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Hyderabad
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World
Sports
Entertainment
India Business
Intl Business
Stocks
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Interview
Letters
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A sporting head on Young shoulders...

Pankaj Kapoor

Eric Young is an award-winning New Zealand-born journalist who is currently presenting the programme *Sportsline* on ESPN-Star Sports. But he could just as well have pursued an alternative career as a connoisseur of wine. Sitting at The Oberoi bar, Young oscillates between leaning backwards and forwards, gesticulating as he takes about his 10-year-old passion for wine.

"How did it begin?" says Young, "Well, one night, I got really drunk and thought there must be a life beyond what I was doing." But that was then -- when Young's job with Auckland Star saw him covering the cricket and rugby league, besides travelling across the world to cover world championship matches. This brings us to the connection with wine. His globe-trotting profile meant that Young had an opportunity to explore sip-shape wine. and that he did!

"There are people who have cellars in their homes and store the vintage stuff. In fact, I recall reading that Sir Andrew Webber Lloyd's wine cellar was sold for a couple of million pounds. I, however, get my kicks out of having vintage wine when the occasion calls for it. No, I am not one of those who store wine, but I certainly figure among those who enjoy the stuff," explains Young.

The funny part is that despite travelling extensively and discovering the various flavours of wine, Young contends that he hasn't seem much of the world:

"When you are travelling as part of work, what you really get to see are airports, hotel rooms, stadia and

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roads! But my new job as a presenter based in Singapore means that I get to travel on my own. And this gives me a lot of time to see different places." Besides, of course, the different strokes of different sporting nations.

Whenever he is not cheering the home team in cricket matches, Australia is Young's favoured side. Of course, now that he is presenting *Sportslive* with an Indian slant, he rooted for India during the recent series with the Aussies, which is, arguably, one of the classic contests of all time. "I haven't seen the 1981 Ashes clash, but when it comes to cricket, that series is the best one can get to see," he says. Wine or willow-wielders, the vintage stuff is what counts with this man. Old is gold for Young, did someone say?

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[A sporting head on Young shoulders...](#)

[That is to say, Unko Kuch Kehna Hai...](#)

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