



Drink tastefully and enjoy responsibly.

“COLONEL JOE” AND HIS JOURNEY OF BEVERAGE PASSION

It is not often that you come across people in life who put everything at stake to follow their passion and end up making a viable profession of it. We are proud to feature one such story of Ravi Joshi a.k.a. “Colonel Joe”, a well recognised name from the world of beverages in India.



Wine and Spirits have always been closer to my heart than I thought many years ago as a young Army officer. There was nothing that would give me more & more pleasure than mixing drinks in the Officers' Mess towards the evening before dinner time. Travelling all over India also gave me a lot of exposure to local brews and exotic libations like Musk Brandy, Paan liqueur, Cherry brandy, Kesar Kasturi, Chhang... just to name a few. With a child like enthusiasm I would also visit distilleries and bottling plants that happened to lie close to Cantonment areas.

A posting to Delhi gave me the opportunity to pursue WSET courses and further my knowledge. It was probably due to my background knowledge, that I did very well in these exams, so much so, that I won the coveted Champagne Scholarship despite being an outsider to the trade.

It was then that I realised that probably destiny was pulling me towards my heart's calling. After deliberating with my wife (who had been a willing partner in all my pursuits through the years) we jointly decided that I should live my passion full time. The decision also meant that I had to take premature retirement from the Army as the nature of my then job dictated various restrictions on foreign travel and interacting with foreign nationals. Separation pangs notwithstanding, I finally bid adieu to the hallowed organisation that had shaped me from a boy to a man. The imprint of its legacy would however continue to stay with me.

Proceeding to France on the scholarship trip, I visited renowned Champagne houses like Billecart-Salmon, Cattier, Taittinger, Michel Gonet and Bollinger to learn about the intricacies of producing the world's best known bubbly. After Champagne, I continued my wine journey to Bordeaux, Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence, The Rhône Valley and The Beaujolais with the assistance of a French wine négociant friend. I stayed and worked with accomplished winemakers to learn about various aspects of winemaking grass roots upwards. I was happy that I had learnt French language (DELF Diploma A2) prior to departure from India, as communication was never a problem during my stay in France.

Back in India I gave expression to my passion by starting a wine and spirits blog called Guns 2 Gewurztraminer- the name of blog symbolising my transition from an Army man to a wine professional. The blog is currently read in more than 30 countries with a newsletter dispatched periodically to a selected list of wine lovers and professionals. I have also been writing for print publications as a Subject Matter Expert in beverages since long.

Being fully dedicated to the cause of beverages, afforded me more opportunities to travel abroad, visiting various other wine regions in top wine producing countries like Italy, France, Spain and Austria. Apart from experiencing the terroir and winemaking ethos of each region, it was invaluable to meet famed wine personalities and learn from them immensely. I also started conducting wine appreciation sessions, and provide trade consultancy services under the umbrella of my eponymous venture “Colonel Joe”.

But despite the general trend in India of alcobev professionals being slotted either as “wine” or “spirits” persons, I believe that passion knows no boundaries and one can surely pursue diversity within a field of interest. Hence I have also been conducting other beverage sessions like one with whisky for a senior course from Duke University USA and a Rum cocktails session for a Defence Services audience. My latest object of affection in beverages has been Sake- The Japanese National

alcohol. In Jan 2020 (before the Covid pandemic revealed its ugly face), I was fortunate to be invited by the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association as a part of a global group of seven beverage professionals to visit Sake breweries across Japan. The invaluable experience inspired me to create Sake Club India (SCI) along with my Sake Sommelier friend Mika Eoka who lives in Tokyo. SCI is an Indo-Japanese community, with participation from around the world to share the passion and knowledge of Sake in India. The Club has been nothing short of a boon for us to maintain our sanity during these difficult pandemic times, as we could productively conduct Sake events in virtual and hybrid formats including a grand first anniversary event hosted for us by the Japanese Embassy in New Delhi.

THE JOURNEY OF PASSION CONTINUES.

