



EXCLUSIVE  
**INTERVIEW**  
Puneet Chhatwal  
CEO, Steigenberger  
Hotel Group



**HIGH SPIRITS**  
Lisa Srao,  
Chairman and MD,  
I Brands Beverages



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**GLOBAL** FAIR & MEDIA  
Deutsche Messe  
FIERA MILANO  
The Indian Express  
(JV between Hannover Milano Fairs India Pvt. Ltd. & The Indian Express Ltd.)

# FOOD & HOSPITALITY WORLD

INDIA'S FOREMOST FOOD & HOSPITALITY PUBLICATION  
ERSTWHILE EXPRESS HOSPITALITY • FORTNIGHTLY INSIGHT FOR THE FOOD AND HOSPITALITY TRADE

www.foodandhospitalityworld.com  
August 16-31, 2014  
Vol.2 No. 23 | Pages 52 | ₹50

## GETTING FLOORED

How colour, texture and  
type of flooring can  
increase the 'wow' factor  
for hotel guests







## GETTING FLOORED

Colour, texture and type of flooring can increase the 'wow' factor for hotel guests. Understanding the importance of floor designs is half the job done in creating a complete finished look to design ideas. Food & Hospitality World speaks to the industry to get insights on why hotels are moving away from traditional floorings to laminates and hardwood floors (22-25)

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# QUALITY FOR MASSES

A recent entrant into the Indian brown spirits market, I Brands Beverages has made a mark with its premium products in a short span of four years

By Archana Sharma

The Indian liquor market, the third largest in the world, with 95 per cent being brown spirits, stands as a US\$ nine billion liquor business. After launching the products in the Indian market in August 2010 with flagship Granton whiskey in Uttarakhand state, I Brands Beverages currently has distribution rights in eight states of India including Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Puducherry.

In an endeavour to take the 'mass market premium' spirits - Three Royals Whisky; Granton whisky; Rum 99, Jamaican flavoured dark rum; and Granton XO Brandy, a French Brandy - to pan-India level, Lisa Srao, chairman and MD, I Brands Beverages is planning to launch the products in markets like Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura and Meghalaya. Apart from these new markets, Srao is also looking to appoint distributors in key markets like Delhi and Rajasthan.

Having been able to achieve consumer acceptance for its premium products within a short period of four years, the company is now trying to consolidate its brand presence and distribution in the country in the coming years. While consolidating its domestic presence, the company is also keen to take the products to overseas markets like Africa and Russia in the future.

Srao informed that her company has achieved 450 per



cent growth in the first quarter of 2013 till the first quarter of 2014. Taking the semi-urban village route, and having a crystal clear strategy, the company is growing steadily.

## Bridging the gap

Noticing the lack of quality international products for the premium segment back in 2008, Srao states, "I found a very specific gap in the Indian liquor market. The premium liquor segment in India's mass market was completely under-utilised, either good quality products were extremely expensive, or af-

fordable products were of bad quality. I kept thinking why we can't have good quality products available in India at affordable prices. The segment I chose is lucrative as whiskey is 80 per cent of India's liquor market. However, I didn't find any top of the line quality products in the premium mass market segment, and that is where I found my niche and positioned my products."

Before she launched I Brands Beverages, Srao spent two years in research and development to ensure that she had the right product for the

right market. "In 2008, when I started researching I realised that each state was like a separate country when it comes to taste and choice of liquor. It was not like UK, the market that I understood very well."

Srao attributes the reason for her company's success to the fact that it caters to quality. "We have set standards in packaging and those are being followed by big players as well," she asserts. She further points out that I Brands products have a superior quality which is blended with visually appealing pack-

ages and value for money, making the product achieve such favourable response. "The top of the line design innovation, canister packaging, embossed bottle and finest quality closures make the products completely unique to the segment that we are focusing on currently," states Srao, adding that, the company will continue to focus on this niche positioning of 'mass market premium' tagline.

Planning to reach the ₹100 crore mark in the next three years, Srao aims to become one of the top five players of the industry.