

# Ep 68: Wines of India with Indians only Master of Wine Sonal Holland (Part 2)



**Janina Doyle:** [00:00:07] Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers. Who if you're like me, just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, brand ambassador, wine educator and sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever-evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this. Cheers to you.

[00:00:31] Namastē to you all and I say Namastē because this is the way to say hello to you in Hindi. Now I made a common faux pas thinking that I could type in hello in Indian and get the translation. And it turns out there are 22 official languages in India. Now Hindi is apparently the official language in their government, certainly spoken in Delhi, the capital. However, in Mumbai, which is the closest city to Nashik, which is the wine capital we are going to focus on today, they speak Marathi. So perhaps they should welcome you to this episode with the hello in Marathi and that is Namaskar. So Namaskar friends. Welcome to Part two with incredible Sonal Holland, Master of Wine. And whereas last week we were talking about the wine culture within the country of India, today we're talking about Wines of India. We're going to taste a delicious Chenin Blanc and a Tempranillo and be talking about the grapes, the regions and the style. So I hope this is just a really nice introduction for you if you haven't even contemplated that they were making wine there. And I can give you a sneak preview and tell you the wines are good, well, these ones anyway. So without further ado, I'm going to let Sjanonal take us on our journey through Indian wine.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:02:05] Right, well I guess this is the time then that we get a little bit more into detail on those grape varieties, the regions, the styles. You mentioned,

Chenin Blanc is growing and Tempranillo. Well, as if by magic, we both happen to have a Chenin Blanc and a Tempranillo with us, don't we?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:02:23] Yes we do, we do.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:02:25] So what is the, I'm going to pour the, a little bit of Chenin Blanc in my glass, so obviously I invite you to do the same. What is the most popular white grape varieties in India? Is it Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:02:38] Actually, I would say among all white varieties, I would say Chenin Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc are probably the two most popular. And I'm very, I'm particularly kicked about Chenin Blanc Janina. Because, you know, I mean, everybody makes a Sauvignon Blanc right.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:02:53] It's the rules.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:02:55] So it's a harder one to compete on. But what I find interesting about Chenin Blanc from India, are that if found a sort of a unique expression, and some examples that are well-made are, seem to be thriving. Yeah. Somehow, I'm more bullish about Chenin Blanc on Indian soil. We seem to, you know what, earlier started off, and we started out growing Chenin, I mean, we all know Chenin Blanc is a high-yielding grape variety, if, you it will give lots and lots of tonnage of fruit, you know? But it started off like that. It started off for all the wrong reasons, you know, growing Chenin. But I think over time, as the producers have tried to work on their craft, to sell their craft and strive for better quality and so on, I think we've been able to extract some finer expression of the Chenin Blanc on Indian soils and I'm particularly excited about Chenin among whites. And in the reds, I would say we do, we do Shiraz really well and we actually even do our Tempranillo really well. And so, therefore, I'm glad we're tasting a Tempranillo and a Chenin today.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:04:02] Ok, yeah awesome. Well, let me before, you know, I'm just going to keep the listeners waiting for just a little bit longer. Let's talk a little bit about Nashik. Why is this the main wine region? What makes it so special?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:04:14] Because it was traditionally a table grape growing region. This is where all our table grapes came from, and it just over time converted to a wine grape growing region. And that was tough because that transition is not always easy because, you know, everything that a table grape needs is exactly the opposite of what a wine grape needs.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:04:35] Yes, lower yields!

[00:04:36] You know, all that transition wasn't the easiest one. It's taken us quite a bit of time. But having said that, the climate of Nashik kind of works because it's situated above sea level, so it mitigates a little bit of the tropical climate. We have wide diurnal temperature variations in Nashik so no matter how hot the day is, the nights get significantly cooler and we have a lot of varied soil in Nashik as well. It's agriculturally quite a rich piece of land, so we're able to experiment with different varieties and figure out. But having said that, Nashik is not the only place we grow grape varieties. We have some grapes growing in other parts as well. A little bit more down south of India, we have another state called Karnataka, where we also have a, the second largest sort of grape growing industry and quite a number of very established, interesting wine producers making wines there. And then we have, then we have, you know, it's kind of clusters. It's kind of a little bit here, a little bit there. And then we have an emerging fruit wine industry as well. And when I think fruit wine, I mean everything other than grape growing, you know, making... Because India is agriculturally very rich. We are an agricultural nation. We grow an enormous amount of fruit that gets exported around the world. So some of our entrepreneurs have experimented with other fruits as well. I normally don't talk too much about those because I think, you know, just stick to, stick to grapes, particularly the wine that we know of.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:06:10] Yeah, but they exist. Okay, So in Nashik, which of course, is the main one, you're obviously letting us know there are different places. Where is that, in the country of India, so people can pinpoint? Where's the nearest airport? How long would it take you to get there if you're going to visit?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:06:27] So you land, you land in Mumbai. You stay in Mumbai, which is by far the most exciting city. And I'm saying this because I'm hugely biased because I live there. Yeah. So you land at the Mumbai airport. But like I said earlier, you

know our top consumption city anyways, Mumbai. So you probably land right anyway. So you can stay here and then you can drive over to Nashik. It's a three, three and a half hour pleasant drive, a straight road. You drive straight off the highway and you come to a bunch of whole lot of wineries situated there, and you probably need like a couple of nights to spend in Nashik, if you want to cover like a proper trail. And some of our wineries have places to stay so you can stay at the wineries and so on. So, yeah, and enjoy some local food and so on.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:07:16] Well you said about staying in the winery, the Chenin Blanc that we're having now, am I pronouncing the winery called, is it Valon or Vallonné?

**Speaker3:** [00:07:24] It is called Vallonné ?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:07:26] Vallonné. Perfect, got it the second time. So the Vallonné Vineyards, I've had a look on their website. There are very premier boutique winery and you can stay there I believe. There's a, I think they're a hotel and restaurant.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:07:39] Yeah, they have a really, really tiny boutique winery and they have only as many as four rooms at the moment. But I do know that even as we speak, they are expanding their tourism facilities because tourism is also again taking off. You know, in India, there's a lot of interest in wine tourism and you know, as people have more access to disposable incomes, they want to travel and experience wine and in its place of origin, which is all great news for wine. But anyway, coming back to Vallonné. They are a nice boutique winery and they have a spectacular view of vineyards. And you know, honestly, if I were to take a picture of myself at Vallonné and show it, put it up on social media, people might think I'm in Provence or something because it is really picturesque.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:08:25] It's beautiful, isn't it? There's mountains and lakes. Just from looking at the pictures on the website. It's absolutely beautiful. So these guys are a boutique winery. Have you, have you gone through their whole range? They do do 13 wines, so they're doing quite a bit of wine for a boutique winery.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:08:40] Most, most wine producers. That's, 13 is probably the least if you, if you go to the leader of wine-producing in India.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:08:48] Well, that's Su...su...

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:08:49] Sula. Yeah, Sula is the number one guy. He would probably make like close to thirty, thirty-five labels. And because we, you know, we have wines at every price point as well. And most producers have something from very entry-level to something premium, which is his own interpretation of his best. So yeah, so this Vallonné makes 13 it is? I mean, I'm going to believe you because I haven't been through their website in a while.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:09:16] I got it from the website. So yeah, I hope so.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:09:19] Yeah, no, I'm sure. I'm sure it. Yeah, good. What do you think of the Cheninja?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:09:23] I think it's so fresh and it's so beautiful, and it has all that classic characters. So I'm getting this. It's got this lovely, lemony, waxy aroma and a bit of camomile for me. And actually, as I'm getting, as I've been smelling it whilst you've been talking, I'm not sure about their wine production here, but I don't know if they've done a bit of Lee's aging or there's a tiny bit of oak because it seems to have this slight extra creaminess that's kind of waking up.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:09:49] Like a flinty ness to it, right? Yeah. I don't know if it has any oak, to be honest.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:09:54] I think it might be the grape.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:09:55] No, I don't. I actually don't think it has. But I know exactly what you mean. It's got that flinty, smokiness, something to it, right?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:10:03] It definitely has some flinty ness.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:10:05] That's, and that's the thing, you know? I wanted to draw your attention to. Chenin Blanc in India typically has that, it's got that, you know, you

can hardly call it minerality. I haven't been able to put a word to it, but there is something like a flinty ness that comes more towards the end,

**Janina Doyle:** [00:10:22] On the finish.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:10:23] On the finish. Which I find very interesting. But at the same time, if you look at the fruit quality, it's kind of broad. It's ripe, it's rich. So there's a lot of melons and citrus notes. There's also this little lifted florality to it. And on the palate, you know, unlike some other very unripe Chenin Blancs, this one's kind of quite nice and rounded. So, yeah, I wouldn't say it's a highly complex example, but for the style that it is, at the price point that it is, I think I think it's an interesting expression of a Chenin Blanc.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:11:04] Yea. Now I'm not sure if we actually mentioned everybody, what this wine is. This is the Anokhee.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:11:08] Yeah. So Anokhee from Vallonné Vineyards and Anokhee stands for unique, that's what the word means.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:11:16] Ok, and this is, I guess, this is one of their more premium level because I think they have the more, I don't want to say everyday wines, but I think the Anokhee is the next level up?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:11:25] Yes. So this one's available in the UK.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:11:28] It is. Yep. £25.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:11:30] £25, is it?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:11:31] Yes. Yeah. So this is and we're drinking the 2018 at the moment. Both wines that we're trying makes things very easy. You can go to wine monkey. So this is a great little site that's got very unusual grape varieties and wine regions for people to go and try. So there we go. So you can get both of these wines. Anyone who's curious to try some wines of India, that's where you need to go.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:11:53] Yeah and even even as I'm sipping, I get a little bit of that salinity on it's finish. I don't know whether you're catching that, but I'm getting a little bit of that saline expression, which I find interesting. You know.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:12:04] Definitely for me, more of that kind of flinty and you said about floral, it kind of goes really, it's like honeysuckle and then that little slightly smoke vibe.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:12:13] But honestly, I felt it was more on the nose. I kind of lost it on the palate.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:12:17] Ahhh no, I got it more on the finish, actually.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:12:19] Oh did you?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:12:20] Yeah, I'm getting a slight smokiness on literally as it finishes and I get more of the fruit. Yeah, and I love the fact that it's like this kind of medium bodied. It's not too heavy, but as you said, it's quite round. So for me, I would like you to tell me what you would pair it with. I'm thinking because I'm trying to think of Indian dishes, and of course, I think you'll be an ideal person to ask. I'm thinking something like maybe like Butter chicken or even maybe something with lentils? What do you, what would you like to pair this with?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:12:47] Yeah I like the lentil choice to be honest, because I was going to lean more towards the vegetarian dishes. So I'm a big believer of what grows together goes together, and that's what we're trying to promote at the moment, just to encourage more Indians and Indians living overseas to drink more, try more Indian wines. But India is a land of many, many different vegetables and we really excel at it. I think our vegetarian fare is by far better than most other countries anywhere that I know of. But so I would encourage people to try this with all sorts of vegetarian dishes because what I find is even when you try with some sort of a green vegetable, you know, green vegetable or even lentil, as you just mentioned, yeah, it kind of tends to have a bit of a bitter edge. And I find that the ripeness of the fruit and the broadness of this wine will kind of complement and, you know, even out any of those bitter edges quite nicely.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:13:45] Okay. Something for people to try. Now you mentioned about the Chenin Blanc having more of the kind of tropical fruit. The climate I know it has good diurnals, but nothing is it quite hot during the daytime in the summer? What is the temperature like in Nashik?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:14:00] In the summer it can be. Yes, no, it can go, it can go even as high as 32 or god forsake even 35 degrees, on a really hot day. It can get quite hot during the day, but thankfully the nights are always 10 degrees cooler, regardless of which month you are in.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:14:19] So do you find then the better vineyards are on slopes, are on hills, are on slightly higher altitudes?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:14:25] No, actually not. We don't have mountains. We don't have topography, Per se. Yeah, we don't have slopes. It's all flat land. But thankfully all of Nashik is at 700 metres above sea level. But it's all flat land. Yeah, it's all flat terrain, we don't have, I mean, we might have a few rolling hills here and there, but by and large, not really. No.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:14:51] Does that mean that people are using kind of tractors and harvesting...?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:14:57] No. Fascinatingly, all, 100 percent of harvesting in India is manual. It's all handpicked and we're blessed because we have an abundance of labor here, so labor is quite inexpensive. And another fascinating fact that I can share with you Janina is, you know, most majority of our vineyard workers are women.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:15:21] Hey, love to hear that!

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:15:23] So much for women empowerment. I come back to my point about one out of 10 people walking the Earth is an Indian woman, and she's probably at the vineyard picking the grapes. So, yeah. And that's because there's a lot of rural staff available at any point in time, readily available to pick your grapes when needed. And a lot of the women, they need employment anyway. So they've all been trained by various wineries on how to do this properly. And it's really a fascinating site I

was at, I was at one of the leading wineries called Fratelli Vineyards a couple of months ago, and I was right there bang in the middle of the harvest season and it was just, we witnessed like 400 women picking grapes. It was such a beautiful sight. Such an empowering and inspiring site as well.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:16:16] Yeah. Who runs the wine world? Girls!

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:16:19] I know: An Indian woman.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:16:23] I love that. Oh, brilliant, that makes me feel good too. So, OK, I'm actually really, really enjoying this. And it's this has got, I've had this out for quite a while and it's got a little bit warmer now, and it's actually really it's it's tasting even better. So I would actually advise anybody who's getting this. Don't just take it out of the fridge. 12 degrees, 13 degrees, the tropical fruits just come out more. It's softer. It's very easy drinking, but the length as well. I will give a real hand up to the quality here because I suppose premium wineries are probably still quite a new thing in India, right?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:16:58] Yeah. I mean, like I said, every producer has at least one or two expressions of a premium example. But premium Indian wine as a concept, I would suggest, is pretty new, right? Because most of the world is yet to discover Indian wine.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:17:15] Me too.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:17:17] Exactly. So the idea of having a premium Indian wine is like kind of going two steps even forward, right? So, but, you know, having said that, whatever premium, not premium, I would say India is a new country. It's still very nascent. We're still learning, to be honest. And like any other country, we have our examples of producers who do well and producers who do not so well. But regardless, every country and every region deserves a chance, right at least once for you to try. So I would say if you find an Indian wine on a shelf, grab it, try it, let your own palate decide if you like it and just don't be biased. That's all. Just don't have any prejudice.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:17:59] Yes. It's the preconceptions.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:18:01] Give it a free. Yeah, just give it a fair chance. That's all.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:18:06] I've given this a fair chance. The Vallonné Anokhee Chenin Blanc 2018, and it gets a big thumbs up. So that was lovely. Now I'm going to pour the Tempranillo seeing as you've mentioned, that Tempranillo is doing very well here as well. I'm expecting then quite a lot of fruit again. Would you say that that is a fair statement then to, I mean, how would you summarise all the wines of India? But should people be expecting more fruit-driven, intense styles?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:18:35] Indian consumer does prefer more new world styles, more fruitier styles rather than savoury styles, perhaps because they are easier to appreciate, you know. But definitely, I would say we like our styles of reds to be bolder and richer. So unlike the rest of the world, which is now steering more towards lighter, elegant styles, I think Indian consumer is still fascinated by richness of fruit, richness of body, depth of colour because mostly because I think they tend to feel that if it looks deep and rich and bold, then it must be premium. Especially when it comes to premium reds, that's what they expect. So, yeah, but having said that, I find even the Tempranillo styles here are supple, but they're not necessarily fruit bombs. They're not like the Malbecs, you know, some of the Malbecs anyway. If you taste this one, I just took a sip while I was speaking with you, and I find that this one's a fruit, it's fruit-forward enough. But it's not overtly fruity.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:19:49] It's earthy as well, isn't it?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:19:50] Yes, exactly. You get that?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:19:52] It's definitely, it's bold, though. I mean, it's so much concentration on the nose, but definitely earthy in the, a bit of leather.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:20:02] So when you smell it, on the aroma you get, you get a lot of this. Dark fruit, pruning, chocolaty character. When you taste it, it's not overt, right, it's not too flashy. I find it medium-bodied and it's got freshness, it's got a bit of leanness as well to it.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:20:22] Do you know what? And you're of course, completely correct. But actually, for somebody who is an old-world drinker who likes the drier styles, likes to feel a little bit of tannin. This is fantastic. So you have all the concentration of fruit. You're quite right. It's only medium-bodied. It's really, really fresh. It doesn't feel weighty in my mouth at all. And then you really, get like tea leaves mixing in with these....Yeah.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:20:51] I was just going to say that. I get that herbaceous quality and I get savory notes. There's a little bit of that earthiness to it. And, you know, it's almost like a Cabernet Franc, you know what I mean, the freshness of a Cabernet Franc.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:21:08] You know what? Absolutely. And I know that they have put this with a little bit of oak. I think it's about a year, but it doesn't taste oaky. The fruit still seems to play center stage.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:21:18] There's very little oak in this wine anyway. Yes, or whatever you get is 100 percent almost the fruit expression. And what I find again, to India's credit, is just naturally speaking, if I were to say India to someone, they would automatically think hot and therefore they would think alcoholic wines.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:21:38] This is 13.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:21:39] But if you taste some of our wines, they don't, they're not overly alcoholic. You cannot perceive the alcohol, even on the finish. It's very well integrated with most of our wines, and I feel very proud about that. Somehow, the alcohol management seems on point and I enjoy the dryness of this wine. You know, it's a nice, dry red.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:22:01] It's grippy.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:22:03] It's ripe on the nose, but it's nice and dry and grippy, as you call it on the palate.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:22:10] And I still get these lovely black cherries. You said prunes totally get that and then lovely, some strawberries as well. So it's which to be fair,

classic Tempranillo as well in terms of those flavours that you would get, but definitely not as a Tempranillo that I, the aromas and the flavours are the same, but the style. This is bolder.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:22:30] So I have to admit that Charosa Vineyards is a bit, it's a bit inspired by old-world styles. They do aspire to make more European styles. Now how much they succeed is for you to judge and need to comment, but I'm just sort of stating philosophically the aim to make inverted commas more old-world styles of wines. Yeah. So that's, you know, as you can see, even from the bottle and the label and for the benefit of our listeners, you know, it's a very classic style of label, isn't it? It kind of attempts to show the terroir and its black and white label. So it kind of resonates. I mean, apart from the screw cap, but everything else about it kind of resonates of a, to me, of a an old-world style or attempting an old-world style.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:23:26] No, that completely makes sense. And I totally agree. And actually, you mentioned about the screw cap. Both of these wines are screw cap. Is that pretty standard now in India?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:23:35] Yeah, it's been. It's been a learning curve for Indian wineries. We started off with corks as anybody would, and then we had a couple of wineries that realized that corks was a dismal failure on our wines here. It was hard to keep them fresh, and we had a lot of, you know, variation in their performances and it was killing our wines, in a nutshell. So a lot of the leading producers took the bold stance of moving over to screw cap and then followed a lot of other wineries as well. So we still have our fair share of wines under cork. But, you know, I would any day choose a screw cap for Indian wines over a plastic cork or even a poor quality agglomerate. I'm not saying agglomerate corks are inferior, but I'm saying some of the inferior types of agglomerated cork.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:24:23] Oh, you can't get them back in the bottle and you can't use a coravin. You can't use a cor... Well, you can, but then it doesn't go back. And yeah.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:24:31] So that annoys me about, you know, corks that are not 100 percent single piece natural cork, unless they're high quality, I find their performance can show a lot of variation. So I would any day choose screw caps. And I

think overall screw caps have been good for our wines, you know, they've kept them fresher for longer. So that's a good thing.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:24:55] Well, these are definitely fruity, fresh styles. So to confirm this is the Charosa Vineyards Tempranillo and 2016 as well, which is nice to see some wine with some age and still seems super, super fresh, I guess that slight leather note and a bit of prune that I'm getting might be coming from some age, but it's...

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:25:12] It's part of the evolution. Yeah, it's part of the evolution, but it's still holding well, right?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:25:17] Absolutely. I mean, so what's this? We're talking five years. Definitely. I'd say another two or three years for sure. It's going to probably get better and better, kind of, my guess.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:25:25] It would definitely keep for another two or three years, you see quite a bit of evolution. There's still a lot of freshness there. And at the core, there's still quite a bit of fruit that can evolve into more sort of complex, tertiary, pruny, leathery, smoky notes. And then it'll probably hold from there on for a couple more years before it declines.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:25:46] Yeah, now Tempranillo, of course, is ideal with lamb. That's a perfect pairing. So should I be really basic and say this should go with like a Rogan Josh or something?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:25:55] Yes. Yes, that's not, by the way, that's not basic at all. It's making my mouth water at the moment. But yeah, I know it's considered a real delicacy. It will be served, it would be, it's a dish that would be served in fine dining Indian restaurants, even here. But again, I'm thinking because of its evolution, it would actually even work really well, any sort of international cuisine as well, you could pair this even with a pizza couldn't you? Or a pasta and a tomato, like some sort of a tomato based or, yeah, anything which is vinegar. So by the way, we have Goa, I don't know if you've heard of Goa, but Goa makes a lot of vinegar based or tomato based dishes? So some Indian dishes like that would also work really well and any kind of meat and something nice and robust, isn't it, something more hearty?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:26:46] I would definitely want something a little bit more intense. So I guess we won't confuse people much more. I just want to ask you one more question on the grapes. Obviously, you said Tempranillo has done well and we know that Shiraz or Syrah, depending, ah, are Indians typically saying Shiraz or Syrah? Shiraz?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:27:01] Indians, we say Shiraz.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:27:03] Yeah, because it's a bigger, bolder stuff.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:27:05] We don't say Syrah. No, we don't, I don't think we make Syrah styles either.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:27:10] Ok, well, I would, ok, bigger, bolder, fruitier styles. So there we go. Everyone knows if you're going to get a Shiraz, it's going to be a bolder style. Shiraz, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, presumably are the most planted or most popular reds. Is that correct to say?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:27:22] Yes. But I would say the Tempranillo and Sangiovese show a lot of promise in India among Reds. I would say, definitely try these two grape varieties coming out of India. I would have loved to try a Sangiovese with you today, but maybe next time?

**Janina Doyle:** [00:27:41] Well, part two. Yeah, exactly. In ten years time. And is there any Pinot Noir growing at all or is it just a bit too hot?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:27:48] Unfortunately not. Unfortunately, no. I'd love to see a Pinot Noir coming out of India. No, unfortunately not.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:27:56] But that's going to have to be imported then. Okay?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:27:59] Yeah, we do have a lot of imported Pinot Noirs here.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:28:01] What is the percentage? Just quickly before we finish off, what is the percentage of kind of international versus domestic?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:28:08] So India drinks 75% Indian domestic wine and only 25 percent internationally. But as skewed as this may appear, it's the same for US. US drinks 75%, 25%.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:28:21] Well, You know, nothing like standing behind your own produce.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:28:24] Yes, but I think what Americans do very well is that they stand behind their produce with a lot of strength and solidarity. Indians don't yet. And fair enough, you know, we are a work in progress, I get that. We are a work in progress. So we've had a few hits and misses. But in more recent years it's been definitely encouraging to see Indian wines getting more appreciation on international shores, win more competitions both internationally and on home turf. Finding their place on wine lists at Michelin star restaurants even. Getting picked up by supermarket chains in the UK like Sainsbury's and others. So it's all, it's all. It's all going in the right direction. It's all going good.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:29:08] That is the future of Indian wine quite clearly. Well, perfect. Thank you so much Sonal. I'll just let anybody know that this lovely Tempranillo we're drinking. That's £30 from the wine monkey if you want to try them. But I'll put the information in the show notes and Sonal, until part two.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:29:22] Until part 2

**Janina Doyle:** [00:29:23] We will discuss the evolution there.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:29:25] Yes, and I will have lots more stories to tell you then. Hopefully many more than I have done today.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:29:30] I can not wait.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:29:31] Yes, but listen, today's been really enjoyable. Thank you for having me on your show.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:29:37] It's a pleasure. Thank you.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:29:38] Great. Thank you for giving Indian wines such as such an enormous and inspiring stage.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:29:44] Oh, it's time, isn't it? And how would we say cheers? How would we say cheers in India?

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:29:48] I don't know. We just say cheers, honestly.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:29:50] Ok, Easy peasy. There you go. Cheers. Take care.

**Sonal Holland MW:** [00:29:54] Take care you. Bye now.

**Janina Doyle:** [00:30:00] So get excited about the thought of visiting Nashik. Now these two wineries that we tasted, the Vallonné Vineyards, you can stay there, they have amazing views and then the Charosa vineyards. They even say they have views like Tuscany. Well, who doesn't want to go there? And in fact, we didn't mention with Charosa Vineyards, they were actually, in fact, the first winery in India to use open tank fermenters. You know, there's just a whole world, or should I say, just country, of wines to explore here that are delicious. And of course, there are loads of premium wineries for you guys to check out. In fact, I should give a special thanks to Wines in India. If you want to go and check out their website [winesinindia.co.uk](http://winesinindia.co.uk). They are importers in the UK, bringing in some of the premium wines of India, so they sent us the wine. So thank you for that. Now they're bringing in other fantastic premium wineries like Reveilo. I mean, they were the pioneers of planting Sangiovese, as Sonal was saying is doing so well in India and they pioneered Nero d'avola and Grillo. So really behind the Italian varieties. Now they're also based in Nashik. But if you wanted to step a little further afield still staying in the Maharashtra provence, you might want to try the Fratelli Winery, which is in a wine region called Akuj. Now they also seem to be big fans of Italian wines because they're very focused on century-long Italian winemaking traditions, but with all the modern winemaking facilities. So that should hopefully give you a little start on your journey of Wines of India. Now, if you want to hear more from Sonal, you can follow her on Instagram. She's always putting up rather interesting educational videos, and that's [@sonalholland\\_masterofwine](https://www.instagram.com/sonalholland_masterofwine) But of course, you already know she's on YouTube:

Sonal Holland Wine TV. I'll put all that information in the show notes. Now as always, it's time to finish off with a wine quote. And I've chosen a perfect one from Gandhi. And he says:

**Janina Doyle:** [00:32:07] "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

**Janina Doyle:** [00:32:13] So carry on your wine studies. Keep learning one glass at a time. And if you are going to live as if you're going to die tomorrow, drink something delicious. Ok, thank you as ever, you are all amazing for tuning in. Thank you for contacting me and giving me advice and feedback and ideas for other episodes. As always, you can contact me, [janina@eatsleepwinerepeat.co.uk](mailto:janina@eatsleepwinerepeat.co.uk) So that's by email and you spell my name with a J. Or follow me on Instagram and you can direct message me @eatsleep\_winerepeat. If you haven't subscribed, please do it. Like the episode, share the episode! Leave me a review, if you can. It helps make your podcast more discoverable. Now, next week, I'll be speaking to another Master of Wine, Siobhan Turner. And we're going to be talking about authentication, wine fraud. Certainly, a name that you want to know about in terms of wine forgery is Rudy Kurniawan, who committed the craziest wine fraud I think the world has ever seen. So we will be discussing that on next week's episode. So I raise my glass to you all. Until then, cheers to you.