



# CRAFTED WITH CARE

MINNIE BHATT DESIGNS BREWERY TAPROOM DRIFTERS TAP STATION WITH HER USUAL ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY MARIA LOUIS

Going by the wave that has been taking over the country over the past couple of years, it's pretty clear that while traditional bars aren't going anywhere, the brewery taproom has progressed from a novelty to the norm. The latest player in the watering hole revolution is Drifters Tap Station, which makes its presence felt in Mumbai's ever-expanding commercial hub, BKC.

Drifters Breweries, the brainchild of Sheetal and Nayan

Shah, is the first microbrewery in India with 24 handcrafted European brews – which are all now also available at Drifters Tap Station. As the name suggests, it was conceptualised when the founders – who are avid beer aficionados – were travelling across the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Slovakia, Italy, USA, Canada and Australia to discover and experience different types of craft beers and search for quality ingredients that could be used back home.

During their journey, they were intrigued by the varieties

## MATERIALS & SUPPLIERS

**Flooring:** Cement tiles - Bharat Flooring  
**Tiles:** Picolo sourced - Decoreta Plus  
**Lighting/light fixtures:** Custom created  
**Wall textures:** Red bricks, rough POP  
**Dado:** Tiles  
**Paint:** Asian Paints  
**Furniture:** Custom created  
**Sanitary fittings:** Jaquar  
**Air-conditioning/HVAC system:** Carrier - Circular aircon

of beer they tasted, the centuries-old processes they learned about, and the passion with which one particular gentleman brewed. This led to a new-found goal, largely driven by the tradition brought to the table by expert brewer Honza Kocka. Following its top-rate brewery on the outskirts of Pune and its first introduction to the city at Kamala Mills last year, Drifters Tap Station is set to make a heady impact.

The large, plush outlet, spread over 2,837sq-ft, exemplifies vintage chic at its best. The glass walls featuring the Drifters logo are sun-kissed, creating a cheery aura during the day and a sense of glitz at night. "The site is at a very well landscaped, recently constructed building in BKC, and has a lovely façade," designer Minnie Bhatt discloses. "My first impression of the space was that it had a very good energy and a lot of natural light. I saw the space as one with an easy and casual vibe. The client wanted a space that was conducive to being an all-day destination with an emphasis on craft beers and a rustic ambience, which was very much in tune with what I visualised for it."

Delivering comfort on all accounts, there is a space here

2. The bar wall displays a part of Drifters Tap Station's range of restoratives. In front is the community table with its top rendered from a log of wood.

3. Natural red bricks contribute to the play of textures that adds warmth and visual interest.



4. Cement tiles with a geometric pattern, pale green and turquoise hues and distressed green table tops create pops of colour. At the far end is the hand-drawn wall depicting the process of making craft beers as a huge chalkboard.

5. A space for everyone: comfortable couches, bar-style high seating and a community table together cater to various group sizes and moods.

## PROJECT DETAILS

**The project:** Drifters Tap Station

**The client:** Nayan Shah

**The designers:** Minnie Bhatt and Aalisha Desai

**HVAC consultants:** Circular Aircon

**Area:** 2,837sq-ft

**Location:** BKC, Mumbai

**Duration of project:** 3 months

for every mood, group and need. The booth seating with hybrid height provides comfortable couch and high seating, while the 16-person community table can seat big and small groups alike. The central area features three to four different kinds of table design, including both high and hybrid seating. "We had the community table created with a wooden log top and repurposed vintage wooden louvered shutters to accentuate the bar apron," Bhatt details.

No contemporary tap room is complete without a bit of fun, games and quirk – and Drifters packages it all so well. In addition to the community interaction and entertainment options, which include board games and a ping-pong table,

a hand-drawn wall depicts the process of making craft beers as a huge chalkboard at one end. This is the highlight of the space, and every other element and detail complements it.

The bar back wall, which has a beer tap dispenser, also features a display of the names of beers that Drifters Tap Station proudly serves. "We wanted to add warm textures to the space and clad a few walls with natural red bricks, visually broken up with distressed plaster. The play of textures adds warmth and visual interest to the space," explains Bhatt.

The only challenge that the designers faced was that of creating eye-catching signage, considering the developer of the property was clear that the glass façade could not be altered. "We overcame this by creating the brand logo in a huge size, covering several of the glass panes. We worked with the limitations and found a creative way to have the signage done in a striking and effective manner," adds Bhatt.

The warm colour palette is intelligently brought to life by cement tiles with a geometric pattern, pale green and turquoise hues, and an IPS flooring that forms a larger abstract pattern. Log wood also complements the other finishes in the space, along with a few distressed green painted tables and table tops created using black-and-white ceramic tiles to contrast the other rustic finishes. Pops of freshness and vibrancy come from succulents, creepers and mirrors, and a great selection of music helps to orchestrate a laidback atmosphere that is ideal for indulging in beer and good food.

Sparking curiosity with their uniqueness, and brewed to perfection, the beers at Drifters Tap Station feature ingredients that pair beautifully with the food on offer. The on-tap brews are refreshing, with eccentric flavour profiles. The Kokum Cider goes down easy with a sweet fizzy punch that is complemented by the scent of cumin and a hint of spices. Other such unconventional creations are the Coconut Saison, Basmati Blonde, Spiced Saison, Pina Colada Ale and Lemongrass White IPA. For not-so-experimental drinkers, one can't go wrong with the Hefeweizen, Belgian Wheat or Pilsner, which are classics while still being characterised by distinctive flavours that are exclusive to Drifters Tap Station. The bar also serves sangrias and wine cocktails, and expertly whips up delectable drinks like the Jalapeno Peach Martini and Kiwi Pineapple Caprioska. Teetotalers will also be pleased with concoctions like Passion Breeze, Mandarin Trail, Drifters Lemonade and Coco Lychee.

The food menu spans a number of cuisines, meaning that there's something for every palate. Winning choices include the Cajun-spiced Chicken Tenders, Achari Soya Chaap, Tandoori Stuffed Mushroom, Crumbed Cottage Cheese, Couscous Fritters, Fried Chicken Wings with bhut jolokia sauce, Phyllo Parcels, Mutton Seekh Kebab and Lamb Meatballs with Spaghetti.

With the menu and aesthetic appeal working together in harmony, it's no surprise that guests have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the experience, and are especially drawn to the wall art and beer pong table. The aura that Drifters Tap Station exudes is one of passion, knowhow and adventure, which is fitting – given the owners' journey.

Nayan Shah says it best as he muses, "Several years ago, when I began my tryst with the brewing industry, I had envisioned having Drifters Breweries on the beer map of India – where the brand would be known for top quality craft brews. I am grateful to have set out on this journey with my wife Sheetal, who defines positivity, and the very talented brewmaster Honza Kocka, who has brought in his knowledge of the centuries old processes and traditions while brewing the beers." 