

Rajeev Samant | 54

Founder-Chief Sustainability Officer, Sula Vineyards

Led the way with reuse of waste water and rainwater harvesting

Samant sold his first bottle of wine in 2000 and has now crossed the one million mark. But he isn't pausing for breath. This September, Sula embraced sustainability by signing on with the Miguel Torres-led IWCA (International Wineries for Climate Action), which has over 20 big-brand wineries on board, including Australia's biodynamic star Cullen Wines and USA's Jackson Family Wines. This, according to Samant, is another step towards their commitment to fight climate change, and make Sula future-ready. "Ten years ago, we installed our first solar panel. Today we generate 65% of our energy requirements. If we aren't sustainable, we lack the meaning to exist."

There is change happening on all fronts. With increased focus on the premium end of their portfolio, brands Rasa and The Source have seen new packaging and improved sales – the award-winning Source Rosé is now established as India's top-selling rosé brand.

On the wine tourism front, Sula already sees a record-breaking 400,000 visitors to their hospitality centres, The Source and Beyond. When we speak, this has hit 100% occupancy, and Samant is thrilled. "The pandemic was a very difficult time for us and the bounce back is very welcome." They opened five new rooms in the last month and now "need to take a breath".

Sustainability remains Samant's *raison d'être*. Addressing India's acute water shortage, Sula is re-using waste water to save up to 33% per case of wine produced, while large-scale rainwater harvesting supplies 85% of their fresh water needs. Among other measures is e-vehicles for winery-linked transportation, a major contributor to greenhouse gases. Sula also aims to touch 75% solar energy use by 2023.

