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## Drive today, drink later, says pub

Pushpa Narayan | TNN

**Chennai:** Guess who has joined the campaign against drunken driving in the city? Pubs.

Leading the pack is Zara Tapas, the Spanish restobar on Cathedral Road, which has introduced 'designated driver badges' as a part of its corporate social responsibility. When a group of customers walks into the pub, the steward offers the badge to one of them who volunteers to stay sober and drive the others back home.

"This person is served only soft drinks or mocktails. He takes the responsibility of driving his buddies back home. As an incentive, the person can exchange the badge for a free drink," says Zara Tapas manager Arasu.

Other pubs like 10 Downing Street advise their stewards to stop serving drinks to people, who they think are

C Suresh Kumar



**REWARDING RESPONSIBILITY:** An employee of Zara Tapas displays the 'designated driver' badge

getting too high. Those like Havana offer chauffeurs and encourage clients to leave their cars behind. Between playing music, DJs make announcements on safe driving.

"Our stewards ask people to go easy after the third drink. If someone ap-

pears to be getting too drunk, they stop serving them. The stewards have been trained to talk softly, but firmly," says 10 Downing Street manager Satya.

And pub-hoppers are not really complaining. "Some days, I decide to go sober. And when I return, I pick the costliest drink. I feel happy that I acted responsible and also got a spirited reward," says Santhosh Zachariah, a regular at Zara.

Others like S Harsha, sales manager at an automobile company, are only happy that they don't have to be embarrassed when cops stop the vehicle.

The city traffic police has been getting tough with drunk drivers. Last month, the licenses of at least 300 people were sent to the transport department for six-month suspension. "If pubs encourage safe driving, we can't be more happy," said additional commissioner (traffic) Shakil Akthar.