

Cobra Beer

Unusual thing, excellence

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Award-winning Cobra Beer is making a huge impact in the ultra-competitive UK beer market. Charming its way to the top and constantly innovating, Cobra is a brand that likes to do things differently and better.

The Cobra story started in 1989 when Karan Bilimoria arrived from India to study in the UK. After qualifying as a chartered accountant as well as studying law at Cambridge, Karan snubbed tempting and potentially lucrative jobs as an accountant or lawyer to follow his dream. That dream was Cobra. Deciding that Britain, and the world, needed a smoother, less gassy lager – one that would appeal to ale drinkers and lager drinkers alike and complement food – Karan took his £20,000 of student debt, his utter lack of experience, the misgivings of his family and friends, and knocked them all into the proverbial cocked hat. Against all odds, Karan and Cobra set out on their mission: to brew the finest ever Indian beer and to make it a global brand.

It's been a little over 16 years since the first shipment of Cobra reached UK shores, and since then the company has taken great strides, making a name for itself in an industry of old and established brands. Thanks to its Indian recipe – a unique blend of barley malt and yeast with maize, hops and rice – the beer has a clean, crisp, extra smooth taste that has charmed beer drinkers from Bangalore to Bedford to Broadway.



Innovation and inspired thinking are in everything that Cobra does, from the design of its mould-breaking embossed bottle to the company's groundbreaking 'CobraVision' short film competition. Developed as part of Cobra's sponsorship of itv2, itv3 and itv4 movies, CobraVision gives aspiring filmmakers the opportunity to have their short films aired in the commercial breaks of blockbuster movies.

But nowhere is innovation more evident than in Cobra's new products. Cobra has launched three new products in the last 18 months as part of the company's push into the mainstream market. Cobra 0.0% is an alcohol-free beer – 'the Cobra for when you can't have a Cobra' – but with the same taste.

The second offering, Cobra Lower Cal, is a light and refreshing beer, which has less than 100 calories per bottle, but is still extra smooth and low in CO₂.

It is the aptly named King Cobra however, which is perhaps the most interesting and different of the new products. It is an 8% ABV superior strong beer and the world's first double-fermented lager, undergoing secondary fermentation at Belgium's historic Rodenbach brewery. With its champagne-style bottle the look is suave and elegant, and the flavour equally so, all of which has already led to an enthusiastic reception from the press, industry and consumers alike.

Cobra Beer has made significant progress since 1990, but there is every indication that the best is yet to come. Its original mission – some would say a mission impossible – to brew the finest ever Indian beer and make it a global beer brand is getting closer.

The brand is now truly 'global' and has offices on four continents, brews in five countries and exports to 40. As to 'the finest ever Indian beer', the awards and accolades speak for themselves and include a company-record 12 gold medals at the prestigious Monde Selection Awards 2006 – one more than their world-beating tally in 2005.

From £20,000 of debt to an award-winning beer brand, Cobra has consistently raised the bar. The company entered an industry of giants and not only survived, but thrived. Clearly, not only does David always beat Goliath, he also brews a better beer.

