

Vishal and Ashu Kadakia | 47 and 46

Wine Park

Trusted their “gut feeling” to create a 160-strong wine portfolio

He started out as “a gatecrasher” in an industry studded with big names. So, his approach to picking wines to represent in his portfolio was novel. “I just look at the quality and the story behind the wine I pick. No big names, only family-owned boutique producers.” Vishal, one of India’s top wine importers today, took on Tuscan brands Brancaia, Querciabella, and Bibi Graetz when their stars were still on the ascendant.

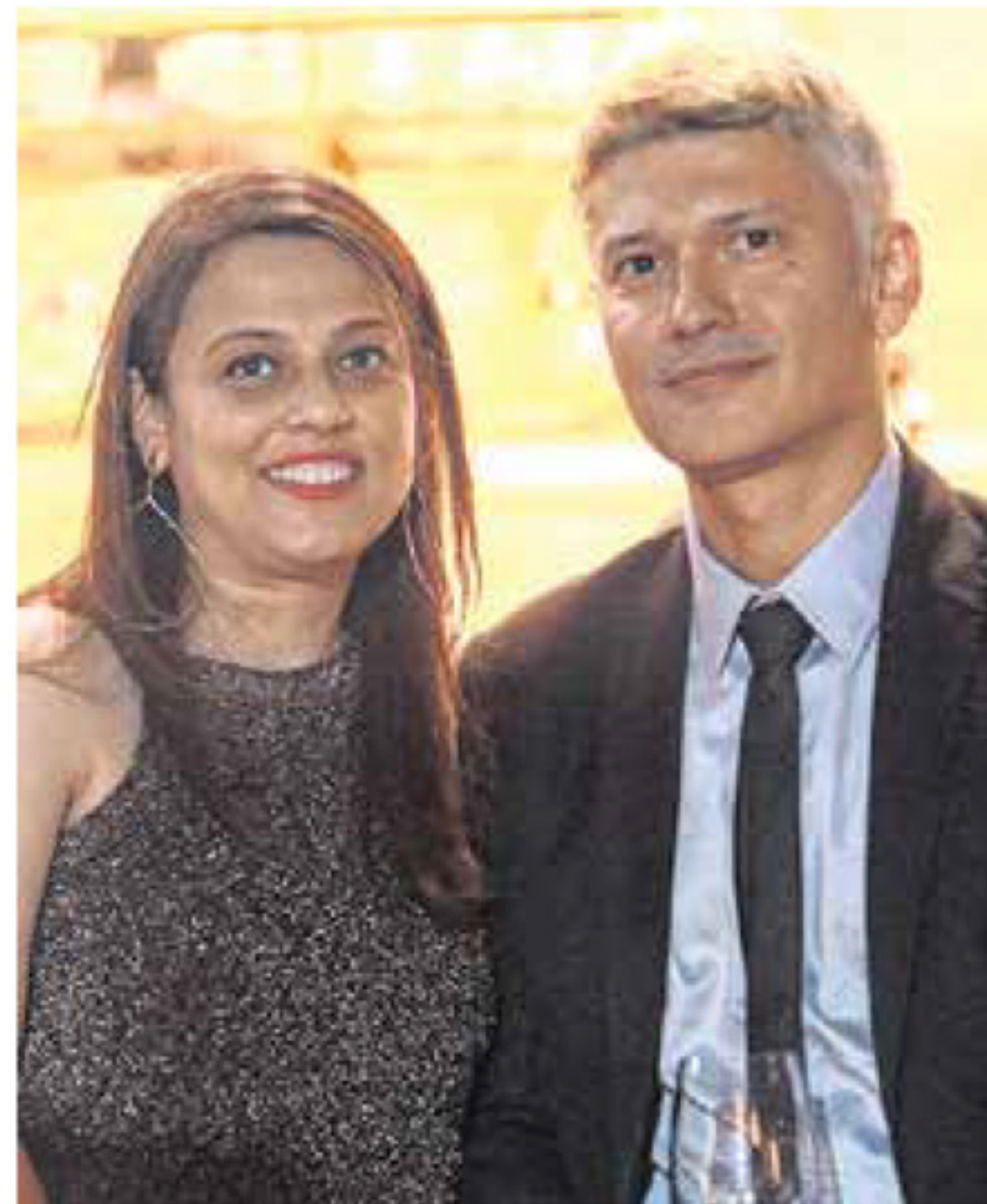
His own wine story traces back to his time in the US when he did a WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust) Level 2 course and fell in love with the complexity of wine. When he moved back to India in 2005 with his wife Ashu, they considered opening a wine bar, but gave it up because “we didn’t have a clue how to go about things”. Much later (while working in his family business), during a visit to Spain, a winemaker they met asked if they would be interested in importing his wines to India. “We

End-of-pandemic wine:
Ashu's pick is Domaine de la Romanée-Conti 2003. I would, however, drink 2005, a super vintage in Burgundy.

brought back a bottle and did a tasting for a star hotel who immediately ordered 60 bottles!” That’s how Wine Park, a leading importer of wines with a 160-strong portfolio, began its story.

Vishal earns his name as the ‘Wine Storyteller’ by ditching tasting notes and, rather, choosing to focus on his producers’ tales of growth and discovery while presenting a wine. “It’s not based on science,” he says, “It’s about my own enjoyment plus a gut feeling.” For instance, he focussed on Loimer Gruner Veltliner’s eye-catching green label and promoted it on that basis – sales quadrupled overnight – rather than the Austrian star producer’s award-winning biodynamic practices; with Chianti’s Querciabella, the story was flipped to focus on the razzmatazz of the producer’s biodynamics practices: cow horns and Preparation 500.

Noteworthy, too, is Wine Park’s business savvy during the pandemic. While businesses were collapsing, they doubled sales. All thanks to Ashu and Google Docs. “I emailed the document



[which organised their client database] to 10 people. In an hour it went viral and we received 400 orders,” she says. Today, their retail client base tops 20,000 and Ashu attends to clients personally and advises them on wine preferences.