



Nikhil Aggarwal, a trained sommelier, gives you the lowdown on the top wines – local as well as international – available in Indian wine shops. Aggarwal is director of All Things Nice, a company dedicated to introducing the Indian consumer to the gourmet life.

10-MINUTE WINE GUIDE

Rieslings and Malbecs

Wine pro Nikhil Aggarwal picks his favourite Malbecs and Rieslings available in the Indian market

This is an interesting time to be drinking wine in India. More awareness coupled with a higher degree of availability makes it easier for oenophiles to try different grape varieties. Malbecs and Rieslings are two delicious varieties that have been available in India for a long time but haven't been as popular as the Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon varieties.

The first time I came across a Riesling wine was 14 years ago when I visited the Neuschwanstein castle in Germany, the same one that inspired the castles in Walt Disney productions. My host, friend and part mentor ordered a bottle at lunch and I was floored by the purity of the taste.

Riesling, considered the king of white grape varieties, is held in great esteem – it makes wines ranging from dry to lusciously sweet while perfectly expressing the terroir from which it comes from. It also has the ability to age for many years allowing the wine to develop over time.

A Riesling's distinctive aroma and flavour make it a delightful varietal. Versatile enough to be enjoyed with a salad, a spicy Thai curry or even dessert, this wine is sure to get your taste buds tingling.

Another personal favourite is the Malbec, produced under the appellation Cahors in France (which is where it originated) but it is in Argentina that it has gained massive ground. In Argentina, one can get 100% Malbec varietal wines that are full bodied and juicy with notes of blackberry, plum and some spice. After aging in French or American oak, you get a rather classy wine.

RIESLINGS

Domaine Schlumberger Riesling Grand Cru Kitterle, Alsace, France
(₹ 3,980, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

This is a dry, powerful and perfectly balanced wine, with complex, concentrated flavours of citrus fruits and a subtle minerality. It pairs well with a warm goat's cheese salad.



Dr. Loosen Riesling Bernkasteler Lay Kabinett, Mosel, Germany
(₹ 2,902, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

Kabinett is a style defined by the German quality system (Pradikat). It has a low amount of sugar. This wine comes from a top vineyard and is richly textured. It pairs well with oysters.



Eroica Riesling, Washington State, USA
(₹ 4,750, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

One of my personal favourites, the Eroica Riesling has sweet lime aromas that are backed by subtle minerality. The wine is well balanced. Try it with a green Thai curry or even a pad Thai salad.



Villa Maria Riesling, Marlborough, New Zealand
(₹ 2,304, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

This ripe citrus wine is delicate and beautifully balanced. It is intense with good length and a limey finish. Try it paired with avocado and crab sushi.



MALBECS

Bodegas Norton Reserve Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina
(₹ 1,472, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

This Malbec is ruby coloured with aromas of plum, mocha and spice. It is full bodied with a long finish and tastes best with mushroom risotto.



Terrazas Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina
(₹ 1,584, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

Terrazas Malbec is deep crimson with red hints. On the nose, you get blackberries and cherries with spice and smoky undertones. It tastes of ripe fruit like plum with chewy tannins. Pair it with barbeque chicken.



Trapiche Oak Cask Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina
(₹ 1,614, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

An excellent value for money wine. It has a deep purple colour with notes of vanilla from the oak ageing, plum and blackberry and chocolate as well. Dark chocolate tastes delicious with it.



Bodegas Cantena Zapata Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina
(₹ 2,728, available at prominent wine shops nationwide)

The Bodega Cantena is dark violet in colour. On the palate, tobacco, dark berries and minerals give way to a long fruit finish. Try it with well done steak.



HOW TO SERVE WINE
The temperature at which wine is served is very important. Sparkling and dessert wines should be around 6°C. For reds, 16-18°C is perfect, while for whites, 11-12°C is best.