SOM DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES

BEHIND EVERY BOTTLE OR CAN OF BEER LIES A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN PACKAGING SOLUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION, BOTH CRUCIAL FOR INDUSTRY PRODUCERS AIMING TO KEEP UP WITH MARKET DEMANDS. IN INDIA, ONE OF THE MOST DYNAMIC MARKETS FOR THE GROWTH IN BEER CONSUMPTION, A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE BEER AND SPIRITS SECTOR IS SOM DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES LTD (SDBL) HOLDING OVER 50% MARKET SHARE IN THE STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH. TO MODERNISE ITS BHOPAL PRODUCTION PLANT, THE COMPANY INSTALLED A NEW FILLING AND PACKAGING LINE FOR 0.5 L CANS CAPABLE OF PROCESSING 50,000 CANS PER HOUR; THIS SYSTEM HAS THE HIGHEST PRODUCTION SPEED IN THE INDIAN BEER INDUSTRY. FOR SECONDARY PACKAGING, SOM DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES LTD SELECTED AN SMI WP 500 ERGON WRAP-AROUND CASE PACKER, WHICH PACKS THE 0.5 L CANS, WHETHER LOOSE OR IN 2X3 MULTIPACKS, INTO 4X6 WRAP-AROUND CARDBOARD CASES.

- **SECTOR: BEER**
  SOM DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES LTD
  Bophal, India
  somindia.com
- Wrap-around case packer WP 500 ERGON



VIDEO

GEO LOCATION

FROM PRIVATE-LABEL PRODUCER TO LEADER IN THE BEER AND SPIRITS SECTOR



SOM Distilleries & Breweries Ltd began operations in the mid-1980s as a bottling unit for "white label" products, goods manufactured without a brand name to allow for other companies to subsequently rebrand. This business grew successfully over the following years, enabling the Indian company to become a major industry player with multiple production plants. Today, SDBL, whose headquarters are in Bhopal, is part of the SOM Group, a renowned industrial entity in the alcoholic beverage sector that has long been distinguished by the quality of its products. Founded by J.K. Arora, the current Chairman and Managing Director, the SOM Group of Companies has always been driven by a mission to produce high-quality beverages. Over time, its portfolio has expanded across various categories and brands, capturing significant shares of the Indian market. Strongly customer-oriented and socially responsible, the Bhopal-based company operates according to the highest ethical and quality standards, offering excellent products at competitive prices while continuously expanding its global presence.

SOM Distilleries & Breweries Limited (SDBL) was the first company in India to pride themselves with a product portfolio comprising spirits, beers, ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages, distillates, and neutral ethyl alcohol. With the ability to cater to the tastes of a vast consumer base, SDBL has established itself both domestically and internationally and is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE). The company's highly successful brands include Hunter, Black Fort, and Power Cool beers, produced at three plants located in the key states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha, which collectively supply 35 million cases to the market annually.









ABOVE: J.K. ARORA, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SOM DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES.

TO THE SIDE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DEEPAK ARORA, SOM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AND AJAY ARORA, SOM DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR, DURING THEIR VISIT TO ITALY.



FOCUS ON SOM DISTILLERIES AND BREWERIES LTD AND THE **SOM GROUP**

The group's name derives from "Som Ras" (or Soma)—the mythical potion of the gods mentioned in the Vedas—which, in Hindu mythology, was an intoxicating beverage.

Deepak Arora, CEO of SOM Distilleries and Breweries Ltd, stated: "Throughout more than a quarter-century of operations, growth and innovation have always been our two constants.

Building on this solid foundation, the SOM Group has created a structure that grows stronger year by year." The Indian company's liquor and beer production, centered at its main facility in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, utilises state-of-the-art equipment for fermentation, storage, and maturation. It is one of Central India's first fully automated breweries, using a Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) system to monitor and manage operating temperatures across fermentation and maturation vats, as well as those for finished beer and yeast.

The production plant is the subject of ongoing investment to expand capacity, thanks to the installation of state-of-the-art machinery, it is now capable of packaging 50,000 500ml cans per hour, making it the fastest canning line in the entire Indian brewing industry.

In addition to its headquarters, the SOM Group operates a plant in Hassan (Karnataka), strategically located to support distribution across southern India, as well as facilities in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh that boost the capacity for regional supply.













BRANDS FOR EVERY TASTE

SOM's flagship brand, Hunter, is a pioneer in the strong beer category and a favourite among the new generation of beer enthusiasts; its bold yet smooth taste has not only made it a consumer favorite but also helped establish the SOM Group in the industry.
Black Fort is a strong beer brand, known for its bold flavour, appreciated by Indian consumers for its hoppy character and rustic, earthy appeal.
Developed specifically for local tastes, it has established itself in the domestic market and is expanding into other regions of India and abroad, thanks to its excellent quality and attractive pricing.
Finally, the Power 5000 and Power Cool products are variants of a highly popular super-strong beer, while the Woodpecker brand markets India's first filtered craft wheat beer, the latter is available in both cans and bottles, in mild (Glide) and strong (Crest) variants.
In addition to the aforementioned products, the SOM Group of Companies is proud to have other major brands in its portfolio, such as White Fox Refresh a lime and orange flavoured vodka-based beverage (ready-to-drink) that is highly popular among the new generation.





INNOVATION AND CUSTOMER FOCUS **PAY OFF FOR SOM**

Since it was founded, the SOM Group has come a long way, earning renown and appreciation over the years for the high quality of the various beer brands in its portfolio. This success is a testament to the contributions of the company's employees and partners, as well as its ongoing investment in new technologies, which have enabled it to achieve significant milestones with brands such as Hunter Refreshing Premium Beer, Black Fort Premium Beer, Power 1000–Strong, Woodpecker Lager, and Power Cool. In January 2014, the Bhopal-based company received the "Fastest Growing Company" award from INDSPIRIT. Furthermore, in May 2014, it was honored with the "CSR" award and the "Best Debut" award at the Milestone 100 Whiskey-SPIRITZ Awards in recognition of its commitment to corporate social responsibility and environmental protection. Other notable international accolades include its inclusion in Forbes' 2013 list of the "Top 200 Companies" in the Asia-Pacific region (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises category) and the "Monde Selection Quality Awards" in France in June 2014, where the Indian group won gold for its "Milestone 100" premium whisky, as well as silver for White Fox vodka and silver for Hunter beer.

















QUALITY COMES FIRST

The SOM Group has always offered its consumers products and services of the highest quality, achieved by adhering to rigorous international standards, making substantial investments in research, and utilising state-of-the-art quality control facilities. Furthermore, the company aims to build lasting relationships with customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders, and is committed to valuing its human resources by creating an environment where every employee can contribute their skills, talent, and ideas to a continuous process of innovation. To this end, the Bhopal-based company fosters a culture of teamwork, the entire organisation collaborates toward a shared vision, aligning individual performance with corporate goals to deliver quality products that are valued by consumers.

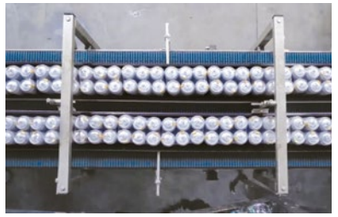






SMI SOLUTIONS
FOR SOM DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES

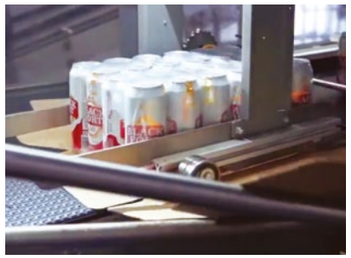






Beer is a product that embodies cultural and regional significance, evolving into a genuine ecosystem of expertise, innovation, and passion.
As a product of the land, it tells the story of its territory before being savoured by consumers.
These values are preserved in every can or bottle through the use of state-of-the-art packaging technologies—such as the SMI WP 500 ERGON wrap-around case packer and its associated infeed and outfeed conveyors.
This system packs 0.5 L cans into fully enclosed cases, creating eye-catching packaging that enhances the product's appeal and attracts customers at the point of sale.
At the same time, the SMI solution ensures maximum protection for the beer during transport and handling, offering clear benefits for product quality and preservation—ensuring it reaches consumers intact—as well as for the brand's reputation.







WRAP-AROUND CASE PACKER WP 500 ERGON

Product worked: 0.5 L cans of Black Fort beer (loose and in 2x3 packs)

Function: Packaging in wrap-around cases in a 4x6 format at a speed of 38 packs/minute.

STRONG POINTS OF THE SYSTEM

- **Smooth and continuous packaging:** the WP 500 ERGON wrap-around case packer meets SOM's need to keep up with the growing demand for Black Fort beer from both local and international markets.

  The 0.5 L cans, which enter the machine either loose or in 2x3 bundles, are packed in 24-can wrap-around boxes in a 4x6 format.

  Continuous packaging with the wrap-around system ensures the company has a smooth production process, without any jerky movements, and even allows them to customise the pack design to catch the consumer's eye

- **High-quality packs:** wrap-around packaging is the ideal solution to get impact-resistant packaging that protects the product during transport and achieves better pack quality with reduced mechanical wear

- **Ergonomics and ease of use:** the automatic card loading system, called Easy-Load, provides the big advantage of making the operator's job easier when loading the cardboard magazine and ensuring smooth and consistent card-picking operations

- **Easy maintenance:** the maintenance operations of the wrap-around case packer are made easier and safer, while the POSYC® control panel, which slides along a rail for the entire length of the packaging machine, allows the operator to use the system easily and efficiently thanks to the extremely intuitive graphical interface, the touch screen, and the advanced diagnostic and real-time technical support features

- **Compact and flexible solution:** the innovative wrap-around packaging system allows the use of a single machine to form the cardboard box and enclose the product inside; thanks to this system, the SMI WP ERGON series offers great flexibility, high production speeds, better stability of the packed products, and optimal use of storage space for packaging materials.



THE INDIAN **BEER MARKET**

SOM Breweries and Distilleries, one of the oldest and most established brands in central India, has clearly paved the way for innovation in beer production, especially in the premium category, and in packaging solutions.

The 1990s saw a huge transformation in the beverage sector in India, thanks to the liberalisation of the economy, which triggered significant changes in consumer behavior, and the explosion of global media, which led to unprecedented lifestyle changes. Beverages also felt the impact of this social change, encouraging the development of the pub concept in the states of southern India and the growth of production and marketing of lighter beverages like beer in the north of the country.

SOM Distilleries & Breweries Limited has been at the forefront of seizing the opportunities offered by the profound transformation of Indian society, in 1994 it opened a modern facility for the production, fermentation, bottling, canning, and blending of Indian-made beer and spirits near Bhopal, in Madhya Pradesh.

Today, the Indian beer market, worth about 5.5 billion USD, is one of the most dynamic in the world in terms of consumption growth, driven by factors like urbanisation, rising disposable income, and a rapidly growing young population.



Although per capita consumption is still limited to 2 litres a year, the future looks bright for companies in the sector, which offer an increasingly wide range of products to a population of just under 1.5 billion people.



BHOPAL: BETWEEN PAST AND MODERNITY

The capital of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh is fascinating and at the same time full of contrasts.

The uniqueness of Bhopal lies precisely in its dual nature: on one side, there's the old town, mostly inhabited and frequented by Muslim residents, with wonderful mosques, ancient ruined palaces, and lively markets where getting lost is easy; on the other, you find modern neighborhoods, with trendy shopping centres, bars serving cocktails and draft beer, and exclusive restaurants.

The charm of the old city and the modernity of the new one, stand in stark contrast to the desolate and grim landscapes around the infamous Union Carbide chemical plant, the site of one of the worst industrial disasters in the world.

Known as the "Bhopal disaster," the area still bears the marks of the severe accident caused in 1984 by the release of 42 tons of methyl isocyanate, which led to the death and poisoning of thousands of people.

Being an important economic and commercial centre of the state, Bhopal is well connected by transportation and offers a pleasant detour, away from the usual tourist routes, to reach places of great interest like Sanchi, a famous Buddhist site protected by UNESCO with its ancient stupas and Ashoka pillars, or the Udayagiri Caves, rock-cut caves from the 5th century (Gupta Empire) that house beautiful Hindu sculptures, including the famous Varaha boar.

















