

Cobra Beer

Inspiration, Innovation, Ingenuity. In bottles.



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CoolBrands 2007/08

Bangalore, India. 1989.
A Cambridge law graduate named Karan Bilimoria has just launched Cobra, a premium beer specially brewed to be extra smooth and less gassy.

Karan plans to export it to the UK. He has £20,000 of student debt and no experience. He is launching a new brand in the world's most competitive beer market. Oh, and a recession has just started. It's going to be an interesting journey.

Eighteen years on and Cobra has come a long way. Geographically it's been quite a trip, with the beer being exported to 50 countries around the world. The company has also travelled far since those lean early days, becoming one of the UK's fastest growing beer brands. Cobra's hallmark throughout has been innovation, and a drive to do things differently. From telling the Cobra story with embossed icons on their bottles right through to their CobraVision short film competition, Cobra is a brand that thrives on being that little bit exceptional.

Nowhere is Cobra's drive to innovate more evident though than in its products. The original premium beer was itself exceptional, with less gas than regular lagers, and over the past few years Cobra has added no fewer than four new products to its portfolio. Cobra 0.0% alcohol-free and Cobra Lower Cal came first, followed by King Cobra – the world's first double-fermented lager. Befitting such a special bottle-conditioned beer, it is even packaged in elegant Champagne-style bottles. The most recent addition to the Cobra family is Cobra Bite, an exotic range of fruit-flavoured beers with 100 per cent natural



fruit extracts, including blood orange, sweet lime, apple and lemongrass.

Cobra's reach extends beyond its award-winning packaging and products. Its heavyweight through-the-line 'Unusual thing, excellence' campaign launched at the end of 2006, targeting discerning lager drinkers with Cobra's biggest ever national television campaign, The Lift.

In fact, Cobra has been making its presence felt on TV screens since 2005, with its CobraVision short film competition. Aspiring filmmakers are invited to submit their 50-second short films, with the best being shown before blockbuster movies on itv4. The initiative gives young filmmakers the chance to put their work in front of an audience of millions on national television, and is already working in association with a range of film partners and film festivals including Edinburgh, Bristol Encounters and Raindance. Moving from the small screen to the big screen, Cobra has recently had product placements in the films Hot Fuzz and The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

Cobra's association with the UK film industry through CobraVision has proved a fruitful one, increasing the visibility of the brand hugely. Cobra now counts exclusive London venues such as the Kingly Club and Leicester Square No. 1 among its list of prestigious accounts. It brews under license in five different

countries including India and the UK, and has offices in London, Mumbai, New York and Cape Town.

Add to this a trophy cabinet that includes more gold medals from the Monde Selection Awards for two years running than any other beer brand – and you have a noteworthy success in a notoriously tough industry.

When Karan Bilimoria poured the first Cobra in Bangalore, back in 1989, he had all the odds stacked against him but he had a mission, and he's stuck to it to this day: to brew the finest ever India beer and to make it a global beer brand. It looks like Karan and Cobra are well on their way.

