

No price is too high for a wine passion

Description

India EU wine tax India-EU FTA Summit : Negotiating Free Trade in Wines

INR 9K for Barolo !! I exclaimed so loudly in my mind that I'm sure the lady next to me in the wine retail shop, heard it. Not sure whether she actually did, but I could sense in her the same predicament which most of Indian wine consumers have (I'm sure you do too) which is *money is not a constraint but dishing out exorbitant amount for a bottle of imported wine is just not fine by me even it is my favorite one*. It's a different matter that more often than not, we end up buying it often justifying it to our spouses jokingly by saying *Shauq bari cheez hai* which means *No price is too high for a passion*. I bought the Barolo too.

Well, one does have to spend a fortune to buy a good quality international wine in India. And if it happens to be a Bordeaux or a Barolo that you are eyeing, then the damage is exponentially higher. Like me, I'm sure you also wonder WHY !?

Now, post liberalization, Indian consumers have had an easy access to various imported goods and services. Globalization has ensured availability of international products in domestic markets at competitive prices. Despite this, the availability of imported wines into India has been restricted and these still come at exorbitant prices. The end sufferer due to this is the humble yet observant Indian wine consumer, who is forever expectant of good quality international wines at a reasonable price.

Free Trade Agreement India and European (EU) negotiations on Free Trade Agreement (FTA) were launched in 2007 to boost bilateral trade. As part of FTA, EU has been actively engaging the Indian government for elimination of duties on wines and spirits. If this happens, it could open the proverbial flood gates for European wines into Indian markets at a reasonable price. Presently, the custom duty on import of wines into India are as high as approx. 150% and this along with host of other taxes and levies make imported wines very expensive to the end consumer. The 14th India-EU Summit which concluded on 06 October 2017 at the national capital promised to carry these negotiations forward and this does keep the aspirations of Indian wine consumers alive of accessing quality European wines at a reasonable cost. Hope that happens soon.