

United Spirits plans new winery in Bangalore

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UNITED Spirits (USL), the spirits arms of the United Breweries (UB) group, plans to set up a winery near Bangalore in two years. The company did not divulge the investment details, as these are yet to be firmed up.

The company already has a winery in Baramati (Maharashtra), where its bottling operations have begun. The winery has a capacity of one million bottles at present.

Abhay Kewadkar, business head (wines) & chief wine maker, United Spirits, told *Financial Chronicle*, "The plans have not been yet firmed up as the proposed winery near Bangalore is subject to the stabilising of the Baramati project, intra-state policies that may necessitate a unit in southern state and availability of captive wine varieties of grapes."

The winery in Bangalore will be modeled on the lines of the one in Baramati that has a vineyard, rooms for visitors, spa, swimming pool, wine tasting rooms and other such recreational facilities.



RAISING A TOAST: The main wine brand of USL, Four Season Wines, plans to sell one million bottles in 2009-10

USL's wine business in India operates through two companies — United Vintners and Four Seasons Wines. Four Season Wines (its main wine brand) plans to sell one million bottles in 2009-10. The company aims to scale this up to one million cases over three to five years.

"The strategy is not to fight in the market for the same pie, but to expand the category. The present wine market in the country is 1.5 million cases but is

stated to grow ten times over the next 10 years, as per a report from International Wine and Spirits Record (a market research company)," said Kewadkar.

The company is expanding its product range as well. New products will include Four Seasons Reserve, which will debut in September and a new set of sparkling wines early next year. Existing brands include Bouvet Ladubay, Four

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Seasons and Zinzi.

Four Seasons Wines is in the process of planting 350 acre of its own vineyards around the winery in Baramati. Out of that, the company will plant on 50 acre, while the rest will be owned and planted by local farmers under long-term contracts. The company has 500 acre under contractual agreement, which will be scaled up to 2,000 acre over three years.

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