

India's Luxury Alcohol Market Decoded

By Nikhil Agarwal

Indians are today more aware about the finer things of life and the alcohol market in the country is gradually changing. India is moving towards consuming fine drink, but only in very small circles and very slowly. Also, our perception of luxury drink is a little skewed here in India when it is entirely possible that ordinary brands get pushed into the luxury segment because of the high duties prevalent

What you drink is directly proportionate to how successful you are

Luxury is a paradox – one man's aspiration can be another man's everyday. A person's definition of luxury depends on which rung of the luxury ladder they are on.

Luxury – the very word denotes something that is hard to obtain, the privilege of a few. But let's put things in perspective in an Indian sense. For one, I'm not going to talk about the international business traveller or tourist who comes to India. We know some of them spend and consume luxury.

If we are going to talk about luxury, then I think it's appropriate we talk about Indians and what they drink. So perhaps we can start off with removing 80 percent or more of the population from this conversation; luxury to them isn't close to what the readers of this article associate luxury with. What you are left with is a sizeable percentage of people who are on their way to enjoying luxury and a tiny percentage of people who already do.

Whenever I travel to wine regions or visit trade shows, every winery/distiller/brewery representative has the same exact opinion. India has 1.2 billion people, so surely there must be a market. Of course there is, but let's put that number in perspective.

Today you see more exclusive wines and spirits being made available and showcased in most metros in the country. Magazines spin luxury and ambition with their elegant bottle shots and suave tag lines. What you drink is directly proportionate to how successful you are. We create an image of class and people lap it up.

Indians are travelling more, there is a food revolution going on in India and, by extension, a drink revolution. TV channels are introducing us to the lifestyles of the rich and famous. In a nutshell, we are more aware. We've been given a sneak peak to the finer things in life and we are hungry for more.

Having been a part of Diageo and Moët Hennessy in the past and engaging HNI's constantly through our "All Things Nice" community, I have witnessed that the Indian alcohol