



The members of Raggabund

# One love in Bandra

Raggabund, a Latin-inspired reggae band on a South Asia tour, takes the stage in the suburb this evening

## TONIGHT'S GIG

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A LOT of people might feel that the core ethos of reggae music — one love — resonates strongly in today's fractious geo-political climate. Don Caramelo of Raggabund, a Latin-inspired reggae band from Germany, is one such person. "We live in very windy times. There are many issues that we have to face if we want to live in peace in this world, and music can be a transmitter of that message. And reggae in itself has always been rebel music. It is music for taking a stand, for highlighting injustice, racism and all that stuff," he says.

In essence, then, reggae is a clarion call for harmonious living, which will ring loud this evening at a Bandra venue, when Raggabund takes the stage for a live concert. The band is on an extensive South Asia tour, playing gigs and conducting workshops across cities in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India. The mem-

bers of the act have never been to this part of the world before, which, says Caramelo, has only raised their excitement levels.

"We want to catch the vibe and all the different languages, colours and people of this region," he says, adding, "The first show we did was in Karachi, and it was awesome to see how the people were singing and dancing along." The band then travelled to Colombo, before beginning the India leg of their tour in Chennai and moving on to Thiruvananthapuram, Bengaluru, Pune and 'probably the biggest city of them all, Mumbai.

The two integral members of Raggabund — Caramelo and his brother Paco Mendoza, who are travelling on this tour with De Luca and Mikey Board — grew up in Germany. But they are of South American descent, which indicates where the band's Latin influence comes from.

"We have a big family in Peru,



Paco Mendoza



Don Caramelo

**TIME**  
6 pm onwards  
**AT** St Andrew's  
Auditorium, Bandra  
West.  
**CALL** 22027710  
**FREE**

and since childhood, we have had a view of two parts of the world living in Europe and with our family in Latin America. So, we have imbibed the South American culture, music, vibe and the heart, and brought it together with what we were listening to in Europe to develop our own style," says Caramelo.

He continues, "Reggae is only one part [of our sound] because we also love other Caribbean music, like dancehall, and all the Latin stuff, like merengue and salsa, along with hip-hop and electronic beats. We try to combine these genres, with reggae being the glue to keep it together."

Speaking about this evening's concert, Caramelo says, "We want to celebrate positivity, and introduce all the colours of this world to the audience, through reggae, Caribbean music, beat boxing, acoustic guitars, electronic beats and different languages," adding, "We want to show them that we are all the same, because the most important thing is 'one love'. That says it all."

**'We want to catch the vibe and all the different languages, colours and people of this region'** Don Caramelo

## Celebrating Merlot

On the occasion of International Merlot Day, sommelier Nikhil Agarwal tells you what makes this underappreciated wine varietal worth ordering at your next dinner party



WINE GUIDE BOOK

PIC/GETTY IMAGES



Nikhil Agarwal

### What is Merlot?

It's a grape variety that's dark blue in colour and found in most wine-growing regions. It's one of the varietals used in the red Bordeaux blend, which is a much-loved wine across the globe. However, it is also enjoyed as a single varietal, although it is often overshadowed by the rather aggressive Cabernet Sauvignon.

### What does it taste like?

Merlot is a dry red wine that is fruit-forward and low on tannins as compared to a Cabernet Sauvignon. It has notes of chocolate and cherry, and aging it in oak gives it more complexity.

### What can I pair it with?

This type of wine pairs well with food that has some amount of fat on it, so I would recommend having it with grilled or roasted meats or vegetables. Alternatively, it tastes fantastic with cheese, or with a creamy pasta or risotto.

### Who can drink it?

Because Merlot is low on tannins and has a fruity character (without being sweet), it is a great wine for beginners. However, that does not mean only beginners should try it. In fact, several wineries are now increasing the proportion of Merlot in their blended wines, as the lower tannin content means wines take less time to open up.

### Where can I try it?

Your best bets are The Table in Colaba, Pali Village Cafe and Olive Bar & Kitchen in Bandra, and Masque in Mahalaxmi. That said, any restaurant in the city that stocks wines is sure to have a Merlot whether in the form of a blend, or a single varietal.

### Did you know?

- The 2004 film *Sideways* had a memorable scene in which the lead character vehemently refuses to drink Merlot. This scene ended up impacting Merlot sales in the US following the release of the movie.
- Petrus, which is considered one of the world's best wines — and also one of the most expensive ones — is 100 per cent Merlot.



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Compiled by Shraddha Uchil