

Scotch co William Grant inks bottling deal with Modi grp

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Mumbai: The world's largest family-run scotch whisky maker, William Grant & Sons, has finalised a local bottling deal with Modi Distilleries, part of the Umesh Modi group, signalling its heightened ambitions in the Indian market.

This would be the 130-year-old scotch giant's only bottling arrangement outside Scotland currently. William Grant is expected to start rolling out the locally bottled, flagship-blended scotch whisky brand Grant's in September this year from Modi's plant in Uttar Pradesh.

The bottling deal is expected to help William Grant — maker of Monkey Shoulder and single malts Glenfiddich and Balvenie, and also the third-biggest scotch producer after Diageo and Pernod Ricard — to compete more aggressively in the broader domestic liquor market. Grant's would intensify marketplace battles with Diageo's Black & White, Pernod Ricard's 100 Pipers and Beam Suntory's Teacher's scotch whiskies. Bacardi began local bottling of its scotch brand William Lawson recently.

According to IWSR global forecasts, India is expected to be one of the largest contributors to global whisky growth over the next five years. The blended scotch market in India is projected to double to five million cases by 2021. "This marks an important next phase of William Grant & Sons in India. The scale of the market for scotch brands bottled in India is 10 times larger than those bottled in Scotland and imported," William Grant & Sons India MD James Pennefather told TOI.

"Having already established a successful portfolio of imported premium spirits such as Glenfiddich, Monkey Shoulder and Hendricks Gin in India, we decided that this is the right time to enter local production with an established family business, Modi Distilleries," he added.

The diversified Umesh Modi group has had a slew of foreign joint ventures across sectors such as Modi Revlon in cosmetics, Modi Senator in writing instruments and Modi Mundipharma. The group also operates Modi Illva, a JV with Italian spirits maker Illva Saronno, with brands like Rockford Reserve and Artic vodka.