

# Soul Tree Wines

## The Official Newsletter

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### The first few months

It is now nearly four months since Soul Tree first hit restaurants, starting with the midlands. As with any start-up it has been a rollercoaster of activity and emotion ranging from frenetic to slow, and from tremendously exciting to indescribably frustrating.

No real surprises there, then. Just your typical first few months in the operational life of a start-up. But for the benefit of our readers let's put that into perspective.

Need we say there have been periods that have been very exciting, and perhaps satisfying, especially at the time of the first sale, or when consumers have given us glowing reviews. Yet, nature always finds ways to balance the scales, and to make sure that we did not run away with the idea of instant success it periodically dropped in the odd challenge or setback.

We have had our share of procurement problems, like when the printer produced labels that were beset with problems, or like when the screw cap supplier inexplicably ran out of silver screw caps two days before bottling was scheduled to start. International shipping, too, is fraught with risks, as we learned: if a week-long port authority strike wasn't enough, a collision at the mouth of the harbor recently resulted in the port being shut down for over a week.

Yet the first three months in the life of Soul Tree, and perhaps the four most important months of our lives, have also been the four most rewarding months for us! They have seen Soul Tree being listed in some of the best restaurants throughout the West Midlands and Warwickshire. These months have seen consumers finally try the wine – and love it! And these four months have demonstrated to us that the project is sure to match up to the promise of the idea.

All in all, we could not have hoped for a better start.

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## Of wine and football



Within two weeks of the Soul Tree soft-launch, we had come up against our strongest competitor yet. Little did we know that it would not be another Indian wine or wine at all, but football! England is a nation of football mad people- that much we knew, yet the degree to which this was true managed to surprise us.

For 4 weeks the restaurant trade as we knew it came to a grinding halt. Everywhere we went we were faced with empty restaurants and idle restaurant staff. Our fate, at least for that time, was directly linked to the fortunes of these very restaurants, and we were to feel the direct impact of something that we would not have thought would have anything to do with us.

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*Soul Tree sponsored the FAST charity event in aid of the Anthony Nolan Trust.*

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### Pairing wine with spice

Spicy foods taste even better with off-dry style wines, or wines with a hint of sweetness. And off-dry style wines themselves come into their own when consumed with spicy foods. The result? A significantly enhanced Indian dining experience.

There are nearly 6000 licensed Indian restaurants in the UK, but the vast majority of them are victims of the 'dry white wine' myth. In their attempt at serving their consumers what they want, restaurants have been losing out on an opportunity to enhance the experience had by their customers.

Caught unawares, we joined the ranks of restaurant owners not knowing whether to enjoy the intensity of the World Cup or to silently wish it away. Thankfully the emotion of the World Cup was too strong to prevent the real us from enjoying the spectacle, and we managed to do full justice to it. And of course, we knew that business could only get better from there. After all you can't keep a good thing down and people were, as sure as rain, going to come back to us with a vengeance.

## A citizen-of-the-world in the making?

Soul Tree may be a very young brand but it does have a heart, and likes to do its bit to make the world a better place.

It was with a view to this that we sponsored a charity event in aid of the Anthony Nolan Trust, a charity that finds matches for leukaemia patients who need a lifesaving transplant. The event, in Broadfields Country Club in Harrow, featured a 5-a-side football tournament (engagingly named FAST – Football All Star Tournament, and featuring teams from Asian media companies in the UK), a celebrity goal shootout, a raffle to raise funds, and plenty of food and drink.

Soul Tree helped raise funds by donating a wine hamper worth £100 to be won in the raffle.

It is early days yet for Soul Tree, but we hope that with time it will stand up and be counted as a company that works for the people and for the environment. We're not promising ourselves anything less!



## A Bollywood Night with a difference

The beginning of September saw the patrons of The Warwickshire Health and Racquets Club being treated to a Bollywood Night – with some Indian wine for the first time! They found a sizzling time with some lip smacking Soul Tree wine perfectly complementing a delicious Indian meal and topped up with Bhangra beats late into the night. In addition to being the only wine available at the bar tasters were handed out. As always, the feedback received was so encouraging, we were left wondering why we hadn't founded Soul Tree years ago!



## Nasik Valley – the birthplace of Soul Tree



Nasik is an ancient city, and a place in history was assured when Lord Ram decided to spend his 14-year banishment from his Kingdom of Ayodhya here – some 5000 years ago. Other periods in its history are no less rich, and the ages-old architecture dotted around the city is testimony to this. Nasik is also where the river Godavari, India's second longest river after the Ganga (in fact it is also called the Dakshin Ganga, or Ganga of the South), originates. The river is not the cleanest you will see, but the banks of the river as it flows through the city are almost mystical with hordes of pilgrims, devotees, and sadhus (though, inevitable, also the homeless poor) thronging what seem to be hundreds of temples.

The city is host to the Kumbh Mela that is held once every 12 years, and as one walks along the ancient banks of the river one is almost transported to the scene of a hundred thousand devotees lining the river's banks (over 5 million pilgrim visitors that Nasik during the 6 weeks of the Mela!) As it is on an average day one can probably find a thousand people on the banks - praying, bathing in the holy river, or even washing their clothes in it; hermits begging for alms; street urchins having the time of their lives; and street vendors selling everything from balloons to ayurvedic treatments for fertility.

Nasik is the third most industrialized city in the state of Maharashtra after Mumbai and Pune, and within the juxtaposition of a modern city within a millennia-old one is a city that is quintessentially Indian!



# SOUL TREE

*Character is Everything*

## What's in a Name?

A perfectly normal question to ask. But not as inconsequential as it sounds!

Since the name went public but especially since launch, we have been quizzed by friends, consumers, restaurateurs, and from people in the industry about how we came about the name Soul Tree. We have also had the odd criticism or two from people who belong to the school of thought that an Indian product in the UK must have a distinctly Indian name. But the overwhelming reaction has been from people who love the name! Our reasons and strategy for the name aside, the one thing that matters most is the individual's instinctive or gut reaction - and on that scale we believe we could not have done better.

Well the brand, and the name, is here to stay, and it won't be long before it slips of peoples' tongues as if it could never have been anything else!



## Please stay in touch with us

We always want to hear from you. Whether it is a quick tip or a suggestion, or even if its brickbats you have in mind. Let us know what you think of the wine, or of the label. Or get in touch if you have anything to say about this newsletter.

We have great things planned for Soul Tree, and are glad for your company along the way. Together, we can make it happen!

Soul Tree Wines

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