

The emergence of the craft gin movement, emphasising its provenance credentials, is a marketing masterstroke, which seems to be perfectly timed to coincide with the global rise of social media. This has resulted in consumers' growing interest in authentic brand stories, says **Abhishek Modi, Managing Director, Modi Illva India Pvt. Ltd.**



## The rise of gin is unstoppable

Contextualising the growth of white spirits during the last decade, Abhishek Modi, Managing Director, Modi Illva India Pvt. Ltd., says vodka has grown in India by a CAGR of 1.1 percent over the last decade. "The growth has been majorly driven by imported vodka," and flavoured vodka, he reveals. As for gin, he says growth of gin has been the new exciting trend, with a global resurgence of premium category.

"The rise of gin in India is seemingly unstoppable. Though the industry is small, but India is seeing a momentous growth in the consumption of imported gins and new local craft gins," he asserts.

However, the market of white rum has been shrinking gradually. Its industry has de-grown at 2.1 percent CAGR over the last decade. White tequila has carved a niche for itself and has grown by 7.7 percent CAGR during the last decade, though the



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industry base is very small (30,250 Cs. sold in 2019).

However, Abhishek says that presently with the ongoing Covid pandemic, the business climate for white spirits is not very encouraging in the country as on-premise business is not fully operational while restrictions on social gatherings continue.

### Metropolitan Drinks

Echoing the sentiments of those in the know regarding consumer demography, he reiterates that white spirits is generally consumed by the younger generation; it is equally weighted towards male and female consumers. This is unlike whisky which is majorly consumed by males. He goes on to add a caveat, saying, "Gin and tequila's presence is still limited to metropolitan cities in India



**Abhishek Modi**

while vodka & white rum's presence in India stretch beyond metropolitan cities to A & B class towns."



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Talking of innovations, he says gin category is in the midst of the most exciting period in decades, with new products, new ways to drink gin and new recruits to the category.

“The ‘craft’ trend has perhaps influenced the gin segment to a greater extent than any other alcohol segment,” he adds. “The emergence of the craft gin movement, emphasising its provenance credentials, is a marketing masterstroke, which seems to be perfectly timed to coincide with the global rise of social media. This has resulted in consumers’ growing interest in authentic brand stories,” he elaborates.

## The Gin Decade

Another trend is sweeping through the vodka segment, he discloses.

“Flavours are back in style — but with a new craft focus. The rise of all-natural flavours follows another trend of healthier consumer lifestyles. “The vodka category also witnessed innovative convenient packaging sizes and designs for special occasions,” Abhishek maintains.

In the white rum category, small batch series got off the ground with limited edition ranges. Spiced and flavoured rums are seeing a surge in popularity, he points out. Once considered a drink to be ‘shot’, tequila is transforming into a sipping beverage – and one of premium standard. The white spirits industry is now seeing the creation of varying colours, flavours and consistencies.

“The emergence of the mezcal market – a distilled alcoholic beverage made from any type of Agave plant – has encouraged tequilas to be more experimental; producing ‘boutique’ drinks,” Abhishek articulates. As to which white spirit will capture the market in India in the new decade, he

confidently states that this decade belongs to gin.

## Mixologists are Key Players

With regard to the role of mixologists and bartenders in promoting white spirits, he candidly states, “White spirits can be used to make great cocktail drinks and hence their volume contribution from bars and restaurants is much higher when compared to other spirits.” He goes on to add that bars and restaurants play a critical role in white spirits’ volume growth as they provide opportunity for consumer trails and bringing-in new consumers. “Their role is also vital in building brand image as consumers spend long hours at restaurants and bars,” he points out.

According to him, mixologists seek quality cocktails which offer great stories and a taste of something unique. “They bring lot of variety and innovations in the products they serve. These intriguing cocktail flavours entice millennials, increasing the overall white spirits consumption,” he avers.

He feels that “Flavour profile is going to be the main draw for consumers, especially in the premium vodka and premium gin category. Therefore, launching new exciting flavours would define the growth story of premium vodka and premium gin category in India, in the post Covid-19 phase.” “Special packaging is another important area to be looked in to”, he adds.

“Currently, we are present in the premium vodka category with our brand Artic. Artic is a 100 percent premium pure grain vodka, prepared with natural mineral water and a secret Italian ingredient. It goes through a meticulous quadruple distillation process and multiple filtrations to provide a distinctive character and superior taste,” he discloses.

Modi Illva is envisaging to add new exciting flavours to the existing portfolio of Artic. Besides, the company is also exploring the craft gin space. **S**

