

Sustaining Good Practices from Seed to Sip

Going beyond labels and paying lip service, the spirits industry is seriously committed to sustainable practices; here is how top brands across the world have fared.

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Excess for the sake of excess or as a trapping of success is no longer the calling card of the AlcoBev industry, once considered the founder member of the indulgent creed. The progressive modern drinker is more controlled and aware than generations past, with consumers looking for ethical, and environmental, brands to support. Discerning consumers are increasingly opting for sustainable spirits and demand information on what their spirits are distilled from, how they are distilled and what impact this has on the environment.

Consumers choose to buy certain brands because of the values they represent; a quest for excellence, an attention to detail, conviction in worthwhile causes. Environmental awareness and sustainability are key concerns for brand supporters so any initiatives that brands commit to increase sustainability have a positive effect on the minds of consumers.

BOTTOMS UP
In order to ensure a sustainable source of American White Oak, Beam Suntory's bourbon brands, are supporting commensurate forestry practices.

SUSTAINABILITY

SPIRIT | TREND

Mindful consumption

Environment protection, conservation of natural resources, and prevention of pollution have been important since the middle of the 20th century. However, given the current, somewhat alarming, indicators of global warming adoption of sustainable practices have acquired greater urgency than before. While the urgency may be newfound, it is a matter of pride that the Alcobev industry was among the earliest to recognise and adopt sustainable practices.

Use of fallen oak (as opposed to felled oak) to construct barrels to mature whisky, conservation of unfiltered water systems in the neighbourhood—both adopted by a leading American liquor manufacturer is an example that instantly springs to mind. Large-scale use

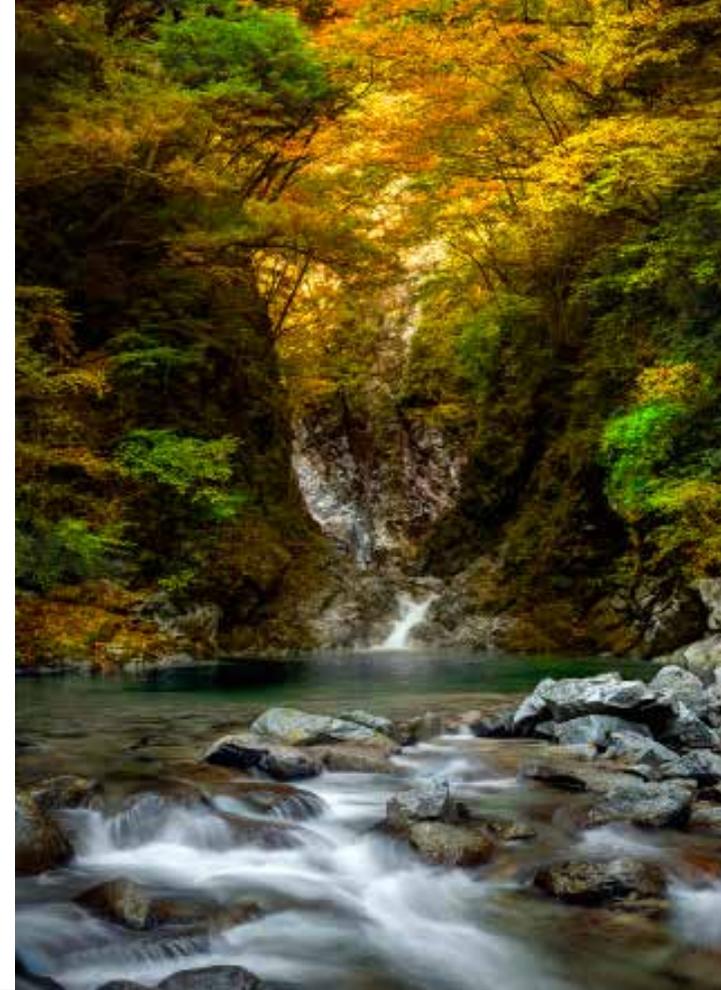
of windmills and solar panels to replace traditional, thermal sources of energy (with their inevitable carbon emission), investment on conservation and regeneration of water sources, R & D leading to development of innovative, eco-friendly packaging, recycling of spent wash, old barrels, leftover botanicals, etc are other initiatives voluntarily adopted by the Alcobev industry in many countries in the West.

Thankfully, the Sustainable Spirits Movement is gathering momentum as consumers increasingly focus on the sustainability of their choice of spirits. This is happening all over the world whether in bars, shops, and even while making cocktails at home during lockdown. Businesses across the globe are also much more focussed on their

environmental impact and how they can achieve net zero. The fact that world leaders are meeting in Scotland, the land of whisky and gin, at the end of this year will ensure that the spirits industry remains focussed on sustainability, net zero and the impending climate emergency. Brands recognise that environmental sustainability contributes to value creation, reputation and thereby success.

The India Story

Earlier, the economy segment IMFL producers were using plastic (PET) bottles and have only recently moved to adopting beverage cartons for their products in the low and mid-range segments in select Indian states. Aseptic Beverage Cartons were chosen primar-



per cent of its packaging made from recycled content and to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions across direct India operations as early as 2025.

Amrut Distilleries, India

For Amrut, recycling of glass containers, re-design of processes to reduce energy consumption, achievement of zero-waste and investment in renewable sources of energy are areas of more intensive focus.

They have adopted a variety of energy conservation measures in the plant operation to bring down the energy requirement, which in turn reduces the fuel requirement and carbon emission. Also, to reduce the use of water, they have adopted a Zero Water Discharge system, where waste water is mostly recycled after treating it. Treated effluent water is used in sugarcane farming, cleaning the plant and to flush toilets. What's more, the entire roof of the distillery has been used to recharge groundwater resources.

Brown Forman

The sustainability vision is to responsibly grow the brands and company, while protecting and enriching the natural environment. For its India-focussed sustainability initiatives it has accelerated local procurement for buying promotional packaging materials by developing vendors that can produce international quality of gift packaging, thereby reducing the carbon footprint on sea-freight transportation. The Brown Forman India office has also implemented a 'No Plastic' usage policy that disallows any form of plastic to be procured or used by the company. Also, one of the key criteria for selecting the Brown Forman India office location was the availability of rainwater harvesting capability in the building and access to abundant natural light to conserve energy. In addition, the entire product portfolio, in India, is offered in glass bottles that are 100 per cent recyclable.

Paul John, India

Paul John is one of the founding members of AARC [Action Alliance of Recycling Beverage Cartons] that pledges to adopt sustainable practices in coordination with central and state statutory bodies to collect and recycle beverage cartons.

Gunning for the Guzzlers Pernod Ricard

Recycling and Waste Management: The Glenlivet Capsule-Collection campaign broke the internet and provided the latest example of brands, bucking tradition by developing world class cocktails wrapped in a thin protective coating made of edible and biodegradable seaweed. Further, all of the by-



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TOAST OF INDIA

Amrut Indian single malt whisky is matured on oak casks in Bangalore at an altitude of above 900m above sea level

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TAPPING THE SOURCE

Both Maker's Mark and the James B. Beam Distilling Co. have established natural water sanctuaries in Kentucky to protect local water sources that are vital to the crafting of bourbon.

ily due to its recyclability and sustainability as 70 per cent of it is derived from a natural source—paperboard. The remaining 30 per cent consists of polymers which can be recycled. Aseptic Beverage Cartons also provide an optimal foot-print during logistics, thus the 3R's of waste management: reduce, reuse and recycle are well covered.

Diageo

Diageo India, a subsidiary of the global leader, Diageo plc practices some of its strongest advocacy work in tackling alcohol misuse, promoting responsible drinking, women's empowerment, water stewardship and reducing environmental impact. It has a complex supply network with 48 manufacturing units spread across 29 states, with 90 per cent of these manufacturing units in water-stressed regions. Hence water is a key part of sustainability initiatives. Diageo has met its 2020 water replenishment target, two years ahead of time. These initiatives have helped community-focussed projects across severely water-stressed areas in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Also, by 2030, Diageo aims to have 100



SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Michter's, USA, The world's best declared American whiskey is evaluating its own 145-acre Springfield farm operations for forest and wetland habitat enhancement.

later this year in Clermont, KY, will be the company's first distillery powered by renewable energy, and Beam Suntory sites across the world have begun transitioning from higher carbon fuels, like coal and fuel oil, to lower carbon fuels, such as natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas. Both Maker's Mark and the James B. Beam Distilling Co. have established Natural Water Sanctuaries in Kentucky to protect local water sources that are vital to the crafting of bourbon.

With Beam Suntory's iconic bourbon brands ageing only in new charred oak barrels, the world category leader is stepping up to ensure a sustainable source of American White Oak for future use in production, and to support commensurate forestry practices.

Michter's, USA

The world's best declared American whiskey has developed a broad recycling and reuse programme that includes sending barrels for reuse in other spirits, reclaiming discarded spirit for fuel ethanol, and recycling of various materials used in the supply chain. Michter's is also actively working with its suppliers on local sourcing initiatives to further reduce its carbon footprint as well as evaluating its own 145-acre Springfield farm operations for forest and wetland habitat enhancement. Additionally, all Michter's projects now require proof of environmentally-sustainable disposal, salvaging, and recycling of materials.

Campari Group, Europe

Their criteria of social responsibility and

products from the distillation process are used to feed livestock or converted into renewable energy. Energy Efficiency: All wash stills are equipped with heat recovery systems, using 40 per cent less energy than a standard still with traditional condensers. The Glenlivet is supporting a research project with Aberdeen University and The James Hutton Institute, to investigate nature-based solutions for 100 per cent barley, sourced from a local grain group to improve sustainable farming practices and better land management.

Beam Suntory

Committed to investing more than \$1 billion to make a positive impact on the environment, consumers, and communities, the company has set sustainability ambitions to go beyond net-zero carbon emissions, reduce water use by 50 per cent and achieve 100 per cent watershed replenishment. Apart from this, the premium spirits leader is also making long-term commitments to sustainability across every facet of its value chain, from seed to sip—a programme known as Proof Positive. Further, The Fred B. Noe Craft Distillery, set to open

TOASTING MILESTONES

England's Silent Pool Distillers has created the 'world's first' spirit in a paperboard bottle to coincide with Earth Day.

Green Man Woodland Gin is contained in a bottle made by Frugalpac and is five times lighter than glass alternatives. The bottle uses 77 per cent less plastic than other plastic bottles and has a carbon footprint six times lower than glass or PET plastic bottles.

Diageo and Bacardi have revealed plans to launch products in paper bottles, but Silent Pool claims its new gin is the first commercially available paper bottled spirit on the market. Silent Pool's main still is powered by biofuel, reducing emissions by up to 90 per cent.

The Lost Explorer Mezcal has revealed a new partnership with the Voice For Nature Foundation, which aims to support organisations and initiatives that promote positive climate change. The Lost Explorer turns agave waste into fertiliser, uses solar panels to power its distillery and replants at least three agave plants for each one used. Each bottle is also made from more than 50 per cent recycled crystal scraps, while its stopper is made from natural wood.

Last year, Bacardi partnered with biodegradable products manufacturer Danimer Scientific to create a bottle made using natural oils derived from seeds including palm, canola and soy. The resulting plant polymer-based bottle will biodegrade after 18 months without leaving behind microplastics. A traditional plastic bottle can take up to 400 years to decompose. The move will replace 80 million plastic bottles used by the firm every year. Bacardi rum will be the first spirit to appear in the new bottle, before the plant-based material is rolled out to replace single-use plastic across brands including Bombay Sapphire, Grey Goose vodka, Patrón tequila and Dewar's Scotch whisky.

In November 2020, Johnnie Walker owner Diageo unveiled its Society 2030: Spirit of Progress plan, which features targets covering sustainability, diversity and positive drinking. The company aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions in India by 2025. Diageo also plans to reduce the water required in production by 30 per cent by 2030 and will deliver more than 150 community water projects across the world. Over the next 10 years, the

company also aims to transition to using 100 per cent recycled content in plastic packaging and 100 per cent of its packaging will be widely recyclable.

American whiskey maker Heaven Hill Brands unveiled its first official environmental sustainability strategy for the next 10 years. In order to conserve ecosystems that support the business, Heaven Hill will also sponsor the planting of 5,000 trees of 'substantial size' in local communities, supporting sustainable white oak supplies and sustainable agriculture.

Moët Hennessy, the wine and spirits arm of LVMH, has partnered with the Clean Cargo initiative, which aims to decarbonise sea transport. Moët Hennessy ships its products primarily by sea to minimise pollution, boost energy efficiency and protect marine biodiversity.

Calvados brand Avallen has committed to saving water through its production by using only 1.2 litres to make a single bottle. Avallen said it takes 13 litres to make a bottle of Bourbon on average. Avallen uses eco-friendly packaging, with its label made from apple pulp.

sustainability is consistent with their values and focussed on four key areas: People, responsible practices, environment and community involvement. Their main environmental goals refer to the reduction of Green House Gases (GHG) emissions from direct operations by 20 per cent in 2025, by 30 per cent in 2030, and from the total supply chain by 25 per cent in 2030; to the switch to renewable electricity for all European production sites by 2025.

Arbikie Distillery, Scotland

An active member of the Sustainable Spirits Movement, it seriously shoulders climate responsibilities as both farmers and distillers. Arbikie launched the world's first climate-positive gin, Nàdar in 2020, which is distilled using the Daytona variety of peas and removes 1.5kg of carbon from the atmosphere per 70cl bottle, making it carbon-negative and climate-positive.

Sullivan's Cove, Australia

Declared the best single malt in the world, its sustainability policy is just as distinguished. As a relatively small producer, Sullivan's Cove has the ability to lower its environmental impact in ways that larger producers may not be able to. All shipping packaging is made from recycled and repurposed cardboard waste that it sources from local businesses. These shipping materials are produced in-house and allow it to eradicate plastic, and non-biodegradable, packaging in their logistics channels.