



Raise a 'Green' Toast

As sustainability comes to the bar, hoteliers are making sure that their cocktails are turning all things green.

By Bindu Gopal Rao

The well-heeled traveller is now looking for authenticity, storytelling, and unique flavours that come with green cocktails. Many are not only open to the concept but actively seek it out as part of a mindful lifestyle. Experts weigh in.

Conscious craftsmanship

Mixologists are creatively repurposing kitchen scraps and garden herbs to craft innovative, sustainable cocktails. Sustainable drinks are all about ensuring that the carbon footprint is minimal. A growing focus on partnering with distilleries that follow eco-friendly, low-impact production methods; avoiding the use of single-use plastics and imported garnishes; and using compostable alternatives like bamboo shoot straws and fruit shells that double as serving glasses are some examples.

At Rick's, Taj Mahal, New Delhi's premier Casablanca-themed bar, the team has introduced a curated collection of green cocktails that spotlight conscious craftsmanship without compromising on creativity. "Each drink is rooted in the use of hyperlocal, seasonal ingredients to ensure freshness and reduce our carbon footprint. True to our zero-waste philosophy, we creatively repurpose ingredients across the cocktail journey—tender coconut shells become elegant serving vessels, citrus peels and herb stems are transformed into house-made syrups and infusions, while pineapple husks and dehydrated fruit skins find new life as natural garnishes. These thoughtful touches come together to create cocktails that are as mindful as they are memorable," says Ananya Pant, Restaurant Manager and Mixologist, Rick's, Taj Mahal, New Delhi.

Green Bars

Sustainability is at the heart of several bar programmes. This



Ananya Pant, Rick's, Taj Mahal, New Delhi



Jagdeep Guleria, The Orchid Hotel, Manali

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involves fundamentals like prioritising seasonal, organic produce from nearby farms to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions and support local agriculture.

“Zero waste mixology, where our bartenders repurpose every part of the ingredient—citrus peels become syrups or garnishes, and herb stems are infused into tinctures—minimising waste at every stage, is something we do consciously. We grow our own herbs, like mint, basil, rosemary, and thyme, right on property. This ensures maximum freshness and zero transport emissions,” says Simran Kaur, Beverage Manager, JW Marriott Chandigarh.

Conscience Call

By crafting cocktails with a mindful approach—right from ingredient selection to presentation—guests get a refreshing drink that not only tastes good but also does good for the planet.

“Being nestled in the lap of the Himalayas, we are deeply aware of the need to protect our fragile ecosystem. Embracing green cocktails allows us to cut down on bar waste, reduce our carbon footprint, and support local farmers and foragers. It’s also a creative challenge that excites our bartending team—pushing them to innovate with whatever is fresh, seasonal, and available locally,” says Jagdeep Guleria, General Manager, The Orchid Hotel, Manali.

Fruit peels and cores often discarded are repurposed into homemade syrups, infusions, and garnishes here. “Leftover coffee grounds and citrus rinds are also dehydrated and reused minimising waste wherever possible. Even our straws are biodegradable, and we serve many of our cocktails in upcycled glassware. Think rhododendron petals, apple cider

vinegar from local orchards, Himalayan rock salt, and wild berries picked fresh during the season. We ferment, infuse, and preserve thoughtfully using native techniques that lend both character and conscience to each drink,” adds Guleria.

The Specifics

Green cocktails go beyond just colour—they represent a sustainable mindset. As bartenders start experimenting and see the creative potential, enthusiasm naturally grows. The goal is to build a culture where sustainability is second nature behind the bar.

“Verdant Vow is a green cocktail in both appearance and approach. It is made using kitchen trimmings that would otherwise go to waste, such as cucumber peels, herb stems, and citrus husks. These ingredients are repurposed into juices, infusions, and syrups. We also use spirits from environmentally responsible producers and avoid single-use garnishes or plastics. The process reflects a full-circle commitment to reducing waste while enhancing flavour,” says Arpan Kakde, Director of Food & Beverage, Westin Pune.

Ashu Chugh, Executive Chef, Matrix – The Lounge Bar by Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort – Greater Noida, adds, “We focus on using fresh, in-house, locally sourced ingredients like seasonal fruits – melons, guava, mango, oranges, litchi, strawberries, mint leaves, beetroot, cucumber, basil and many more.”





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Guest Experience

The response to green cocktails has been very encouraging. Guests appreciate the thoughtfulness behind the cocktails and enjoy the unique flavours. Many are pleasantly surprised to learn how sustainability is woven into their drinking experience.

Suranjit Sengupta, Corporate Director of Food & Beverage, Sarovar Hotels, explains, “Our hotels across India are stirring up a green revolution behind the bar. For

instance, at Sarovar Portico Gorakhpur, our brand mixologist Rahul Vishwakarma infuses house-made syrups with citrus peels and air-dries herb stems and fruit skins to use as natural garnishes—ensuring nothing goes to waste.”

He adds, “At Cloud9 Sarovar Premiere Goa, fresh bougainvillea and butterfly pea flowers are hand-picked from the hotel’s garden. Leftover orange peels and coconut flesh are fermented and compressed into edible dry garnishes. Meanwhile, Park Plaza Jalandhar has developed a signature cocktail using a banana-peel ‘serum’, a ‘peel dust’ garnish, and aromatic incense made from discarded banana peels.”

These zero-waste techniques not only reduce garbage but also introduce complex, memorable flavour profiles that guests truly enjoy. Guests are often amazed to discover that their drink is crafted using upcycled ingredients, making the experience both delicious and sustainable.

The Right Way

Transitioning to sustainable mixology, however, presents a few hurdles. Energy-efficient bar tools and fermentation equipment require time and capital. Bartenders need to be trained in saving, repurposing, fermenting, and crafting sustainable elements. Sourcing consistent seasonal produce in a hill station setting can be a logistical challenge. Educating staff and guests alike on the concept of sustainability in mixology also takes time. But with passion and persistence, these challenges are becoming opportunities to create meaningful experiences.

These cocktails serve as excellent conversation starters. Colourful, creative drinks garnished with edible flowers and herbs are frequently shared on social media. Beyond presentation, the flavours surprise and impress even the most seasoned cocktail lovers.

“Sharing the story behind each drink—how the ingredients are sourced, fermented, and used—deepens the guest experience. Many of our properties now offer story-driven menus or bartender-led sessions that give guests a behind-the-scenes look into the process. This transparency builds connection and loyalty, turning a cocktail into a meaningful memory,” says Sengupta.

It is safe to say that green cocktails are more than a trend—they are the future of mindful hospitality. As hoteliers experiment with solar dehydrators, grow more herbs on-site, and collaborate with local producers to keep pushing boundaries, the cocktail scene is certainly set to get greener in the coming days. **H**