

Heineken Invests \$100M in Haiti Brewery

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A worker cleans empty bottles of Prestige Beer at the Heineken/Brana Brewery S.A. in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Friday April 4, 2014. Heineken NV says it is investing \$100 million in the struggling Caribbean nation of Haiti. (AP Photo/Dieu Nallo Chery)

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The Dutch brewer [Heineken](#) [1] announced Friday that it is investing \$100 million in its Haiti production plant that makes the popular lager Prestige.

The relatively large investment is significant because many international companies have been reluctant to spend money in Haiti because of a business climate hampered by red tape, allegations of corruption and a flimsy infrastructure.

But Jose Matthijsse, general director of the National Brewery of Haiti that Heineken owns, said the Dutch company is eager to invest more in the Caribbean country because political stability and cooperation have improved under the current government.

Heineken purchased the Haitian brewery in 2011, and owns 95 percent of the company that produces Prestige. The remaining 5 percent is held by Diageo Ireland, the company that makes Guinness stout.

About one-fifth of the new investment has already gone toward construction of a second 24,300-square-foot (2,260) production line that opened December in the same facility in Port-au-Prince. The addition will allow the brewery to double output, for 40,000 more cases of Prestige and other beverages produced every day.

The new production line has also enabled the brewery to introduce a 16-ounce bottle of Prestige.

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The rest of the investment will be used to further increase lager production, manufacture more bottles and to purchase items such as trucks and generators.

The brewery has long been limited in how much lager it produces by the number of the signature amber-hued bottles available at any one time. People tend to buy the lager in bulk because it's cheaper that way, which can delay the return of bottles for deposit.

Because the bottles can be returned, the brewery has often limited its past production based on how many containers are available. Past manufacturing of new bottles has never been enough to make up for the losses.

"All Haitians know that at times their favorite beer, Prestige, is not available for consumption," Matthijsse said. "And that has been a frustration over the past years ... So it was about time that the capacity be increased."

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