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## Starbucks Ready To Take Over Bangalore's Coffee Culture

*By Prathima A Narayan*

Long queues are not alien to India. From cricket stadium entrances to liquor stores, we have no problem in being another leg in the caterpillar. Because when we love something, no line is too long for us.

Which is why it was no surprise to see people waiting in line, coffee starved on the evening of November 23. The day [Starbucks](#) opened its first store in Bangalore.

After one year in the country, the 50/50 joint venture between Starbucks Coffee Company and Tata Global Beverages Limited, finally set foot in our city. The store in Koramangala is not only Tata Starbucks' flagship in Bangalore but also the 30th store in the country. By the end of this year, outlets in Phoenix Market City and Orion Mall will beckon their own queues.

"The business that we built here in the first year has exceeded our expectations in terms of the way in which customers in India have embraced Starbucks, the way in which our partners have brought Starbucks experience to life. We see that there is going to be a tremendous opportunity to grow in India for many years to come," said John Culver, group president of Starbucks Coffee China and Asia Pacific at the press conference held for the store's opening.

CEO of Tata Starbucks Limited, Avani Davda, accompanied him at the opening. "It's not about asking the consumer to get used to a black cup of coffee. It's about how we come into a country or into a community and weave ourselves into it. And I hope that Bangalore will welcome us, just as the other cities," she said.

The coffee served at all the Starbucks outlets in India is sourced from the coffee plantations in Coorg and Chickmagalur. "The first time that the leadership of Starbucks came to India, they didn't go to Delhi or Mumbai, they started here – the coffee capital of this country," said Davda.

"We only source only the top 5% of Arabica beans grown across the world. What we discovered is that there is very up-quality Arabica coffee grown here in India," added Culver.

In addition, on their one-year anniversary in October, they also launched a country specific blend called India Estates Blend, which includes four different coffees found here in Karnataka.

The price for a cup of coffee starts from Rs 100 onwards. But apparently Starbucks is not just about a cup of coffee. “Our pricing reflects the experience that we are able to provide our customers,” explained Culver.

“You cannot cheat the consumer, and the Indian consumer is very savvy – that’s what I truly believe,” said Davda, “F&B or a cup of coffee or the food is not just what they’re looking for. It’s the connection. Now when you have the young Indian consumer who is well travelled, he really seeks out this experience.”

“I think the mission of Starbucks has always been one partner, one cup, one neighbourhood at a time. And I’m very happy to tell you that we are working very hard today to live up to that mission,” she added.

Today, the Starbucks world map has 62 countries with 19,000 stores on it. Looks like the hard work is paying off.

The passing crowds outside the Koramangala store suddenly resemble those in NYC (sans the rushed pace of course), sipping on their very own tall cappuccino, grande latte, venti espresso.

So if getting a dose of Starbucks means standing in the queue for anywhere from three to thirty minutes, the brand’s loyalist is up for it. As Davda explained, “It feels good to read about the queues but every time we go to a new city and the consumer steps into our store, they test us, they try to see if the coffee tastes the same and then they fall in love with this brand.”



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