

Indian single malts pip foreign brands in sales

Overtake Global Giants For The First Time

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New Delhi: Move over Glenlivet, Macallan, Lagavulin and Talisker — it's now time for homegrown single malts, whose sales have for the first time overtaken those produced by the global giants.

Early estimates prepared by industry body Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) show that Indian single malts have cornered a share of around 53% of total sales in 2023. Of the total sales of around 6,75,000 cases (of nine litres each) of single malts in India last year, around 3,45,000 cases were retailed by Indian-origin makers, while the remaining 3,30,000 were by Scottish and others.

"In our estimate, the local brands grew by around 23% in 2023, while the imported ones grew at a more conservative 11%. This is a milestone," Vinod Giri, director-general of CIABC, told TOI.

The numbers are seen as a milestone for homegrown players. "It's not everyday that such a feat is achieved. From being mocked around till just a decade-and-a-half back, Indian whisky makers have co-

HIGH SPIRITS

'000 cases of 9 litres each (sales)		
	2022	2023
Indian-origin	281	345
Scottish and foreign makers	296	330
Total	577	675

Top Indian brands | Amrut, Paul John, Rampur, Indri, Gianchand

Top global brands | Glenlivet, Macallan, Lagavulin, Laphroaig, Talisker

Source: Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies



me a long way as they are now second to none in terms of quality and refinement," says Thrivikram Nikam, joint MD of Amrut Distilleries.

The craze for 'Made in India' brands has prompted Diageo and Pernod Ricard, which source their single malts mainly from Scotland, to join the party launching local brands. Diageo had introduced the Godawan in 2022, while Pernod recently launched its first Indian single malt Longitude 77.

"India is a fast-growing market and very diverse, and the younger audience is experimenting and gravitating towards niche products. Consumers want newer

stuff, and there is lot of value in newness," says Kartik Mohindra, chief marketing officer at Pernod India.

Paul P John, chairman of John Distilleries that makes its single malts in Goa, says the foreign brands are "panicking now" as Indian companies grow bigger. "They were caught napping and are now trying to catch up. Unfortunately, they are taking short cuts, and are producing stuff here that they don't understand. India has arrived."

Indian single malt makers dismiss the "arrogance of Scotch puritans" who swear by 'Scottish weather, Scottish water, and Scottish barley' to root for the "irreplaceable quality" of the European brands. Prem Diwan, chairman and MD of Devans Modern Breweries, which distils its whiskies in Jammu, says, "The quality of Indian single malts is absolutely fantastic, which is one of the main reasons fuelling their demand. While Scottish makers are very traditional in their processes, Indian makers love to experiment.

Pernod's Mohindra says there is enough demand for all the players to keep growing.