



Four Wines. Three Countries. One Memorable Evening

Description

As President Wineglitz India â?? The Wine Club, Mukul Manku curated a wonderful wine dinner for the club members on 24th July 2026. Held at the Spicy Duck restaurant in Hotel Taj Palace New Delhi, the event saw a full house attendance. In this post Mukul talks about his experience during this memorable evening.

The Wine Flight



The lineup of wines

We had a flight of four wines that day â?? one sparkling and three still wines. Two of these were from Italy and one each from France and Australia. A brief on all these wines is given in the paragraphs that follow.

Starter Course at The Blue Bar





The starter course

Our club dinners are usually planned with five courses and four wines. Like always, this one began with the starter course and was held at the Blue Bar of Taj Palace, giving guests a chance to meet, chat, and break the proverbial ice. The Italian sparkling wine Casa Bottega Brut DOC was served generously along with some delectable snacks, making for a relaxed and enjoyable start to the evening.

Casa Bottega Prosecco Brut DOC



Guests relishing the Prosecco

This Prosecco comes from the Veneto region in North East Italy and is made with the glera grape varietal. Made in the frizzante style it revealed itself as a light, crisp and a lively Prosecco. Everyone appreciated its vibrant character and relished it with the small bites.

Clarendelle Blanc

From the Blue Bar, we all proceeded to the Spicy Duck Restaurant for the sit down dinner. The first wine to be served on the table was the Clarendelle Blanc from Clarendelle Inspired by Haut Brion. Wuite remarkably this same wine also gets served in various ceremonies at annual Oscar Awards.



Clarendelle Blanc gets served in various ceremonies at the Oscar. Image ?? Clarence Dillon.

Interestingly Clarendelle brand is owned by Prince Robert of Luxembourg, who in addition to this is also the owner of Chateau Haut Brion ?? the legendary first growth wine estate located in Bordeaux. With Clarendelle, Prince Robert wanted make wines which truly reflected the Bordeaux terroir and at the same time which were both approachable and affordable. And with that in mind he created the Clarendelle brand of wines.

In fact Clarendelle benefits immensely from the experience and skill of the same winemaking team which has been crafting First Growth wines for Chateau Haut Brion since the year 1935. So while this wine in our glasses that day appeared accessible but at the same time it also carried the finesse and precision of a first growth wine.



Clarendelle Blanc ?? Inspired by Haut Brion

Three grape varietals go into making of Clarendelle Blanc. First is the Sauvignon Blanc which adds a lot of freshness to the wine, then we have Semillon which provides the wine with body and structure and lastly the Muscadelle which gives an aromatic lift to the wine.

Grapes for making this wine are sourced from vineyards spread across Bordeaux, both on the Left and the Right Bank. To that extent Clarendelle Blanc can be truly considered as a curated expression of the Bordeaux terroir.

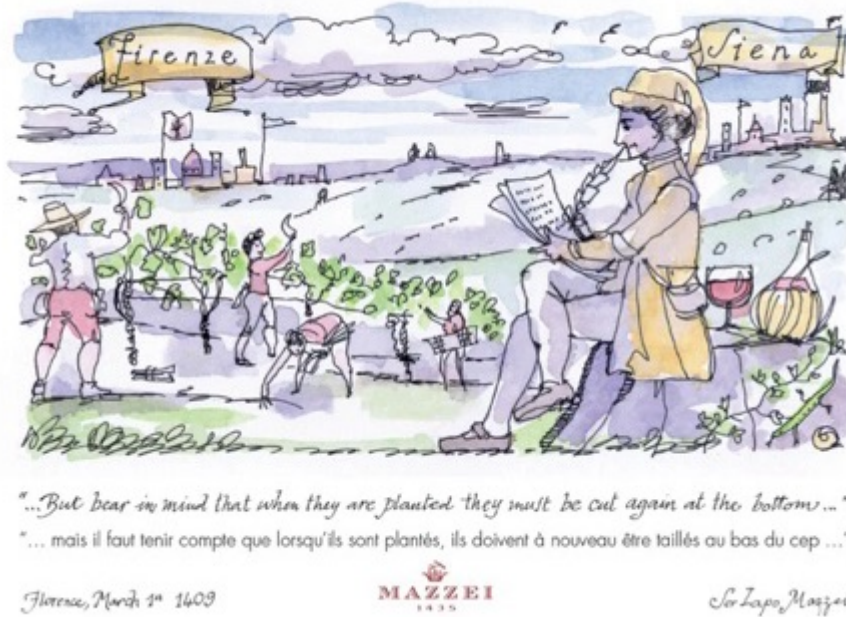
Poggio Badiola



Poggio Badiola

Italian wine names often read like poetry—each word carrying meaning—a thought which rung true for the next wine that evening. It was the Poggio Badiola, where “Poggio” in Italian means a small hill while “Badiola” is the name of the vineyard from where grapes are sourced to make this wine.

This vineyard forms a part of a wine estate called as Castello di Fonterutolli which is located in the Chianti region of Tuscany in central Italy and is owned by the Marchesi Mazzei family. Mazzei family has been making wines since the year 1435. Infact one of their ancestors called **Ser Lapo Mazzei is known to have made the first written mention of “Chianti Wine”**. So it’s a prominent and historic family steeped deeply into the Italian wine traditions.



Ser Lapo's representation from Mazzei.it

Coming back to the wine in the glass, Poggio Badiola is a blend of Sangiovese and Merlot. Such wines which are made with mixing an Italian grape along with a non indigenous one – Merlot in this case, are called as Super Tuscans. These wines fall under the appellation of IGT Toscana, which enables the winemakers to go beyond the strict regulations of any traditional Italian appellation and produce high quality wines made with some experimentation.

Poggio Badiola is a blend of 70 % Sangiovese and 30 % Merlot. It is a wine with high level of acidity which enables it to pair nicely with a range of foods and on the table too, it made a delectable pair with the paired dishes.

Penfolds Bin 389 – The Baby Grange



Penfolds Bin 389 â?? The Baby Grange

With that we arrived at the last wine of the dinner which was also the King of Wines that day. It was the Penfolds Bin 389. Penfolds as we know is one of the most iconic wine brands of Australia.

The story of Penfolds took a defining turn in the early 1950s, when their young winemaker Max Schubert travelled to Europe, where he was fascinated and inspired by the great wines of Bordeaux, especially by their ability to age and evolve over time. At a time when most Australian wines were made for early drinking, this was a bold new idea.



Max Schubert, who as company's first Chief Winemaker would propel Penfolds onto the global stage. Image of Penfolds.

On returning back, Schubert took upon himself to create similar wine albeit now with grapes grown in Australia. These wines were named as Grange. Unfortunately not long after he started this project he was stopped from proceeding further by his own management. The reason was that the initial vintages of these wines did not prove to be commercially viable.

However, Schubert had full faith in his conviction and he continued to make small batches of experimental wines, secretly in the cellars without informing the management. For easy identification he used to store each of these wines at a designated bay or "bin" in the cellar a term which later became part of the wine name itself.



Penfolds Bin 389 in the main course

The turn of tide happened from 1956 onwards when these very wines started to get top honours in various wine competitions in Australia including the famous Sydney Wine Show. These wines soon gained prominence and became iconic wines commanding high prices – a legacy which continues even today.

In the glass the wine came across as a bold and a full-bodied wine full dark fruit, spice, and a touch of oak – which in fact is a true expression of a red Penfolds wine.

The wine which we savoured that day was the Penfolds Bin 389 which is also known as the Baby Grange – since it has a similar structure, texture and power of the main grange wines, with some more approachability. And also so because it matures in the same oak barrels which were used for Grange wines in the previous vintage.

Author's Note

Okay this time itâ??s a longish one, so here it goes..

Somewhere along the journey of hosting wine dinners, Iâ??ve come to believe that once an evening is planned, it takes on a lifeâ??and destinyâ??of its own. How it unfolds, whether the room fills up, how the conversations flow, and ultimately, whether the guests truly connect with the experienceâ?? these are elements you can guide, but never fully control.

This dinner was no exception.

The intent was clear from the outsetâ??to curate an evening anchored by at least one outstanding wine from Penfolds. What seemed like a simple idea took persistence and patience to bring to life, but when it finally did, it found its perfect setting at Spicy Duck, within the elegant surrounds of Taj Palace.



What followed was one of those rare evenings where everything aligned effortlessly. The food was expressive yet balanced, the wines showed beautifully, the service was intuitive, and the ambience struck just the right noteâ??refined yet relaxed.





The result was not just a successful dinner, but a memorable experience—one that lingered in conversation long after the last glass was poured.

So that was all about my experience, hope you all liked it. Till next time it's cheers from my side.

Mukul Manku | Founder Wineglitz India