

UB to launch Kingfisher wine

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United Breweries is set to launch Kingfisher wine in six months. The company, a leader in the beer market in the country, has been drawing its wine strategy for sometime and is also setting up a winery at Nashik.

UB group Chairman Vijay Mallya, addressing shareholders at the company's seventh annual general meeting in Bangalore, said the group was moving ahead with plans to launch wine brand under the Kingfisher stable. "Both beer and wine come under the same category. The wine is expected to be in the

market in around six months," he said.

The UB Group had recently acquired Bouvet Ladubay, a reputed French wine brand for around \$20 million. The acquisition enabled the company to introduce high quality wines to the emerging wine connoisseur in India. The group will also assimilate leading edge viticulture from France and take advantage of established distribution in Europe and US to push other products in the Western markets.

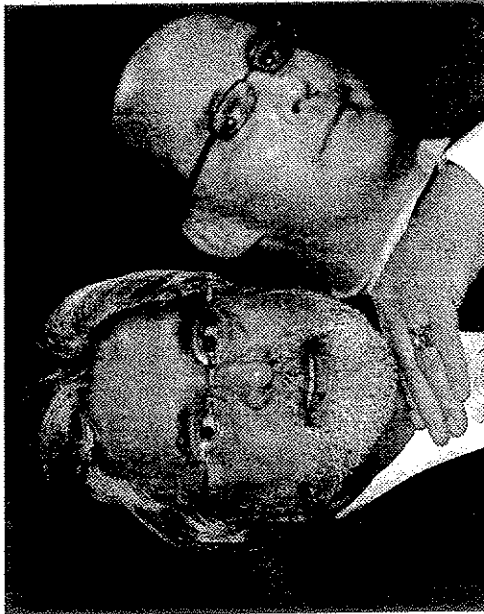
UB is also in talks to acquire a wine company in South Africa. Mallya said plans were being made operational to launch a premium beer prod-

uct - Kingfisher Ultra, to take on the MNCs coming into India.

"There are many players such as SABMiller trying to increase their market penetration by acquiring Foster's in India. Foster's is a brand which is found at premium markets and not across India. Our brands are present in nook and corner of India. However, we are putting in place a strategy to plug the premium gap through Kingfisher Ultra," said Mallya.

The company is also putting in place a Rs 400 crore expansion plan to expand its brewing capacities across the country in phases.

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UB Group Chairman Vijay Mallya and Director John Simon Hunt at the company's annual general meeting in Bangalore on Tuesday.

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