

Metcalfe's Skinny announced as Official Popcorn Sponsor for the National Film Awards 2016

An artist whose name will soon be on everyone's lips

...and the award for Top venue to party in Chelsea is still JuJu

Mission to Spain to test the new Jaguar XF

TRENDING NOW

Chelsea MONTHLY

SIZZLIN' Ender's Game Movie Review

HOME NEWS FOOD & DRINK ENTERTAINMENT SHOPPING PROPERTY TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE

VIDEO GAMES MINISITE GADGETS MINISITE MOVIES MINISITE TV MINISITE TRAVEL MINISITE FASHION MINISITE ADVERTISE ON CHELSEA MONTHLY ART MINISITE

TOP 10 MOST VIEWS ALL TIME

4 5th annual National Luxury & Lifestyle Awards 2015 nominations announced 1599

5 Anomaly 2 1188

6

Username Password register

Twitter Facebook Google+

358 views 0 likes 0 comments Posted March 26, 2015

Entrepreneur thinks outside the barrel with Soul Tree Wine

by Claire McGinnis



Chelsea Monthly: What gave you the idea to launch Soul Tree Wine?

Alok Mathur: We spotted a fantastic gap in the market a few years ago. Indian cuisine is so incredibly popular in the United Kingdom. Many people look back at the way Indian beers have become associated with Indian cuisine. It was almost a no brainer with the size of the Indian restaurant sector in the country. With more than 10,000 Indian restaurants: it was just a gap waiting to be tapped into. Fresh out of business school, we just couldn't resist the temptation: the idea seemed too good to be true.

Chelsea Monthly: You mentioned 'fresh out of business school'. There are loads of entrepreneurs coming up in business now. Have you always wanted to be an entrepreneur?

Alok Mathur: The answer to that is probably no. I spent fourteen years in a corporate career. It was really an evolution where you realize over time that true satisfaction and true excitement really comes from doing something meaningful. It's very hard to achieve that in a corporate environment. It was a question of getting to a stage where you really have some excitement at looking ahead to the next ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty years of your career. Asking, what am I doing that is really going to make me proud? I just want to look back at this and say, "Wow, this is great, we've really done something". That is really the motivation and it happened over time.

Chelsea Monthly: So, obviously when people think of wine, they normally won't think of India. Narrate the journey from grape to customers. How did you first find the vineyards in India and how does that process work with you?

Alok Mathur: The modern Indian wine industry is very young. Although India has been producing wine for over 5000 years, the modern industry is only about two decades old. India has a very fragmented agricultural sector so the growers are all small, independent farmers. Most of the wine that is produced in India is consumed within India. Hence, it was really a question of going back to the grass roots, identifying how this works back in India, getting into relationships with small farmers, and then partnering with a winery to produce the wine which would be to our quality standard for the international market. It took us a good twelve to sixteen months to put everything together because India is 4,500 miles away. Now we work directly with those small farmers, buy the grapes off them, and introduce the wine in wineries in the Nasik region of India, for the wine to be bottled and then shipped across to the UK.

Chelsea Monthly: There has been another successful story in this line of market. Obviously it's not been in the wine, but in the beer sector with Cobra Beer. They seemed to have been successful using the same model that you are currently undertaking. Is that the approach that inspired you?

Alok Mathur: Absolutely, because that model worked perfectly. What we did brilliantly was take advantage of the untapped market, the Indian restaurants and all the consumers of Indian cuisine in the country. But we are trying to go beyond that. To do that we knew that we had to bring this Indian wine out, create a global consumer brand, and then make it almost a household name across the world. We focused primarily on the UK market. We are already looking at export markets: we have distribution at the moment in Germany and in the US, which is actually very exciting because it's obviously a huge market for wine. Our initial response has been absolutely tremendous. We also have some sales in France, would you believe it? So it's a small but growing export scene for us.

Chelsea Monthly: In terms of name, you mentioned you wanted it to become a household name, where did the brand name come from?

Alok Mathur: When we sat down to try to figure out a name for the brand, it was really going back to asking what does it stand for, or what are we trying to do here? Our wine is so integrally intertwined with the country of origin and that is a major factor. You pick up a wine based on where it comes from: you want a South African wine today or a French tomorrow, and a Chilean the day after. For us, it was all about what the unique character, flavors, style that the Indian terroir and wine making style bring to the table. We really saw this as not just a wine from India, but almost India in a bottle. Soul Tree is really the soul of India, which is encapsulated in a bottle, in the form of wine that can be brought to the rest of the world. That's where the name comes from.

Chelsea Monthly: How would someone who wants to get involved, with, say, a restaurant, a bar, or anyone reading this magazine, or any supplier or distributor, go about contacting you?

Alok Mathur: Our website, www.soultreewine.co.uk is the best first form of contact. Customers can get in touch with us on the email address partnership@soultreewine.co.uk. If you want to partner with us, that's brilliant, or if you want to taste the wines, we can help facilitate that. If you just want to tell us how good or how bad the wine is, we welcome that as well. We just want to be out there, talking to people.

Chelsea Monthly: Last, but not least, you are going to be sampling the Soul Tree Wine at the National Film Awards. What do you expect?

Alok Mathur: Based on experience we have had at various tasting events people find the wine incredibly intriguing. So the first thing is people are fascinated by the fact that it is a wine from India, something they have never tasted before. Usually it creates a buzz, so we are hoping for a good buzz across the event.

Going to the National Film Awards? Try out Soul Tree wine and tell us what you think! @thefilmawards



LATEST ARTICLES

- Pioneer Liquid Beauty Supplement GOLD COLLAGEN® sponsors the Best Actress category at the 2nd annual National Film Awards
- A London Gallery, with millions in sales, amongst the stars of the Arco Art fair in Madrid
- "CECI N'EST PAS UN THE"
- Introducing premium Luxury Gin... Givinity

TOP RATED THIS MONTH

National Film Awards 2016 announces nominees 100%

WHEN IN WINTER, UNNA BARBADOS COULD BE THE ANSWER!!

LATEST ARTICLES

- Pioneer Liquid Beauty Supplement GOLD COLLAGEN® sponsors the Best Actress category at the 2nd annual National Film Awards
- A London Gallery, with millions in sales, amongst the stars of the Arco Art fair in Madrid
- "CECI N'EST PAS UN THE"
- Introducing premium Luxury Gin... Givinity