

IST SELTZER

TAKING HEALTHY DRINKING FROM A
CONCEPT TO REALITY!

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Images by IST



In just 99 calories, 2 grams of sugar and a gluten-free concoction, Hard Seltzers are not only the lowest-calorie drink, but also the best tasting drink on your retail shelves! Their alcohol content is 5% ABV (alcohol by volume), delivering the pleasant effects of beer in a guilt-free manner. For consumers looking to enhance their everyday routines, IST offers a refreshing sensory experience with 100% natural flavor combinations.

What makes Seltzer so special?

When the pandemic hit India, and the line between work and home blurred, many brought a drink home, retiring to their rooms after office hours.

While others focused on reducing their drinking and voluntarily decided to refrain from intoxicants. Since Seltzer's meet all the criteria, we found them to be an excellent choice. Besides tasting great, it has 5% alcohol (just like beer), is gluten-free, so there is no bloating, and most importantly, it doesn't leave you feeling hungover. India is definitely ready for Seltzer products, but they don't know much about the category and what it offers. This gap will enable the alternate beverage market to boom once it is filled.

To know more about Seltzer, we got in a candid conversation with Krupa & Kunal Shah, the dynamic duo who are all set to change the game.

Why did you opt for a new beverage segment like Seltzer rather than opting for a tried and tested route?

Both Kunal & I are healthy hedonists, we are constantly looking to balance pleasure and happiness in a mindful way and celebrate life while living consciously, and our inspiration stems from our sincere passion for cheerful drinking without compromising on a healthy

lifestyle. Very few beverages in the market allowed us to do both, which drove us to create IST - a light, refreshing, tasty and healthier alternative that can seamlessly integrate into the everyday lives of the ever-evolving Indian consumer.

What was your biggest inspiration?

The global Hard Seltzer revolution is what really inspired us. Kunal & I were both in the US when White Claw was starting to replace beer in most fridges. A low-cal and refreshing drink with the same buzz as a beer was a really appealing idea to millennials and Gen Z, and we noticed similar mindful drinking and conscious food & beverage trends being adopted in India at the same time.

The low-ABV space remains the most interesting area of alco-bev innovation and witnessing the creation of a whole new alco-bev category shaping consumer behaviors was really quite exciting!

How do you plan to market the product and widen its reach?

We are now available in over 100+ retail outlets and 30+ restaurants in Goa, which include upscale spots such as Maai in Assagao, and local community bars such as Misky Bar in Panjim and Cajy Bar in Arpora.

Moreover, the product is being widely accepted in events where consumer feedback has been phenomenal. From doing hearty Sunday brunches to intimate gigs and large-scale football screenings, we are continuously leveraging unique platforms to engage with consumers and have seen a growing community and consumer love for IST.

What made you choose Goa as a market and what potential do you see?

Firstly, Goa's favorable excise policies towards start-up and home-grown brands make it a

great place to introduce a new alco-bev brand operationally. Secondly, Goa offers an opportunity to make IST Hard Seltzer accessible to tourists from across the country and internationally, which allows us to analyze feedback from a varied set of consumers.

And most importantly, people often come to Goa with an openness to experience new things, and there is a great passion among retailers and consumers to try locally produced craft brands. We often hear “when are you going to launch in Delhi/ Mumbai/ Hyderabad, etc.”, which has all now given us the confidence for our Pan-India launch.

Which part of your business are you most passionate about?

As an early-stage start-up it is extremely critical for us to understand consumer insights, which is the part we are most passionate about. Both Kunal & I interact with retailers on a daily basis and actively engage with consumers during events where we get to learn about their feedback directly, and it's the great response from the Goa market is what is keeping us going!

There are currently two flavors available for IST - Grapefruit Smash and Lime Smash. Grapefruit Smash features notes of pomegranate, and Lime Smash features Chardonnay.

We look forward to this new way of drinking!

