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PARTY SPECIAL

- RISE OF ARTISANAL COCKTAILS
- HOTELS WELCOME NEW YEAR

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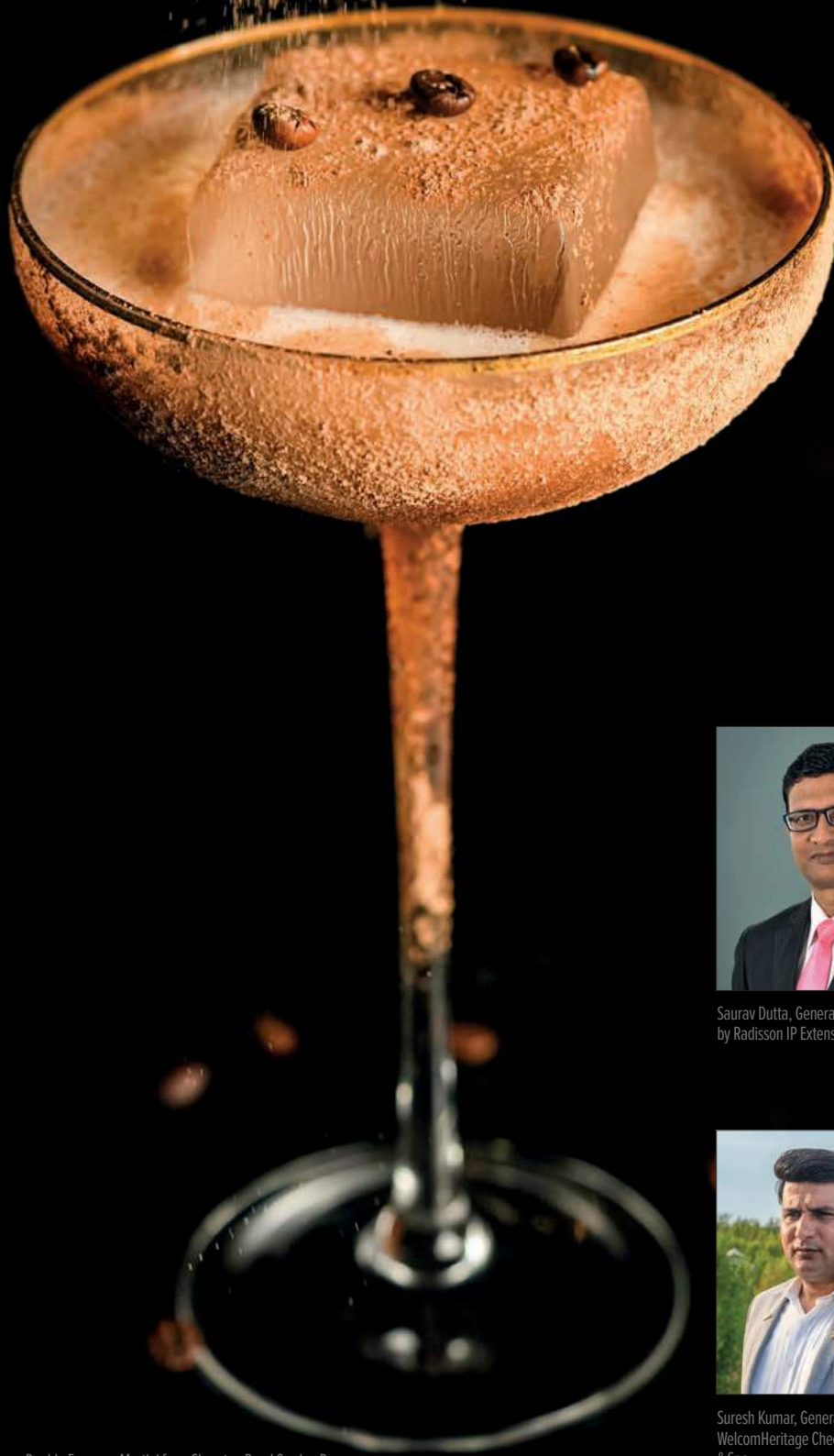
COUNTDOWN TO EXCELLENCE

The 15th Hotelier India Awards Jury Gather In Mumbai

Cocktails Go Arty?

Artisanal cocktails that emphasise creativity, high-quality ingredients, and unique, thoughtful presentation are making waves in the hospitality F&B scene.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



Double Espresso Martini from Sheraton Bund Garden Pune



Saurav Dutta, General Manager, Park Inn by Radisson IP Extension, New Delhi



Suresh Kumar, General Manager, WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa,

There is a quiet revolution brewing in bars... Bartending is heading the crafted route as artisanal cocktails that use special ingredients, flavours and taste profiles are coming to the forefront.

THE CONCEPT

The definition of an artisanal cocktail is craftsmanship, quality ingredients and attention to detail. It begins with using good quality base spirits and incorporates the freshest produce available - preferably sourced locally - to express peak flavour and sustainability. House-made syrups, unique infusions, and exotic additions that include bitters and botanicals with specialties ensure that the drink has depth and complexity. "Techniques such as muddling with precision, infusion, and the more advanced techniques like sous-vide or molecular mixology, all add to the cocktail's uniqueness. It is not simply

about presentation: handcrafted garnishes, herbs, edible flowers, and novel vessel utilisation all add layers and sensory appeal. The principle at play is one of balance between layered flavours, proper temperature for the drink, and control over dilution,” says Saurav Dutta, General Manager, Park Inn by Radisson IP Extension, New Delhi

LOCAL LOVE

While travellers are looking for unique, authentic experiences, hotels are driven by the desire to create something bespoke and fresh, of premium quality, while being true to the spirit of the local region at the core. The regional surroundings, including the local communities and environment are often the first source of inspiration. Suresh Kumar, General Manager, WelcomHeritage Cheetaahgarh Resort & Spa, says, “We craft all our offerings with the intention of showcasing authentic Jawai while seamlessly integrating premium modern luxuries and services. This ethos extends into our cocktail menu as well. Besides the classics, our menu features unique cocktails where local ingredients are used to highlight the flavours found in the local cuisine and culture. We also create cocktails to pair perfectly with dishes on the food menu.” Sagar Kulkarni, Director of Food & Beverage, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel, adds, “We have redefined the cocktail experience by blending innovative techniques with premium, locally sourced ingredients. From smoky infusions that elevate traditional dishes to zesty citrus blends that refresh the palate, our expert mixologists combine classic techniques with contemporary flair. One standout creation is our Indian-inspired cocktail, featuring raw mango, raw imli, saffron, and coriander seeds—a drink that perfectly complements our vibrant culinary offerings. A key highlight of our program is the use of seasonal ingredients, ensuring that our offerings remain fresh, vibrant, and in tune with the season.”



Sagar Kulkarni, Director of Food & Beverage, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel



Ashutosh Singh, Food & Beverage Manager, Saraca Hotel Lucknow

CREATIVITY CUES

Hotels are redefining the bar experience with artisanal cocktails by using house-infused and crafted cocktails that speak to creativity and local flavour. Park Inn by Radisson IP Extension, New Delhi uses fresh regional ingredients plus a house-made element, such as unique infusions and syrups, from smoked chilli to exotic teas, all for great flavours. Modern fermentation and items such as kombucha and shrubs add unique taste profiles. Artisanal cocktails have always generated a buzz in the niche category of new drinks. Techniques like fermentation, mixed with molecular mixology are sending waves among bartenders. Customisable cocktails offer a personal touch that guests appreciate, while social media amplifies the appeal of visually stunning beverages. “The focus is on both the science and



Brunton Boatyard's Armoury Restobar curates a cocktail menu inspired by regional flavors, sourcing spices from iconic locations like the Mattancherry spice market and fresh, seasonal ingredients from nearby producers



Cocktail at Taj Lakefront Bhopal

art of mixology, elevating the drinking experience through thoughtful preparation, presentation, and sensory appeal. What makes it different is the attention to detail at every step, from ingredient selection to the final presentation. It starts with choosing high-quality spirits like artisanal brands of gin followed by sourcing freshly plucked betel leaves (paan), freshly squeezed lime juices, and herbs like mint, over store-bought mixers. We use house-made ingredients like syrups (honey, fennel, rose), infusions (herb- and spice-infused alcohol) and sake with some ice cubes," shares Ashutosh Singh, Food & Beverage Manager, Saraca Hotel Lucknow.

RESEARCH RIGHT

Developing artisanal cocktails inspires us constantly as it involves researching trendy drinks, ingredients, and guest feedback. Industry reports, social media, and events trigger ideas in different ways, yet unique ingredients are sourced locally and globally. "At Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan, the creation of artisanal cocktails involves researching local, seasonal ingredients and exploring global trends to craft unique, flavourful drinks. Our team experiments with new techniques and keeps up with mixology innovations to deliver exciting experiences. Guest feedback plays a vital role in shaping our offerings, ensuring we stay attuned to preferences. We introduce new cocktails every two to three months, aligning with the seasons and special events. By combining creativity, quality, and sustainability, we continuously elevate our cocktail experience for our guests," says Jitendra Thakur, F&B Director, Courtyard by Marriott, Chakan, Pune.



Varun Ganda, F&B Director, Hyatt Regency, Viman Nagar, Pune



At WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh, the menu features unique cocktails where local ingredients are used to highlight the flavours found in the local cuisine and culture



Cocktail at CGH Earth Brunton Boatyard

GREEN FINGERS

Artisanal cocktails are also embracing sustainability; from low-waste practices to ethical sourcing, they all come as standard procedures. The experience is further enhanced as teams share the story behind the drink, making it personal and interactive. So, in essence, an artisanal cocktail becomes a blending of art and science, so to speak, crafted to deliver something unique, memorable, and multi-sensory. Sustainability comes at the top of the list with concern over practices not ruining the environment, and thus zero-waste cocktails find significance contemporarily. Fresh, seasonal ingredients like fruits, herbs, and spices are chosen for their quality and flavour.

Varun Ganda, F&B Director, Hyatt Regency, Viman Nagar, Pune, says, "At Single Malt Bar, we prioritise working with local farmers. Instead of relying on commercial mixers, our bartenders create house-made syrups, bitters, and infusions (such as vanilla bean syrup, smoked rosemary, or house-aged



Cocktail at WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh

rum). These bespoke elements help craft unique flavours that you can't find anywhere else. Each cocktail is carefully crafted, with bartenders often using techniques such as shaking, stirring, muddling, and even barrel-aging ingredients to enhance flavour. Some cocktails are infused for extended periods, allowing the flavours to meld in a way that produces complex, distinctive drinks. Cold-pressing, where fruits or herbs are pressed to extract juice without heat, is another method we use to maintain the integrity of flavours."



Birendra Bisht, Food & Beverage Manager, Taj Lakefront Bhopal



Ravi Batra, Assistant Food & Beverage Manager, ITC Maurya New Delhi



TREND CHECK

Trend lines for artisanal cocktails are shaped by shifts in consumer tastes and innovations in the industry. Modern guests from the millennial and Gen Z generations require a unique, story-enhanced experience while attesting to creativity and artisan standards. Good-quality, fresh produce is expected to please this health-conscious patron. Birendra Bisht, Food & Beverage Manager, Taj Lakefront Bhopal, says, "At the heart of this process is the understanding of mixology as a science. Techniques like clarification, infusion, and filtration require precision, while the delicate balance of flavours demands not only skill but a true appreciation for how ingredients interact. It's a journey that combines tradition with innovation, ensuring that each cocktail is not only a drink but a moment of indulgence—one that lingers on in the memory of our guests."

Artisanal cocktails offer an opportunity to tell a cultural story and provide a bridge between traditional flavours and modern culinary innovation. Ravi Batra, Assistant Food & Beverage Manager, ITC Maurya New Delhi, concludes, "The drive for artisanal cocktails is fuelled by a desire for authenticity, cultural connection, and sensory storytelling. Modern consumers are increasingly interested in cocktails that showcase local ingredients, emphasise sustainable sourcing, and feature unexpected flavour profiles. This trend is also part of the broader shift toward experiential dining, where customers seek memorable, immersive culinary moments." It's time to say cheers, with an artisanal cocktail. 🍷



Idduki Cardamom Sour from ITC Maurya New Delhi



Right Munnar Chai Punch from ITC Maurya New Delhi