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SPIRITZ

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August 2024, Vol 16, No 1

15th
ANNIVERSARY

Dialogue

Hina Nagarajan

MD & CEO, Diageo India

Sip
Revolution

MaQintosh
Spreads Wings

Idaaya
from Himalayas

KBAPL
Premium Offerings

Handcrafted at
THE BALVENIE®
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PREMIUM

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Spiritiz enters 16th year

It fills us with immense pride and joy to see your beloved magazine enter this incredible milestone of 16 years, and counting. While celebrating 15 years of delivering substantive journalism, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the companies, readers and colleagues who have stood by us through thick and thin.

Your unwavering trust and collaboration have been the foundation of our journey, allowing us to provide insightful and impactful stories within the liquor and hospitality industries. As we commemorate this milestone, we reaffirm our commitment to excellence, innovation and integrity in our reporting.

Thank you for being an essential part of our success and for inspiring us to continue striving for journalistic excellence. Here is raising a toast to many more years of shared achievements and continued growth together!

A Good News

We are so happy that the Union Budget 2024 has brought a significant change for the liquor industry by amending the central GST law, particularly Section 9, to exclude ENA from its scope. This long-awaited change, achieved after extensive lobbying, is anticipated to reduce the cost of liquor production, potentially leading to lower liquor prices.

However, the actual impact on prices may vary across states due

to differing tax policies. Despite this positive development, the joy might be short-lived as states could impose Value Added Tax (VAT) on ENA, which can negate the benefits provided by the central government. Our tax expert, Dr. Sanjiv Agarwal, offers an in-depth analysis on this issue in his article under 'Budget Watch', in the inside pages. States have the power to either support or hinder the liquor industry's progress. Andhra Pradesh serves as a recent example of how state policies can impact the market.

Welcome Move

Under the leadership of Y S Jaganmohan Reddy, in 2019, the state ceased purchasing liquor from major brands, restricting consumer choice. However, with the Chandrababu Naidu government now in power, the state has resumed procuring from top companies, offering a broader selection of brands to consumers. This policy shift has positively influenced the share prices of alcoholic beverage companies. The interplay between central and state policies will eventually determine the future landscape of liquor pricing and availability in India.

Anniversary Edition

As we celebrate our 15th anniversary, our top priority is ensuring our anniversary issue reaches you on time. This special edition offers a delightful journey

through the 'Sip Revolution', while discussing on a tapestry of exquisite concoctions crafted by master bartenders who are also successfully engaged in blending tradition with modernity.

Also, we have an exclusive interview with an exemplary business leader, Hina Nagarajan, Managing Director and CEO, Diageo India. There is much to partake from her vision and thoughts. There are also other interesting stories like the making of Idaaya Rum and expanding footprints of KAPL.

Consumers in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Uttarakhand can now savour the renowned MaQintosh whisky. Amrut Distilleries Ltd. has entered into a significant agreement with India Glycol Limited to bottle and sell this whisky in North India. Raju Vaziraney, advisor to both companies, shared his insights on this groundbreaking deal. For an in-depth look at his perspective, read the full story inside.

Enjoy responsibly this special edition with a nice cocktail.



Shalini



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Dialogue

Hina Nagarajan, Managing Director and CEO, Diageo India

A business leader with more than three decades of exemplary tenure, Hina Nagarajan is an inspiration for many. She successfully marked her presence with varied roles with Diageo across countries. Hina Nagarajan talks about not only the mantra that keeps the Diageo India banner flying high but also the various strategies that the company adopts by always keeping the consumer in mind while crafting processes, products and growth curves.



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Sip Revolution

Redefining Cocktails in India

In the ever-evolving world of mixology, India's cocktail scene is experiencing a revolution, driven by new technologies, innovative techniques, and an adventurous use of unusual ingredients. This exciting transformation is not only redefining how cocktails are crafted but also how they are perceived and enjoyed.



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Partnership



MaQintosh Spreads Wings

In a significant industry partnership, Amrut Distilleries Limited has signed a royalty agreement with India Glycols Limited (IGL) to leverage their combined strengths and expand its brand presence in north India. This collaboration will bring Amrut Distilleries' versatile MaQintosh Whisky, popular for over three decades due to its brilliant blend, more into the limelight.

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Premium Offerings



Be Indian, Drink Global

There is an increasing percentage of young professionals across India for whom premiumisation takes top billing. And it is here that Klassic Business Advisory (P) Limited, plays a significant role by importing into India some of the best and most authentic alcobev brands from across the world.

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Rum Corner



Making Idaaya as Good as the Himalayas

A premium sipping rum crafted against the backdrop of the Himalayas. Doesn't that sound enticing, mysterious, alluring and elevating? Giving traditional rum a modernist spin along with a combination of the traditional and the contemporary, The Good Distillers has found its niche with Idaaya.

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Focus



Kombucha Pours Flavour and Health Together

For young entrepreneurs Adithya Kidambi and Shishir Sathyan, Eureka moment came from their shared passion for healthy living and curiosity about fermentation. Their journey began in their kitchens, where they decided to experiment with kombucha. To their delight, their efforts resulted in the discovery of a uniquely flavourful drink.

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Destination



The Enigma of Priorat

Priorat, a picturesque region in Catalonia, Spain, is renowned for its exceptional wines and olive oils. Divided into Priorat d'Oli and Priorat d'Vin , the region blends tradition with innovation, offering products that reflect its rich history and rugged, yet captivating, natural beauty.

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Launch Pad



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WB revises excise duty on alcohol

The West Bengal government has revised the excise duty structure, introducing a new levy and adjusting existing duties, leading to an average price increase of 5-20 percent for consumers.

A new duty of Rs 5 per bulk litre has been imposed on ENA), while the excise duty remains at Rs 50 per bulk litre, the additional excise duty has slightly increased.

The number of declared price slabs per case (9 litres) has been reduced from Rs.17 to Rs 15, with the Rs 0-649 and Rs 650-699 slabs removed. The additional excise duty for the remaining slabs has increased by 0.75 to 5.08 percent, except for the Rs 0-799 slab, which saw a decrease of 8.3 percent. For beer, the additional excise duty has increased by 4-40 percent for both strong and mild beer.

Goa govt.'s decision criticised by trade body

The Goa government's decision to permit bars and liquor stores in Goa to operate within 100 metres of educational or religious institutes has been criticised by the Goa Liquor Traders Association. The association has termed the decision as "unwanted."

The Finance Department of Goa in a notification stated: "100 per cent additional licence fees shall be charged to the licences issued in relaxation of sub-rule (4) of rule 90 of the Goa Excise Duty Rules, 1964 and also for renewal of such licences."



Tasmac to sell liquor in 90 ml bottles

Tasmac has got the go ahead to sell 90ml bottles of liquor in Tamil Nadu. Tasmac will sell 90 ml liquor in plastic bottles which are comparatively affordable packaging options for the distillers and bottlers. Liquor in 90 ml bottles is expected to arrive in Tamil Nadu by this Diwali.

In order to ascertain how successful the liquor sold in 90 ml bottles are and if there is a demand for them, Tasmac officials visited Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka where liquor is sold in 90ml bottles and tetra-packets.

NRAI's proposals to Telangana government

NRAI has proposed to bring down beer and wine licence fee in Telangana to help smaller food & beverage outlets in the state and to advance the state's excise revenues. The association has also advocated extending operational hours for outlets serving liquor in the state.

Moreover, NRAI has suggested that the state government either reduce the number of dry days to support bars and restaurants or refund and reimburse the cost of dry days on licence fees to all liquor licence holders in the state.



Punjab limits IMFL purchase for retailers



A recent circular by the Punjab government has limited liquor retailers operating in Punjab to purchasing only 1,000 cases

of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) per month. For buying additional stock of IMFL, retailers need to apply for a permit and submit utilisation report for the initial 1,000 IMFL cases.

As per the protocol, new labels need to be approved each year for liquor brands operating in Punjab. This entails that liquor brands operating in Punjab are now required to go through the process of procuring new licences for liquor, which may be challenging to sell.

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DCCWS opens the first liquor vend at T3



Delhi Consumer's Cooperative Wholesale Store (DCCWS) has opened the first liquor vend at T3. It will be open for 24 hours.

The newly opened liquor vend will sell liquor brands at MRP of Delhi with no extra markup for airport taxes, etc. This can be a delight for the tipplers as unlike Delhi which has 20 dry days, the T3 liquor vend will have only three dry days.

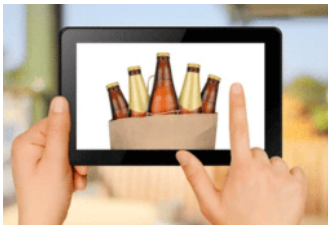
Whilst it is meant for travellers it's also open to any consumer who can buy a visitor's ticket for Rs 100 from Gate 6 and show photo identity and get the great buying experience. It's a walk-in self-service store where almost all premium liquor brands are available for over Rs. 800 per bottle.

Most likely a couple of more stores may open soon; one in departure of T3 itself.

Liquor home delivery on the cards

Food and grocery delivery platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, and BigBasket are gearing up to launch online liquor delivery services in select states. This pilot project aims to bring low-alcoholic beverages such as beer and wine right to doorstep.

In the first phase, the service is expected to be available in New Delhi, Karnataka, Haryana, Punjab, Goa, and Kerala. Currently, home delivery of alcoholic beverages is permitted in Odisha and West Bengal. As per the reports, authorities are currently assessing the pros and cons of this project.



USL invests in non-alcoholic drink start-ups



Diageo's majority-owned Indian business, United Spirits has taken "strategic minority investments" in domestic start-ups, V9 Beverages and Indie Brews and Spirits.

V9 Beverages Pvt. Ltd. markets and sells India's first distilled non-alcoholic spirit brands Sober Gin, Sober Rum and Sober Whisky. The United Spirits group has bought a 15 percent stake in V9 Beverages for Rs 22.9 million, as per the report.

Indie Brews & Spirits is the maker of Quaffine, India's first cold brew coffee liqueur. The group has also taken a 25 percent stake in Indie Brew and Spirits for Rs. 50 million, the report added.

Monkey Shoulder's UBC crowns Denzil Frankil

After eight city rounds, over 1300 participants, and an intense competition, Monkey Shoulder's 'Ultimate Bartender Championship' (UBC) crowned Denzil Frankil from Sixteen33, Mumbai, as the winner.

The thrilling finale for the Ultimate Bartender Championship took place at Samskara Resort, Jaipur bringing 20 exceptional finalists from across India, all vying for the prestigious title. The contenders showcased their skills in challenges centered around key bartending skills like ingredients, mixing, pouring, nosing, and in perfecting the ultimate serve.

Having proven his exceptional skills and creativity, Denzil Frankil will now attend Camp Monkey, an exclusive annual gathering of Monkey Shoulder Brand Ambassadors and fellow championship winners from around the world, in Goa, in November 2024. Along with exclusive gifts from Monkey Shoulder, this title grants him much exposure, networking opportunities, and the chance to hone his craft under the mentorship of industry experts.

The jury members for the finale included Joe Petch, Global Brand Ambassador – Monkey Shoulder, Gagan Saggi - Founder, Indulge India, Karan & Avantika – Founders, Fola and Upstairs Club.

Gaurav Sareen, India's Brand Ambassador, Monkey Shoulder said, "This year's Ultimate Bartender Championship has truly showcased the best of mixology talent, providing a dynamic platform for remarkable individuals to shine. It's inspiring to witness the flourishing bartending community in India, and we are committed to supporting them as they strive to meet global standards. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Denzil Frankil from Mumbai on this remarkable achievement and wish him continued success in his promising career."



BARENTS
PREMIUM



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‘House of the Dragon’ inspired brew

Medusa Beverages and Warner Bros. Discovery Global Consumer Products have partnered to unveil the exclusive ‘House of the Dragon’ inspired edition. This collaboration seamlessly merges Medusa’s brewing expertise with the captivating world of the acclaimed HBO Original drama series.

Drawing inspiration from House of the Dragon, this innovative partnership captures the fiery essence of dragon fire and the bold, adventurous spirit of Medusa.

Each brew in the collector’s series features exclusive, limited-edition cans that reflect the series’ dramatic landscapes, from scorching infernos to icy realms, embodying pivotal elements of House of the Dragon’s epic narrative.

Diageo India partners with TSL Foundation

Diageo India (United Spirits Ltd) Partners with TSL Foundation to train 200 young women under its ‘Learning for Life’ programme.

The training center in Bhondsi, Gurgaon was inaugurated in the presence of Gaurav Singh, Additional CEO, Haryana State CSR Trust, Government of Haryana along with members from Diageo India and TSL Foundation team.

The employability linked training programme will be conducted in collaboration with the Government of Haryana to build awareness to upskill and empower young women. This initiative is aligned to Diageo India’s commitment to championing Inclusion and Diversity, a key pillar of Diageo’s Society 2030: Spirit of Progress goals.



Geist’s brews in Puducherry

Geist Brewing Co. has announced the availability of its draught beer in Puducherry. The Bengaluru-based distribution craft brewery has 3 F&B outlets across the city and offers a range of craft beers that are being supplied on tap and in cans across Bengaluru, Hyderabad and now in Puducherry.

Geist Brewing Co. currently supplies their four variants, Geist Witty Wit, Geist Uncle Dunkel, Geist Kamacitra and Geist James Blondin 500ml crowlers (cans) in Puducherry. These variants, along with the addition of the Geist Weiss Guy and Geist Repeat, are now available on tap at select partner pubs, hotels and restaurants in the region.

DDFS attains record monthly sales

Delhi Duty Free has reported a historic achievement of the highest monthly sales, where its sales reached an unprecedented Rs.203 crore in June 2024. This milestone follows DDFS’s record-breaking annual sales of Rs. 1941 crore for the 2023-24 fiscal.



The remarkable growth is attributed to a significant increase in passenger numbers over the previous fiscal year. Strategic initiatives in promotions, logistics, and passenger convenience at Delhi Airports have played a crucial role in facilitating this unprecedented growth in sales.

Furthermore, the success of targeted promotions and campaigns has significantly increased customer engagement and sales penetration, contributing to the record-breaking performance of DDFS.

Latest ‘Men Will Be Men’ campaign on air

Seagram’s Imperial Blue has delighted audiences with the latest ‘Because, Men Will Be Men’



campaign, blending humour with India’s cricket obsession. Set in a cricket stadium, the ads highlight quirky male behaviours, resonating with fans nationwide.

The campaign’s use of AI for personalised ad versions enhanced viewer engagement, sparking widespread social media conversations and memes, especially on Instagram.



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MSIL to launch premium liquor stores

Karnataka state owned MSIL (Mysore Sales International Limited) is expanding its presence by opening premium liquor stores with a wide range of brand options in various locations.

After successfully launching a store in Bengaluru, a new outlet is set to open soon in Vijayapura district. Earlier this year, MSIL also introduced a premium liquor store in Mangaluru city and its outskirts.

Triumph of Chandon India

Chandon India, the premium sparkling wine brand from Moët Hennessy, has won multiple medals at the renowned Decanter World Wine Awards 2024, held in London.

The Decanter World Wine Awards is one of the most respected and influential wine competitions globally, judged by a panel of 243 leading wine experts from 33 countries.

Chandon India's Brut, Rosé, and newly launched Aurva expressions were honoured with silver medals, showcasing the consistent excellence of Chandon India's wines. The Chandon Brut received an impressive 91 points, the Rosé an outstanding 93 points, and the Aurva 90 points.



New appointment at Bacardi India

Bacardi India has appointed Radhika Tomar as Director of Human Resources - India and Southeast Asia (INDSEA). With 18 years of global HR leadership spanning FMCG, consulting, technology, and consumer durables, Radhika carries the experience of fostering inclusive cultures and enhancing organisational capabilities.

Before joining Bacardi, she served as HR Director - India and Global Talent Activation Director at Kimberly Clark. Her career journey also includes tenures at Microsoft India, Dyson, McKinsey & Company, and Aon Hewitt.

Sake pairing seminar

The Sake Pairing Seminar and Business Meeting, organised by Hirohama India Pvt. Ltd. and endorsed by Japan's National Tax Agency, was held on 16th July 2024. The event brought together key figures from the sake industry, top restaurateurs and hoteliers to enhance sake's presence in India.

The seminar began with a welcome address by Kojiro Honda, the import coordinator of sake in India, who highlighted the current status and challenges of sake in the Indian market. Following his address, renowned sake sommelier Mika Eoka captivated the audience with an interactive presentation on the art of sake pairing.

Participants, including importers and restaurateurs from top Japanese establishments in Gurgaon, and hoteliers from prestigious hotels, responded enthusiastically. Chef Manjit Gill, Chairperson of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations, added prestige to the event with his presence.

Notably, Japanese YouTuber and social media influencer Ms. Mayo, known as Mayo Japan, attended, adding an extra layer of cultural exchange to the proceedings.

The seminar was followed by a business meeting where participants discussed potential collaborations and strategies to promote sake in India. The event indicated a promising future for the expansion of sake culture in India.



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Pernod sells Jacob's Creek and Campo Viejo brands

Pernod Ricard has announced the signing of an agreement to sell its international strategic wine brands including Jacob's Creek and Campo Viejo to Australian Wine Holdco Limited (AWL), a consortium of international institutional investors and owner of Accolade Wines.

The company added that the sale, which was expected to be completed in the second half of 2025, would allow it to redirect its resources to its premium spirits and Champagne brands.

The sale will also include the brands Orlando and St Hugo from Australia; Stoneleigh, Brancott Estate and Church Road from New Zealand; and Ysios, Tarsus and Azpilicueta, which are produced in Spain.

Pernod forms a global company

Pernod Ricard has announced the creation of a new global company, North American Distillers Limited (NADL), marking a significant expansion of its American Whiskey portfolio. This move follows substantial investments in the thriving American whiskey category and aims to align with the company's growth ambitions.

Richard Black, a veteran in the spirits industry with 23 years at Pernod Ricard, will oversee NADL as its CEO.

NADL will prioritise operational excellence, emphasising safety, quality, and sustainability. A key project under its is the highly anticipated Jefferson's distillery, currently under construction in Kentucky, which aims to set new industry standards.



The GlenAllachie's regional exclusive whiskies

The GlenAllachie has launched a set of two regional exclusive single malts, which are the product of being aged in fine European wine casks.

The new duo of whiskies, which join the brand's Wood Collection, consists of a 12-year-old Sauternes Wine Cask Finish for the UK market (RRSP £67.99) and a 10-year-old Ruby Port Cask Finish for the Europe market (RRSP £61.99).

Each of the expressions is the product of initial maturation in Bourbon barrels before being transferred into casks chosen by renowned cask innovator Billy Walker.

Both single malts were bottled at 48 percent ABV without chill filtration or artificial colouring.

Diageo's first AI induced personalisation experience

Johnnie Walker Princes Street, the world's leading spirit tourism experience, invites guests to experience Johnnie Walker x Scott Naismith, a generative AI-powered event allowing the co-design of a personalized Johnnie Walker Blue Label bottle.



Available only in Edinburgh from 1st -31st August, 2024, this initiative combines Scotch whisky, art, and AI. Visitors will answer three questions influencing themes in Scottish artist Scott Naismith's work, generating unique bottle designs.

Powered by Diageo's Project Halo, the experience caters to consumers seeking personalized, unique products. Each bottle purchase includes access to the design experience and can be paired with expert-led tastings of Johnnie Walker Blue Label and the limited edition 'Elusive Umami' at the rooftop Explorers' Bothy bar.

Diageo agrees sale of Safari to Casa Redondo



Diageo announced that it has agreed to the sale of Safari, a fruit flavoured liqueur brand, to Casa Redondo, a Portuguese beverage-alcohol company. This transaction is in line with Diageo's strategy

of maintaining a sharp focus on effective portfolio management.

Safari is predominantly sold in Benelux, Portugal and Türkiye. Given its consumer base, Diageo believes Casa Redondo is the right player to take Safari into its next chapter of growth across Europe and beyond.



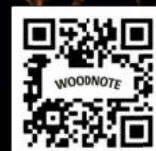
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Loch Lomond debuts 50 YO single malt

Loch Lomond distillery launched 50-Year-Old single malt, which was distilled in 1973 using 100 percent unpeated malted barley.

It was aged in refilled American oak casks, moved to first-fill Bourbon casks in 2011 and moved again to oloroso Sherry hogsheads in 2017. The whisky is drawn from the oldest reserves at Loch Lomond and is limited to 100 hand-numbered bottles worldwide.

Bottled at 42.6 percent ABV, limited bottles of the liquid are available worldwide, priced at £25,000.

Shankar Distillers in Troy

Shankar Distillers, the latest venture by tech entrepreneur Varchasvi Shankar, has officially opened its doors in Troy, Michigan. The highly advanced and automated distillery features a state-of-the-art 45-foot continuous distillation column that required the roof of the distillery to be modified. Located discreetly in an industrial park, the distillery's glass ceiling is a notable landmark in the area and is visible from I-75; just north of the 14 mile exit near Oakland Mall.

The distillery offers a comprehensive range of spirits, including the Varchas Reserve Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Varchas Straight Rye Whiskey, Dasara Gin, and Varchas Vodka. Visitors can purchase these products along with branded merchandise such as whiskey glasses, flasks and T-shirts.



Torres enhances water reuse

Familia Torres has significantly increased its reuse of regenerated water, achieving 45 percent in 2023. This water, essential for irrigation, cleaning, and cooling, is a crucial part of the winery's water management plan under the Torres & Earth sustainability program, initiated in 2008 to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects.

Alongside water reuse, Familia Torres collects nearly all rainwater from its facilities and plans to increase this capacity by gathering water from roadways. The winery also maintains approximately 45 ponds on its Catalonia estates, capable of storing 122,000 m³ of water.

Diageo to sell Pampero rum to Montenegro

Diageo has announced that it has agreed for the sale of Pampero rum to Gruppo Montenegro, which is a leading Italian company in the premium spirits and food business with a portfolio that includes iconic Italian spirits brands such as Amaro Montenegro, Select Aperitivo, Vecchia Romagna Brandy and Rosso Antico Vermouth.

Pampero is an authentic heritage brand and is the first Venezuelan rum aged for more than two years. It has a rich 85-year-old history. Pampero is the number one rum in Italy by volume and has a strong presence across other continental European markets.



Bhakta 2012 Indian Single Malt launched



Bhakta Spirits has announced the launch of its inaugural international whisky, Bhakta 2012 Indian Single Malt Whisky. It symbolises the convergence of an accomplished category-

builder and three on-the-rise categories: Indian whisky, Armagnac, and single vintage spirits.

Born from northern India's grain-rich fields and copper pot distilled in the tropical landscapes of Goa, Bhakta 2012 Indian Single Malt Whisky is the product of more than ten years of initial ageing. Offered at a cask strength of 113.8 proof, the expression tells an inspiring tale of heritage and tradition. It sells for \$149.



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Crazy Cock at travel retail

South Seas Distilleries, one of India’s oldest malt distilleries, expands its flagship Indian single malt brand, Crazy Cock, to three key travel retail markets. Launched in December 2023, Crazy Cock has two exquisite expressions, ‘RARE’ and ‘DHUA,’ which are now available in duty-free outlets in Mumbai, Delhi, and Hyderabad.

As a premium supplier to Indian and global whisky makers, South Seas Distilleries has a rich legacy in the malt industry. Located in the coastal town of Dahanu, Maharashtra, the distillery leverages the region’s unique microclimate, resulting in the tropical maturation of their malts.

Silent Pool Gin’s Expression

William Grant & Sons teamed up with Avolta to debut a travel retail-exclusive Silent Pool Gin Mediterranean Expression. The gin was initially available in Avolta’s World Duty Free stores across UK airports, supported by an activation at London Gatwick South throughout July before moving to London Gatwick North in August.

The launch of the Silent Pool Gin Mediterranean Expression is well timed to coincide with the peak summer holiday travelling period in Europe.



Suntory partners with Avolta

Suntory Global Spirits is celebrating the official opening of Larios’ travel retail shop-in-shop concept at Málaga Airport, in partnership with Avolta. Established at Larios’ birthplace, Málaga, the gin brand took its name from the main street in the Spanish port city, Calle Larios, representing the local values and culture.

Highlighting the ‘Vivir bien es un arte’ (Living well is an art) mantra, the concept was designed to reflect the Málaga street vibes.

The space features a tasting area, as well as digital and educational elements, as well as a gift with-purchase offer.

Sazerac’s agreement with Dhall Foods

Sazerac, one of the largest spirits companies in the US, has signed an exclusive import and distribution agreement with Dhall Foods and Beverages Pvt. Ltd. for all India Duty Free, diplomatic sales and travel retail supplies.

The core range of Sazerac includes brands like Buffalo Trace Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey, Sazerac Rye Straight Rye Whiskey, 1792 Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Eagle Rare Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Southern Comfort Original Whiskey, Fireball Cinnamon Whisky, Paddy’s Irish Whiskey, Wheatley Vodka and Myers Rum.

This partnership with Dhall Foods will help strengthen Sazerac’s presence across all airports, port shops, diplomatic sales and duty-free channels across India.



Royal Salute’s new expressions



Royal Salute has launched a prestige whisky collection inspired by the 62-gun salute at the Tower of London. The collection includes Royal Salute

62 Gun Salute Original Reserve, The American Oak Reserve and The Peated Reserve.

The Original Reserve was available prior to the collection’s release, however the two other whiskies are new expressions.

The Original Reserve (US\$3,000) and American Oak Reserve (US\$3,300) are available from selected retailers globally and from The Whisky Exchange. The Peated Reserve (US\$3,300), meanwhile, will initially be a duty free exclusive before being rolled out globally.

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Diageo GTR partners with Ibiza’s Pacha

Diageo’s Don Julio 1942 tequila has partnered with Ibiza’s Pacha nightclub to host Flower Party nights, featuring special pop-ups at airports across Europe. Travellers at London Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Madrid, and Ibiza airports can sample Don Julio 1942 tequila at tasting bars.

Passengers who buy a bottle of Don Julio 1942 at select airport locations have a chance to win a trip to Pacha’s closing party, featuring DJ Peggy Gou.

Whyte & Mackay launches single malts at GTR

Whyte & Mackay hosted a series of high-profile activation spaces at Dubai International Airport, created in partnership with Dubai Duty Free to showcase its portfolio of single malts.

The company showcased The Dalmore; Jura; Fettercairn; and Tamnavulin, with a series of high-profile activation spaces, across T1 and T3 Departures, and T3 Arrivals. The company has reported an exceptional uplift in sales at DDF in June, with its single malts growing plus 37 percent in value compared with that of June 2023.



Bacardi GTR appoints Regional Director

Bacardi Global Travel Retail has announced the appointment of Charlotte Rann as Regional Director, Europe. Charlotte will oversee European partnerships, as well as lead European-based international customers, including Heinemann, ARI, and Lagardère.

She replaces Sam Pickard who was recently appointed Bacardi Global Travel Retail’s Regional Director, AMEA. Charlotte celebrates ten years with Bacardi this year and, most recently, led the UK & Ireland’s domestic off-trade business.

New Glenfiddich Archive Collection unveiled

The second annual release from Glenfiddich’s Archive Collection has been unveiled, which showcases ten of its distillery’s rarest whiskies from over the past half-century distributed through Gebr. Heinemann.



276 bottles of The Glenfiddich Archive Collection American Oak Hogshead 1990 33-Year-Old have been allocated to the travel retail channel, available for purchase exclusively in Gebr. Heinemann stores in Frankfurt, Istanbul and Amsterdam Schiphol Airports.

Bacardi GTR’s exclusive gifting range



Bacardi GTR has unveiled Grey Goose Coolers, a travel retail-exclusive range from the super-premium vodka brand.

The coolers, available in three shades of blue, are offered on a complimentary basis with the purchase of any 1L bottle from the Grey Goose vodka collection including Grey Goose Original, Grey Goose Flavors and Grey Goose Essence.

Made from pierce-resistant neoprene, the zip-up coolers can be personalised with sleek, metallic letter charms, allowing for custom initials or names. Each cooler depicts a goose in flight, the symbol of Grey Goose vodka.

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Will States Impose VAT on ENA?



Dr. Sanjiv Agarwal
FCA, FCS, D.Litt.



The liquor industry is now wondering if the relief granted by the Centre in the 2024-25 budget will truly be beneficial or if it will be offset by another form of taxation. Although the Central government has amended the GST law to exclude Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) meant for human consumption from the GST purview, the decision to levy VAT on ENA is open to individual states.

Most states may impose VAT on ENA, following the example already set by Andhra Pradesh in

2017, as they may not like to forgo additional revenue. However, implementing VAT may take several months, given that many states have already passed their budgets and will need to issue an Ordinance to introduce the tax.

ENA is a significant raw material for both India Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and India Made Indian Liquor (IMIL), accounting for about 43 percent of IMFL and 35 percent of IMIL. Therefore, if VAT is imposed on ENA, the alcoholic beverage manufacturing industry may lose the advantage gained from the GST amendment

in the Union Budget.

The GST law has been amended in the recent Union Budget (The Finance Bill, 2024) presented in Parliament on 23rd July 2024. The proposed amendment to Section 9(1) of the CGST Act, 2017 excludes ENA used in the manufacture of alcoholic liquor for human consumption from GST. Consequently, there will be no GST on un-denatured ENA or rectified spirit used for this purpose. Previously, only 'alcoholic liquor for human consumption' was excluded from GST. Additionally, IGST and UTGST will not apply.

States will need to update their respective GST legislations accordingly.

After the introduction of GST in July 2017, states lost the power to levy taxes on ENA, which now falls back under state jurisdiction if they choose to tax it. This however only applies to ENA used for alcoholic liquor for human consumption. The Union has ceded its right to tax ENA to the states, which may result in

a varied or uniform VAT on ENA across different states.

The GST Council, in its 52nd meeting, recommended amending the GST Law to explicitly exclude rectified spirit/ ENA from GST when supplied for manufacturing of alcoholic liquors for human consumption. This recommendation was reaffirmed in the Council's 53rd meeting held on 22nd June 2024, which proposed an amendment to

Section 9(1) of the CGST Act, 2017.

Section 9 of the CGST Act, 2017 deals with the levy and collection

of tax. According to Section 9(1), CGST is levied on all intra-state supplies of goods or services, except alcoholic liquor for human consumption, at rates not exceeding 20 percent as notified by the government on the Council's recommendations.

This amendment is expected to provide significant relief to the alco-beverage industry by eliminating confusion, stabilising the cost and tax framework, and easing the burden on this heavily taxed sector. However, it remains to be seen how many states will choose to impose VAT on ENA, used for alcoholic beverages for human consumption thereby potentially subjecting the industry to new forms of taxation and nullifying the relief granted. 



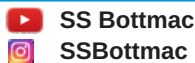
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Avoid Costly Mistake

What you need to know before importing alcohol to India

Understanding the complexities of domestic laws before importing alcoholic products into India is crucial for ensuring a smooth and successful import process. India's regulatory framework for alcoholic beverages is stringent, involving both Indian Customs and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Familiarity with these laws, including specific labeling and documentation requirements, helps avoid delays, rejections, and financial losses.



Gopal Joshi

Stephanie Wiese, the owner of a craft spirits brand in Georgia, ventured into the Indian market with her single malt Georgian whisky, eager to tap into the predominantly whisky-consuming nation. Lacking prior travel experience to India and unaware of the country's customs and food clearance regulations, Stephanie reached out via email to an Indian alcoholic beverages importer based in Mumbai. After negotiating the CIF rates and logistics terms the Indian importer placed an order for a pallet load of whisky.

However, the importer's failure to provide Stephanie with adequate information and necessary document samples led to significant issues with Indian customs and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). This oversight eventually resulted in the consignment's rejection. Despite appealing to the FSSAI, Stephanie's stock was either destroyed or had to be returned to Georgia.

Imports of all food items into India, including alcoholic beverages, are regulated by two government agencies: Indian Customs and the Food

Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Alcoholic beverages fall under the category of food items, according to the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

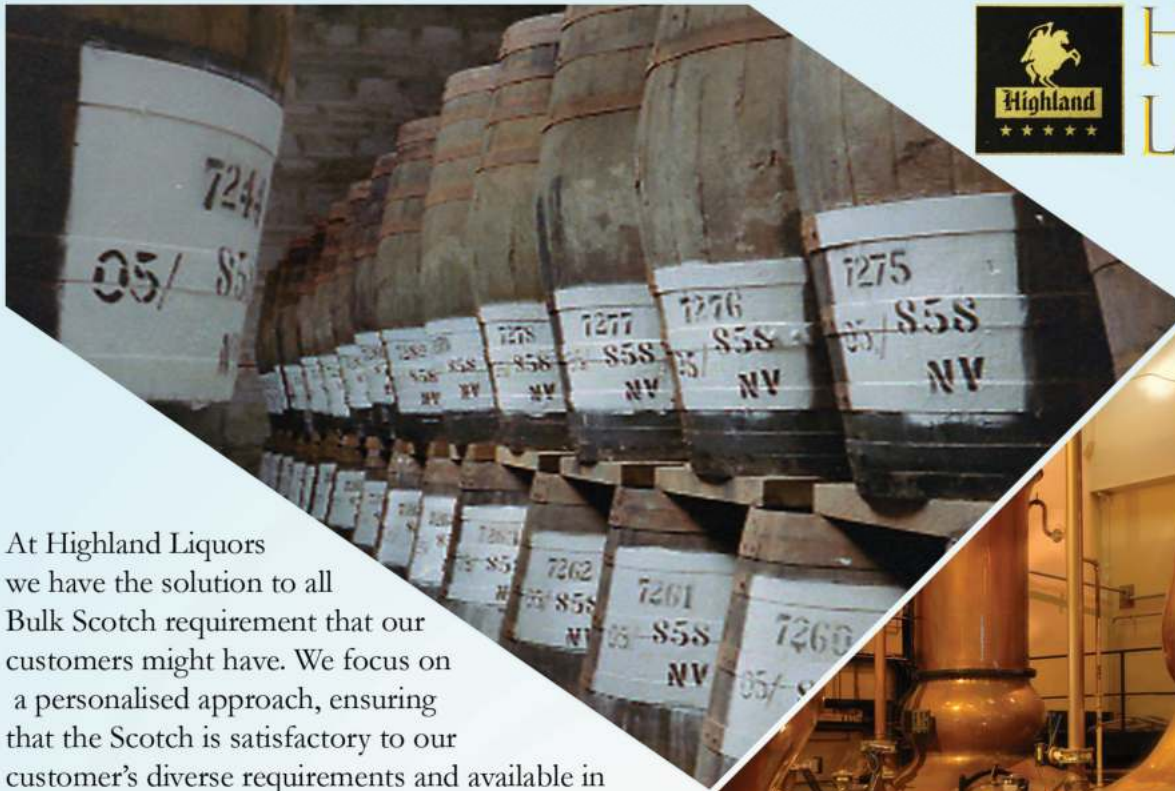
Indian Customs is responsible for collecting customs tariffs and other revenues, managing imports, warehousing, discharge, and handling inter-and intra-custom bond stock transfers under the Indian Customs Act, 1962.

On the other hand, FSSAI oversees the food items (including alcoholic beverages) from the point of the Bill of Entry (BOE) until clearance. This involves issuing a No-Objection Certificate and conducting lab tests. Only after this statutory process is completed, alcoholic beverages are permitted for sale in India's domestic markets.





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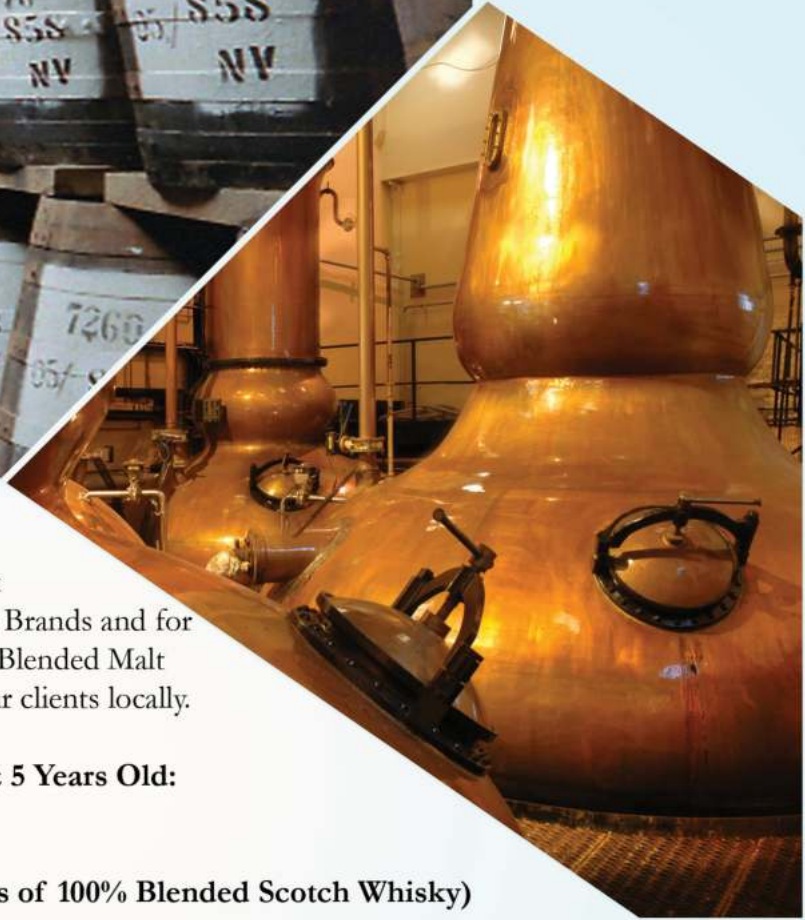


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If you are a Producer, Bottler, Blender, Importer, Wholesaler or otherwise user of Bulk Scotch Whisky please feel free to contact us for any sales related or HMRC Registration related queries.

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The clearance of imported alcoholic beverages in India is governed by the Food Safety and Standards (Import) Regulations, 2017, and the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations, 2018. This article aims to shed light on the clearance process of alcoholic beverages by FSSAI, emphasising its importance for exporters and importers to avoid regulatory challenges. Given that the FSSAI portal (FoSCoS) is integrated with the ICEGATE (Indian Customs portal), the first crucial step is ensuring that an India-specific label is affixed to each bottle at the consignment's origin.

Essential information

The importer must provide the exporter with essential information, including the first and final ports of discharge, the complete address of the importer's custom bonded warehouse along with the warehouse code, the complete address of the importer as shown in the Import Export Code (IEC) certificate issued by DGFT, India, the importer's FSSAI central licence number along

with the FSSAI logo, and the FSSAI's statutory warning. Upon receiving this set of information, the exporter should prepare the Bill of Lading (BL), invoice, packing list, certificate of country of origin, lab test report from the origin, and an India-specific label complying with FSSAI guidelines. In some cases, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is also required.

It is crucial to mention that FSSAI is very strict and particular about the labelling of imported foreign liquor. There have been

many recent cases where the NOC has been rejected by FSSAI's authorised officer and later by the first and second appellate authorities. It is advisable that if the importer or exporter is bringing imported foreign liquor into India for the first time, he/she should engage an expert to avoid any possible shortcoming or error in paperwork that could prove to be counter productive. 📍

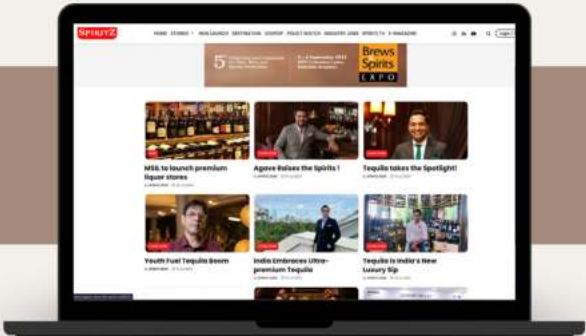
Gopal Joshi is a seasoned alcobev industry professional. He frequently writes on industry-specific matters.



Standards & Labelling

Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages Standards) Regulation, 2018, specifies the standards for alcoholic beverages such as Distilled Alcoholic Beverages (brandy, country liquor, gin, rum, vodka, and whisky), liqueur or alcoholic cordial, wines, and beer. It also outlines specific labelling requirements for alcoholic beverages in addition to the labeling requirements of the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011.

The specific labelling requirements include the declaration of alcohol content, labelling of standard drink, prohibition of nutritional information, no health claims, restriction on the words 'non-intoxicating' or similar on labels of beverages containing more than 0.5 percent alcohol by volume, labeling of wine, allergen warnings, and statutory warnings.



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Diageo India

Champion of Innovation, Inclusion, and Sustainability

It's never enough to simply create an alcoholic beverage and then sit back and let the consumers choose your brand. To respond to evolving consumer needs and stay relevant requires hard work and agility. To take a cue from what Diageo India does, it is continuous innovation that helps its brands remain at the forefront. Along with this comes the spirit of inclusion and diversity, pioneering grain to glass sustainability and promoting positive drinking. In this exclusive interview, **Hina Nagarajan, Managing Director and CEO, Diageo India**, elaborates to **Shalini Kumar** about not only the mantra that keeps the Diageo banner flying high but also the various strategies the company adopts to always keep consumers in mind while crafting processes, products and growth curves.

Leading a company like Diageo presents numerous challenges. Could you share your reflections on your journey so far in this role and what makes you proud? How did your experience as the Managing Director of Diageo Africa and emerging markets help you in your current role?

I have spent 30 years in consumer businesses, and each market presents unique challenges and opportunities. My time with Diageo Africa, working with 37 vibrant countries across the African continent, helped me understand the industry and its consumer potential. The diverse challenges prepared me to handle various situations and find solutions.

I find many similarities between Africa and India—both are strong potential markets with young, vibrant economies, growing consumer aspirations, but also highly regulated and taxed. This experience proved valuable when I took over Diageo India in July 2021. My goal was to put the Indian business on a sustainable, double-digit growth path, focusing on premium and prestige segments. In October 2021, we unveiled a new strategy.

The task was challenging as it meant tripling our historical growth rate and doubling our premium portfolio growth rate. Together with my leadership team, we made strategic choices to win. And today, I am proud of our achievements—our prestige and the above segment contributed 87.4 percent of net sales in FY24. We became debt-free last year, and our market capitalisation which was around ₹40-45k cr in June-July 2021, now is around ₹80-85k cr. plus.

The company returned to dividend distribution after a long hiatus, enabled by the successful turnaround of the company to sustained earnings growth and profitability. In Q2FY24 the Board of Directors approved an interim dividend of ₹4. In addition, the Board recommended a final dividend of ₹5 per share.

In FY24, our stand-alone net sales were at ₹10,692 crore, an increase of 10.5% on a rebased basis. The Prestige & Above segment grew by 11.9% and accounted for 87.4% of net sales during the financial year ended March 2024.

We have significantly enhanced our productivity and efficiency extraction initiatives through the value chain.

Nothing Less than the Best

In 2023, Sustainalytics, a global leader in ESG research and data, rated Diageo India as the Top-Rated ESG Performer in food products industry category in Asia. In April 2024, they further recognised Diageo as a low-risk company; a significant achievement in beverage alcohol industry, making Diageo India unique in this regard. The company's initiatives have received notable recognition. 'The Pride Circle India Workplace Equality Index' rated Diageo India as a gold employer.

LinkedIn featured Diageo India as a top company in their annual list, ranking it among the top 10 leading workplaces in retail and consumer goods in India. Additionally, the company feels pride to be listed among the top 20 companies in Equileap's Gender Equality Report and Ranking for emerging markets. These accomplishments reflect the progress Diageo India made and its continued commitment to these values.



Women leaders in Diageo India



Our performance has been holistic, aligning financial success with our ‘Diageo in Society Spirit of Progress’ agenda, focusing on three pillars – championing inclusion and diversity, pioneering grain to glass sustainability and promoting positive drinking. We have made significant progress, with ratings as a top-performing company in sustainability and notable improvements in diversity.

How much has India changed as a market and how much has it impacted the overall strategy of your company? What kind of shift are the millions of young and first-time drinkers necessitating in your brands’ re-shaping, renovation and innovation strategies?

India is undergoing deep societal change – driven by rising affluence among women and youth. This transformation brings new values of authenticity, individuality and local pride. Women are building a much more inclusive consumption narrative. It



used to be a taboo in our industry, but now women are enjoying the category and it’s really creating new opportunities for us. The new consumers are looking for premium brands and experiences, fuelled by the digital revolution.

This market really presents a vibrant opportunity for us to innovate, renovate and cater to these new evolving needs. We are responding to these structural shifts, which are pivoted around premiumisation, well-being and also the demand for sustainability. We pride ourselves as one of the best brand builders in the world. Our portfolio includes global brands like Johnnie Walker and local brands like McDowell’s and Royal Challenge. We have introduced new products like Don Julio tequila and the locally crafted Godawan, which has won over 40 international awards including the best single malt at London Spirits competition 2024.

Given that Gen Z is exploring various spirit categories without sticking to a specific one, do you anticipate any part of Diageo’s portfolio becoming irrelevant for these new-age consumers? If so, do you have plans to divest those brands?

We have been agile in responding to shifts in consumer choices and behaviour, using a future-



focused approach to innovation and renovation. The fact that we are winning in the market suggests that our portfolio reshape is right for the market and our brands continue to be loved by consumers. This gives us confidence that we are on the right track.

If I just look at Gen Z, this is a generation that is coming with different tastes and preferences, experimenting with lighter whiskies like Royal Challenge American Pride and Johnnie Walker Blonde, as well as white spirits like tequila, vodka and gin. However, we also cater to Gen X and the millennials. This confluence of consumers means our brands remain relevant for different cohorts. Our focus is on building all of them to give consumers a fantastic, high-quality brand choice.

Traditionally, Indian consumers have perceived McDowell's whisky as a volume-based brand. Can Diageo India successfully alter this perception and cultivate a newfound appreciation for McDowell's Indian single malt as a premium offering?

McDowell's was the first Indian single malt in the market in the 1990s, but maybe it was ahead of its time back then. When we researched with consumers and presented the concept, they were enthusiastic about bringing it back. McDowell's whisky is the number one whisky in the world by volume and McDowell's recent extension into white spirits under the McDowell's X series brand of gin, vodka, and rum is also receiving positive acceptance.

In view of your current focus on the reshaping of prestige and above brands, are you planning to add some new brands from your international portfolio?

We are constantly watching for trends and have a fantastic portfolio of global brands to bring in when the time is right. Recently, we launched Don Julio in India, offering a full range of profiles. Gin flavours are gaining traction, and we introduced novel variants of Tanqueray. Baileys is popular, and we added new variants like salted caramel and strawberries and cream. We continue to monitor market trends and bring in new products as needed.

In the recent past, Diageo India has taken many initiatives in different areas like investing in technology, protecting the environment, taking stakes in craft spirits-making companies, etc. Will there be more such investments or acquisitions?

We maintain an open approach to evaluating opportunities. As a cash-rich company generating

strong cash flows, we are open to investments that fit our strategy. We refer to them as new engines of growth. We have already invested in Nao Spirits and recently in Pistola, which is a premium emerging agave brand in India. Our minority stake in both is beyond just a financial investment. We are committed to building these brands with our R&D, supply chain, financial management, legal compliance and route to market infrastructure. We have over the last 3 yrs supported a community of innovators and entrepreneurs outside of our investee companies, who have gained from USL's extensive knowledge and infrastructure.

We are committed to creating world class products highlighting Indian pride, built on the strength of Indian ingredients and provenance.

We seek partnerships and alliances that bring both innovative products and solutions to our portfolio and support our environmental, social and

The fact that we are winning in the market suggests that our portfolio reshape is right for the market



governance agenda. We continue to look for AI-based technologies to enhance our processes and capabilities, optimise route maps for our sales force, curb counterfeiting and improve traceability of our products from grain to glass. We will continue to invest in these areas as interesting opportunities arise.

What was the rationale behind trimming your portfolio and now focussing on the value-driven luxury and premium portfolio? Are you confident that other than metros, semi-urban and rural markets are ready to spend more on high-end drinks?

We have been witnessing a premiumisation trend in our category for the last seven or eight years. Looking at the historical growth data from 2017 to 2022, the premium end of Scotches was growing at over 20 percent, mid and upper prestige segments grew strongly, while the lower end saw single-digit growth, and the popular segment was flat or declined. This trend accelerated during the pandemic and continues to be robust. With increasing levels of affluence, demand for high quality premium brands – the best of global, increasing pride in local craftsmanship and provenance, experimentation (cocktails, new brands/ categories), repertoire drinking (different drinks for different occasions/ motivations) and so on. Consumers today are also looking for unique and customised experiences in every facet of their lives.

By 2030, 45 percent of our households will be in the mid to upper income group, totalling 175 million households, comparable to the number of households in Great Britain. Women and youth

Taking the Digital Path

Diageo is embracing digital strategies as it is aware that consumers are now very digitally savvy and their whole journey on any consumer purchase starts with discovery on digital. For instance, Diageo India has a platform – in.thebar.com, catering to digitally savvy consumers. This is a platform which is about all things celebration, content and community engagement. Diageo India has set up two centres – an Innovation Centre in Bengaluru and a Craft Centre in Goa.

The centre in Bengaluru is the only DSIR-certified alcohol beverage research and development centre in India. The company has a full-fledged centre engaged in microbiology to sensory mastery and it really brings science and liquid building art together. Diageo India is really working on bespoke spirits for the consumers. It has invested Rs 45. crore in a craft centre in Goa last year and this is to help the company innovate in craft in terms of ‘Made in India’ and also support the craft ecosystem in the country. These efforts are guided by the new behaviours of experimentation, experiential consumption, and pride in local brands shaping our innovation and renovation strategy and investments.



Diageo Innovation center

striving for aspirational experiences also drive the demand for premium spirits. There is one more interesting fact: women have accounted for 64% of the growth in demand for Indian single malts in the last two years, and 40 percent of the growth in white spirits.

In the alcohol beverage industry, consumers reduce the number of drinking occasions but stay loyal to their brands rather than downgrade. We believe this premiumisation trend will continue to strengthen. Divesting 32 brands and franchising another 11 allows us to focus on the prestige

Quick-Fire Round
with Hina Nagarajan

Describe yourself in one line

Optimistic

Leadership mantra

Reach for the moon; at least you will get to the stars

Message for women leaders

Be bold and believe in yourself

Favourite book

Harry Potter

Favourite song

I love Hindi songs, both old and new. I am very fond of Bollywood music

Favourite destination

Europe

Favourite drink

Tanqueray and tonic

The Unwinding Process

I love watching movies with my husband and travelling to exotic places like an Alaskan cruise or to see the Northern Lights. I also enjoy playing mobile games, especially Scrabble with my son. Right now, I am playing 12 games with him. Long distance shopping with my daughter is another favourite of mine.



portfolio, leveraging the premiumisation trend. Our growth has more than doubled the historical rate in the last 3 years, and our premium portfolio is growing in strong double digits. Our premium and above (P&A) portfolio accounted for 87.4 percent of our business last year, demonstrating the positive impact of this strategy.

How do you prioritise and ensure compliance and corporate governance across all the business units?

Our ambition is to be the best-performing, most trusted and respected consumer products company, which requires strong compliance and governance. We have a deeply embedded code of business conduct to help employees understand their responsibilities. New employees undergo training on this code, and annual training and tests are mandatory for all employees, including myself. We have comprehensive policies and procedures, regular training sessions, and monitoring systems. Our robust internal audit process reviews core

business processes and controls, identifying areas of non-compliance.

Our whistleblower programme, Speak Up Line, is extensively used, allowing employees to report non-compliance issues confidently. We share best practices and resources to promote a unified approach to risk management. Our core value is conducting business the right way from grain to glass, which is why our employees are proud to work with Diageo. Our recent annual engagement survey showed that 94 percent of our employees are proud to work for us, and we have an 89 percent overall engagement score, which is 14 percent above the external benchmarks.

How do you foster inclusion and diversity within Diageo and the broader Indian market? Can you provide examples of your advocacy and contributions in this area?

Inclusion and diversity are central to our purpose of celebrating life every day, everywhere. Our diversity numbers have increased from 7.5 percent

in 2017 to 27 percent in 2024, with 50 percent of our executive team being women. We continue to push for more progress with market-leading policies on equal parental leave, crèche benefits, pregnancy loss leave, health insurance benefits for same-sex partners, and guidelines on gender identity and sexual orientation.

Externally, we aim for marketing to reflect an inclusive societal perspective. Up to 45 per cent of our talent, from behind the lens to our films, is diverse. We invest in progressive media to support diverse narratives and financially back platforms promoting inclusivity. We are expanding the definition of diversity to include people with disabilities, with more than 50 individuals with disabilities working with us.

Our 'Creative Comeback Programme' helps female and binary creative talents return to the workforce. Our 'Learning for Life' initiative teaches hospitality skill to communities, with over 5,000 people trained, 50 percent of whom are women.

Our 'Learning for Life' initiative teaches hospitality skills to communities, with over 5,000 people trained, 50% of whom are women



In Nashik, we run a micro-enterprise initiative for smallholder women farmers.

As a member of the Board of Governors of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), what are your responsibilities and how do you ensure ethical practices in the advertising industry? Will there be any relief for liquor brands for communicating responsibly with the end consumers?

Our primary responsibility is to ensure positive and responsible marketing codes across the industry. At Diageo India, we believe in self-regulation and follow rigorous international and internal marketing codes. Our marketing code prohibits advertising to consumers below the legal drinking age and any direct advertising of alcohol products.

We advocate for drinking better, not more, and run several responsible drinking campaigns. As



By 2027, 15% of the world's legal drinking age population will be in India

a member of ASCI and ISWAI, we encourage all member companies to follow responsible advertising codes and promote responsible drinking. Our focus is on compliance with current guidelines, and while we cannot predict future relief, our narrative to authorities emphasises responsible drinking campaigns to address illicit liquor problems and promote moderation.

Give us a sense of how the costs of alcoholic ingredients, packaging materials, transportation, etc. have gone up in the last couple of years and how seriously this cost inflation is affecting the overall health of the industry in general and Diageo India in particular.

The last two to three years have been very inflationary, with

significant increases in extra neutral alcohol (ENA) and glass costs. ENA remains inflationary due to the government's ethanol blending policy, despite our productivity initiatives and forward contracts for grain procurement. Glass costs stabilised in the second half of 2024, with a minor decline helping to mitigate ENA inflation.

We expect ENA to remain inflationary, while glass and other packaging materials should stay stable. However, our price regulation means we are not getting enough price increases to offset inflation, thereby shrinking our manufacturing margins. Industry associations like CIABC and ISWAI continue to advocate for free pricing or an inflation-linked pricing mechanism with the government. This would help us cope with inflation, maintain healthy margins, and invest in the industry's future.

What is your outlook for Diageo India and the Indian alcohol beverage industry for the next five years? What do you foresee in terms of potential changes in this sector?

Our outlook is very optimistic. India is one of the fastest-growing markets for alcoholic beverages globally, with one of the most optimistic consumer bases. We are the largest market for whisky, and despite short-term inflationary challenges, the macroeconomic and demographic developments are favourable in India.

By 2027, 15 percent of the world's legal drinking age population will be in India, and by 2030, India will add 25 per cent of the world's legal drinking age population, with 100 million new consumers. Our market has low penetration and per capita consumption compared to countries like the US and the UK, providing ample growth opportunities.

We remain confident in our strategy and are committed to delivering sustained double-digit top-line growth and value to all our stakeholders. Although price regulation presents challenges, we continue to advocate for pricing mechanisms that reflect inflation and help us maintain healthy margins and future investments. The industry's growth prospects are positive, and we believe the government recognises the industry's importance to the state revenue exchequer. 📍

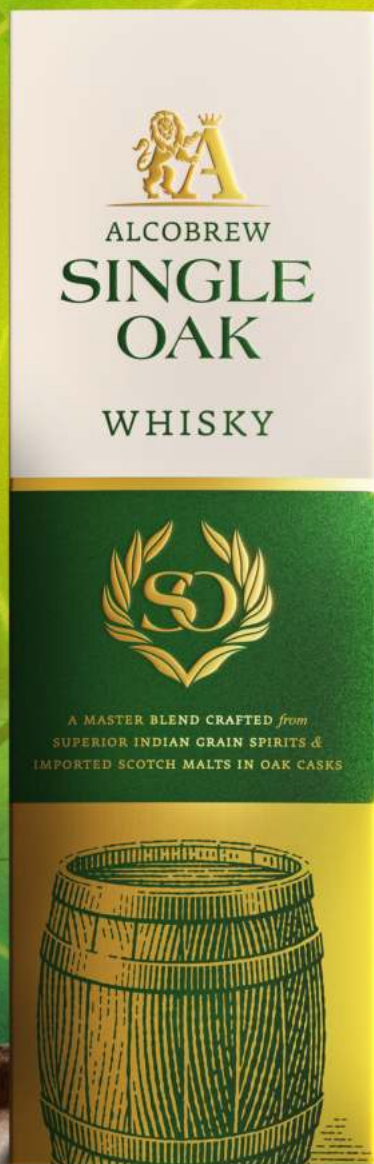


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Sip Revolution

Redefining Cocktails in India

In the ever-evolving world of mixology, India's cocktail scene is experiencing a revolution, driven by new technologies, innovative techniques, and an adventurous use of

unusual ingredients. This exciting transformation is not only redefining how cocktails are crafted but also how they are perceived and enjoyed.

At the heart of this revolution is the infusion



of technology into the art of cocktail making. Advanced equipment like centrifuges, vacuum distillation units, and rotary evaporators are becoming staples in modern bars. These tools allow mixologists to extract and concentrate flavours in ways previously unimaginable, resulting in cocktails with depth and complexity. The precision offered by these technologies ensures

consistency and perfection in every glass, delighting patrons with every sip.

Innovation n bars doesn't stop at technology; it extends to the techniques employed by bartenders too. Molecular mixology, a subset of molecular gastronomy, is taking the cocktail scene by storm. Techniques like spherification, foaming, and gelification are being used to create drinks that are as visually stunning as they are delicious. These methods transform the cocktails into an experience, engaging all the senses and elevating the act of savouring a cocktail as an appreciation of an art form.

Equally important in this revolution is the embrace of unusual and exotic ingredients. Indian bars are increasingly looking beyond the traditional to incorporate local herbs, spices, and fruits that reflect the country's rich biodiversity. Ingredients like kokum, hibiscus, turmeric, and tamarind are making their way into cocktails, adding unique flavours and aromas that set them apart from the global standard. This emphasis on local produce not only supports regional farmers but also celebrates India's culinary heritage.

Sustainability and environmental consciousness are also key components of this new cocktail culture. Many bars are adopting practices that minimise waste and promote eco-friendliness. From using biodegradable straws and recyclable materials to implementing zero-waste policies, the focus is on creating delicious drinks without harming the blue planet. Bartenders are also exploring ways to repurpose ingredients, turning what would typically be waste into integral components of their concoctions.

Behind this sip revolution spearheading through India's cocktail scene stands some select bartenders and mixologists who dare to defy the norm and push the envelope to create innovative and exotic spirits.

Most admirable of all is the blend of tradition and modernity that is surely paving the way for a future where cocktails are more than just drinks—they are evolving into experiences, stories, and a testament to the artistry of mixology.

So, the next time you raise a glass, remember you may not be just sipping a drink; maybe you are partaking in a heady revolution. Cheers to that! 🍷

A Matter of Flavours

With bars across India now putting into use latest innovations and technologies, the cocktail experience has hit the sky. As **Atul Tiwari, EAM – Food and Beverage, The Leela Palace Chanakyapuri, New Delhi,** points out, this tremendous change has been a delight for the patrons who now prefer cocktails to other alcoholic beverages in order to experience something new and refreshing while also keeping in mind the health benefits too.



High-end bars are now increasingly getting committed to leveraging

cutting-edge technologies like rotary evaporators for vacuum distillation, which not only intensify the flavours but also



reduce energy consumption as compared to traditional distillation methods.

Similarly, sous vide machines are used to minimise waste by efficiently extracting the flavours from ingredients, enhancing sustainability in the process. Molecular gastronomy techniques such as specification and foams enable bartenders to repurpose ingredients creatively, which reduces food waste and enhances the overall sustainability of cocktail creations.

Atul Tiwari believes that these advancements in technology not only allow the bars to innovate and perfect new flavours and techniques but also support their commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable practices in the beverage industry. The use of such innovations can be evidenced with one of the signature cocktails of The Leela Palace Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, which is named the 'Goldfinger'. This cocktail pays homage to Ian Fleming's novel and features saffron-infused gin, aperol, cacao liqueur, orange bitters, and olive caviar.

Atul informs that the saffron gin undergoes a meticulous infusion process using a rotary evaporator to extract and intensify its unique flavour, while sous vide techniques are employed to infuse the cacao liqueur with complementary aromatics. Molecular gastronomy is then utilised to create olive caviar, thereby adding a delightful textural contrast and visual appeal to the drink.



What about the Cost?

The initial investment, he says, in advanced technologies like rotary evaporators, sous-vide machines and molecular gastronomy equipment can be substantial but their impact on revenue is notably positive. These technologies enhance operational efficiency by streamlining production processes and ensuring consistent, high-quality cocktail outputs. This efficiency translates into cost savings over time, despite initial setup costs.

"Moreover, the ability to create unique and innovative cocktails using these techniques differentiates us in the competitive market, attracting customers seeking novel drinking experiences and willing to pay premium prices. Additionally, our commitment to sustainability through reduced waste and optimised ingredient use resonates well with environmentally conscious patrons, further bolstering our brand reputation and customer loyalty," says Atul.

From Classic to Curated

At many of the bars, there has been a strategic shift from classic cocktails to curated cocktails to offer the patrons unique and memorable drinking experiences. This evolution has been well-received, with customers appreciating the creativity and craftsmanship behind each curated cocktail. "One example that has successfully replaced a classic is our rendition of the Picante.

Inspired by Pablo Picasso's bold artistic style, this spicy and vibrant cocktail features tequila infused with hot spiced brine, complemented by the zestful notes of grapefruit and the smokiness of charred pineapple," says Atul.

The combination not only pays homage to Picasso's legacy but also introduces modern flavours and textures that resonate with contemporary tastes. The positive response from patrons reinforces the bars' strategy of curating cocktails that blend

artistry, innovation and flavour; enriching the overall bar experience.

The Other Popular Choices

Fat-washing techniques at many of the bars infuse cocktails with savoury flavours and unique textures. This process involves infusing spirits with fats such as butter, coconut oil or bacon fat to impart their flavours into the alcohol, which are then separated through freezing and straining. One notable cocktail

showcasing this technique at The Leela Palace Chanakyapuri is the 'Raymond Chandler'. This cocktail pays homage to the famous author's affinity for bourbon and his literary legacy. It features coconut fat-washed bourbon, Campari, Amaro Montenegro, and coffee bitters.

The coconut fat-washing adds a rich and subtle tropical undertone to the bourbon, enhancing the complexity of the cocktail while honouring Raymond Chandler's enduring influence on the noir genre and bourbon culture. Further, the introduction of savoury drinks and umami bombs has significantly transformed the traditional cocktail experience by expanding flavour profiles and offering unique taste sensations.

These cocktails not only appeal to adventurous palates but also showcase the versatility of ingredients traditionally associated with culinary applications. "For instance, 'Kenkou', inspired by the health benefits of wasabi, combines gin, pandan, wasabi, pear cordial, and citrus. This cocktail exemplifies how savoury elements like wasabi can provide a spicy kick and umami depth, complemented by the sweetness of pear and the aromatic notes of pandan; creating a balanced and intriguing flavour profile that challenges conventional expectations of cocktails," Atul informs.

Other notable examples include cocktails infused with ingredients such as miso, soy sauce, or even mushrooms,

New and Unusual Ingredients

At The Leela Palace Chanakyapuri, some of the examples of using a variety of new and unusual ingredients to create innovative cocktail experiences that intrigue and delight the patrons include:

Saffron Gin: Utilising saffron-infused gin in cocktails like 'Golden Smuggler', alongside aperol, cacao and orange bitters, enhances the drink with exotic floral notes and a luxurious golden hue.

Banana Cinnamon Cordial: Found in cocktails featuring aged rum, this cordial adds a sweet and aromatic depth, balanced with citric notes and sparkling wine; creating a refreshing and nuanced drink.

Yuzu and Chamomile: Used alongside Indian gin, pisco, aperol, cacao and egg white, these ingredients bring citrusy brightness and floral undertones to cocktails, offering a complex and aromatic profile.

Hibiscus Tonic and Cardamom Explosion: These ingredients, combined with vodka, passionfruit, lime, and savoury herb wine, create a vibrant and aromatic cocktail experience that balances floral and spicy notes.

Atul explains that while these ingredients contribute to the complexity and flavour profile of their cocktails, their impact on health benefits can vary. Some ingredients, like citrus fruits and herbs, may offer vitamins and antioxidants, while others like tonic water or syrups may contain sugars.

"Overall, the focus is on crafting exceptional and memorable drinking experiences that balance innovation with thoughtful ingredient choices," he avers.

which add layers of complexity and savoury richness, there by expanding the possibilities for cocktail enthusiasts seeking new and innovative drinking experiences. Meanwhile, even tequila-based cocktails have gained popularity among cocktail enthusiasts in recent years. Tequila offers a distinct flavour profile with its agave base, ranging from earthy and vegetal notes in blanco tequilas to richer and oakier flavours in aged varieties like reposado and añejo.

The versatility of tequila allows mixologists to create a wide range of cocktails, from refreshing margaritas to complex and layered drinks that highlight its unique characteristics. Additionally, the growing interest in artisanal and craft spirits has further propelled tequila into the spotlight, with enthusiasts appreciating its craftsmanship and authenticity. Overall, while preferences can vary among individuals, tequila-based

cocktails have indeed become a favoured choice for many cocktail enthusiasts seeking exciting and flavourful drinking experiences.

Future of Cocktails

Looking ahead, Atul believes the future of cocktails will continue to evolve with several key trends and innovations shaping the industry. One prominent trend is the increasing emphasis on sustainability and conscious consumption, driving bars to adopt eco-friendly practices such as zero-waste initiatives and locally sourced ingredients. He asserts that innovations in technology, like advanced equipment for precision mixing and infusion, will further enhance cocktail craftsmanship and consistency, allowing for more complex flavour profiles and creative presentations.

Atul and his team are aware that there is also a growing interest in health-conscious

cocktails featuring low-alcohol or non-alcoholic alternatives, as well as functional ingredients known for their wellness benefits. Cultural influences will continue to inspire new flavours and techniques, with global ingredients and regional traditions influencing cocktail menus.

“Ultimately, the future of cocktail promises a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation, catering to diverse tastes while pushing the boundaries of creativity in the world of mixology,” he says. 📍



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Cocktails

Undergoing a Metamorphosis

With the use of modern equipment and tools as well as the availability of quality ingredients, the cocktail scenario in India is going through a transformation like never before.

Yangdup Lama, Co-Founder, Sidecar, Cocktails & Dreams, Speakeasy, takes a look at what is happening in the high-end bars where patrons are being fussed over with new flavours and styles.



The mixology world is like an open blue sky. Here one can go the traditional way of fermentation and pickling in flavour extraction and preservation or use all sorts of modern techniques like

distillation and sous vide to derive flavours either to use them directly into the cocktails or in a subtle way.

“Technology does play a very important role in doing so because of the quality that it gives in terms of texture, smoothness,

clarity and cleanliness. It is absolutely wonderful that these days this is a never-ending game and bartenders and mixologists are pushing boundaries in every sense of it from being innovative and unique in the creations,” asserts Yangdup Lama.



Redefining the Balance

Minimalistic cocktails are the way ahead because they give a clear definition to the drink. The moment it is less, there is clarity in what the drink stands for in terms of its serve and its flavour profile,

and hence when it is minimalistic it is surely about quality ingredients, quality techniques and quality serves. There has also been a clear shift from the classic cocktails to the curated ones. “However, classics cannot go out of fashion but they keep revisiting in a different avatar because of their strong foundation and the fact that they have stood the test of times,” says Yangdup.

Curated cocktails take inspiration from the classics but bring about an absolutely refreshing experience to the modern-day cocktails with innovation, storytelling and presentation. Meanwhile, fat-washing is contributing to the cocktail segment in a big way, helping enhance the savoury flavours in cocktails.

Yangdup explains that the enhancement of the flavour depends upon the understanding of the mixologist as regards what intensity he or she wants of the ingredient into the drink.

“Fat washing is purely about extracting flavours from fatty or oily ingredients by simply infusing for a while and then freezing to separate the fat while retaining the flavours of the fat into the spirit. The enhancement of the flavour depends upon the understanding of the mixologist about what intensity he/she wants of the ingredient into the drink,” Yangdup elaborates.

He thinks some bartenders and mixologists indulge in fat-washing out of understanding while many may do it because it gives them a feeling of being in tune with the trend of the present times.

Similar is the case with savoury drinks and the concept of umami

bombs which have changed the traditional cocktail experience.

“I wouldn’t say that it has really changed the traditional cocktails but has given another extension of going beyond sweet, bitter and citrus. It only adds a different complexity to the modern day cocktail and allows bartenders and mixologists to experiment further and create something that is full-bodied yet unassuming,” Yangdup emphasises. He believes “Balance is the real thing in cocktail mixing and it purely comes from practice, practice and practice and doing it as mindfully as possible.”

The Path Forward

Yangdup feels innovations and techniques surely define the future of the bar but a lot depends on how well they are being used by the concerned people and their understanding of the process. Bars in India, he says, are coming of age and we don’t seem to be far behind in implementing and mastering this art.

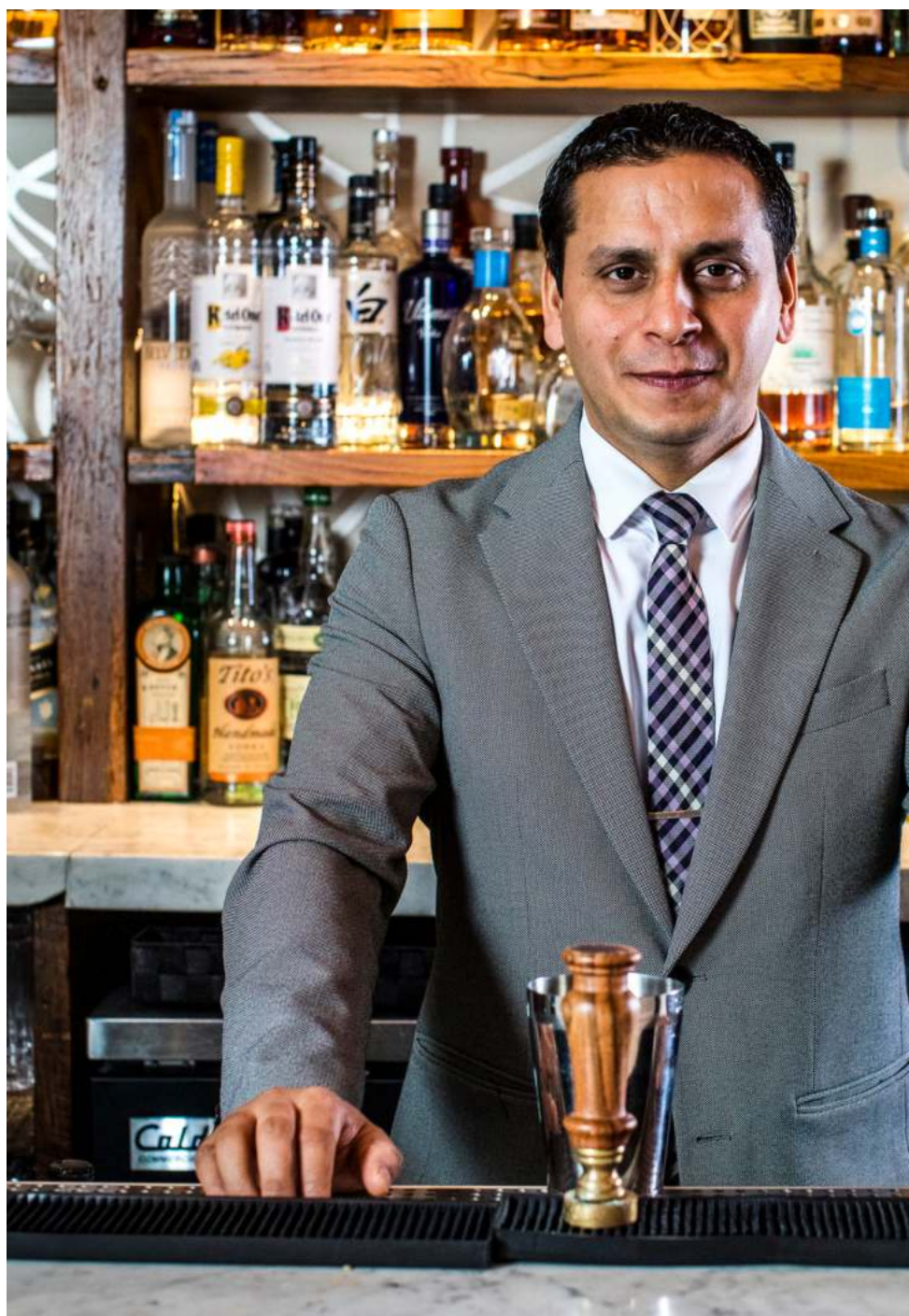
Yangdup believes cost does have its implications because it is about investment on quality gadgets and ingredients. Yet, the high-end bars are taking the leap, placing their faith in the way things are moving and churning.

Speaking of new and unusual ingredients that are used in creating innovative cocktails, Yangdup says that he personally likes to use edible camphor which is “nice and fun.” And among the bars that are forging new journeys, Home Bar, Lair, Bar Spirit Forward, Soka and Ekaa are the ones that Yangdup counts as among his favourites. 📍

Cocktails

go through a Dizzying Turnaround

With innovation setting the pace in the bar scenario of India, cocktail culture has been undergoing a true-blue metamorphosis, driven by the need to continuously experiment and serve drinks that will keep the consumers coming back for more. As **Hemant Pathak, General Manager/ Beverage Director – Junoon New York & Jazba New York**, points out, the way forward is to think out-of-the-box and let technology pave the ground for new flavours and experiences.



Hemant says that if there is one thing immediately noticeable, it is the

fact that the bar scenario is evolving at a rapid rate. Gone are the days when the bar was just a watering hole for those



seeking alcoholic beverages. Most bars are now trendy places with various themes guiding the way they function and cater to discerning consumers. And speaking of trends, one of them is that of minimalist cocktails which have been redefining the balance between quality and quantity by focusing on fewer ingredients, attention to detail, sustainability and providing a complete consumer experience.

And then there is the factor of innovation that now includes sous vide used by high-end restaurants to cook food to the exact level of doneness desired every time, rotary evaporators to extract and concentrate substances from mixtures by heating and evaporating sample materials according to the different boiling points of substances within mixtures, liquid nitrogen and Spinall 2.0, among others.

"There is also the virtual reality mixology experience, which is an immersive experience allowing interaction with virtual instructions and bartenders to learn the art of crafting cocktails," he says.

Trends in Cocktails

Social media has also begun to serve as a powerful platform for cocktail creativity and trends, with mixologists showcasing their creations and connecting with fellow enthusiasts, example of which include cocktails like rhubarb and *paan*. All these have inspired a shift from classic to curated cocktails. Ask Hemant for his opinion and he says, "Classic is not going anywhere, but this gives a solid foundation

for the modern curated cocktails, now a favourite among the patrons. The well-crafted cocktails use modern techniques backed by an incredible amount of research by bars and bartenders."

To enhance the savoury flavours in cocktails, he explains, fat-washing is a mixology technique that involves adding a small amount of fat such as oil or cream to a cocktail and then straining it out, leaving behind a subtle, savoury flavour and a velvety texture. Fats can amplify umami (delicious savoury taste in Japanese) flavours, adding complexity to the cocktail.

"Many bartenders and mixologists are aware of fat-washing, but it's not a universally practiced technique. However, it can help enhance creativity," Hemant states. In fact, the concept of umami bombs has revolutionised the traditional cocktail experience through the use of new ingredients.

Further, as Hemant explains, exploring savoury drinks helps in enhancing food pairing possibilities. Some notable examples of cocktails with umami infusions include Bacon Old Fashioned, which is a classic old-fashioned with bacon-washed bourbon, adding a smoky, savoury element, and Shiitake Negroni, which is a twist on the classic Negroni, incorporating shiitake-infused Campari for added depth. Bartenders also balance complexity with refreshment by using acidity i.e. incorporating citrus, vinegar or other acidic ingredients to cut through richness and refresh the palate.

Bar Takeovers

Speaking of trends, Hemant believes that bar takeovers have also got to be taken into consideration. This offers a unique opportunity for brands and bars to showcase their creativity, and build relationships and drive business results while enhancing their reputation and engagement with customers and the community.

Hemant further states that the tangible benefits are increased revenue through sales and visibility, brand exposure and awareness through social media, and an opportunity for a bar to showcase new products or cocktails. The intangible benefits include networking opportunities within the industry, enhanced brand reputation, increased customer loyalty, and inspiration and education for bartenders and staff.

So, how do consumers experience and perceive bar takeovers and what specific aspects of these events contribute to their overall satisfaction and continued patronage? Industry observers say that consumers experience bar takeovers as unique and exciting events that offer unexpected brand appearances and pop-up experiences that create buzz and curiosity.

“Also, the fear of missing out (FOMO) effect is elevated due to limited-time cocktails, special menu items or rare products. It also creates a social media moment. Overall, it’s a memorable experience for the guests while encouraging repeat visits and loyalty,” says Hemant.



Defining the Future Bar Scene

All such innovations and techniques are likely to shape the future of the bar scene in India. The Indian bar industry has

been evolving rapidly, and many bars are already embracing technology and innovative techniques to enhance customer experience and improve efficiency. The cost-effectiveness

of these innovations depends on the specific technology or technique. Some, like automated machines, can reduce labour costs and improve consistency, while others, like molecular mixology, may require significant investment in training and equipment.

The application of these innovations

can lead to a slight increase in cocktail prices, but it also offers a unique experience and premium products that customers are willing to pay for.

The key is to strike a balance between innovation, quality and affordability to cater to the diverse Indian market. And here, regional ingredients are beginning to find favour. Hemant, for example, uses Peepli pepper from Meghalaya and a regional coffee from Chikkamagaluru to make the cocktails that much more special. Speaking of innovations, certain establishments like Tayer + Elementary and Double Chicken Please in New York City are certainly breaking new ground. 





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The New

Chemistry of Cocktails

Gone are the days when cocktails were just a mix of various ingredients to give a little more flavour. Now, it's all about techniques and tools, says **Lorenzo Di Cola, Head of Brand, Altamura Distilleries.**

There is an interesting opinion about the evolvement of the cocktail segment. Experts believe that we are in an age where the cocktail world is every day linked with chemistry. And this may be right too given the fact that it is common enough now to see on the cocktails menu a lot of drinks with clarified or fermented ingredients. The new techniques give bartenders an opportunity to find new flavours in usual ingredients. Lorenzo views one such example of such a cocktail is from the experimental cocktail club named Venice. "It is a fake

colada without any pineapple and coconut but a mix of fermented quinoa and clarified banana water inside, that tastes like a real colada," explains Lorenzo.

Cocktail Trends

The cocktail scene is very attractive with minimalistic cocktails, which have no garnish and very powerful flavour profiles. According to him, one



of the classic examples of new modern cocktails is the Atlantis from the new menu of Paradiso. It is a twist on a savoury cocktail but with an incredible taste, particularly if you are looking for a twist on umami cocktails.

Fat-washing is of course becoming a favourite technique, which is based on infusing a liquid with a fat ingredient. It is placed in a freezer after a short period of rest and then served after straining it the next day. He has made a cocktail with fat-washing using peanut butter and a mix of spicy flavours like chipotle.

“I really love fermented products, for example fermented corn with whiskey and Italian amaro taste like goat milk. The possibility to play with unusual flavours is very fanny and interactive with the costumers,” points out Lorenzo.

Meanwhile, savoury drinks and the concept of umami bombs have changed the traditional cocktail experience.



As Lorenzo puts it, “Try to do a dirty martini with an infusion of dry vermouth in blue cheese and black garlic brine. It turns out as a real bomb!” One of Lorenzo’s favourite is a gin Collins with an infusion of parmesan and a basil lemon soda. He also loves fermented products, as for example, fermented corn with whisky.

The trending line in cocktails is now connected with the use of techniques and tools and even though the investment is huge, it is the increasing demand for such drinks that makes it worth the effort. The bars in India that Lorenzo has been impressed with on account of their cocktails include Sidecar Home among



others.

Benefits of Bar Takeovers

In the meantime, bar takeovers are catching on fast and stakeholders believe that this is a really good platform to find inspirations and attract customers. Lorenzo feels bar takeovers is a good way to maintain the loyalty of the customers and if the bars have good deals with brands they can have a lot of profits from takeovers.

As for customers, the loyalty factor gets a shot in the arm with the level of excitement and buzz that such takeovers create. 📍



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Recasting

the Cocktails in a New Avatar

Cocktails are acquiring new dimensions by way of flavours, ingredients and style of presentation. Most of this is due to the use of technology to create effects and also sourcing high-quality and different kinds of raw materials. As **Rohan Carvalho, Proprietor, Bar Square Hospitality Services**, points out, 'this has led to a major evolution in the cocktail circuit with high-end bars willingly investing in equipment and tools while enhancing the skills of the bartenders'.



The world of cocktails is getting a major shake-up, and it's all thanks to science and technology!

Now, bartenders are using fancy gadgets like sous vide machines for effective infusions and even special tools called centrifuges to



make juices super smooth and create interesting textures in drinks, informs Rohan Carvalho.

They can even use computers to come up with brand new flavour combinations based on existing recipes. This high-technology stuff is also making its way to the bar tables and counters. Imagine menus that come alive with pictures and information about the drinks using special glasses vide augmented reality.

You can even control machines with your phone to get the perfect measurements every single time. "But here is the important part: all these fancy technologies aren't meant to replace the skill of a great bartender, who continues to be the real star of the show. These new tools are just like fancy kitchen gadgets for Chefs. They help bartenders be even more creative and make truly amazing drinks," analyses Rohan Carvalho.

Rohan says that an example of how these innovative techniques help to create wonderful cocktails is Silver Lining made of

mezcal (sous vide with smoked wood chips and cardamom) or saline or absinthe and garnished with silver-coated cardamom seeds.

Rohan puts forward some examples of how technology leads to experimental cocktails:

Sous Vide Infusion: Imagine a spiced and smoky mezcal or gin cocktail achieved by infusing the spirit with smoked wood chips and spices using sous vide for a precisely controlled smoky flavour.

Centrifuge-clarified Cocktails: Classic cocktails like a Piña Colada or Bloody Mary can be transformed with a touch of modern flair. By using a centrifuge to clarify the juice, you get a silky-smooth texture and a vibrant, translucent presentation that highlights the fresh fruit flavour.

Nitrogen-infused Cocktails: For a dramatic presentation, bartenders can use liquid Nitrogen to create cascading

Trending Cocktails

According to Rohan, some of the trending cocktails include:

- **Sesame Island Brew:** Spiced rum with black sesame syrup, chocolate bitters and cold brew.
- **Beetroot and Gin Fizz:** Earthy beetroot juice meets the juniper notes of gin, topped with a fizzy soda for a surprising and delightful drink.
- **Smoked Chai Old-Fashioned:** A smoky twist on the classic, using lapsang souchong-infused bourbon and a touch of spiced tea syrup.



smoke or even frozen spheres infused with unique flavours. Imagine a Negroni where the gin is infused with a coffee bean sphere frozen with nitrogen, slowly releasing a delightful coffee aroma as it melts.

Data-driven Flavour Pairings:

Using online flavour profile databases and AI-powered suggestion tools, bartenders can explore unexpected yet delicious flavour combinations. This could lead to a cocktail featuring a smoky mezcal paired with a vibrantly flavoured passion fruit and hibiscus tea infusion, creating a complex and intriguing taste profile.

Interactive Cocktail Stations:

Imagine a bar with a tablet-controlled cocktail station where patrons can choose their preferred base spirit, customise the level of sweetness or bitterness, and even watch as the machine meticulously mixes and dispenses their personalised cocktail. This creates a fun and interactive experience for guests.

Minimalist & Curated Cocktails

Minimalist cocktails are making a splash by redefining the balance between quality and quantity, embrace a 'less is more' approach to presentation. The focus is on high-quality ingredients. Rohan explains that minimalism prioritises using fewer, but exceptional ingredients like fresh, seasonal fruits, top-shelf spirits and house-made syrups or infusions. With fewer ingredients, achieving perfect balance becomes paramount.

"Minimalist cocktails often come in smaller portions and also encourages a more mindful approach to drinking; appreciating the quality and craftsmanship in each sip," Rohan explains.

Minimalist cocktails embrace a 'less is more' approach to presentation. "Here garnishes are often simple, functional, and edible, complementing the drink's flavour without overwhelming it.

Classic cocktails are timeless, but the bar scene is buzzing

with innovative 'curated' drinks. This trend reflects several factors. Consumers crave unique experiences and curated cocktails offer a sense of discovery, catering to adventurous palates. Bartenders are embracing seasonal ingredients, crafting fresh and exciting flavour combinations. The rise of craft spirits provides exciting new tools for exploration and innovation.

He says that curated cocktails showcase bartenders' creativity, allowing them to express their unique vision and push boundaries. There are several reasons why patrons love curated cocktails. The focus on fresh, seasonal ingredients and premium spirits creates a perception of a higher-quality experience. Unique names and back-stories add intrigue and personalisation. Many bars offer a balance of both classic and curated cocktails.

Elaborating about curated cocktails, Rohan Carvalho gives some examples like Boche's Kindi, White Negroni, Smoke and Mirrors and Spicy Paloma.

He goes on to say that fat-washing is one thing that is becoming increasingly popular and also savoury sips and umami bombs are shaking up the cocktail circuit too.

Bartending Strategies

As Rohan points out, bartenders navigate the complexity of savoury flavours in refreshing cocktails through a few key strategies. They use savoury ingredients sparingly to add depth without overpowering the drink. Think accents, not



Bars High on the Innovation

Across India, there are several bars that are now taking a deep dive into innovative cocktails with a focus on sustainability. Some of these are:

Cobbler and Crew, Pune: This sustainability-focused bar uses local and organic ingredients, minimises waste and sources ethically. It has been recognised as India's most sustainable bar in 2024 by '30 Best Bars'.

Native Cocktail Room, Gurugram: It is known for its commitment to zero-waste and circularity and uses leftover ingredients creatively, like fermenting leftover pineapple skins for shoyu and sourcing ingredients from local farms.

Ekaa, Mumbai: This upscale bar utilises sous vide techniques and explores indigenous Indian ingredients, showcasing unique properties in its cocktails.

Lair, New Delhi: This speakeasy-style bar embraces Indian spices and local produce, reinterpreting them into modern and innovative cocktails. Their design also incorporates eco-friendly elements.

Malaka Spice, Pune: This bar showcases farm-to-table practices, sourcing all its ingredients from a local farm that employs sustainable methods. It focuses on fresh, seasonal flavours in the cocktails.



overloads. They balance richness with a touch of citrus, vinegar or other acidic elements to keep the palate cleansed and make the drink feeling light. A touch of sweetness counters bitterness and savoury elements.

"Bartenders use natural sweeteners like honey or agave for added complexity. Even the texture plays a role. These may include frothed egg whites or saline rims to add a surprising and delightful element that complements the savoury flavours. High-quality ingredients also matter," elaborates Rohan. They also use top-notch savoury ingredients without introducing unwanted harshness.

To make the cocktails increasingly popular and innovative, Rohan opines that

techniques like sous vide and centrifuge clarification might be adopted across all the high-end bars for a unique experience, but their high cost might limit widespread adoption in the smaller bars.

Technology like app-controlled systems could see use in busier bars for faster service and potentially lower labour costs. "Indian bartenders are known for their resourcefulness. Expect innovative techniques using locally available tools and ingredients. Think infusion using traditional clay pots or dehydrators made from recycled materials," he says.

New Concoctions

The Indian bar scene is getting adventurous with exciting

ingredients. There are many trending options such as cocktails featuring familiar flavours like cardamom, saffron, and star anise or fresh herbs like curry leaves or mint, adding unique twists to classic drinks. Patrons can now expect cocktails showcasing seasonal fruits like mangoes, passion fruit or jackfruit, or even vegetables like beetroot or bell peppers, creating unexpected flavour profiles.

Indian bartenders, he says, are exploring local grains like millet or sorghum for base spirits, or incorporating regional liquors like coconut feni or cashew feni or the *mahua* flower. Smoked teas like lapsang souchong or even chilli infusions are finding their way into cocktails, adding depth and complexity. 📍

It's the

Experience that Counts!

Bars in India are going all out to convert cocktails into a variety of experiences for the patrons, all of which is aided by the use of new ingredients, equipment and the style of presentation. **Kama K M, Founder and Director, Drinking Safari and The Big Bhaang Theory,** says cocktails are now a 'lifestyle' pleasure and those who prefer cocktails are the ones who are knowledgeable about them and like to flaunt their experiences.



Technology plays a very vital role when it comes to innovations in the bar industry and creating

elite cocktail experiences. From understanding the chemistry of an ingredient being used in the cocktail to serving it, a lot of



it is dependent on technology these days. Infusions which used to take weeks earlier are now being replaced by techniques like roto vap and sous vide, which retain the maximum flavours and minimise any flavour loss, and deliver within a few hours. For example, some bars have a special menu for minimalist cocktails, a new trend that comes with a surprise element.

Given this trend, bartenders are engaged in innovating cocktails, some of the more popular ones being Clarified Bloody Mary, Nitro Espresso Martini, Clarified Negroni, Cold Fashioned, Asian Gin and Tonic, Floral Collins, Gin

Gerale and Pan Asian Hi Ball.

This innovation also includes the glassware and the decor of the bar as also the type of amenities offered to the patrons.

New Techniques and Styles

Fat-washing is now an interesting way to add an extra dimension in the cocktail segment, providing the drink with an intense flavour and a velvety texture. "It gives a fuller body to the drink, opening up an umami profile which gives it a savoury touch," says Kama. Umami is one of the most favoured styles which has a mild

Trending Cocktail Techniques

Kama talks about some cocktail trends spreading through the bar scene in India, which are given below:

- **Cocktails on Tap:** Nitro and carbonated cocktails. Here cocktails are stored in kegs and served fresh on tap, thus retaining the best ideal temperature, texture and fizz.
- **Clarified Cocktails:** This involves the usage of various types of ingredients for curdling the suspended particles in a liquid, separating them and clarifying them using filter paper or a mesh. This retains the taste of the drink and provides a smoother texture with lots of visual appeal.
- **Siphons and Roto Vaps:** This helps re-distillate and can be used for creating interesting non-alcoholic drinks too.
- **Use of Enzymes:** It involves understanding the chemistry of the ingredients and changing or enhancing it using enzymes.
- **Low and No ABV Cocktails:** Less is more these days. It's good for the consumers and for the bars to create different experiences.
- **Asian Spirits and Asian Ingredients:** Asian ingredients in cocktails are also trending these days. These are in the form of syrups, shrubs, bitters, sodas, etc. to create some great umami cocktails.
- **Fancy Ice:** Ice spheres, glass-sized cubes, and infused cubes having fruits, flowers or herbs are being used in cocktails. This helps retain the temperature for longer time, resulting in lesser dilution of the drink so that the same taste is retained till the last sip.

but a lasting aftertaste that brings salivation and sensation to stimulate the throat, roof and back of the mouth as well as the mind's pleasure zones.

"Savoury cocktails with umami feel were always there but they just evolved and became more sophisticated," adds Kama, adding that some classic examples of the umami cocktails include Bloody Mary, Dirty Mary, Paloma, Picante and Bloody Bull.

Ultimately, balance is the key to making a good cocktail. "Any cocktail which can activate all the five senses is a perfect one, which is why the simple cocktails of the erstwhile days have led to more complex drinks with people moving farther from just the sweet and sour flavours," Kama elaborates.

For instance, citric acid instead of classic lime juice is in fashion these days. It helps to enhance the notes of the spirits and usher in a delicacy without overpowering it with citrus. The addition and balancing of saline, bitters, shrubs and syrups have made cocktails more experimental and interesting. "But bartenders should be able to understand the flavour of each ingredient and how they complement other flavours. There is also the concept of how

each cocktail pairs with the food you have. Therefore, the scope for cocktail experimentation is wide and amazing," Kama points out.

Changing Trends

While the current phase in cocktails in India seems like it will stay put for a long time, experts say that trends are like the wind, always changing directions. For example, trends like molecular mixology and Tiki cocktails have taken a backseat all of a sudden. The trends also come

at a cost and as Kama rightly says, the investments can be risky, particularly if a mixologist or bartender decides to switch over to another establishment or if there is a sudden shift in preferences.

Therefore, sustainability of operations is another factor that has to be in tune with the trends. "A good bartender should be able to make a cocktail even with the leftovers. The important thing is to extract the flavours from the fruits and herbs and add these to the cocktails. Cheese, wood, leaves, stalks, waste peels, squeezed lemons – anything and everything can contribute to a great cocktail experience with the right story behind it because it is not just the cocktail that you sell but also the story and experience around it," Kama explains. 📍



Bars that Stand Out

According to Kama, some of the real good cocktail bars in India which are taking the experiences to the next level include Comorin, Home Bar, Lair, Sidecar, Cobbler and Crew, Bombay Canteen, PCO, and Masque. Masque gets an extra mention for its sustainable practices as reflected through its menu.

8
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Classic Cocktails

must for New Variants

Drinking is not just about that. It has evolved into an art and craft where those who serve the drinks need to perpetually come up with new ideas, strategies and mixes to be able to keep the patrons in the bar excited at all times. As **Varun Sudhakar S, Founder – Bar Bundle, (OPC) Pvt Ltd**, explains, this is what has brought in the concepts of Umami Bomb and fat-washing in the bar scenario.



Innovation is what takes any industry further towards growth. And it is no different for the alcoholic beverages industry where innovation and techniques that improve the quality of the drinks is something that is worth investing in and implementing. India today stands

at par with the global level with many bars and bartenders here doing some amazing things and getting recognised. This has the backing of constant adaptation to the ever-changing technology and most importantly, applying it to what is practised in the bars.

To share an example, from an



India bar consulting point of view, says Varun, most of the bars possess a sous vide machine (a cooking technique that involves vacuum-sealing food in a bag and cooking it in a precisely regulated water bath), a water distiller, and forced carbonator or carbonator machines, which help in faster output of menus and bringing out a whole new level of flavour variants to the cocktails and mixed drinks.

There are places that use digital printing, sensory stimulators like perfumes, mood lighting, sounds, etc. to accompany the drinks. A few bars have gone further and have invested in equipment like a rotary vacuum evaporator.

"I have made some cocktails using a sous vide machine to incorporate multiple flavours like sun-dried tomatoes and black pepper in two different combinations in a recent project with One 8 Commune in Bengaluru and the menu is all together called as 'Temptation' which uses a blend of modern and old school methods together," affirms Varun. The intangible benefits of such innovation include recognition in multiple markets, social media content opportunity and getting noticed by investors or patrons.

The Cocktail Scenario

One of the trends banking on innovation is minimalist cocktails that redefine the balance between quality and quantity in today's bar scene. "When we say minimalistic it is not two ingredients mixed but drinks which are technically complex during the "mis en place" stage and hardly takes a minute or

less to build in front of the guest with minimal fuzz, with minimal garnish, etc. These drinks can still be made in quantity with no compromise in quality," explains Varun. This has also led to a shift from classic cocktails to curated cocktails.

Commenting on this evolution, Varun says, "As a beverage consultant, I strongly believe that we still need our classic cocktails to be our core basic to build any new variants." So, curated cocktails might taste and look completely different, but if we start dissecting the same, all have been inspired by a good classic cocktail. For instance, gimlets, which through research and development have now evolved, thereby leading to some very different kinds of gimlets across the country.

"Cost of cocktails I should say will be directly proportional to the cost of ingredients in the market. The CAPEX cost should not be included into your recipe cost. Technically any cost that is put into investing, needs to be looked at as per the spending power of a particular bar. You can start with the minimum equipment and then keep upgrading," Varun elaborates.

Fat-washing and Umami Bomb

The savoury part of a cocktail is basically from the choice of ingredients used to make it. Fat-washing usually helps in getting a rounded mouth feel to the cocktails. If the technique is used properly, it helps in an overall elevated cocktail experience.

Meanwhile, the concept of umami bomb has definitely

The first set of cocktails emerged with umami bomb in it, and that was the Bloody Mary

changed the traditional cocktail experience. Umami bomb is the original blended chilli oil that transforms your favourite dishes into addictive flavour explosions. Industry observers feel that in India the first set of cocktails emerged with umami bombs in it, and that was the Bloody Mary.

“In recent years, we are specifically talking about different formats and items that we use to bring in the umami bomb flavour, as for example, mushrooms, fish sauce, seaweed, etc. It is a good reflection of how our food culture is evolving as well as how the consumers are getting used to more flavour profiles,” Varun elaborates.

He goes on to suggest that the key elements that bartenders rely on include using salts, fresh herbs, spices, pickles, etc. to give a flavour journey, create an aroma and give a balance to

the drink. Given this new taste, foraged items are something very interesting to use though they may be available only for limited periods as per the harvests. **S**



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Creating

a New World of Cocktails

The high-end bars in India are definitely going through a very interesting phase of innovation and a process of offering unique experiences to their customers. High-volume bars are embracing automated bartending systems, some of which can even be programmed to whip up custom drinks based on customer preferences. Some bars are exploring using AI algorithms to analyse flavour profiles and suggest new ingredient combinations.

Robert Hospet, Portfolio Advocate, South India, Suntory Global Spirits, presents a detailed overview.



The world of cocktails is getting a high-tech makeover! Forget flipping through dusty

menus. Technology is making it easier than ever to explore cocktail options. Interactive menus on tablets or apps allow



Imagine sipping a cocktail with edible spheres or enjoying a drink infused with liquid nitrogen

you to browse descriptions, customise your drink, and even order directly from your phone. Then there is the concept of science in the glass. This technique uses scientific principles and fancy tools to create mind-bending textures, flavours, and presentations.

Imagine sipping a cocktail with edible spheres or enjoying a drink infused with liquid nitrogen for a dramatic smoky effect. High-volume bars are embracing automated bartending systems. These machines ensure perfectly crafted cocktails every single time; ideal for busy nights. Plus, some systems can even be programmed to whip up custom drinks based on your preferences. Robert Hospet informs that some bars are exploring using AI algorithms to analyse flavour profiles and suggest new ingredient combinations. “This can lead to unexpected and delightful flavour discoveries, like a whisky cocktail with a hint of lavender or a gin concoction featuring starfruit,” he adds.

Robert goes on to elaborate on some innovative techniques for cocktail preparation:

Sous vide: Bartenders are experimenting with sous vide infusion to gently extract flavours from fruits, herbs and spices into spirits. This can create complex

and nuanced flavour profiles in cocktails. For example, you can try a sous vide pineapple tequila cocktail for a smoky and tropical experience.

Rotovap: Today, bar teams like to have this

in their cocktail lab. Rotovap is a scientific instrument that has become increasingly popular in the cocktail industry. It is a versatile tool that can be used to create unique and innovative flavours.

Emulsification: This technique uses lecithin or other emulsifiers to create a stable suspension of two liquids that wouldn't normally mix like oil and water. This can be used to create new flavour combinations or visually stunning layered drinks. An example is the Bee's Knees with a foamy, citrusy top layer.

New-age Techniques

These are gaining popularity in the bar scene for their focus on high-quality ingredients and balanced flavours. “They move away from sugary, ingredient-heavy drinks and prioritise quality spirits, fresh ingredients, and expert techniques. This allows the true flavours of each component to shine through, creating a more sophisticated and enjoyable drinking experience,” explains Robert.

“One can curate a minimalist cocktail by focusing on quality over quantity, emphasising on fresh ingredients, through use of expert techniques and greater appreciation for the base spirit,” he asserts further.

He thinks the shift from classic cocktails to curated cocktails hasn't been a complete replacement, but rather an evolution driven by several factors like a desire for new flavours and experiences, the rise of the mixologist and seasonality and local sourcing.

Then there is the technique of

New and Unusual Ingredients

Beyond the familiar fruits and liqueurs, the world of mixology is embracing a whole new cabinet of curious ingredients. Here are some unexpected elements making a splash in cocktail creations: smoke and fire, herbal infusions, spicy delights, umami explorations and beyond the plant kingdom. As bartenders continue to explore new flavour frontiers, we can expect even more surprising and delicious concoctions to emerge in the future!



fat-washing which is in vogue in India's bar scene. "Fat-washing is a technique in mixology where fats and oils are infused into spirits to add richness, texture and unexpected savoury flavours to cocktails. It's a relatively simple process that can take your cocktails to a whole new level," he explains.

The first aspect is to choose your fat. "This is where things get interesting! Common choices include bacon fat, duck fat, butter, peanut butter, sesame oil, or even avocado oil. The type of fat will significantly impact the final flavour profile of your drink," Robert adds while explaining the further steps involved in fat-washing.

"Secondly, infuse the spirit. Gently heat your chosen fat to release its flavours. Once it's fragrant, combine it with your spirit of choice (bourbon, rum,

or gin are popular options) in a container. Let it sit for a few hours at room temperature, allowing the flavours to meld," Robert informs further.

Next, chill and solidify the fat. Place the mixture in the refrigerator or freezer. The fat will solidify on top, making it easy to remove. And finally, strain and enjoy! Skim off the hardened fat and strain the spirit through cheesecloth to remove any remaining particles. Your fat-washed spirit is now ready to use in your cocktails. Fat-washing adds a layer of richness and mouth-feel to cocktails, making them more decadent and interesting. But the real magic lies in the savoury element it introduces.

Savoury drinks and the concept of umami bombs are shaking things up in the realm of cocktails, offering exciting new flavour profiles that challenge traditional expectations. Classic cocktails often rely on a sweet and sour flavour profile. Savoury drinks break away from this, introducing umami, salty and even fatty notes to create complex and unexpected flavour experiences.

Umami, the savoury taste associated with broths, aged cheeses and meats, adds depth

and richness to cocktails. It can elevate the drink by creating a well-rounded and satisfying taste profile. Savoury drinks draw inspiration from the culinary world, incorporating ingredients like herbs, spices, olives, and even vegetables. This allows for creative freedom and unique flavour combinations.

"Umami bombs are concentrated infusions of savoury flavours, often created by fat-washing spirits with ingredients like bacon fat or parmesan cheese. These are then added in small amounts to cocktails for an intense hit of umami," explains Robert.

Bartending Tips

Striking the right balance between savoury complexity and refreshing enjoyment is the key to crafting truly delicious savoury cocktails. Some of the tips that Robert shares include the facts that acidity is a friend, sweetness must be with restraint, embracing the herb garden helps, carbonation is a must for the win, texture plays a part, and presentation matters.

"Remember, balance is the key. Start with a base spirit and build your flavours gradually, tasting as you go. Don't be afraid to experiment and adjust the



proportions to find the perfect balance between savoury complexity and refreshing enjoyment for your unique creation,” he adds.

The Way Forward

Innovations and techniques like molecular mixology, automated bartending systems and AI recipe development are certainly making waves in the global bar scene.

Whether they will define the future of Indian bars entirely depends on several factors. Big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Gurgaon, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad are more likely to embrace these trends due to a higher disposable income crowd and a faster-paced, trend-conscious. In smaller towns, traditional cocktails and familiar flavours might still dominate.

High-tech equipment like centrifuges for clarification of the fresh juice or robotic bartending systems can be expensive. Indian bars, especially those outside major cities, might be hesitant to make such significant investments.Using

these techniques effectively requires skilled bartenders who understand the science behind them. Training and education will be crucial for wider adoption of these techniques. Also important is the cost-effectiveness and impact on prices. Some innovations can be cost-effective too. Sous vide, for example, can enhance existing spirits without needing expensive new ingredients.

For high-tech equipment, the return on investment (ROI) needs to be considered. The increased efficiency and potentially higher sales volume might justify the cost in high-traffic bars, but not necessarily in slower ones. The cost of the technique itself might not directly translate to a huge price hike. However, using premium ingredients or offering a unique, technology-driven experience could justify a slightly higher price point for some customers.

Using local and seasonal ingredients alongside innovative techniques can be a cost-effective way for Indian



bars to offer a modern yet familiar experience. Theatrical presentations using liquid nitrogen or creating interactive cocktail menus with tablets could become a way for bars to stand out and offer a memorable experience, even without heavy investment in expensive equipment.

Overall, technology and innovation have the potential to influence the Indian bar scene, but it's likely to be a story of adaptation and fusion, rather than a complete replacement of tradition. The key will be to find the right balance between offering new experiences and staying true to the taste preferences of the local clientele.

Robert observes that some of the bars that are helping the cocktail scenario in India to evolve by imbibing the new techniques and innovations are: Sidecar, New Delhi; Cobbler & Crew in Pune; Comorin in Gurgaon and Hideaway in Goa. 📍



Cocktails

Shimmer and Shine

While a majority of bar owners will agree that the cocktail scenario has certainly taken a deep dive into exciting waters where mixologists are having a great time using various new ingredients and equipment to serve an array of astonishing creations, there is also a hint of despair that the good times may not last forever. Taking a close look at what's happening, **Cinalli Luca, Food and Beverage Consultant with Hospitality Gourmet**, presents his own interesting take.



Just as technology has permeated every sphere of our life, so has it in the space of alcoholic

beverages. Bars are now more than just places where you hang out with friends and down a couple of drinks. Rather, they are

'experiences' and they create 'memories. And that translates into tools and equipment that create cocktails, with a diverse portfolio of flavours and presentation styles. Most would like to term them the 'Instagram' moments!

Overall, as Cinalli Luca, puts it, the 3D machines are at work to create ideas that make the consumption of alcoholic beverages an "amazing" experience. He gives an example of the large impact centrifuge machine that helps create a new layer of taste and mouthful sensations. Such developments have led to some out-of-the-world cocktails such as a mix of guava, cacao butter and osmanthus.

Whither the Trends?

Meanwhile, even though industry observers believe that the trend of minimalist cocktails is here to stay for a long time, Cinalli is of the opinion that this may be on the wane with the demand for minimalist cocktails

decreasing by the day.

He also feels that there has never been a shift from classic to curated cocktails and it has just been a figment of the imagination. "It has always been curated cocktails because the co-called classic cocktails were also curated cocktails back in the 1990s. It's just that we live in different times and so it seems that a new trend has come into place," he says.

One of the examples that Cinalli shares of a 'curated' cocktail is Whisky Sour replaced by a Penicillin Cocktail. According to him, the old-fashioned style continues and Cinalli feels that the best one is that of using bacon because it helps give the cocktail an absolutely different flavour. Even umami bombs may just be a passing phase – a one-time order to check out what it tastes like with no long-term loyalty. "I don't see repeat orders for the umami bombs," he says. The infusions in cocktails that work the best are pickles or vinegar



and a bit of sugar, he adds.

The Run of Bar Takeovers

With the costs of managing bars getting into oceanic depths given the fact that patrons need 'more and new' all the time, how will the operational and financial curve shape up in the near future? He feels that as of now, concepts like bar takeovers are definitely helping to promote bars and brands through the generation of a loud buzz that reaches out to the consumers and attracts them to try out new cocktails. In terms of branding, this works well but the question is will it sustain over a longer timeframe? For the moment though, and in particular for the consumers, it's 'enjoy while it lasts'!

"If organised well and professionally, consumers will have a chance to taste / experience a bar been relocated for a night," asserts the Food and Beverage Consultant. 📍

Trends and Costs

Trends are like phases that come and go and sometimes repeat themselves. The bar scene right now is packed with a wide range of cocktails that make the drinking scene vibrant, energetic and exciting.

Certainly, new kinds of equipments are supporting the experimentations and providing experiential moments. But there is the cost factor too and Cinalli Luca feels that it does not seem too wise for a high-end bar to invest heavily and acquire all the latest gadgets available in the global market. "Rather, there needs to be a sharing platform within bars so that certain machines can be used by several bars with the payment of a fee," he suggests.

Cocktails Take the Sustainable Path

While the primary aspect of any bar is to dish out the most innovative cocktails using different kinds of ingredients and placing strong emphasis on quality, another factor that is now being incorporated is that of implementing sustainable practices. **Aashi Bhatnagar, Bar Manager, Cobbler and Crew, Pune** views that some bars in India are turning out to be a game changer.



The one primary thing that is transforming the cocktail industry is technology. This is being

done through the introduction of sophisticated tools and techniques that enhance both the creative process and the

final product, offering a way to experiment with perfect flavours and techniques. One of the most popular among these is the sous



vide that involves vacuum-sealing ingredients and immersing them in a precisely controlled water bath to infuse flavours. It also allows creating homemade cordials and liqueurs at controlled temperature and in lesser time. Sous vide does not alter the flavours of delicate ingredients like thyme, sage, turmeric, etc.

Aashi informs that another innovative approach is to use advanced carbonation systems that involve using CO2 to carbonate the cocktails, adding a sparkling texture. This enhances the mouth-feel and presentation of cocktails, offering a fresh and exciting sensory experience, as for example, making a simple yet easy pickled soda out of grapefruit and celery shrub for a delicious riff on a Paloma or herbal soda for a highball.

Aashi suggests that using liquid nitrogen is yet another strategy to make the cocktail interesting by freezing the ingredients before muddling or mixing. This intensifies the flavours and creates unique textures. It also allows for dramatic presentations with mist and vapour effects while retaining the colours of herbs like mint or basil. Bartenders are also in favour of fermenting ingredients, which actually is an old practice that has returned to the limelight thanks to incorporating sustainable practices. "Even the non-alcoholic drinks are acquiring different flavours and hues thanks to such tools and innovations," says Aashi.

The Popular Ones

There are some cocktails that have stepped ahead on the popularity chart. And this has

been more due to the mix of different kinds of ingredients. One example is that of Banta Paloma, which uses 'banta soda', a common street version of the soda. It gets its name from the marble in the neck of the bottle which is pushed down for the soda to gush out. Among many patrons who choose the Banta Paloma, it can evoke a nostalgic feeling. There are other sodas too which give a specific flavour to the cocktail, including pepper and salt soda. Meanwhile, cumin, black pepper and black salt add to the flavour too.

Polka Girl is another one high on the charts and for Aashi this is recall of the Hindi cinema of the 1980s when Mithun Chakraborty ushered in the disco dancing style on the lines of John Travolta in American films. "It was all about those flashing lights, revolving platforms, sequined clothes and a very flamboyant acting style," Aashi says. Thus, Polka Girl is a cocktail that contains vodka, orange juice and Galliano. To create a unique amalgamation, Aashi adds homemade nocino that hints of vanilla and star anise along with green walnuts to replace Galliano. Sparkling pineapple juice replaces orange juice to enhance the rich fruity character of Polka Girl.

Emerging Trends

Minimalist cocktails are definitely redefining the balance between quality and quantity in today's bar scene with emphasis on the importance of high-quality ingredients and precise techniques over the complexity of numerous components.



Meanwhile, the shift from classic cocktails to curated cocktails has stemmed from a desire to offer unique, innovative and personalised experiences to the patrons. Curated cocktails allow bartenders to showcase their creativity by combining unexpected flavours, regional ingredients or cultural influences. “This trend appeals to those looking for new taste experiences and a deeper connection to the cocktails they enjoy,” Aashi opines.

At the Cobbler and Crew, ‘Feeling Good’ is a cocktail inspired by its interpretation of a pesto pasta featuring basil, white wine and other ingredients clarified to develop a clear, vibrant cordial. This drink is a sophisticated riff on a Gin Basil Smash and is garnished with parmesan leather for a savoury twist. Its harmonious blend of herbaceous freshness, citrus

zest and savoury depth makes the patrons ask for more. “These qualities make ‘Feeling Good’ not just a drink but a memorable experience, which is often the hallmark of a modern classic,” Aashi states.

She says that fat-washing is also a much sought-after trend, giving a new spin to cocktails. Also, savoury drinks and umami bombs have revolutionised the traditional cocktail experience by incorporating complex, rich flavours typically associated with food. This innovation broadens the flavour spectrum.

Bartenders now balance savoury flavours by carefully selecting ingredients like fresh herbs, vegetables and umami elements such as tomato juice or miso. Proper dilution and fresh garnishes like herbs or citrus twists further enhance a drink’s refreshing quality while maintaining its savoury

complexity. While some of the leading bars are already embracing these trends, Cobbler and Crew has been going a step forward by focusing on local sourcing and using natural sweeteners like honey in their cocktails

New Twists

Ashi says that there are some truly unique ingredients that are now finding their way into cocktails. Take for example, ricotta, which adds a luxurious, smooth texture and a creamy finish to drinks. One exemplary creation is the ricotta fat-wash martini. This cocktail pairs the velvety richness of ricotta with the elegance of a carefully balanced aperitif blend, achieving a sophisticated and refined flavour profile. To create the martini, this ricotta fat-washed spirit is combined with a blend of extra dry and bianco vermouth.

Another unique ingredient, she says, is truffle oil which is added to a cocktail for its earthy depth that infuses into the drink a unique aromatic quality. At Cobbler and Crew, this unique concoction combines the botanical complexity of gin with the refreshing sweetness of watermelon and the subtle tartness of strawberries.

Truffle oil adds the unexpected twist, imparting a luxurious depth to the drink. The cocktail is further enhanced by fat-washing the mixture with clarified butter. As Ashi puts it, Bars are now inventing their own curated cocktails depending on the clientele’s demand and exposure to having cocktails from around the world.” 📍

Sustainable Delights

Aashi lists some bars in India those are certainly pushing the envelope to serve their patrons with surprising and exciting flavours. They include Sidecar, New Delhi which utilises techniques like barrel-ageing and homemade bitters and syrups. It prioritises sustainability by reducing single-use plastics, using biodegradable straws and sourcing seasonal ingredients locally.

The Bombay Canteen in Mumbai is yet another popular bar that offers a blend of classic and innovative cocktails, often inspired by Indian flavours and ingredients. It practices sustainability by prioritising seasonal produce, reducing waste and supporting local suppliers.

On similar lines, Cobbler and Crew stands out for its creative and sustainable approach to mixology. Aashi informs that it sources local and organic ingredients, and includes eco-friendly practices in its operations such as using coasters made from recycled plastic waste, repurposing chipped glassware and using straws made from coconut leaf.



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Exploration

is the Name of the Game

Innovation is certainly leading the way in high-end bars where mixologists are picking up new techniques and even new ingredients to make cocktails and other beverages enticing for the consumers. However, as **Sanjay Rawat, Head Mixologist at MKT-DLF,** points out, it is also important to strike a balance between embracing innovations and preserving the knowledge and appreciation for classic cocktails, ensuring that we honour the past while looking towards the future.



Savoury drinks and the concept of umami bombs have significantly transformed the traditional cocktail experience, says

Sanjay. These innovations have introduced a new depth of flavour that goes beyond the typical sweet, sour and bitter profiles, adding complexity and a unique taste sensation

to cocktails. In the modern bar scene, these savoury and umami-infused cocktails are becoming increasingly popular, often taking the place of classic cocktails. For instance, there are bars that offer twists on the classic Martini and highballs.

These incorporate ingredients like parmesan cheese, soy sauce and miso to create rich, savoury flavours that surprise and delight the palate. Further, tequila-based cocktails have become a new favourite among cocktail enthusiasts. People love the distinct taste of tequila, and instead of just taking tequila shots, they now prefer enjoying it in a well-crafted cocktail. This shift has led to a rise in the popularity of tequila cocktails, as they offer a more sophisticated and enjoyable way to experience the unique flavours of tequila.

New Ingredients, New Techniques

There is also a new-found emphasis on using unusual ingredients like kale, spinach, palo santo and khush roots to create innovative cocktails. These ingredients not only add unique flavours but can also enhance the health benefits of cocktails. Liquid nitrogen is yet another popular choice, used for faster clarification and consistent cocktails, ensuring that each drink is visually stunning and perfectly balanced. "It is the evolving technology that is significantly contributing to experimenting with and perfecting new flavours and techniques in cocktail creation," points out Sanjay Rawat.

Fat-washing is yet another

Traits and Trends

Sanjay Rawat opines that the trends and innovations in the world of cocktails are incredibly exciting and promising. They allow the upcoming generation of mixologists to showcase their talent and bring new, creative ideas to the forefront. These advancements provide the tools to craft innovative and unique cocktails that push the boundaries of traditional mixology.

However, there is a concern that in this pursuit of new trends, mixologists might be neglecting the roots and rich heritage of classic cocktails.

The hunger for learning about these timeless cocktail recipes and techniques seems to be fading day by day, which is lamentable.

technique to create savoury flavours in cocktails. At MKT-DLF, this is used to create umami-flavoured cocktails. "For example, we add melted parmesan cheese to the gin and let it rest for an hour, allowing the cheese to rise to the top. We then strain it using a coffee filter, resulting in a perfectly creamy and umami-flavoured martini called The Royal Martini," Sanjay informs.

At his bar, the most demanded cocktail is a twist on the classic Gibson called the 'Pickled Gibson'. This is made using house-made apricot pickled brine, which adds a unique and delightful flavour, pairing perfectly with the traditional Gibson cocktail.

At MKT-DLF, there has been a significant shift from classic to curated cocktails. Patrons have responded enthusiastically, appreciating the unique and dynamic drinking experiences. One of the standouts is the 'MKT Picante', featuring Patron Reposado with spicy and fruity notes, which has effectively replaced the traditional



Margarita. "Our ingredient-focused menu ensures each cocktail highlights distinct, fresh flavours, keeping our patrons excited about trying new and innovative creations," Sanjay states.

He believes that some of the new technologies in use these days are very cost-effective, such as the sous vide machine and dehydrator. These tools and new presentation props help create cocktails more efficiently and make them visually appealing on Instagram. This, Sanjay feels speeds up the process and attracts more guests, positively impacting a bar's revenue. 📍

Spinning

New Experiential Trends

The trend of bar takeovers by celebrity bartenders and mixologists has undoubtedly added a new dimension to the global nightlife scene. These events create a win-win situation for bars, brands and consumers alike, offering increased foot traffic, enhanced prestige and memorable experiences. As this trend continues to gain momentum, it intersects with broader movements in the bar industry, including minimalist creations, savoury drinks, fat-washing techniques, high-technology methods and a focus on value-for-money experiences.

Together, these trends are shaping a dynamic and exciting future for the world of mixology, where creativity and expertise are celebrated, and every night out can be a unique adventure, says **Ankur Chawla, CEO, ScopeBev.**



Bar takeovers by celebrity bartenders and mixologists are becoming increasingly

popular globally, creating a buzz in the local nightlife scene. These events bring renowned experts to popular bars, offering unique and



exclusive experiences for patrons. For bars, these takeovers mean elevated brand prestige and increased foot traffic, while brands benefit from enhanced visibility and association with top-tier talent.

Consumers, in turn, enjoy the opportunity to sample innovative and expertly crafted cocktails through these exercises.

The Trend

Such bar takeovers can provide a fresh and dynamic twist to the usual night out. For bars, brands, and consumers alike, these takeovers offer a multitude of benefits, from increased foot traffic and enhanced brand prestige to the enjoyment of innovative, expertly crafted cocktails.

The bar takeovers involve inviting a celebrated bartender or mixologist to host an event at an existing bar. These professionals, often known for their creative flair and expertise, bring their signature style, unique recipes and engaging personalities to the venue. This attracts a diverse crowd eager to experience something out of the ordinary.

Impact on Bars

For bars hosting a celebrity bartender takeover can significantly elevate their status within the local nightlife scene. The presence of a well-known figure can draw in patrons who may not typically frequent the venue, leading to increased foot traffic and revenue.

Additionally, the association with a renowned mixologist can enhance the bar's reputation, positioning it as a trendy and innovative hotspot. The allure of a celebrity bartender is a powerful draw for patrons. People are naturally curious and excited to witness a live performance by someone whose work they may have only seen in magazines or on the social media.

This curiosity translates into higher footfall, as regular patrons are joined by newcomers eager to experience the takeover. Hosting a famous bartender or mixologist can significantly boost a bar's prestige. The association with a high-profile professional conveys a message of quality and exclusivity, attracting a more discerning clientele. This can lead to long-term benefits as the bar

All that Glitters is not Gold!

In order to get the real feedback on bar takeovers, this writer spoke with some of the most active people in the trade. As per one of the top mixologists, bar takeovers in India, by and large, are nothing more than an MLM scheme. The mixologist criticised the entire dynamics around it, stating that they often missed the real essence of the cocktails and were just dramatic events more suited for Instagram moments.

Another friend, very popular on the digital media, said the focus on money-making by certain individuals is more than their understanding of the cocktails.

Successful Bar Takeovers in Recent Times

- Dewars Japanese smooth with Kampai Aerocity. It was a special event anchored by Ankur Chawla.
- One night in TOKI-O by Shingo Gokan at the The Leela Palace, New Delhi was one of the most spectacular bar takeovers witnessed recently.
- The Soka team at Bandra Born was unique and special.
- Vesper Bar taking over Library Bar with Smoke Lab at The Leela Palace, New Delhi.
- Sidecar has been at the forefront of some of the top bar takeovers like Coa Hong Kong, Handshake Mexico, Zest Seoul Panda, and Sons Edinburg, etc.
- Some real good bar takeovers were at Khi Khi like Nutmeg and Clove and Off Track from Singapore, Burnt Ends, The Johri, Little Bit Sober at Kolkata, etc.

Here's a shoutout to the bars who made it to the Asia's Best Bars List 2024:

- No. 40: ZLB23, Bangalore
- No. 59: The Bombay Canteen, Mumbai
- No. 68: Lair, New Delhi
- No. 84: Sidecar, New Delhi
- No. 96: Home, New Delhi.

develops a reputation for hosting unique and high-calibre events. It also leads to an exchange of newer concepts. When a celebrity travels to the host bar and offers the drinks, some kind of knowledge, thought process and techniques are being shared amongst the bar guys.

Benefits for Brands

There's no better marketing than 'liquid to lips', especially when it's presented thoughtfully by people known as the best in the business. For beverage brands, partnering with bars for these takeover events can lead to increased visibility and brand recognition. The collaboration with top-tier talent ensures that their products are showcased in the best possible light, often through innovative and sophisticated cocktail creations.

Patrons are likely to take note of the ingredients used in the expertly crafted cocktails, leading to greater brand awareness.

Aligning with celebrated bartenders and mixologists allows brands to be associated with expertise and innovation, thus enhancing the perceived quality of the products and positioning them as top-tier choices.

Consumer Experience

For consumers, bar takeovers provide a unique opportunity to enjoy expertly crafted cocktails that are often unavailable in their regular nightlife experiences. These events allow patrons to sample new and innovative drinks, making for a memorable and sophisticated evening out. Celebrity bartenders bring their signature creations to the takeover events, offering patrons a chance to try something new and exciting. These drinks often feature unique ingredients, creative presentations, and a level of craftsmanship that elevates the overall drinking

experience.

The atmosphere at a bar takeover is electric, filled with anticipation and excitement. Patrons not only get to enjoy exceptional cocktails from around the world but also witness the artistry and flair of a top-tier bartender in action. This combination of taste and spectacle makes for an unforgettable night. As the bar takeover trend continues to grow, it dovetails with several other emerging trends in the bar scene. These trends reflect a broader shift towards innovation and sophistication in the world of mixology. 

Ankur Chawla is the CEO for a leading food and beverage consulting company named ScopeBev and has consulted some of the top liquor brands, restaurants & bars to build this article. He's also the Co-founder of India's first natural spring water in sustainable cans 'Responsible Whatr'.

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Transforming Bars and Elevating Experiences



The trend of bar takeovers and bar programs led by celebrity bartenders is creating waves in the industry, bringing both tangible and intangible benefits to the forefront.

Spiritiz spoke to some celebrated mixologists and alcobev experts from different parts of the world to understand the impact of this trend on bars, brands, and consumers.

Top industry professionals highlight the excitement and buzz generated by these events, attracting new customers while maintaining the loyalty of existing ones. The sense of discovery and novelty adds to the vibrant atmosphere, creating a more engaging and dynamic environment compared to regular nights at the bar. They feel that these bar takeovers provide an exciting opportunity for brands and bars to showcase their creativity, build relationships, and drive business results.

Additionally, bar takeovers offer strategic benefits, including increased revenue and enhanced community engagement. While some experts question the long-term sustainability of this trend, it undeniably promotes innovation, engagement, and community building.

Overall, bar takeovers ensure memorable experiences for customers and provide significant advantages for the alcobev industry.

Let us read what some top names of the mixology have to say on this trend.

Hemant Pathak, GM/Beverage Director –Junoon New York & Jazba New York

The bar takeovers offer a unique opportunity for brands and bars to showcase their creativity, and build relationships and drive business results while enhancing their reputation and engagement with customers and the community.

Also, the fear of missing out (FOMO) effect is elevated due to limited-time cocktails, special menu items or rare products. It also creates a social media

moment. Overall, bar takeovers are memorable experience for the guests while encouraging repeat visits and loyalty.

Yangdup Lama, Co-Founder, Sidecar, Cocktails & Dreams, Speakeasy

When it comes to the benefits of bar takeovers, it's about relationship-building while promoting a particular brand. If done properly, it helps elevate the craft of the bartender as well and build great brand relationships with the fraternity, thus resulting in gains in volumes. It also allows the customer to engage and experience something new, something different which they would otherwise not be able to.

But the trick is to organise bar takeovers with precision and the right elements of excitement.

Lorenzo Di Cola, Head of Brand, Altamura Distilleries

Bar takeover is a really good platform to find inspirations and attract customers. It is a good way to maintain the loyalty of the customers and if the bars have good deals with brands they can have lot of profits from takeovers. Bar takeovers create lots of excitement and buzz.

As for customers, the loyalty factor gets a shot in the arm with the level of excitement and buzz that such takeovers generate.

Rohan Carvalho, Proprietor, Bar Square Hospitality Services

At such bar takeovers, a sense of discovery and novelty is a major draw. The takeover event itself can create a more vibrant and exciting atmosphere compared to a regular night at the bar. Live music, special menus and the buzz of the event contribute to a memorable experience.

Participating in a bar takeover allows consumers to show their support for both the visiting brand and the host bar. This fosters a sense of community and goodwill.

Robert Hospet, Portfolio Advocate, South India, Suntory Global Spirits

Bar takeovers are a strategic win-win for both visiting brands and the host bars. Some of the tangible benefits for host bars include increased revenue, boost to slow nights and revenue from



visiting brands' cocktails while the intangible benefits include enhanced reputation, employee development and community engagement.

From a customer's perspective, bar takeovers offer a chance to break away from the routine experience and explore new and exciting cocktail experiences.

Cinalli Luca, Food and Beverage Consultant with Hospitality Gourmet

With the costs of managing bars getting into oceanic depths given the fact that patrons need 'more and new' all the time, how will the operational and financial curve shape up in the near future? As of now, concepts like bar takeovers are definitely helping to promote bars and brands through the generation of a loud buzz that reaches out to the consumers and attracts them to try out new cocktails.

In terms of branding, this works well but the question is will it sustain over a longer timeframe. For the moment though, and in particular for the consumers, it's 'enjoy while it lasts'!

Kama K M, Founder & Director – Drinking Safari & The Big Bhaang Theory

It's a great thing for bartenders too to get reach and exposure by going out of their comfort zones.

Following stories and posts on social media, most of the aware consumers are always aspiring for experiencing the world's best bars and it's a great way to experience at their favourite aspirational bars and enjoy some new cocktails in their very own city through these bar exchange programs and bar takeovers. 📍



L-R: Sunit Kapila, Head Distiller IGL; Raju Vaziraney, Adviser; V Ravindran, Sr VP Amrut; Alok Singhal, Director IGL and K Prakash, VP Amrut

MaQintosh Whisky

Set to Spread its Wings

Through an agreement between Amrut Distilleries Limited and India Glycols Limited, MaQintosh Whisky will now be available in north India as well. Given that the present whisky market is dominated by just a few leading players, this move will expand the field and provide consumers access to yet another fine quality whisky. As **Raju Vaziraney, Head (Business Development) and Adviser, Amrut Distilleries**, says, this will be the first step towards introducing more interesting expressions.

In what is being termed in the industry as a very significant partnership, Amrut Distilleries Limited has signed a royalty agreement

with India Glycols Limited (IGL) to leverage the strengths and core competence of both the organisations. This will bring into the limelight Amrut Distilleries'

versatile brand MaQintosh Whisky, which has been popular since over three decades because of its brilliant blend. At the crux of this deal has

been Raju Vaziraney who is the Principal Advisor for both Amrut Distilleries and IGL.

Amrut Distilleries, Bengaluru is the pioneer of Indian single malts and is known for its world-class whiskies. As per the agreement, Amrut Distilleries will supply and monitor the blend and also ensure that its accredited vendors supply the packing material as per the prescribed quality standards. IGL, known for its world-class ENA and also the capability of making world-class brands at its state-of-the-art distillery in Uttarakhand, will use its strengths to market MaQintosh Whisky in its home state where it has a leadership position in the relevant segments.

IGL will invest the working capital and maintain full control over the sale and distribution of MaQintosh Whisky and use its competence in sales and marketing in the markets of north India. IGL will build the brand and also ensure that the volume targets are achieved. “It is very difficult to establish a whisky brand in the premium segment in India. It is because the consumer wants world-class quality as well as feel the legacy that the brand belongs to. Therefore, in this case, both the companies will complement each other,” informs Raju Vaziraney.

Maintaining the Quality

The biggest task under this agreement is to first and foremost retain the high standards of quality for MaQintosh Whisky even as IGL

After the initial focus on MaQintosh Whisky, the company is planning for another expression

scales production in its home states of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. As per Raju, this will be guaranteed because Amrut Distilleries will supply the blend with the support of accredited vendors. The SOPs of the brand will be followed through production and the highest quality control standards. There is a brand manual which is being followed in letter and spirit.

“We follow the brand ‘guard book’ to ensure the consistency of all POS material and brand support items. This guard book has for reference all the brand support material samples so that brand personality is consistent



Raju Vaziraney, Head (Business Development) and Adviser, Amrut Distilleries

Look & Feel

Amrut Distilleries has been working on giving MaQintosh Whisky a totally new contemporary look and feel. The mono carton is a jet black one with gold embossing. There are tasting notes mentioned on the gift box and also the core brand values. There are also mixology notes on the gift box which are bound to delight the consumers once they try the cocktails of MaQintosh Whisky.

The emerald green bottle reflects premium quality. The label highlights the rich malt and VMS used as also the brilliant ENS of IGL along with other valuable and rare ingredients.

in the minds of the consumers,” Raju informs.

Here, quality is also tied to pricing, especially given the discerning nature of consumers who choose their beverage in the range of Rs. 800-1200. Both Amrut Distilleries and IGL therefore have their task cut out for them.

The Expansion

The partnership is slated for a long-term period. IGL is aiming for a minimum of 10 percent market share in the relevant premium segment, in the next two years. As regard expansion, Raju admits that it will take quite some time to establish the brand in the premium segment. Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, in particular, are huge markets in the premium whisky segment and the companies will follow a steady-build approach to establish the brand across various geographies.

“I am personally not an advocate of a big bang approach in the market since consumers take time to shift and also new recruits will only gradually adopt and stay with the brand,” Raju states.

He informs that the company will focus on a multi-pronged marketing approach that will include digital campaigning too in order to spread awareness about the brand and educate consumers about the finer points of top-quality whisky.



In the meantime, the Haryana market is on the top of the list given that it is a huge market for the premium whisky segment.

“The premium whisky space has largely been dominated by two or three players for quite some time and the consumers will now get a richer experience with another whole-body blend in the form of the young and classy new look of MaQintosh Whisky,” Raju points out. Meanwhile, after the initial focus on MaQintosh Whisky, the company is planning for another expression. This will enlarge the reach of the brand besides offering two expressions from the house of Amrut Distilleries. Post October, the companies shall step on the gas for a bigger market share. 📍

Be Indian, Drink Global



There is an increasing percentage of young professionals across India for whom premiumisation takes top billing when it comes to the choice of alcoholic beverage. This also means zeroing in on drinks that are truly unique such as soju. And it is here that **Klassic Business Advisory (P) Limited (KBAPL)**, headed by **Anshuman Bhardwaj** as its **Managing Director**, plays a significant role by importing into India some of the best and most authentic alcobev brands from across the world.

Just as with many premium category alcoholic beverages available across the world, soju has its own story. Traditionally, soju is fermented white rice with a crisp flavour, a little apple, and sometimes with a touch of burnt rice.

Soju is often called the Korean vodka, since it is smooth, mild, and mostly neutral, but it clocks in at about half the alcohol

content. The good news is that for those who have developed a taste for soju in India, it is now readily available in India thanks to KBAPL, which was established in 2013 and is involved in the import and distribution of premium alcoholic beverages across India.

Impressive Portfolio

KBAPL introduced the world's most popular soju, Chum Churum, to the Indian market

and expanded its portfolio to include wine, tequila, vodka and gin. In addition, the company offers two wine brands too: Classic Reina French wine range and Cinquena Australian wine range. These wines have performed well, with increasing acceptance and demand among consumers. The company has strategically placed its wine brands in various bars, restaurants and retail stores to

maximise visibility and sales.

The company, says Anshuman, focuses on importing high-quality, authentic products to meet the demands of the Indian market. It offers a range from affordable to luxurious brands. The decision to enter the Indian market was driven by a gap in the availability of premium quality imported beverages in India. Over the years, the company has built strong relationships with manufacturers, ensuring the authenticity and quality of the products they import.

focus on covering pan-India by the end of 2024. The company has continually evolved to meet market demands, adding new categories and brands to its portfolio,” says Anshuman.

Adding to the Bouquet

KBAPL plans to expand its portfolio by adding new categories such as Scotch whisky, single malt, aged whiskies, while aligning with its vision of offering a diverse range of premium alcoholic beverages.

These additions are in line with the company's mission to introduce the best quality and authentic products to the Indian market, catering to the sophisticated and evolving tastes of Indian consumers. The new additions to KBAPL's portfolio have performed well, gaining acceptance in multiple markets and cities across India. These products are available in Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and West Bengal.

The brands in their ambit have presence across a wide range of on-trade (bars, restaurants) and off-trade (retail stores) outlets, reflecting their growing popularity and demand.

Soju: A Cultivated Choice

The main consumers of soju in India are young adults and professionals who appreciate its unique taste and quality. Soju sells the most in metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and in the state of Tamil Nadu. A significant percentage of the soju's consumer base in India is, attracted by its smooth flavour and versatility.

KBAPL has different variants of Chum Churum, including Chum Churum Original Soju, Chum Churum Peach, Chum Churum Apple, Chum Churum Grape, Chum Churum Blueberry, Chum Churum Strawberry and Chum Churum Yogurt.

This journey has been marked by a commitment to understanding and fulfilling the evolving tastes and preferences of Indian consumers. “Our main objectives include ensuring the availability of high-quality, authentic products and expanding market reach. Over the years, KBAPL has grown its portfolio and market presence, with a



KBAPL plans to expand its portfolio by adding new categories

Finding its Niche

KBAPL sets itself apart from competitors through its commitment to authenticity, quality, and a diverse product range. The company’s focus on importing products from their original regions ensures authenticity.

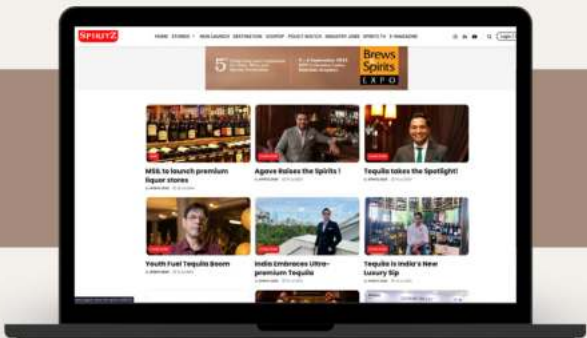
KBAPL’s market reach and expansion programme reflect its dedication to introducing and distributing top-quality brands across India. The marketing strategy it adopts is important too. KBAPL promotes its brands through various marketing and promotional activities, including

events, tastings, social media campaigns, and collaborations with bars and restaurants. “These efforts are aimed at creating awareness and developing consumer tastes for its products, ensuring that consumers are well-informed about the unique qualities of each brand,” Anshuman states.

In order to make the products widely available, the company operates through a well-established network

of distribution and sales channels, including wholesalers, retailers, and on-trade partners, government depots, duty-free shops, etc.

It collaborates with reputable channel partners to ensure the efficient distribution and availability of its products across India. In addition, KBAPL has its own direct presence with manpower in many cities of the Indian market.



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Making IDAAYA

as Good as the Himalayas



There are many unique features about the recently launched Idayya sipping rum, the best one being that it is made from the pristine waters of the great Himalayas. Giving traditional rum a modernist spin along with a combination of the traditional and the contemporary, **The Good Distillers** has found its niche with IDAAYA, which is what will take it places across the world, as the company's **Founder and CEO, Karishma Manga Bedi** puts it.

A premium sipping rum crafted against the backdrop of the Himalayas. Doesn't that sound enticing, mysterious, alluring and elevating? It is, and the brand that has come into being in its very 'natural' surrounding is Idayya. Created with the intent of promoting India's heritage of spirit-making and a vast reserve of methodologies and ingredients, Idayya is rooted in a vision to present the best of India to global audiences. This dark sipping rum is created from a 12-year-old rum aged in bourbon casks along with Indian molasses spirit.

Water from the snow-capped Himalayas is used in the making of the rum, which is blended in sal wood casks using Indian methodologies, and further bottled using the solera system, which is a process for ageing liquids like wine, beer, vinegar and brandy by blending different ages and vintages together to create a consistent quality. As such, Idayya



is a culmination of passion for the craft of rum-making, reflecting a deep reverence for tradition and an aspiration towards uncompromising skill.

"Our vision at Those Good Distillers is to create speciality spirits representing India that are competing with the best in the world, made without compromise and compelling in their story and taste. We create for joy and passion, with detailing at every level," says Karishma. It's a journey that comes packed with its own romanticism, as she puts it.

The Craft

"During our research we found that the oldest reference to a drink made by fermenting and distilling from sugar cane juice was done in India. Our ancient book, the *Arthashastra* made reference to this as a kind of Amlasidhu. There have been many different ways that liquid has been treated within the Indian cultural context and inspired by these, we are using two of the techniques to treat our casks, which is proprietary to Idayya," explains Karishma.

"These are 'lepam', where a paste is smeared inside the cask and 'dhoopam' where the casks are smoked. Historically, these were done to treat, disinfect and close gaps in the casks," asserts Karishma.

Such treatments also allow the casks to take on distinct characteristics of the ingredients used, which in this case are all indigenous to India.

"Additionally, we also believe that how the barrels work at a higher altitude is a kind of magic. Given changes in temperature between day and night and

between summer and winter as against more tropical climate where there is less variation, such changes in the mountains allow the barrels to contract and expand, along with temperature, barometric temperature and humidity – all playing a part in the flavour profile imparted to the rum," Karishma elaborates.

The brand chooses to work with the indigenous sal wood that grows at the base of the Himalayas. The solera system for bottling allows for great consistency in the product. All of these, Karishma points out, have given her rum a distinctive edge and a point of differentiation from other rums not just in India but globally. What has also helped is having an experienced master blender like Christopher Arms overseeing the process. Based out of the UK, he is a highly experienced and commercially aware technical innovator in the field of alcoholic beverages for over 30 years.

"Taking into account the exposure that we have to Indian traditions and Ayurvedic practices, we jointly worked together to craft the profile for Idayya," Christopher says. More than 60 rums across the globe were sampled before committing to the aged one from Latin America that the team thought was perfect to build the profile of the liquid that they wanted. The brief clearly outlined that they wanted to create a product that was neither feminine nor too masculine.

Christopher was particularly intrigued by the idea of fusing Indian traditions to the world of rum that enabled the birth of this layered drink.

Calling the Shots

Prior to taking on the role of CEO at The Good Distillers, Karishma has had over 20 years of experience with leading global brands such as Dior, TAG Heuer and Sephora. She has also helped build many start-ups in India before finally deciding to channel her love for discovery and curiosity towards this new entrepreneurial adventure. The company's Director and investor, Samrath Bedi is a first-generation entrepreneur credited with creating a first-of-its-kind luxury Ayurvedic skincare and beauty brand named, Forest Essentials.

Also on board is the Founding Director, Shivam Misra, who has over 24 years of experience in the liquor industry in India and emerging global markets.

its status as a world-class spirit.

At the time of Idaaya's entry in the world of fine rums, there has been a shift that is taking place at a global level in the rum industry. Today, the complexity and sophistication that is being implemented in rum making has allowed it to take centre-stage with a more nuanced and novel approach.

In recent times, there has been a change in narrative away from old lore to talk about processes, craft and the experience of sipping, all of which is shaping the context for a modern outlook to rum. 📍

Not Without Challenges

The path to creating the rum they wanted certainly had its stumbling blocks. For one thing, there isn't much transparency over nomenclature, route to market, duties and so many other aspects of this business which differ from one state of India to the other, she says.

In addition to this, making a product in India that confirms to EU standards (which are most rigorous), while trying to market the same in India, duty-free and Europe created a whole host of challenges. The brand, however, found support from others within the industry for guidance but eventually, it was the courage of conviction with a problem-solving mindset and a result-oriented perspective that won the battle.

"The brand thus far has received a very positive and heart-warming response. Idaaya is true to its testament of presenting a world class spirit," remarks Karishma.

Currently, Idaaya is available at duty-free in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru and will be launched

in trade, in India soon. It will also be available internationally starting with the UK at the beginning of 2025. Its pricing varies between markets, and ranges between Rs. 7,500-11,700.

Acclaims for Idaaya

Prior to its launch this June 2024, Idaaya has received international acclaim by winning a Double Gold at the International SIP Awards 2024 and it earned Silver at The Asian Spirit Masters and a Bronze at the International Wine and Spirits Competition 2024, further solidifying





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Kombucha

Pours Flavour and Health



When the enterprising duo of **Adithya Kidambi** and **Shishir Sathyan** decided to indulge in some experimentation with kombucha in their kitchens, they weren't really sure of what the outcome would be. Interestingly, they discovered a flavourful drink that would also rate high in terms of health quotient. And that is how **Mossant Fermentary** came to be.

Experiments lead to discoveries. That's a proven fact. The 'Eureka' moment is how one describes it. And it has been no different for two young entrepreneurs in the beverage industry whose journey began out of a shared passion for healthy living and a curiosity

for fermentation. They started experimenting in their kitchens, brewing different kombucha flavours and discovering the amazing health benefits of natural fermentation. And as things progressed, they saw a gap in the market for tasty, better-for-you alternatives to sugary sodas, which motivated them to turn

their hobby into a business. "We wanted to create beverages that not only taste great but are also high in terms of health quotient. So far, this has been an incredible journey from those initial kitchen experiments to sharing our kombucha with a wider audience, and we are excited to continue innovating

and bringing more unique flavours to the market,” says Adithya Kidambi, CEO, Mossant Fermentary. As to the choice of kombucha as a category, it was a deliberate one – creating a canvas to innovate with different flavour profiles. The beverage uses the best loose leaf tea, herbs, flowers, natural flavours and extracts.

Appealing Flavours

The rose flavour is inspired by Tamil Nadu’s paneer soda. It is made with a natural rose extract, making it versatile for cocktails or to enjoy on its own. The duo chose hops for its distinct taste. It is brewed with Assam black tea for its malty characteristics. This kombucha is dry-hopped to give it a citrusy-mango aroma as well as a sharp, crisp taste. The Earl Grey Lavender is a contemporary version of the English classic – French Lavender soothes the bright bergamot and caramel notes of this Earl Grey tea from Assam.

Mossant Kombucha is crafted through a precise fermentation

process involving tea, sugar and a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast. This process converts the sugar into organic acids, creating an easily digestible beverage that is rich in minerals and vitamins. “Our traditional fermentation methods ensure that the nutritional values of our products are preserved, delivering a unique and satisfying drinking experience,” informs Shishir Sathyan, Co-Founder, Mossant Fermentary.

Their belief is that kombucha has the potential to replace traditional sodas, especially for those looking for healthier alternatives.

The Kombucha’s USP

Mossant offers the same fizzy, refreshing experience but with added benefits like organic acids and vitamins that sodas sometimes lack. “Our philosophy of ‘crafting a better soda for India’ revolves around providing a healthier alternative to traditional sodas. By focusing on fermented beverages like kombucha, we



aim to offer products that are not only refreshing but also beneficial, free from artificial additives and excessive sugars,” Adithya says.

The primary consumers for this beverage include millennials and Gen Z who are open to trying new products with diverse flavour profiles as well as those making conscious dietary choices, often due to conditions like diabetes. The kombucha market in India is experiencing a growth rate of approximately 15 percent year-on-year.

The Tea Factor

The company has identified some experienced and professional tea dealers who have helped it by sourcing the teas directly from estates or cooperatives at auctions to ensure that it has access to the choicest of teas harvested each season. All these teas come in single-use, vacuum-sealed and nitrogen-flushed packs that are opened and used entirely so that the exposed tea leaves are always used immediately.

This ensures the highest levels of freshness which helps capture the volatile aromatic compounds. Sustainability is also a part of the process. All the spent teas are repurposed as fertiliser on

the lands, which is excellent for Nitrogen fixation and greatly

benefits the soil; making it more fertile and healthier for farming.

The Way Ahead

Elaborating on how their kombucha beverage will find new consumers and territories in times to come, both Adithya and Shishir says that they are strategising to broaden the product range and enhance their presence both online and offline, aiming for increased market penetration across various platforms and locations.

Their mission is to provide consumers with cleaner and better alternatives for their beverage needs, starting with kombucha. The duo is also looking to enter many different categories beyond kombucha with a commitment to clean-label products. This means focusing on using high quality, natural ingredients without any artificial additive.



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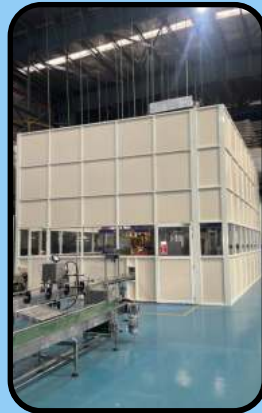
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Foster's Beer Infused New Spirit to Festivity



The much-anticipated inaugural edition of BigTap Fest 2024, held at Delhi Haat Pitampura during 15th-16th June, was a triumphant success, leaving behind a trail of unforgettable memories. The fest was also a shining example of spirited partnership between industry and consumers.

As the presenting sponsor, Foster's played a pivotal role in making the edition of BigTap Fest a remarkable success, elevating the experience for attendees and setting a new standard for future edition of the event.

Raising the Bar

During 15th and 16th June, the evenings at Delhi Haat Pitampura were transformed into a bustling hub of excitement and entertainment. The atmosphere was electric, with hundreds of festival-goers pouring in to enjoy the

diverse range of heady beverages, enlivening performances, and culinary delights. The vibrant fusion of peppy music and the exquisite taste of Foster's Beer enlivened the partying spirits at the fest.

Cocktail lovers thronged at the Oaksmith's Bar, which was offering refreshing and innovative cocktails. They offered an Instagramable opportunity to the attendees at their artistically created photo booth.

At the fest, a delightful line up of beers including Foster's, Sterren, Bad Monkey, Six Fields, Bee Young and Lone Wolf kept the audience well-hydrated and in high spirits.



Foster’s Beer Bar: A Highlight of the Fest

Foster’s Beer stood out as a central figure in this grand celebration. One of the standout attractions at BigTap Fest 2024 was the Foster’s Beer bar. It was illuminated with lights and special silver colour decoration, creating an ambience that complemented the vibrant energy of the festival.

This dedicated space quickly became a favourite spot for the attendees, providing a relaxed and inviting environment to unwind and savour the refreshing taste of Foster’s.

Unforgettable Entertainment

The collaboration between Foster’s Beer and BigTap Fest 2024 was a resounding success, highlighting the synergy between a world-class beer brand and a premier musical festival. Foster’s not only enhanced the overall experience for festival-goers but also reinforced its reputation as a beloved and innovative brand.

Festival-goers left with glowing reviews, praising both the festival and Foster’s involvement. “The Foster’s Beer Bar was the perfect place to relax and enjoy the festival atmosphere,” said one attendee. Another added, “The interactive experiences made the

festival even more memorable. Foster’s really knows how to engage with its audience.”
Overall, BigTap Fest 2024 embodied the power of collaboration and the joy of shared experiences. Foster’s Beer, as the presenting sponsor, played a crucial role in creating an event that will be remembered for years to come.
Animated atmosphere and fun-filled activities induced attendees to eagerly anticipate the next edition of the event. As the echoes of laughter, music, and clinking glasses fade, the memories of BigTap Fest 2024 remain vibrant, thanks to the remarkable presence of Foster’s Beer. 📍



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The Enigma of Priorat

Where Wine and Olive Oil Converge in Unrivalled Brilliance



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In the sun-kissed landscapes of Catalonia, there exists a realm where time seems to stand still, and nature's bounty flourishes in its richness. This is Priorat, a region where the essence of tradition intertwines with the vibrancy of innovation, yielding wines and olive oils of exquisite allure. Surrounded by villages that still carry a medieval feel, the valley has divided its geography into two parts – the Priorat d'Oli (The Priorat of Oil) and the Priorat d'vin (Priorat of Wine) and prides itself on the produce of both these regions.

To understand the allure of Priorat's wines and olive oils is to delve into its storied past. This hallowed land has been cultivated

since ancient times; its terraced vineyards and gnarled olive groves bearing witness to centuries of toil and triumph. Nestled between the imposing Montsant





mountains and the shimmering Mediterranean Sea, Priorat boasts a terroir unlike any other in Spain.

What sets Priorat apart is its rugged terrain, characterised by slate-laden soils known as ‘llicorella.’ This mineral-rich foundation, coupled with a harsh continental climate tempered by maritime influences, imparts a distinctive character to the grapes and olives that call this land home. It is this marriage of geology and climate that imbues Priorat’s wines and olive oils with an unmistakable sense of place, a tangible expression of terroir that captivates the senses.

Priordei’s Legacy

Among the pantheon of Priorat’s offerings, certain labels stand out as exemplars of the region’s prowess. In the realm of wine, Priorat’s ‘Clos Galena’ reigns supreme; a bold and expressive blend of Garnacha and Cariñena

that speaks of the land from which it springs. With its deep ruby hue and intricate tapestry of flavours, this iconic cuvée is a testament to the artistry of Priorat’s winemaking tradition.

At the heart of Priorat’s enological and gastronomic tapestry lies Priordei, a beacon of excellence revered by connoisseurs and epicureans alike. With a lineage tracing back to the region’s ancient monastic traditions, Priordei embodies the essence of craftsmanship and dedication. Every bottle of wine and flask of olive oil that bears the Priordei seal is a testament to the uncompromising pursuit of quality and authenticity.

Equally deserving of accolades are Priorat’s olive oils, crafted with the same reverence and attention to detail as their vinous counterparts. Of these, Priordei (meaning - God of Priorat) stands tall! From the peppery intensity



Priorat is a mosaic of contrasts and confluences; a tapestry woven from the threads of tradition and innovation, history and modernity

of their 'Arbequina' varietal to the velvety smoothness of their 'Picual' selection, each drop of Priordei olive oil comes across as a celebration of flavour and finesse. 'Picual' olives hold a

special reverence in the field of olive oils and is amongst the most popular olives for oils along with 'Arbequina'. This slightly bitter and umami laden fruit lends a smooth well-rounded finish to the oil which is quite characteristic of the oils from their stables and has led them to win several awards from the olive oil consortiums from around the world.

Contrasts and Confluences

What sets Priorat apart from other wine regions in Spain is its singular combination of tradition and innovation. While steeped in centuries-old customs, Priorat embraces modern techniques and technologies to push the boundaries of possibility. This dynamic equilibrium between the old and the new infuses its wines and olive oils with a sense of vitality that is as intoxicating as it is irresistible.

Moreover, Priorat's wines and olive oils offer a sensory journey unlike any other. Whereas the wines of Rioja may exude elegance and refinement, and those of Ribera del Duero whispers of power and structure, Priorat's offerings dazzle with their complexity and depth.

Similarly, while Andalusian olive oils may seduce with their buttery textures and herbal nuances, Priorat's elixirs captivate with their boldness and intensity.

In essence, Priorat is a mosaic of contrasts and confluences; a tapestry woven from the threads of tradition and innovation, history and modernity. Within this kaleidoscope of flavours and aromas, Priordei stands as a beacon of excellence, guiding the way to a world of exuberant sensory delight.

A Symphony of Senses

In the realm of gastronomy, few regions in our blue planet can rival the allure of Priorat. Here, amidst the rugged beauty of Catalonia's hinterland, wines and olive oils of sublime complexity and finesse find their apotheosis.

With Priordei leading the charge, Priorat's enological and gastronomic treasures continue to captivate the hearts and palates of aficionados the world over. As one savours the fruits of this enchanted land, one cannot help but marvel at the alchemy that transforms humble grapes and olives into elixirs of unparalleled brilliance. 





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AHP Hospitality Challenge 2024 Concludes with Success

The seventh edition of the AHP Hospitality Challenge 2024, organised by the Association of Hospitality Professionals (AHP), has been concluded in the recent past.

Winners were awarded at the Airforce Auditorium in New Delhi, on 25th July 2024. The theme of the prestigious event was 'Sustainability.' The event showcased the exceptional skills and creativity of the competing

hospitality professionals across various competitions.

The AHP Hospitality Challenge 2024 brought together over 350 participants from across the country, competing in 20 diverse categories. The



competition began with the Front Office Master competition at Radisson Paschim Vihar, New Delhi, followed by three days of rigorous culinary competitions at Banarsidas Chandiwala IHM, New Delhi, which covered four unique competitions: The War of Spirits and Art of Table Setting at Surya Hotel, New Delhi, and the Art of Bed Making and Art of Towel Folding at The Park Hotel, New Delhi. The competitions were conducted under three categories -Professionals, Students, and Special Ability.

These events honoured the winners and celebrated their remarkable achievements,

bringing together industry professionals, experts, and enthusiasts for an evening of recognition and celebration. The winners of each category demonstrated exceptional skill and creativity. Vir Singh from Radisson Hotel Sec-29 Gurugram triumphed as gold winner in the War of Spirits – 2024.

Some of the other distinguished gold winners from different categories were Tanmay Chugh from Radisson Udyog Vihar, who showcased his talent in the Sweet Sensation - 2024 category; D Balaji from Chennais Amrita, who excelled in Dressing a Cake - 2024 (Students); Ravi from Crowne Plaza Okhla and Pankaj Panday from The Suryaa, New Delhi, won in the Ornamental Breads - 2024 category; Nilesh Kumar from Eros Hotel, New Delhi, emerged the gold medal winner in the International Confectionary - 2024 category.

This year's event was marked by a strong emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity. One of the highlights of the evening was the participation of 18 specially-abled professionals who showcased their exceptional skills, proving that talent knows no boundaries. Their participation enriched the competition and highlighted the industry's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. Additionally, a single parent excelling as a hotelier was specially recognised, underscoring the resilience and dedication of individuals balancing professional

excellence with personal responsibilities. This inspiring moment highlighted the industry's commitment to diversity.

"The 7th edition of AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards is not just an event but a celebration of the exceptional achievements and dedication of hospitality professionals across India," pointed out Devipshita Gautam, Founder and General Secretary of the Association of Hospitality Professionals. "The event underscored the importance of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation in shaping the future of the hospitality industry. The presence of specially-abled professionals and the recognition of a single parent excelling as a hotelier were poignant reminders of the industry's commitment to diversity and equal opportunity.

We are honoured to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our participants. Their contributions inspire us all to strive for excellence and innovation," she added further.

"The AHP Hospitality Excellence Awards 2024 is a testament to the dedication and passion of our industry professionals. This year's focus on sustainability and inclusivity has set a new standard for the future of hospitality. We are proud to recognise the extraordinary contributions of our colleagues who continue to push the boundaries of excellence," asserted Vinod Gulati, President of the Association of Hospitality Professionals. 📍





Triveni Engineering Ventures into IMFL Segment

Triveni Engineering and Industries Ltd. (TEIL) has entered the Indian-made foreign liquor market with two new whisky brands: The Crafters Stamp Rare Artisan Blended Whisky and Matsya Triple Reserve Blended Whisky.

The Crafters Stamp Rare Artisan Blended Whisky is a harmonious blend of Scotch malts aged in bourbon and sherry oak casks, combined with mature Indian malts and fine Indian grain spirits.

Matsya Triple Reserve Blended

Whisky is an extraordinary blend, harmonizing full-bodied bourbon and sherry cask-aged Scotch malts with the finesse of matured Indian malts and fine grain spirits. These new whiskies, recently launched in Uttar Pradesh, cater to the super premium and premium whisky segments, promising a memorable sensory experience.

Godawan Single Malt Exclusive to The Palaces of Taj

Godawan Artisanal Single Malt has partnered with Taj Palaces to create a unique limited-edition whisky named Godawan Single Malt Exclusive to the Palaces of Taj. This special release celebrates the rich heritage of Indian spirits and the unmatched luxury of Taj hospitality.

Each bottle is a masterpiece, adorned with the iconic 'Jaali' design, reflecting the intricate beauty of the palaces that symbolize the legacy of Taj. Bottled at 46% ABV, this exquisite whisky is currently available in Mumbai for Rs. 11,000 and will soon be launched at Taj Palace Jaipur, Rajasthan, and Taj Palace Falaknuma, Telangana.

This small-batch release of 300 bottles features a rich dark brown whisky with a gentle and mellow nose. Its complex aromatic bouquet includes notes of vanilla, cream, fresh wood, and a hint of cinnamon. The unique double-maturation process and Virgin American White Oak casks gives the whisky a high level of complexity.



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Event	When	Where	Link	Host
Brew and Spirits Expo	4-6 September 2024	KTPO Convention Centre, Whitefield, Bengaluru, India	https://www.brewsnspiritsexpo.com/	
The Australian Wine Tasting Tokyo 2024	10 September 2024	Andaz Tokyo, Toranomom Hills	https://www.wineaustralia.com/	
Vinexpo India	16-17 September 2024	Jio World Center, Mumbai, India	https://vinexpo-india.com/	
SpiritZ Conclave and Achievers Awards 2024	18 October 2024	Le Méridien Gurgaon	https://spiritzawards.com/	 SpiritZ Achievers' Awards
Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair 2024	7-9 November 2024	Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center	https://www.hktdc.com/	
ProWine Mumbai	8-9 November 2024	Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai, India	https://www.prowine.in/	
ProWine Shanghai	12-14 November 2024	Shanghai New International Expo Centre(SNIEC), Shanghai, China	https://www.prowine-shanghai.com/	
Brews and Wines Expo 2024	14-16 November 2024	India Expo Mart, Greater Noida (Delhi-NCR), India	https://www.novaexporium.com	
SIAL India	5-7 December 2024	IICC, New Delhi, India	https://www.sialindia.com/	
Wine Paris and Vinexpo	10-12 February 2025	Paris	https://wineparis.com/	
ProWine Germany	16-18 March 2025	Düsseldorf, Germany	https://www.prowein.com/	

ASIO BLOODY MARY

RECIPE:

1. 2 oz / 60 ml of ASIO Vodka
2. Followed by 4 oz / 120 ml of Tomato Juice
3. 0.25 oz / 7.5 ml of Fresh Lemon Juice
4. 4 Dashes of Tabasco Sauce
5. 2 Dashes of Worcestershire Sauce
6. Pinch of Salt
7. Pinch of Pepper
8. Ice cube
9. Shake well and Strain into Glass
10. Garnish with a Lemon wedge and serve!



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The Happy High brings Cholatails



The Happy High, a Mumbai-based wine and spirits consultancy and education firm, has curated the beverage list for the ITC Grand Chola, Chennai with an aim to bring nuggets of the Chola legacy and local favourites to the fore. The curated beverage menu is named Cholatails.

Cholatails is a beverage menu made for the global palate and it celebrates the Chola legacy and the local cult. It is now available at The Cheroot Malt and Cigar Lounge and Tranquebar, at ITC Grand Chola, Chennai.

Curated by a dedicated team of beverage enthusiasts, the Cholatails comprises unique concoctions and innovative flavours designed to tell stories of the Chola dynasty and on key ingredients that form the core of the Tamil cuisine.

Diamond jubilee of Sofitel



Sofitel Mumbai BKC marked the 60th anniversary of the global Sofitel brand with a dazzling Moulin Rouge-themed soirée on

28th June. The event, held in collaboration with Travel + Leisure India and Lifestyle Asia India, saw a gathering of prominent guests, media figures, and leading influencers.

Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet, the Consul General of France in Mumbai, attended as the Chief Guest.

Enhancing the sensory experience, a perfume bar by Scentido offered guests a unique olfactory journey. The evening's culinary highlight featured a selection of exquisite French cuisine, showcasing the culinary expertise of the Sofitel Mumbai BKC team.

Cigar Smoking World Championship

The third season of the Cigar Smoking World Championship (CSWC) concluded recently. Hosted by the India Cigar Club in Delhi, at Miss Pinto on 30th June 2024, this year's event was marked by remarkable performances, with participants setting new benchmarks in the art of slow smoking.

The championship saw participation from 16 enthusiasts. Aakanksha Vaisht emerged as the star of the event, shattering the previous record with an astonishing time of 1 hour, 59 minutes, and 2 seconds. The previous record, set in 2022, stood at 1 hour, 15 minutes, and 23 seconds. Sahil stood second with 1 hour, 28 minutes followed by Aanchal achieving 1 hour 23 minutes, and 30 seconds. All three top performers exceeded the previous record, adding a triumphant chapter to the championship's history.



The Butcher Shop at Crowne Plaza Greater Noida



Crowne Plaza Greater Noida has announced the launch of their brand new culinary property named The Butcher Shop, which is expected to appeal to meat enthusiasts and BBQ connoisseurs alike. It is opened at Mosaic, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida.

Its menu will feature specially curated BBQ delicacies, showcasing a delightful assortment of meats and seafood, featuring both signature dishes and seasonal highlights.

The Butcher Shop offers the flexibility of dining in or opting for takeaway services. The meat to be served at The Butcher Shop has been procured from some of the country's most premium suppliers, with quality being the utmost priority.

THSC leadership meets Minister



The top leadership of the Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) recently met the Minister of State (Independent Charge) Minister of Skill Development &

Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary and had a discussion focused on the expansive opportunities within the tourism and hospitality sectors and the pivotal role of skill development in creating meaningful employment for the youth.

Chaudhary highlighted the potential within tourism and hospitality and stressed the importance of skilling initiatives to empower youth, helping them secure rewarding jobs.

The meeting underscored the collaborative efforts between the government and THSC to foster a skilled workforce, contributing to the nation's economic growth and development.

Samhi to rebrand its properties



Samhi Hotels Ltd is set to rebrand two hotels acquired from the ACIC portfolio. The 217-room hotel in Pune will be rebranded as a

Courtyard by Marriott after renovations by FY2026.

Similarly, the 114-room hotel in Jaipur will be transformed into a Tribute Portfolio by Marriott, enhancing its market position in the popular tourist destination. These agreements follow Samhi's proven expertise in hotel acquisitions and turnarounds.

Additionally, four other ACIC hotels will shift from franchise to management agreements with Marriott, aiming to boost their operational performance and market presence.

'Ghoomar' in Old Delhi

Chandni Chowk, the historic centre of Old Delhi, has welcomed a new culinary adventure – Ghoomar, a traditional Rajasthani Thali restaurant. Ideal for large gatherings, Ghoomar offers an authentic taste of Rajasthan right in the heart of Old Delhi.

Located on the 2nd floor of Dawatpur, Omaxe Chowk, which promises an expansive dining experience with its 6,000 sq ft space, Ghoomar can accommodate over 150 guests.

The new Ghoomar setup was inaugurated by Executive Director of Omaxe Group, Jatin Goel. The highlight of the event was Ghoomar's signature pure vegetarian Rajasthani thali, which includes over 24 authentic items that celebrate Rajasthan's rich culinary heritage.



Hoteliers' initiative to support community



Accor India and InterGlobe Hotels, in collaboration with HOPE Foundation and InterGlobe Foundation, hosted a graduation ceremony at Pullman New Delhi Aerocity for the students of 2023 and 2024 batches from the Nursing Assistant, Retail and Hospitality courses.

This CSR initiative aims to provide young individuals from disadvantaged societies with employable skills. Over 130 students were awarded their NSDC certificates at the ceremony. This initiative provided a unified programme offering integrated skill development opportunities in retail, hospitality and nursing assistant fields for underprivileged youth.

The programmes have transformed the lives of over 220 young people with over 150 graduates being successfully employed.

NinjaLive for home parties



CaterNinja, India's pioneering digital catering brand, introduces NinjaLive, a unique live food service featuring pizzas, tandoor-based starters, *chaats*, pasta, and

momos prepared at home.

Designed for gatherings of around 20 people, NinjaLive offers hot, delicious food with easy setup and affordable prices. Ideal for house parties, birthdays, and corporate events, NinjaLive addresses common home delivery issues by providing fresh, steaming dishes.

Founded in 2018, CaterNinja combines culinary artistry with convenience and plans to expand its innovative services to 20 cities soon. NinjaLive represents a natural evolution of this commitment, bringing interactive culinary experiences directly to customers' doorsteps.

Indore hoteliers plant record saplings



The Indore Hoteliers Association (IHA) and the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) (HRAWI) set a world record by planting 1.1 million saplings in a single day as part of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' drive.

The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, and Madhya Pradesh's Chief Minister, Mohan Yadav attended the record-setting event, which saw over 700 hoteliers participating. Led by BJP's Kailash Vijayvargiya, the initiative contributed to Indore's entry into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Over the past week, the team had planted a total of 5.1 million saplings, showcasing a remarkable commitment to environmental sustainability.

BIRA 91 Opens Second Taproom in Delhi

India's leading beer brand, BIRA 91, has inaugurated its second taproom in Delhi, located at Pacific Mall in Tagore Garden, West Delhi.

The new taproom offers a diverse selection of craft beers on tap and a gourmet food menu curated by celebrity chef Vicky Ratnani. Designed to be the ultimate leisure spot for beer enthusiasts, BIRA 91 Taproom at Tagore Garden promises a unique and enjoyable experience.



Effingut launches craft beers in cans

Effingut announced the release of its renowned craft beers in cans. Founded over a decade ago by Manu Gulati, Effingut has expanded from a modest brewpub in KP, Pune, to a national brand with 11 outlets, including 4 brewpubs, 2 bistros, and 5 E2Go locations.

Effingut's new venture into canned beers aligns with its mission to make craft beer a staple for all occasions. Initially, their Bavarian Wheat Beer and in Cider Ale Kashmiri Apple will be available in 500-ml cans across Pune and Mumbai, offering beer enthusiasts the legendary Effingut experience in a portable form. Effingut's portfolio includes over 230 distinct beer styles.



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Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi promotes Ashwni Goela



Hospitality veteran Ashwni Kumar Goela has been promoted to the post of Vice President Operations at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi and as Area General Manager at Radisson Hotel Group.

Previously, Ashwni held the position of Area General Manager for Delhi (NCR) and GM at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport. Before that, he served as Area GM for Rajasthan & Agra and GM at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport.

Courtyard Goa Colva names its Cluster GM



Marriott International has announced the opening of the Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva. With this launch, Babita Kanwar steps into an enhanced role as

Cluster General Manager for both Le Meridien Goa, Calangute and Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva.

Kanwar brings a unique combination of hotel sales, revenue management, and operations experience to her role. Recently celebrating her 23-year milestone with Marriott International, she began her career in F&B Operations with Taj and Oberoi.

Le Meridien Kochi appoints new GM



Le Meridien Kochi appointed Satish Srinivasamurthy as the General Manager of the hotel. With a career spanning 23 years with many reputed hotel brands, Satish brings with him a strong

understanding of the hospitality landscape.

He began his career with food and beverage at The Oberoi Bengaluru in 1999, followed by overseas stints in the Bahamas and Switzerland. He also worked at The Claridges Surajkund and Hyatt Pune. Satish's journey with Marriott International began in 2013 as the F&B Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Chennai.

Pacific Hospitality appoints Gaurav Dhayani



Pacific Hospitality has appointed Gaurav Dhayani as its new Beverage Corporate Head. With his extensive experience and impressive achievements in

the industry, Gaurav will lead the company's beverage division, driving innovation and excellence in mixology.

Gaurav brings a wealth of expertise, having served as Corporate Beverage Manager at NOHO and AIDU, and as Diageo's Brand Ambassador for North India. His illustrious career includes stints at Olive Bar & Kitchen, Taj Palace New Delhi, and Grappa at The Shangri-La New Delhi.

New Director of Finance for Shangri-La Eros New Delhi



Shangri La Eros New Delhi has appointed Parul Jain as its Director of Finance. With nearly two decades of diverse industry experience, Parul

brings exceptional expertise to driving the hotel's financial success. In her new role at the property, Parul will oversee all aspects of financial operations, including budget management, financial reporting, and risk mitigation.

Her career includes pivotal roles at prestigious brands such as The Lodhi, New Delhi, The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, and Barista Coffee.

Sofitel Mumbai BKC promotes Sidney Dcunha



Sofitel Mumbai BKC promoted its Director of Culinary, Sidney Dcunha to Director of Food & Beverage and Culinary. Sidney, who joined Sofitel Mumbai BKC in

2022, has since then been instrumental in further developing the hotel's robust culinary offerings.

Having worked with some of the leading Michelin star venues in New York, under celebrity Chefs such as Michel Roux Snr, Floyd Cardoz, and Hemant Oberoi in India, Sidney brings close to two decades of experience in the culinary space.



A NEW HAVEN IN DELHI FOR CRAFT BEER ENTHUSIASTS AND FOOD LOVERS

BeeYoung Brewgarden, the first direct-to-consumer model of Kimaya Himalayan Beverages, aiming to redefine the craft beverage scene in Delhi. BeeYoung Brewgarden is presented as an European styled microbrewery in the heart of the capital and emphasizes principles of craftsmanship, community, authenticity, and celebration.



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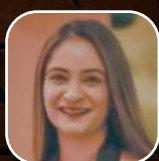
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