



Life and beer

CULTURE Beer is an important part of many lives, not just its thirst-quenching taste but as a social glue binding together communities centred on the local pub. Adrian Tierney-Jones reports

Beer runs through our daily lives with the cast-iron certainty of a river making its way to the sea. Celebrations, a winning goal, a new job all call for a glass of the freshest beer to toast success. Commiserations, a dropped catch, being on the losing side, then take a glass of ale to contemplate how to do better next time.

Even though he hails from the land of wine, England's manager Fabio Capello knew all about the restorative and relaxing

nature of beer when he allowed his team a glass the night before they won their World Cup game against Slovenia. However, the England footballers must have been suffering a hangover during their subsequent heavy defeat to Germany.

But beer is no longer the almost exclusive domain of men. Increasingly women are tuning in, not only to football, cricket and other traditionally male-dominated pastimes, but also to taking a glass of beer.

Beer has its own culture, its quirks and peculiarities, its slang and slogans. We drink beer in the pub, though we may also call it the local or the boozier, when it may be a rural inn, gastro-pub and even a theme bar. Tradition decrees that a "pint of the best" is the lingua franca. Handle or straight, jug or sleeve, half, pint or third: we get a choice of glass and of how much beer we want. Your shout, my round, in the chair.

Even though Lloyd George did his best to vanquish the round during World War 1 for fear that drinking was interfering with the war effort – though, given the ferocity of the times, a beer was a necessary tonic – it still remains as a constant thread looping through our beer culture. It is a reminder of the sociability and neighbourliness of popping down the pub.

Pubs may be under the hammer with newspaper headlines pointing the finger at binge drinkers and organisations issuing dire forecasts for the future of this uniquely British institution, but they

still survive. And many thrive, though it would be foolish to ignore the fact that some also struggle. The vast majority of them remain hubs of their community, whether a thatched local in the middle of the countryside or a corner house on the edge of town where quizzes, darts and the odd music night liven things up.

This is the place where beer is drunk in company and in moderation, with friends and strangers all getting on. The British pub is also at the cornerstone of our democracy, the place where dustman and duke, banker and barrow-boy can meet on equal terms.

It is not for nothing that one of the first things many of our serving men and women do on coming home is pop down the pub: stand them a beer for they are heroes.

The pub has also changed in many ways. Once the preserve of men, an all-male club – though women could order a port and lemon in the snug – the past few decades have seen pubs mirror society in becoming more inclusive.

The days of grimy and darkened public houses, where the only woman to see was the barmaid, are receding into memory. Families are also welcome, though sometimes this may be more contentious. Beers change as well: golden ales, with ripe fruit and a sprightly bite, attract both sexes, while the range of lagers available is enough to suit any palate.

And if a beer at home attracts instead, in the garden after grass-cutting or curled up in an armchair with book in hand, then there is a marvellous range of beers to choose from. There are hundreds of breweries, of all shapes and sizes, pumping out bitters, golden ales, milds, stouts, porters, India Pale Ales and beers flavoured with chocolate, coffee and spices.

Whether it is the rich seam of real ale to be found at the multitude of Anchors, King's Heads, Brewery Taps or Royal Oaks, or something interesting and innovative at home, our nation's drink echoes the words of an old Brewers' Society poster from the 1950s: Beer is best.

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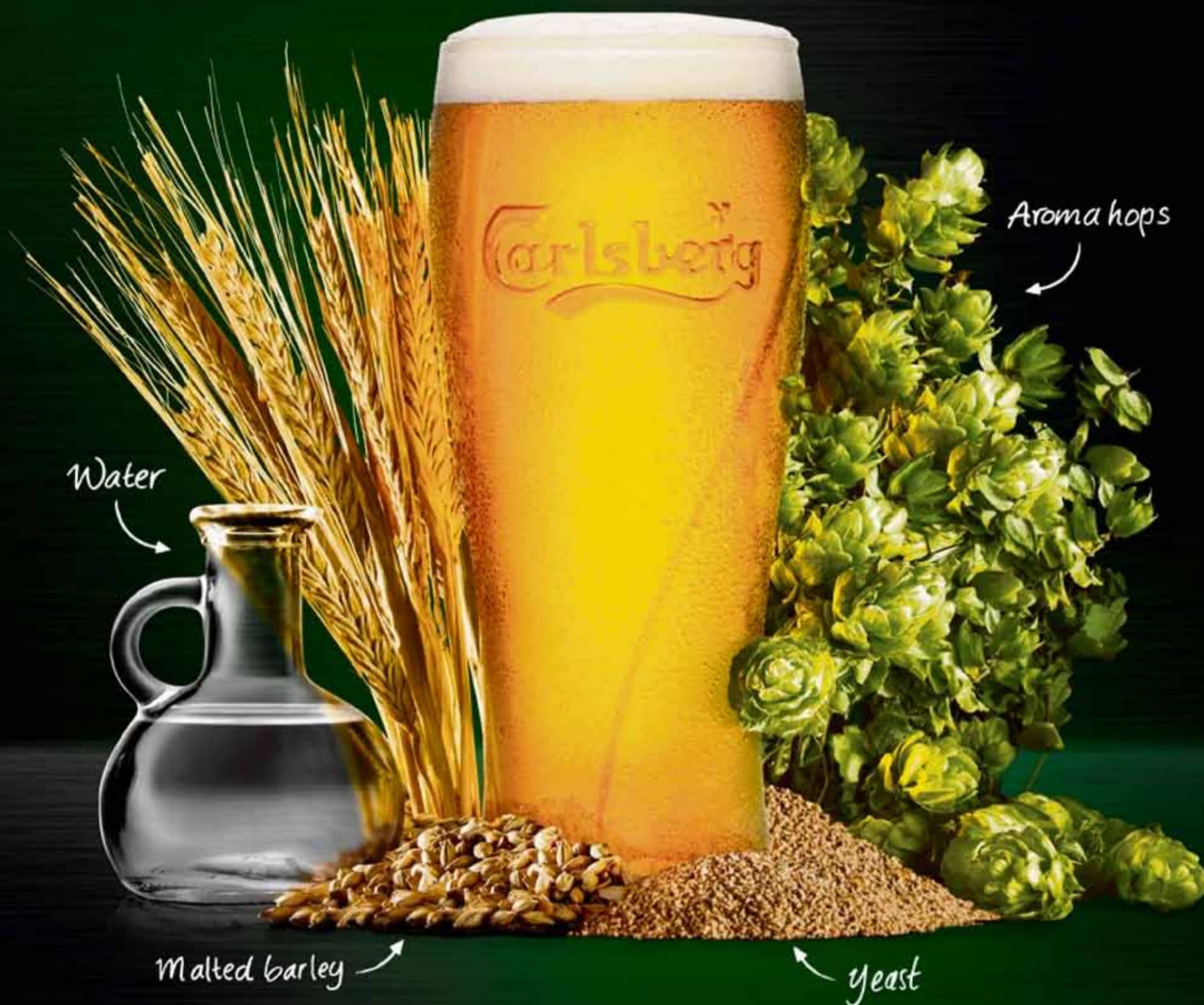
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The Carlsberg logo, featuring the brand name in a stylized white font with a crown above the letter 'r'.

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Cheers for thriller beers

STYLES Know your lagers, ales, stouts and porters to open up a whole new array of tastes. Expert **Pete Brown** runs through the many different styles of beer which are waiting to be discovered

The late, great Michael Jackson (not the singer, the other one, who invented modern beer writing) had a routine when people told him they “didn’t like” beer. He would adopt an expression of shocked concern and say, “What, none of them? How many did you try before you gave up?”

hear people talking about “beers and lagers”, but lager is beer, just like ale.) The technical difference between the two is all about the type of yeast they use and how long they take to brew.

Lager accounts for 90 per cent of the beer in the world. Golden pilsner lager was created in Czechoslovakia in 1842 and

nically an ale. While ale is much smaller than lager, there is much more diversity within it.

HERE IS A ROUGH RUNDOWN:

Pale ale – does what it says, covering a broad range from light summer ales that are almost the same colour as lager, but with a bit more personality, through to heady, aromatic India Pale Ales

Bitter – the workhorse of the ale world, usually mid-brown, moderate strength, it is all about the perfect balance of citrus or floral aromas, caramel and biscuit on the palate, with a dry finish

been aged to give a whole truckload of flavour complexity; no one says you have to drink the stuff in pints and these can rival sherry or port as an after-dinner digestif

Wheat beer – substituting some of the barley for wheat gives a blonde (usually) naturally hazy beer; often has spices added and ranges from banoffee to Asian-style lemongrass and lime notes in its delivery

Fruit beer – a good cherry or raspberry beer is a long way from a syrupy alcopop; the sweetness balances with tartness from real fruit for a wonderfully refreshing summer beer

Lining up to please the palate



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If you thought beer was a simple choice between cold, fizzy lager and warm, flat real ale – oh yeah, with the odd pint of Guinness – then you are in for a bit of a shock. What Michael was getting at is that there are myriad different styles of beer around the world, with large groups, sun-genres, hybrids and constant mutations.

The judges at the Great American Beer Festival divide beers into over seventy different categories. Obviously they are insane, but the only way you would convince them of this is to pretend there are even more.

It does start with a division into ales and lagers. (You sometimes

a good one is rather wonderful: pale and refreshing and best served chilled, but with a spicy, grassy aroma, a gentle sweetness on the palate and a buzzy dryness at the finish. It spread rapidly to become the world’s favourite beer. But it takes time to brew well; lager comes from the German word for “store” and the beer should be cellared for four weeks.

As well as pilsners there are dark lagers, Viennese red lagers and pale German-style lagers that are drier than pilsner.

Then there is ale: misunderstood and much maligned, until the recent global craft-brewing boom. Stout, often considered a third type of beer, is in fact tech-

“ If you thought beer was a simple choice between cold, fizzy lager and warm, flat real ale, then you are in for a bit of a shock

Porter and stout – a richer, darker roasting of the malt (beer’s main building block) leads to fuller chocolaty, coffee, sometimes even vinous flavours

Mild – dark, like porter and stout, but usually low in alcohol, full of mocha flavours while managing to stay light and refreshing

Old ale and barley wine – strong beers (above 7 per cent) that have

Strong Belgian beer styles – Dubbels, Tripels, Abbey beers and Trappist beers; some are like English barley wines, others are like nothing else you have ever tasted.

And if that does not make you thirsty, Michael Jackson is up there somewhere looking down on you, with an expression of serious concern.

Beer's natural alchemy

BREWING The brewing process has been refined and its secrets passed from brewer to brewer over the years. **Adrian Tierney-Jones** discovers what goes into the perfect pint

Beer begins in a field of barley, a carpet of golden grain, swaying in the breeze and ripening in the sun, its ultimate destination the glass in the hand of the happy drinker.

This is a journey that starts with the harvest, after which the barley is taken to a maltings. Here the seeds are soaked in water, allowed to part germinate – producing enzymes that will transform starch to soluble sugars – and then kiln-dried, ready for use by the brewer.

At the brewery, malted barley is ground in a mill to form the grist and then steeped – or mashed – in hot water for up to two hours. It is a process that brings forth a copper-coloured liquid called the wort, intensely sweet to taste. The wort is rich in sugars, upon which yeast will ultimately feed, changing them into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Malted barley also provides colour for beer, with darker malts used for porters and stouts. Naturally, the brewer is conscientious about getting the best malt.

“The first thing we specify is that all our barley be grown and malted in East Anglia,” says Fergus Fitzgerald, head brewer at Suffolk family firm Adnams. “This is very easy for our maltsters to fulfil as so much malting barley is grown here in the bread basket of England. Using East Anglia barley keeps food miles down, allows us to get to know many of the growers and, to paraphrase another beer strap line, it’s ‘probably’ the best malting barley in the world.”

FLAVOUR

“We want our barley to be free of moulds, have enough protein for the yeast, as much starch as possible, plus enough enzymes to convert that starch into sugar. On the flavour side we want sweetness, dryness, a light touch or complexity, to be the background flavour in some and all encompassing in others. We also want body and mouth-feel.”

The creation of the wort involves another essential natural ingredient: water or liquor as it is called by brewers. Needless to say, a particular quality of liquor is essential for making good beer. Burton-on-Trent became a brewing centre for ales because of the quality of its hard, mineral-rich

water and many brewers moved there. By the late- 19th century, brewers had learnt that they could add various salts to replicate this famous liquor. The process is called Burtonisation and continues today – the main salts involved are gypsum (calcium sulphate) and Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate). Soft water is usually good for stouts and lagers, whereas hard water is good for bitter, mild and India Pale Ale (IPA).

The next stage in the alchemical process of brewing is the boiling of the wort, which is when the third ingredient is added. This is the hop, a plant grown in its historical heartlands of Kent, Hereford and Worcestershire. Hops act as a bitter and fruity counterbalance to the sweetness of the malt; they also act as a preservative in beer. Hops yield resins and oils, with resins producing bitterness and hop oils bestowing flavour and aroma. Brewers select different hop varieties. Some such as Challenger and Fuggles

are added earlier on for their bittering qualities; others such as Goldings or First Gold go in later, giving fruity, zesty, spicy character to the nose.

Roger Ryman, award-winning head brewer at Cornwall’s St Austell Brewery, keeps close links with the hop growers whose skills and dedication have helped to add lustre to his prize-winning beers.

ORIGINS

“It’s important to have a good relationship with your hop grower and merchant,” he says. “I visit them in September, one of the nicest times in the brewing calendar. Hop farms are in attractive areas such as Herefordshire and Worcestershire or further afield in Slovenia and the United States. Hop-growers are usually very nice people, and close to the soil and the earth. They live the agricultural year. People forget the agricultural origins of beer, that it is dependent on a year’s harvest. We talk about wine vintages, but hops also vary from year to year.”

After the hopped boil, the beer is pumped through a cooling system to fermenting vessels. Now is the time when the fourth ingredient of beer is added: yeast, a single-cell fungus plant that kick-starts fermentation and transforms malt sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Until Louis Pasteur ex-

People forget the agricultural origins of beer, that it is dependent on a year’s harvest

Brewing is a balanced mixture of art and science



Beer is big business

- Britain’s 25 million beer drinkers sustain some 400,000 jobs in the pub and brewing industry.
- According to the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA), this generates a retail sales value of more than £18 billion a year.
- There are 650 breweries, including 600 micro-breweries, and 200,000 licensed premises.
- The range of beers on offer totals almost 3,000, brewed in the UK and imported from abroad.
- In addition, beer is a major export as nearly 2.5 million pints of British beer drunk every day overseas.
- “Of course, beer’s popularity at home and abroad is also very healthy for the British economy, with the brewing industry contributing nearly £6 billion a year in VAT and duty on beer sales,” says the Beer Academy.
- Sport, in particular, benefits from beer sponsorship, notably football, rugby, tennis and golf. The brewing industry invests around £38 million annually in sports and music-related events.
- Latest figures from the BBPA show that a typical pint of lager costs £2.95 and a typical pint of bitter £2.58.
- British consumption of alcohol per head remains in the mid-range compared with our European neighbours. Britons drink less than the French, Germans, and Spaniards, with the Czechs drinking the most per head, at 21.8 pints (12.4 litres) of alcohol, compared with the UK’s 14.3 pints (8.1 litres).

plained how yeast worked, brewers nicknamed it “goddisgoode” as they could only turn to the Almighty for an explanation of why beer became so potent.

“The yeast strains we use are of pivotal importance to the individual character of each of our beers,” explains Greene King’s head brewer John Bexon. “Yeast is a live product that reproduces during each brew and is handed down from one generation of brewers to another. The DNA of the yeast strains that we use for Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale today will be almost identical to those used by Benjamin Greene when he started the brewery in 1799.”

Ales use top or warm-fermenting yeast, while lagers are fermented in colder conditions and then matured, or “lagered”, for anything up to three months. Real ales usually receive five to seven days’ fermentation before being racked into nine-gallon casks, or firkins, where secondary fermentation will take place in the pub cellar; “smooth” ales are pasteurised and filtered before kegging. When the landlord perceives the time is right, the beer is ready: a healthy, natural wine of our country. Cheers.

Adrian Tierney-Jones is editor of 1001 Beers You Must Try Before You Die

The brewer's tale

HISTORY Just how long ago was beer first made? And was it a merry mistake? **Pete Brown** traces the cloudy origins of the nation's number-one tippie

Who says miracles never happen? If you were to harvest some grain, such as barley, and store it in something, like a clay pot, and if that barley were to get damp and germinate, the liquid in the jar would turn into beer.

That is because yeast is in the air all around us and it just loves sugar, which it can find, among other places, in germinating barley. When it eats that sugar, it creates alcohol and carbon dioxide, two of the components – along with the barley itself – of beer.

No one knows when this happy accident was first discovered but, given the simplicity of it, it is reasonable to assume that it was a long time ago, in various locations around the world. Basically, it would have started occurring not long after we first grew grain and stored it in pots. In other words, beer is as old as civilisation itself, and may have even been the motivation for ceasing a nomadic ex-

istence and settling down in stable farming communities in the first place. Evidence of brewing happening deliberately now stretches back as far as 7000BC.

The Sumerians and then the Egyptians were the first to really celebrate it and produce it on a commercial scale, a mere 5,000 years ago. They began adding herbs and other flavourings to the porridgey mush, which they drank through long straws. Beer was already waiting for the Romans when they arrived in northern Europe and became our national drink around AD400, when the Anglo-Saxons colonised Britain. It has remained our most popular beverage ever since.

Brewing was part of every household's activities, like baking bread. The earliest pubs, or alehouses, were private homes belonging to people who brewed better beer than their neighbours. Something about beer meant customers lingered over the transaction and these homes be-



As a nation, Britain was baptised in beer

Beer fuelled the Industrial Revolution

came “public houses”, community centres where people did business or just passed the time of day.

The monasteries made brewing more scientific and larger in scale, and beer became part of everyday life. As cities grew, weak beer was a vital source of fluid when water would have given you dysentery. Beer was sterile, thanks to being boiled in its production, and alcohol is a natural disinfectant, so newborn babies were washed in it. As a nation, Britain was baptised in beer.

Strong beers were served at weddings and sold to passers-by to pay for the festivities, and weak beer was served in schools and workhouses, a vital source of vitamins and nutrients for those on poor diets.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, most pubs brewed their own beer until the Industrial Revo-

lution allowed the better brewers to work on a bigger, commercial scale. Beer fuelled that revolution, with brewers being among the first to use steam power, investing in transport links and pioneering microbiology to better understand that miraculous but often infuriating yeast.

In the late-Victorian era, by any measure, brewing was Britain's second biggest industry to cotton. That this is almost never mentioned in textbooks on the period is the lasting achievement of the Temperance Movement, which almost succeeded in introducing prohibition during the First World War.

But in World War II, beer was recognised as our saviour. It was never rationed and Prime Minister Winston Churchill mandated that every single fighting man must get his allocated eight pints a week, no matter where in the world he was; a command that resulted in the spectacle of Spitfires flying into Normandy on D-Day with beer barrels strapped under their wings.

We still drink more beer than any other alcoholic drink. It has had its detractors of late, but when George III proclaimed, “Beer and beef have made us what we are,” he was boasting, not complaining. And I'll drink to that.

Pete Brown is the author of Man Walks Into A Pub: A Sociable History of Beer



Typical, you wait ages for a great tasting alcohol free beer

...and then two come along

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Food for thought

CUISINE Gastronomic snobbery or plain ignorance too often bars beer from the dining table.

Ben MacFarland calls time on wine's one-time monopoly and says beer is back on the menu

If you love food but only eat it with wine, you are denying your taste buds a gastronomic delight. It is like being a footballer who only uses his right foot, a novelist who does not believe in vowels or a violinist who only plays half the strings.

A bon vivant who shuns beer is, strictly, just a vivant and one who is scoffing at the dinner table of denial. Do not get me wrong, wine is great and it works wonderfully with a whole host of dishes and flavours, but certainly not all of them and not always the ones you would expect.

There is no room for monogamy if you are an enlightened imbibers. You need to dip your toe into different, often more discerning, drinking waters, be promiscuous and play around a bit, experiment and experience new pairings; embrace beer in all its gastronomic glory and guises. You never know, you may just like it.

If you are unsure, then simply check out the chefs. In the last few years, Gordon Ramsay, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Rick Stein and even Ferran Adria, of El Bulli in Spain, have all designed beers that dovetail deliciously with their dishes. Breweries, meanwhile, have broadened their epicurean horizons beyond the clichéd pie and a pint, and are now adorning their bottles with recommended food pairings.

It is not a new thing. Beer and food have been culinary companions since the Middle Ages when brew houses and kitchens were one and the same. The beer tankard, not the wine chalice, graced the dining tables of both the posh and the pauper for centuries. In fact, it was the Romans, the original oenophiles, who first propagated the exclusive "wine and dine" myth.

Anyway, what beer lacks in tannin and acidity, two of wine's key weapons, it makes up for in copious other culinary qualities. It has bitterness, sweetness, bubbles; it leads with less alcohol and it has an enormous array of flavours, many of which are absent from wine's repertoire. Get the beer right and magic will happen.

It is a simple fact that beer has a far wider range of flavours than wine. Beer can taste like pretty much anything – lychee, coffee, pear drops, banana, toffee, chocolate, lemongrass – the variety is endless.

Beer has the caramelised character to find flavour and further flavour with charcoal-chequered meat and desserts. Where spicy, heat-

emitting foods shoot wine down in flames, beers, such as a robust India Pale Ale (IPA) and brusquely bitter pilsners, have the fire-fighting bitterness and fat-lifting carbonation to rescue and revive flavours from the overpowering inferno.

Irish stouts and porters envelop the acidity of oysters and seafood in a dark, roasty and toasty cloak; peaty rauchbiers smoulder with smoked cheese and meats, while wit beers woo salads and herb-encrusted fish with their spicy citrus charm and tempered tartness.

Herbal, spicy German weiss biers chase succulent roast chicken down with zest and wide-eyed zeal; fruit beers are a fine, faithful friend to chocolate, foie gras and duck, while British best bitters are, by divine appointment, betrothed to battered fish and chips, succulent pork pies, bangers and mash and a ploughman's lunch, (try and serve wine to a ploughman and you will find his fork somewhere painful).

If you are looking for something to please your pheasant or cheer up some deer, then the spicy, herbal biere de garde has certainly got game; fruit beers go with chocolate desserts; chocolate beer goes with fruity desserts and, of course, beer goes with all pizza. And the same goes for nuts. And, while we are on the topic, crisps.

These fusions of flavour are just a few examples of what can be found under beer and food's shining silver dome of epicurean opportunity. The culinary possibilities are endless and, unlike the world's best wine which worry wallets, the world's best beers are pleasantly affordable and within the grasp of everyone's fiscal fingertips.

So, if you have not done so already, open your eyes, awaken your senses, step out of the gastronomic gloom and bask in the brilliance of beer and food.

BASIC RULES OF PAIRING BEER WITH FOOD

Match intensity of flavour

Strength and intensity of flavour are crucial. Do not partner a big, muscular beer with a light dish. A heavy stout is going to overwhelm a chicken salad, while a lightly hopped pilsner is going to get lost in the full-on textures and tastes of roast duck or lamb. A good initial approach, although not without its exception to the rule, is to think of dark ale as red wine and lighter lager and wheat beers as white wines. They have similar parallel characteristics.

Challenge perceptions

Keep an open mind at all times and do not be led by cliché or tradition. Lager, for example, is not the only companion to curry as it may merely fan the flames. An IPA, high in hoppiness and big in bitterness, will fight them and is much better equipped to deal with the spices. Matching like with like is not always the way to go. Fruit beers with fruit desserts are simply too sweet and fruity, while chocolate beers with chocolate are too chocolate. Swap these two around though and you have some taste sensations.

Complement, cut or contrast

Try and achieve one of these three "Cs". Cut through and cleanse the palate with a beer that frees your taste buds of a certain flavour – be it chocolate, salt, chilli – so that you can enjoy the next bite of your meal as well as the previous one. A golden ale with a juicy burger is a good example of this. Moules marinieres with a herbal, citrusy Belgian witbier is a fine example of a beer that complements the elements of a dish. Contrast, meanwhile, is just that: a lively and feisty clash that should not work but does; two opposites that attract. One of the finest contrasting beer and food matches is the briny flavour of oysters paired with the roasted malt flavours of a dry stout or porter.

Hoppy beers are akin to acidic wines

In circumstances where you would be seeking a wine with high acidity, such as with salty, oily or spicy food, it is best to opt for an ale or lager with significant hoppiness. These include German pilsners,



The beer tankard, not the wine chalice, graced the dining tables of both the posh and the pauper for centuries

Glassware: get rid of the pint glasses

Whenever serving beer during a meal and whatever it is served with, one thing you must do is get rid of the pint glass. It is an absurd vessel and, like feet, has no place on the dinner table. As with wine and spirits, good beer should be served in refined glassware. You would not slosh a bottle of vintage wine into a pint glass, so why do it with a beautiful beer? What holds true for the grape holds true for the hop. Like wine, different beers need different glasses to enhance the taste, bouquet and balance of the glorious liquid that lies within.



IPAs, bolshie pale ales and biere-de-garde beers from France.

RECOMMENDED BEER AND FOOD COMBINATIONS

Foie gras or duck confit with kriek

It is difficult to unearth a more instantly incredible food-and-drink pairing than foie gras and this sweet, slightly sour beer style from Belgium, made by steeping real cherries in a brown ale. Unlike sauternes, the age-old wine option, kriek has the tartness to cut through the indulgent texture and does not complicate things with a coating mouth-feel. The textures are wonderful too; the

rich carbonation and biting, fruit finish contrasting brilliantly with the smooth, buttery feel of the food. Try Liefmans Cuvee Brut (Kriek), Girardin Kriek, Drie Fonteinen Oude Kriek, Oude Kriek Boon.

Salads, chicken and fish with witbiers and weissbiers

Wheat beer, be it Bavarian or Belgian in style, is food's flexible friend. Belgian witbier, often brewed with orange peel and coriander, is spicy yet light with herbal, citrus notes, while German weissbier gets all its banana and clove-like flavours from the use of a unique yeast strain. They make great breakfast beers and are awesome with



Beer can complement fine cuisine in the best restaurants around the world

Recipe for sweet success

Young's London Special Ale pancakes with toffee sauce

One of the nation's most popular premium ales, Young's London Special Ale is a perfect ingredient for pancakes: the toffee notes bring out the delicious caramelised flavours in the sugar and complement the golden syrup in the toffee sauce.

Pancakes

- 1/2 pint of Young's London Special Ale
- 2 eggs
- 100gms of plain flour

Mix all of the ingredients together until they are the consistency of double cream. Fry in batches in a very hot, well-oiled frying pan.

Toffee Sauce

- 75gms of butter
- 75gms of brown sugar
- 75gms of golden syrup
- 2 tablespoons of condensed milk

Heat all the ingredients together until combined and the sugar has melted. Serve with chopped nuts, raisins and a pint of Young's London Special Ale.

eggs Benedict as well as a full greasy fry-up. Weissbier works wonders with pork belly and pasta dishes while Belgian witbier is magnificent with mussels, chicken caesar salad, fishcakes and fresh whitebait. Try Schneider Weiss, Erdinger Weiss, Blue Moon, Weihenstephaner Hefe-Weiss, Troublette Witbier, Vedett Extra White, Hoegaarden.

Curry with India Pale Ale

Curry is big on flavour and spice, and is looking for a liquid lover to act as a throat-charming chutney substitute. IPA, with its marmalade notes and soothing citrus hints of lychee, lemon and lime, is just perfect here. It also has the stamina and hoppy strength to survive. IPAs and spicy tandoori dishes are perfect bedfellows as an IPA's hops are the perfect foil for curry's rasping capsaicins. Softer south Indian dishes would work better with pale ales, however, like Coopers Sparkling Ale from Australia. Also try Meantime IPA, Worthington White Shield, Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale, Brewdog Punk IPA, Thornbridge Jaipur IPA.

Shellfish and seafood with porter or stout

Oysters are awesome with porters and stouts. The association dates back to early-Victorian times when porters and stouts were everyday beers, and oysters were a bar snack as pedestrian as peanuts are today. Earthy, intense and brewed using toasty, roasted malts, stouts and por-

ters are a stunning contrast to the sharp, briny brashness of the oyster. Shuck it and see. When browned ever so slightly and caramelised, seared scallops are also perfect with the malt sweetness and feint treacle touches found in traditional porter. Try Fuller's London Porter, Coopers Best Extra Stout, O'Hanlon's Port Stout, Dorothy

Goodbody's Wholesome Stout, Meantime London Porter.

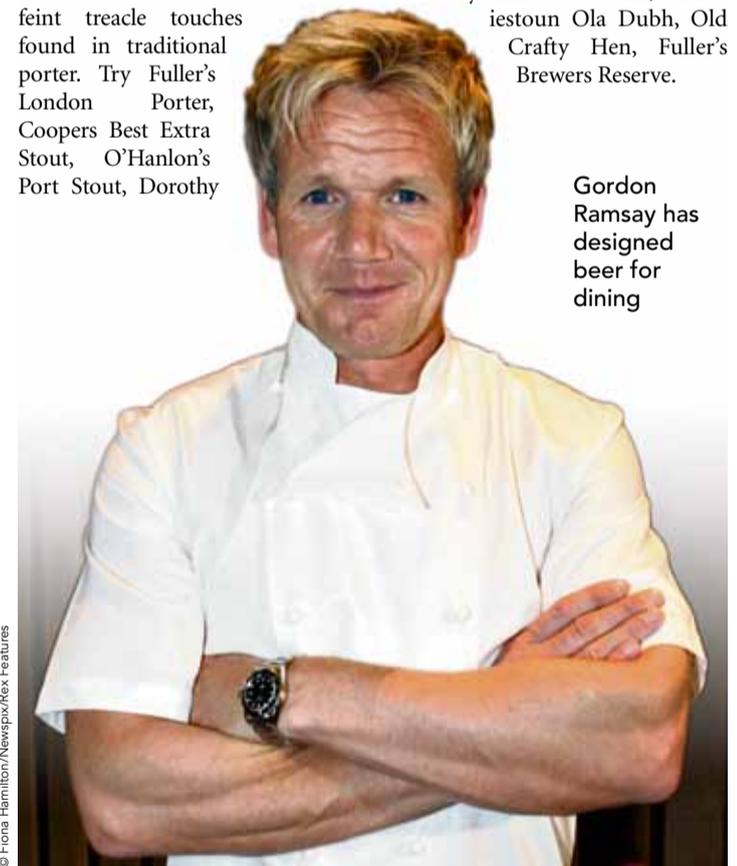
Epoisse with Belgian Trappist beers

Unlike wine, beer has the variety of textures to lift rich, indulgent cheeses from the palate, while cheese, in return, mellows beer's bitter hoppiness. Citrusy, herbal hops replicate a number of accompaniments often found on a cheeseboard, such as fruit chutney, quince jelly and raw apple. Lots of beer styles pay homage to fromage better than wine, but Trappist ales from Belgium, brewed by monks who also have a long history of cheese-making, are particularly thrilling. Try an aromatic Epoisse with the port-like, almond-tinged Orval, or a blue cheese with Chimay Bleue, the dry figgy pudding flavours of Rochefort 10 with a stilton, or blend the nutty and herbal notes of Westmalle Tripel with a mature English farmhouse cheddar.

After-dinner oak-aged ales

An increasing number of brewers are creating strong ales and maturing them in wood. With chocolate, cheese or a whisky, they are delightful after-dinner sipping beers, best drunk from a snifter or a tumbler.

Try Innis & Gunn, Harvestoun Ola Dubh, Old Crafty Hen, Fuller's Brewers Reserve.



Gordon Ramsay has designed beer for dining

Cooking with beer: tips for tippable cuisine

Stout marinade

With a characteristic caramel sweetness and dry bitterness, stout is a superb beer in which to soak pork, chicken, beef or lamb; a porter will work too.

Sauces

Make sure that leaner, hoppier beers are not boiled in a reduction as they can go bitter and metallic. Ideally, the intensity of flavour of the beer should mirror the intensity of flavour of the food.

Poaching

If you are poaching foods, do it at low heat 160-180C and remember that adding sweetly

flavoured root vegetables, such as sweet potato or parsnips, will balance out any overtly hoppy flavours.

Batters

Oilier fish (mackerel and sardines) like a hoppier beer, such as Marston's Old Empire, whereas light fish (sole) are happy with witbiers, fragrant English ales or the sweeter Innis & Gunn brews.

Salad dressings

Add American Blue Moon wheat beer or Hoegaarden from Belgium to your salad dressing for exotic complexity.

Champion beers of the World Cup

WORLD CUP Football and beer are a perfect match. But who are the final 16 biggest drinkers and what are their best national beers? Peter Archer takes a swig of World Cup beverages



© beergenie.co.uk

Whatever they manage on the pitch, surely no other nation could ever outdrink the beer-loving, thirsty English?

After all, we are Anglo-Saxon ale quaffers famed throughout the world. Where else could more pints be downed than in England?

For example, during England's three qualifying matches in South Africa, it is estimated that an extra 21 million pints of beer were drunk. Many

more were downed, drowning sorrows, after England crashed out to Germany on Sunday.

But, wait for the whistle, not content with their side's victory on the field of play, the beer halls of Bavaria are claiming they outswill England's traditional pubs.

The referee is consulting the oracle – www.beergenie.co.uk – and writing something in his notebook. It cannot be true. The Germans top the league of beer drinkers at the football

World Cup. And England can only sip home in sixth place.

Of the 32 nations taking part, New Zealand are runners-up to Germany, in terms of beer consumption per capita, with Slovenia third, Denmark fourth and lager-loving Australia fifth.

England, followed by the United States, Slovakia, Netherlands, Serbia, Portugal, Mexico, Switzerland, South Africa, Chile and Brazil, make up the last 16 biggest boozers.

World champion beer drinkers Germany consume a staggering 196.6 pints (111.7 litres) per person a year, compared with England's 146.9 pints (83.5 litres). The Kiwis, in second place, knock back a dizzying 162.4 pints (92.3 litres) per head of population.

So when it comes to the serious – and sometimes not so serious – subject of beer, it pays to stay ahead of the game. Why not taste some of the best World Cup beers on offer?

Germany 1

Schneider Weisse

Bursting with banana flavours and cloves, it is to Bavarian wheat beer what Jurgen Klinsmann was to diving in the penalty area; one of the world's finest wheat beers.

Andechser Doppelbock Dunkel

Chocolate, raisins, prunes, bitter coffee beans and a peppery twang feature in this chewy, maroon-coloured dark beer from a Monastic brewery, located at the foot of the Holy Mountain, south of Munich.

Slovenia 3

Lasko Club

A light pasteurised lager beer which could be teamed up with Slovenia's favourite beef goulash and dumplings followed by strudel. Slovenes, who incidentally have the lowest marriage rate in the EU, have hired The Colonies pub in London's Victoria for the duration of the World Cup.

Australia 5

Foster's

Streuth, do lagers come much more super-chilled than this? The amber nectar is a sure-fire fridge-filler for even the most fair-weather football fan; Foster's claim Brits drink more than 30 pints of their Aussie brew every second.

Coopers Sparkling Ale

A deep auburn-coloured and cloudy bottle-conditioned beer with a honeyed hop aroma followed by a full-bodied fruity, raspberry-ish note and mild hop bite.

New Zealand 2

Monteith's Lager

A light-bodied lager, soft and mellow with a nutty send-off. Monteith's brewery in Greymouth, on New Zealand's west coast, dates back almost 150 years. In 2001 it was closed by new corporate owners but, following public outcry, reopened four days later. The brewery still uses boilers fuelled by coal and open fermentation, and the beers remain unpasteurised.

Denmark 4

Mikkeller Single Hop India Pale Ale (IPA)

Founder and brewer Mikkel Borg Bjergsø, the man behind Mikkeller beers, does not actually have a brewery. He trots the globe, like a hedonistic hobo, collaborating with the cream of the world's craft-brewing talent, tapping their brains and borrowing equipment to create his unique ales.

Carlsberg Export

Probably well known, this slightly stronger golden European pilsner achieves a thirst-slaking balance between malt sweetness and herbal, hop bitterness; Carlsberg was the first brewery to domesticate wild yeast.

England 6

Fuller's London Porter

Brewed by the River Thames using a trio of brown malts, this Dickensian-esque drop has the dark hue of a cheeky soot-swathed chimney-sweep; silky and smooth, it is nutty with a touch of liquorice, coffee and dark, bitter chocolate, and is great with oysters or in a stew.

Wells Bombardier

Natural mineral water, English Fuggles hops and crushed Crystal malted barley deliver the experience of England in a glass; peppery aromas give way to malty richness, tangy hops and sultana fruit on the palate, with a long, soft, spicy finish.

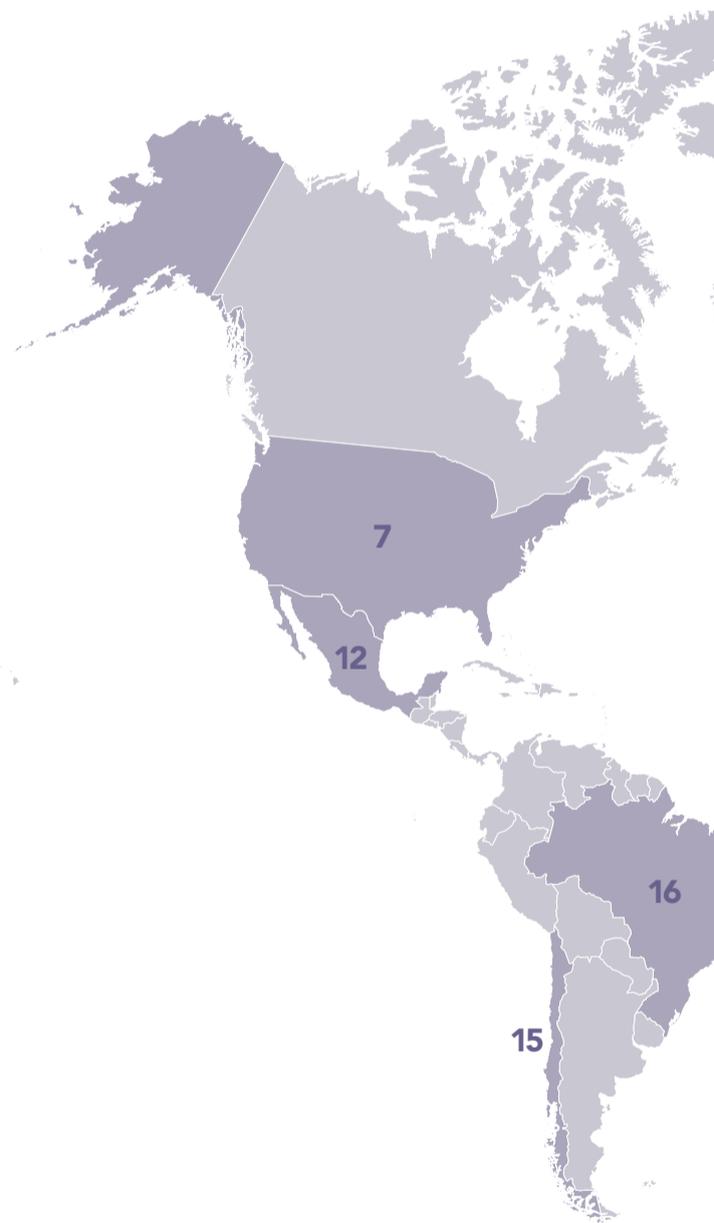
United States 7

Anchor Steam Beer

This San Franciscan cult beer dates from the 1890s Californian Gold Rush. It straddles the gap between a lager and an ale, and is brewed using fresh North American hop flowers.

Budweiser

The best-selling beer brand in the western world has few rivals in the easy-drinking finals; brewed with rice and lagered using beech wood, Bud is as American as apple pie.



Brazil 16

Brahma Lager Beer

Adored almost as much as Pele, this light, easy-drinking lager was created in 1888 and is enjoyed all over Brazil.

Xingu

A black, silky lager laced with sweet treacle on the palate and liquorice on the nose; pronounced "shin-goo", it was inspired by an ancient Amazonian tribe who brewed black beer as long ago as the mid-1550s.



Chile 15

Fallen Angel's Fire in the Hole Chilli Beer

Chileans export wine but not their beer, so why not give the Fallen Angel Brewery in Sussex a call; their Fire in the Hole beer is not from Chile but it is brewed using chillis.



South Africa 14

Amstel

Brewed in South Africa, host country of the 2010 World Cup, with all the Dutch deftness of a Johan Cruyff pass, Amstel is a little hoppier than most mainstream lagers and is a good teammate for hard cheese; it is named after the river that runs through Amsterdam.



Switzerland 13

Hurlimann Lager

Named after Albert Hurlimann, a world champion in the scientific study of yeast, this citrus-scented Swiss lager is a zesty Zurich-born beer which is clean, crisp and now brewed in Kent to ensure freshness for the UK market.



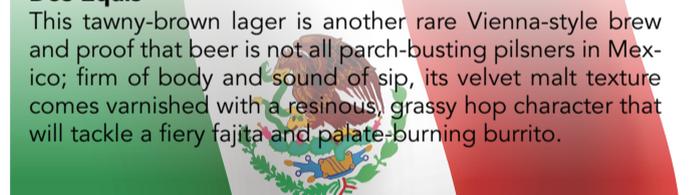
Mexico 12

Negra Modelo

The dark beer alternative for Mexican beer drinkers, it is one of the few surviving examples of Vienna-type beer; creamy, smooth and full of flavour.

Dos Equis

This tawny-brown lager is another rare Vienna-style brew and proof that beer is not all parch-busting pilsners in Mexico; firm of body and sound of sip, its velvet malt texture comes varnished with a resinous, grassy hop character that will tackle a fiery fajita and palate-burning burrito.



Portugal 11

Sagres

The lager of Lisbon, Sagres is supped all over southern Portugal; a German-style pilsner best served with light tapas or perhaps cod, cooked in one of 365 different, Portuguese ways.



Slovakia 8

Zlaty Bazant

Meaning Golden Pheasant, the biggest beer in Slovakia is a pale Euro-lager brewed in a Czech style; good with a Slovak potato pancake fried in oil perhaps.



Netherlands 9

Heineken

One of the world's legendary lagers, Heineken has been brewed since 1873; a clean and crispy lager with a fruity finish.

Grolsch Weizen

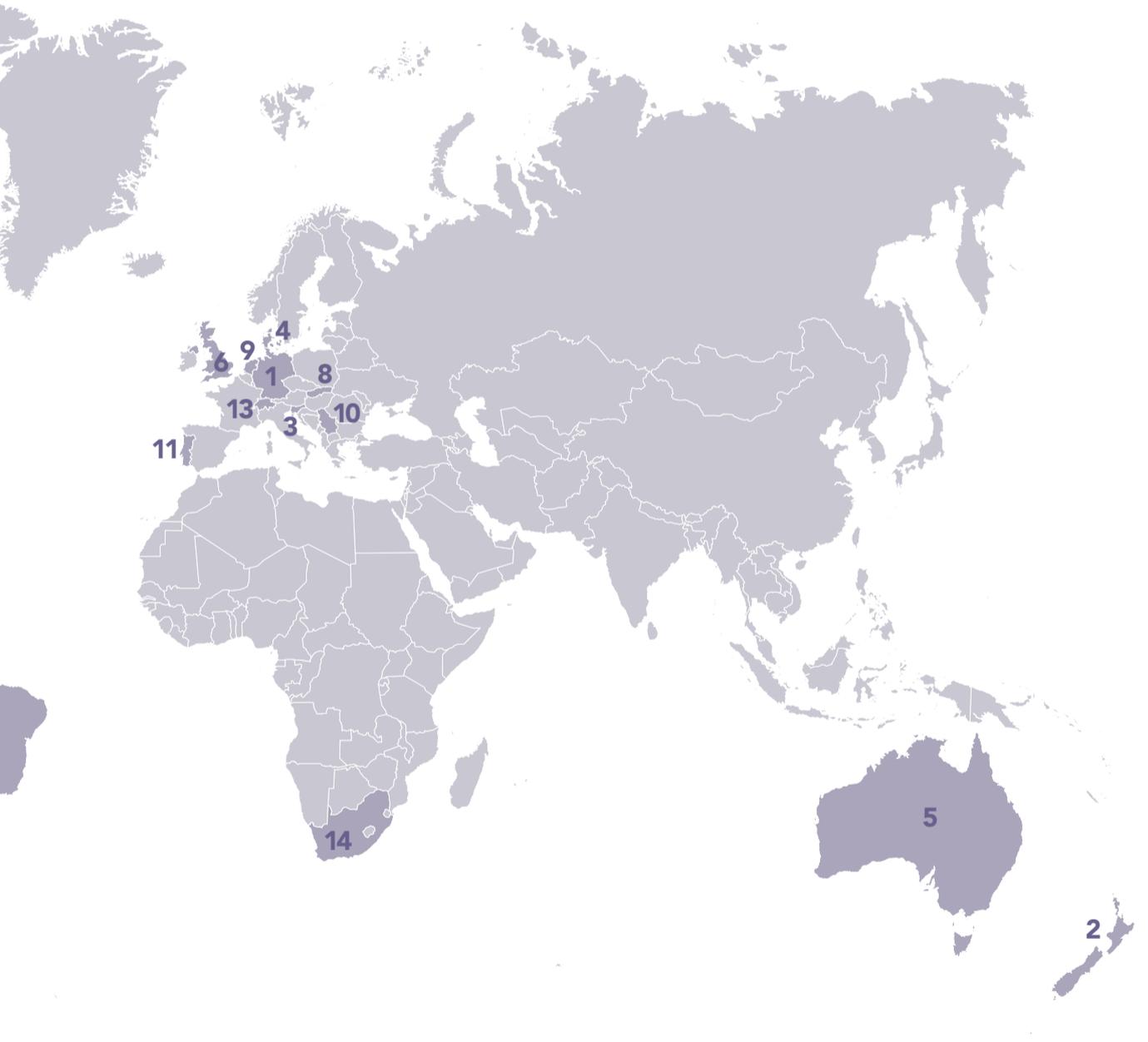
Fuller bodied than Belgian witbiers but with more spice than Bavarian weizen; good with the popular Dutch bar snack, bitterballen, which is a savoury, deep-fried beef meatball with parsley and seasoning.



Serbia 10

Jelen Pivo

The traditional and leading Serbian beer brand is a best-seller throughout central and eastern Europe; a core lager beer made with high-quality ingredients, it has a distinctive bitter taste.



Real beer for real women

LIFESTYLE More and more women are switching from wine to beer as brewers begin to cater for female tastes. **Stephanie Hirschmiller** meets the ladies who like a nice pint at the new-look local

Like many women, I have always had a slight mistrust of beer. I think it stems from my first university vacation when an old school-friend turned up at my local pub. She had previously been one of those super-svelte types whose figure everyone envied. But now she was knocking back the pints and beginning to bear an uncanny resemblance to a beer barrel. It was not a good look.

In retrospect, however, it was more than likely a combination of junk food and sheer quantity of booze intake, rather than the beer alone, that was to blame. Believe it or not, pint for pint, beer is generally lower in calories than wine or spirits. A Beer Academy report published this month says that half a pint (284ml) at 4 per cent ABV (alcohol by volume) contains around 95 calories while a 175ml glass of white wine weighs in at a hiccup-inducing 131.

Yes, times are a-changing. In fact, there is a seismic shift occurring in

the drinks industry evinced by the statistics. According to a survey, conducted by CAMRA (Campaign For Real Ale) earlier this year, the percentage of females who have tried real ale has more than doubled in the last 18 months from 16 to 37 per cent.

The introduction of more female-friendly brews, such as Fullers' Honeydew, that are sweeter, fresher, paler in colour and lower in alcohol content than their more traditional counterparts, is also contributing to the swing. Although some may consider this a trifle patronising and complain that it is simply conforming to a stereotypical view of women and their tastes, it certainly seems to be working.

And with a raft of young thirty-something women making waves in an industry, which has, up until now, been rather male-dominated, the trend certainly seems set to continue.

PAOLA

A case in point is 35-year-old Paola Leather, technical brewer and



Women can be attracted to the taste of beer

© beergenie.co.uk

Putting the ale back in female

For many centuries women – not men – dominated brewing. References to “brewsters” and “ale wives” are common throughout the medieval period of history. Brewing was a form of cooking and was done by women, until making beer became a large-scale commercial venture and men muscled in.

But women are slowly making a comeback, not only in brewing but also in the drinking of beer.

In the UK there are now a number of women among top brewers, tasters and testers at the St Austell Brewery in Cornwall, Greene King in Suffolk, Shepherd Neame in Kent and Scotland's Traquair House Brewery.

However, according to recent research, 79 per cent of British women never or rarely drink beer.

A slightly cheerier statistic, from the point of view of beer appreciation presented by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), is that 37 per cent of female alcohol drinkers have now tried the real stuff.

But why are so many women still not interested in the taste of beer?

The British Beer & Pub Association's Beer Genie website is categorical. “The reason that women don't drink as much beer as men is a combination of misconceptions, myopic macho marketing, a lack of information and the way it is served,” says Beer Genie.

“There are more than 60 different beer styles to choose from, many of which will appeal to female drinkers.

“One could suggest fruit beers, golden ales, wheat beers and light, easy-drinking lagers. But that would be to suggest that women don't have the palate or the ability to enjoy ‘bigger’ beers.”

bottling manager at the St Austell Brewery in Cornwall, famous for its flagship Tribute ale. Having grown up in Bogotá, Colombia, she was immersed in beer from an early age. Her grandfather worked in the brewing industry and she remembers family barbecues where beer was not only drunk but also used in the cooking process as a marinade. She recalls how, as a child, she was allowed just a little bit mixed with a soft drink. “When I was at school I used to say that I wanted to work in a brewery when I grew up,” she laughs. “People thought it was just something you say as a kid, but now I've fulfilled my dream.”

She came to her post via an unusual trajectory which saw her working as a taster for chocolate and coffee in Columbia where she honed her palate. I wondered if there were many principles from this initial career that she's been able to apply to beer.

“The percentage of women who have tried real ale has more than doubled in the last 18 months from 16 to 37 per cent

Sure she has helped to develop the brewery's Chocolate and Chili beer brought out for Valentine's Day this year, but her rare sensibility goes right back to her childhood. “My mum never allowed us to have sweets when we were children,” she says. “So if we wanted something sweet, we got fruit or vegetables.” In fact, she and her two sisters were encouraged to experiment with different tastes and flavours from an early age, and urged to engage all the senses including touch and smell. One of her first memories is the delicious scent of fresh carrots.

Lizzie Brodie, one half of the brother-and-sister team who manage the William IV pub in Leyton and co-own East London's Brodie's brewery, maintains that women find her more approachable as she is another woman as well as being a brewer. The pair started the small brewery, more as a hobby than anything else, in 2008 but it has ended up running their lives. “We get loads of attractive young women, from ladies-who-lunch types to yummy mummies,” she enthuses. “We make a lot of light hoppy ales which is a great starting point.”

MINT CHOC-CHIP

The duo's seasonal ales go down a treat and the current special is a strawberries and cream variety in honour of Wimbledon. Past successes have been passion fruit and even mint choc-chip flavours.

That restaurants from All Bar One to Pearl in London's Holborn have taken to matching food with beer, as was once the preserve of wine, is another key factor in making the drink more accessible to women. And then there is Andrew Fisher's pioneering Brouge group, which made it to the finals of this year's F Word, Channel 4 TV chef Gordon Ramsay's show. Not only does it boast a resident beer sommelier, to guide diners through a dizzying roster of some 60 varieties, for the most part from small independent Belgian brewers, but it also uses beer in its cuisine, with star dishes like honey-spiced Lambiek beer ribs with chilli and spring onion, and serves beer-based cocktails to boot.

“Since setting up two years ago, I've seen a total shift in perception from real ale being an old man's drink to becoming increasingly trendy with the female market,” says Duncan Sambrook, former accountant turned founder of Sambrook's micro-brewery in London's Battersea. He has managed to convert his wife. “When we started dating, she drank nothing but wine,” he says, “and now I've even managed to convert some of her friends who I never thought I'd see drinking ale either.”

Getting women to embrace the amber nectar is a marathon rather than a sprint, but with all those stamina-building B vitamins, you can bet beer is up to the challenge.

SPONSORED FEATURE

Fancy a pint?

There is more to a pint of beer than water, barley, hops and yeast. Passion, dedication and pride play a huge part too, as **Joanna Dring** finds out

Driving past, you would not think anything of it: a tall, old, windowless building, slap bang in the middle of a street full of turn-of-the-century houses. Yet this building is where the journey of one of man's greatest creations begins – beer.

The building is home to a well, sunk by the great-grandfather of Paul Wells, chairman of Wells and Young's Brewing Company.

"Water is one of the most important ingredients in beer," he says. "And back in 1904, my great-grandfather sunk a bore hole to natural mineral water; water so pure that it could be bottled and sold – but we don't because then we wouldn't have enough for our beers."

With centuries of brewing experience on the banks of the River Great Ouse in Bedford, Wells and Young's has enjoyed a meteoric rise from a small regional brewer to a major player in the UK drinks industry as the brewer behind some of the country's best-loved beers.

In a typical matter-of-fact style, Paul says: "You might not have heard of the brewery, but you'll know our cask beers, Bombardier, Young's and Courage. We also brew and import world-renowned lagers such as Red Stripe, Corona Extra and Kirin Ichiban. These beers make up an outstanding range which has something for everyone.

"But there is a saying: all beers are created equal, but some are better than others. And we like to think ours are really special.

"If you visit our brewery and talk to the team, you'll find they are all passionate about what we do, and there is no greater passion than a brewer making sure the beer they're brewing is the best quality it can be. We have nine master brewers, which is more than any other brewery of its size. This means every pint is brewed to perfection and the beer won't leave the brewery until they've given the go-ahead; it's a meticulous process from a quality-control perspective."

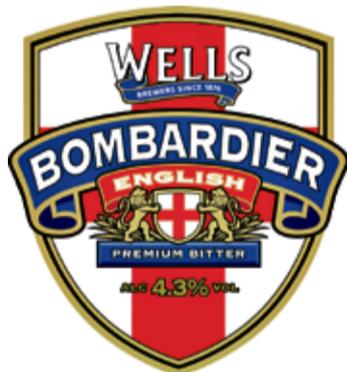
Sustainability is also a key area for Wells and Young's. Not only were they the first major brewery to receive the Red Tractor mark of accreditation for its British barley, but they also make sure they have long-term contracts with their farmers. This means security for the farmers and a guarantee of the best ingredients for Wells and Young's.

"We use a lot of British malting barley and have quite specific requirements, so we have good relationships with our farmers," says Paul. "For example, we can actually pinpoint the field where our Maris Otter barley was grown – not many brewers can claim that."

The end result of this immense passion for brewing and quality is, of course, a great pint in a great pub. And Paul Wells' passion for the pub is just as strong as it is for the beer.

"I love pubs and there is nowhere else where you can enjoy fresh cask beers which are so full of flavour. That first sip of top quality cask beer, pulled fresh from the pump in the pub, full of character and condition, is a unique British tradition, and at Wells and Young's we're proud to be part of it."

HAVE YOU TRIED?



Wells Bombardier

Proudly brandishing the St George's Cross, "Drink of England" Wells Bombardier, is the epitome of England in a glass. For 15 years, Bombardier has celebrated all things English – from St George's Day, through to home-grown English sports and events – and it is also the Official Beer of English Heritage.

Bombardier has peppery aromas and sultana fruit on the palate. www.bombardier.co.uk / www.twitter.com/bombardier_beer / www.facebook.com/bombardier.beer

There is no greater passion than a brewer making sure the beer they're brewing is the best quality it can be



Paul Wells' passion for a great pint in a great pub shines through



Young's Bitter

Nicknamed "Ordinary" by its loyal drinkers, there is nothing ordinary about the flagship Young's beer. Young's Bitter was the first beer from a major brewery to receive Red Tractor accreditation, such is the determination of the brewers to make sure only 100 per cent Farm Assured Barley is used in the brew. Young's is the beer for people who really know their stuff.

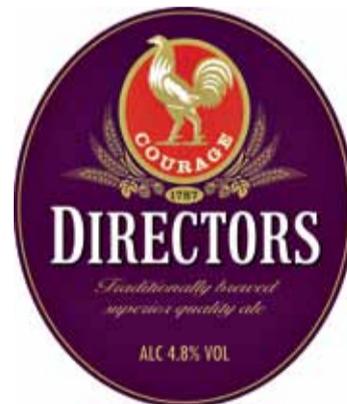
Young's Bitter is a refreshing, golden beer with a light and fruity aroma, and dry, bitter finish. www.youngsbeers.co.uk / www.twitter.com/youngsbeers / www.facebook.com/youngsbeers

Young's London Gold

If you are new to cask beer, then this is the beer for you. The newest member of the Young's family, Young's London Gold is light, refreshing and full of citrus flavour. Like all Young's beers, London Gold is brewed with

Red Tractor accredited barley, hops from Kent or Worcester and water from the brewery's very own well, so you can rest assured you are drinking a beer brewed with the very best ingredients.

London Gold is light and fruity with a refreshing bite.



Courage Directors

Dating back to 1787, Courage beers are synonymous with British brewing. Iconic "Take Courage" signs can be seen adorning pubs and buildings around the country, and it is Courage Directors which is the crème de la crème of Courage beers. First brewed for the directors of the brewery, the beer was so good and so sought-after, it was not long until this exclusive beer became available to everyone. Now available nationwide, Directors still retains its exceptional quality with a rich, deep taste.



Wells Waggle Dance

An unusual name for a very drinkable beer. The "Waggle Dance" is the movement bees make to alert fellow bees to the source of nectar. And Waggle Dance is brewed with real honey. In fact nearly half a ton of honey is used in every single brew to make this delicate, but not overly sweet, beer.

Waggle Dance is the brewery's summer seasonal beer, so get it while you can.

The beer has a touch of honey on the nose and palate, and its sweetness is balanced with a healthy dose of hops to give the beer a delicate flavour.

For more information on Wells and Young's, and to see the full range of beers, visit www.wellsandyoungs.co.uk



Pub and beer trade can ride the crisis

BUSINESS Pubs face a bitter time as the coalition Government's austerity measures, including a hike in VAT, begin to bite. But all is not lost, writes Nick Louth

I used to enjoy a good pint of Bombardier at the Lord Tennyson in Louth and once won the pub quiz. But the only question unanswered at this Lincolnshire pub is how long the demolition wrecking ball will take next week to reduce it to rubble. The gentle clack of pool balls in the lounge is long gone and the restaurant, where Thursday was steak night (two for £20 including a bottle of wine), is boarded up.

"It's really sad to see it go," says Rob Johnson who, with Alison Andrews, spent six years running the Tennyson. "It's going to be a big loss to the area."

Every week 39 pubs across the country close, many of them like the Lord Tennyson never to reopen. In the first quarter of 2010, 23 pub, bar and nightclub companies collapsed, more than double the number a year ago, and a stark contrast to the rest of the economy where corporate failures are slowing. The effects of the smoking ban in 2007 are still being felt too.

Putting the British pub back at the heart of communities is going to take a lot more than nostalgia and goodwill, though. While publicans are racking their brains to find ways to get people back into the UK's 52,000 pubs, by offering more food and entertainment or by running shops and Post Offices from licensed premises, they are up against the toughest competitor of all: price.

When supermarkets offer beer in bulk at less than £1 a pint, those who prefer the conviviality of their local pay handsomely for it. The national average price for a pint is now almost £3.

"Beer taxation is absolutely crucial to this," says Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of the British Beer & Pub Association. "There is clearly a link between pubs closing and the level of tax on beer in pubs."

BUDGET

With a rise in VAT from 17.5 per cent to 20 per cent announced in last week's emergency Budget, the total cost of tax and duty on a typical pint will rise by 6p to reach £1 when the tax rise kicks in on January 4.

A report by Oxford Economics this month predicted that VAT at 20 per cent would have a devastating impact on the British beer and pub industry with the loss of more than 7,000 jobs.

The pub and brewing industry had wanted Chancellor George Os-

borne to make a matching cut in duty to offset the VAT rise, but put a brave face on its disappointment.

"The VAT rise is a price to pay for tackling the deficit and bringing Britain's balance sheet back in order," Mrs Simmonds says. "This tax increase is not welcome, but is understandable and applies to everybody. We hope this will be short-term pain for long-term gain."

Mrs Simmonds says she was relieved that beer duty had not been increased. However, an above-inflation rise in duty in Alastair Darling's last Budget in March had already brought the total beer-tax rise since March 2008 to 26 per cent.

In addition, there are sizeable problems within the industry. The two largest pub companies or pubcos, Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns, are struggling to earn a return on the multi-billion-pound debts they took on to buy their pubs, and are now selling off large parts of their estates, which together total 14,200 pubs. However, with

pub values having slumped 30 per cent since their peak in 2007, realising value is tough.

The Tennyson, owned by Punch, is one of them. The site is likely to be used for housing.

"We never got the support of the pubco," says Mr Johnson. "We never had a fighting chance." He, and many thousands of other tenants who were tied to buying beer from their pubco, maintain that they often could not buy beer in at the price supermarkets are now selling it.

TIED PUBS

However, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) last year failed to persuade the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) that the beer tie operates against the public interest. The OFT concluded: "Any strategy by a pub-owning company which compromises the competitive position of its tied pubs would not be sustainable."

Many in the industry, and a minority within CAMRA, had feared that a complete abolition of the tie would in any case undermine small breweries by leading publicans to buy discounted mass-produced brews.

"I think the pubco model will move on," says the BBPA's Mrs Simmonds. "If we removed the tie, then some brewers would have disappeared."



Prospects are uncertain for pubs in hard times

While there is plenty of doom and gloom around, all is not lost. The industry has worked hard to improve the tenant-owner relationship, with a new code of practice and more emphasis on training.

"The fantastic thing about running a pub is that you don't need masses of qualifications, but you do need training," Mrs Simmonds says.

Eight out of ten adults still count themselves as pub-goers and 15 million people visit a pub at least once a week. Pubs provide an increasingly sophisticated range of food, wine and entertainment, and have immersed themselves in the local economy. The average pub spends £70,000 a year on locally-sourced goods and services.

"The pub is a British icon and beer is a British drink," says Mrs Simmonds. "Around 90 per cent of what is drunk here is brewed here."

So, while the demolition crews move in on the Lord Tennyson, for those who enjoy a pint in good company, there is still hope.

The national average price for a pint is now almost £3

Now there's a funny thing to tell your friends in the pub...

FACTS This is not a pub quiz. But did you know that the oldest surviving recipe in the world is for beer? Peter Archer considers some other slightly surprising trivia

In ancient Egypt, so the story goes, two containers of beer were the minimum wage for a day's labour.

Egyptians used beer as a currency to pay slaves, tradesmen, priests and public officials alike. But payment of the liquid "kash", as the beer was called, did not reflect the strictly regulated social hierarchy. For example, although the Queen was entitled to ten loaves of bread a day, she too was allotted two crocks of beer, while a princess received ten loaves but had to be content with one daily crock of free beer.

Even the daily beer ration of the slaves, who built the pyramids to last, included two crocks of brew. This was their right and could not be withheld on the whim of the slave master for the nectar of the gods – as the Egyptians believed beer to be – was a human entitlement.

Beer became so popular in ancient Egypt that no ruler dared tax it until, in 35BC, a hard-up Cleopatra resorted to the ultimate insult. She slapped a tax on beer, the people's drink, ostensibly to curb public drunkenness, but in reality to build more naval galleys.

With alcohol tax in mind, if you thought the British government is tough on pubs, in ancient Mesopotamia – now Iraq – tavern owners found guilty of overcharging for beer were put to death by drowning.

More historical trivia: the hard-drinking Vikings believed that a giant goat, whose udders provided an endless supply of beer, awaited them in Valhalla, Viking heaven.

And the reason that traditional European beer steins have lids dates back to the time of the plague; drinkers did not want deadly bugs to fall in their beer.

The term "the real McCoy" derives from Jim McCoy, an American Prohibition bootlegger whose beers tasted impressively similar to the real brands. Don Marquis, American journalist and humorist, remarked: "Prohibition makes you want to cry into your beer and denies you the beer to cry into."

Staying in America, George Washington had a brew house in the grounds of his home, Mount Vernon. And Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, said: "I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can

be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts, and beer."

Queen Victoria said: "Give my people plenty of beer, good beer, and cheap beer, and you will have no revolution among them."

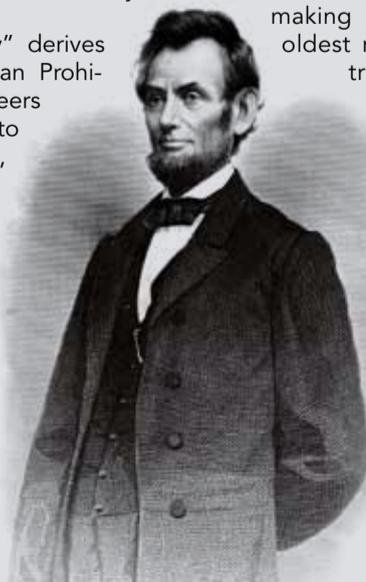
War-time Prime Minister Winston Churchill also knew beer's worth. He said: "Make sure that the beer – four pints a week – goes to the troops under fire before any of the parties in the rear get a drop."

The Weihenstephan Brewery in Bavaria, making beer since 1040, is the world's oldest running brewery and the oldest trademark in Britain is Bass Ale's distinctive red triangle.

Incidentally, beer cans were first produced in 1935; in China, you can buy beer in plastic bags; and the Japanese delicacy Kobe beef is made from cows that have been massaged in beer.

And, if you have managed to stay awake, put some dried hops under your pillow to help you sleep; hops are a herbal sedative.

Abraham Lincoln: 'Give the people real facts and beer'



Crafty business on the up

CRAFT BEERS Britain is part of a global revolution in craft brewing which is transforming pub life. Choice is now as plentiful as flavour and real ale is cool again. **Pete Brown** reports

It is a truism in beer that when you start drinking – a key stage in your emerging individuality as an adult – you reject the beer your dad drank.

For as long as I have been drinking beer, this has been cited as one of the reasons why, in the space of a generation, Britain stopped drinking traditional real ale and switched to lager. Ale, runs the received wisdom, is only drunk by old men in flat caps.

But received wisdom has a habit of running slower than reality. We first started drinking lager in huge quantities in the mid-seventies. And if you were 20 in 1976 – the year lager really took off – you are now 54. Look closely next time you are in a backstreet boozier: today, that codger in the corner with the flat cap is probably drinking Carlsberg or Carling.

Nowadays, if you want a different drink from the pint your dad drank, you will choose either real ale or im-

ported speciality beer. As the total beer market declines, these two styles are the only ones stable or in growth.

People who have grown up seeing everyone around them drinking lager are reaching their mid-20s and saying: “Is that it? Surely there must be something a bit more interesting.” And just like Britain’s broader foodie revolution, they are finding more complex flavours, a greater array of styles, more locally sourced or organic products, and more local and artisanal producers than ever before.

Thanks to our peculiarly British disease of believing anything we do as a country is probably a bit rubbish, we find imported beer easier to like. The tiny trickle of Belgian imports went mainstream in the late-90s, when wheat beer Hoegaarden and strong, sweet Abbey beer Leffe made the transition from specialist bars to high-end mainstream pubs. They created what the trade calls the “speciality-beer”

sector, an alternative to mainstream lager for image-conscious mainstream beer drinkers, or for those looking for a beer with the depth and substance to match with food.

Over the past few years, that trickle of imports has become a flood. Anyone who thinks Belgium is a boring country should look at its beer: a country the size of Wales produces over a thousand different beers. As well as wheat beers and fruit beers brewed with raspberries or cherries, there are strong, after-dinner beers brewed by monks, beers that ferment spontaneously, sour beers and aged beers.

These are now joined on British pub and supermarket shelves by quality lagers from Germany and the Czech Republic, beefed-up takes on traditional styles from the phenomenal craft-beer scenes in countries such as the United States, Sweden and Denmark, and exciting new experimental beers from northern Italy that cost anything up to £100 a bottle.

But we have always had our own craft beer too. Britain is pretty much the only serious beer nation in the world that does not recognise its incredible influence and global



The number of small breweries has multiplied in recent years

popularity. In 2002, Progressive Beer Duty gave a tax incentive to small brewers and hundreds of new artisan breweries opened for business. There are now more breweries in the UK than at any time since the 1940s. And while they continue to show a healthy respect for brewing heritage, younger breweries, such as Thornbridge, Dark Star, Brew Dog and Otley, are marrying tradition with innovation, cross-fertilising beer styles, experimenting with ageing beer in whisky barrels or

adding quirky ingredients, such as fruit, chocolate or spices.

British real ale, once the preserve of the geek, is cool again, with its distinctive hand pumps appearing on more bars every year, appealing to anyone who enjoys flavour.

It reasserts its place on the bar as part of a global revolution in craft brewing, a revolution that means if you are looking for something interesting in your glass, there has never been a better time to dive in to beer.

DISPENSING Beer can be delivered in perfect condition but if it is not kept properly in the pub cellar and served well, the pint suffers, as **Kamini Dickie** discovers

Three deep at the bar on a Friday night and the pub staff, while swarming like busy bees, have yet to alight on your hard-fought corner. Despite the sweaty nature of this encounter, against expectations your round arrives in pristine shape: bright, sparkling beer in the perfect glass at just the right refreshing temperature.

It may seem self-evident but good pubs have good cellars, efficient dispensing systems and knowledgeable bar staff to serve you the best beer. Casks and kegs are kept in an orderly fashion down below. As Beer Academy chief executive George Philliskirk says: “The cellar is the engine room of a good pub, delivering great beer.”

The quality of beer leaving the brewery has never been better; it is then in the hands of the publican to ensure that the beer is handled carefully, stored optimally and dispensed perfectly. Cellar temperature is crucial, ideally 11 to 13C.

Hygiene and cleanliness are paramount; after all, this is liquid food. Cask beer, with its natural credentials, is an exciting live product, if a touch sensitive and so must be handled with TLC. This is where cellar craft comes



Serving up quality for discerning quaffers

A well presented bar can mean well kept beer

“The industry’s greatest asset – and at the same time its greatest liability – are the bar staff whose job is to serve a great pint

into its own. When it arrives from the brewery, cask-conditioned beer is not ready to be served. It needs to be stillaged and allowed to sit quietly for three to four days while it conditions; during this time the cask is held steady on its side while final secondary fermentation takes place, and the finings and yeast collect in the belly of the cask, allowing the beer to clear.

According to Richard Maisonpierre, quality manager for regional brewer Greene King: “Cask beer must pass the CATT test: Clarity - it must sparkle; Aroma – whether it is fruity, hoppy, malty, it should fit the style; Temperature – must be served between 11

and 13C; and Taste – it should be refreshing with no off-flavours.”

The casks and kegs in the cellar are tapped and connected to the hand pulls and dispense fonts on the bar via tubes called lines. Keeping the taps, lines and fonts hygienically clean is an onerous task which good publicans take in their stride. It is as simple as ABC and many publicans earn their ABCQ, Award in Beer Cellar Quality, an internationally recognised qualification accredited in the UK by the BII, the professional body for the licensed retail sector.

Of course you cannot peer into the cellar but good practice in the

stock room is evidenced at the point of sale. Look for these cues: polished, shiny hand pulls and dispense fonts; clean, sparkling glassware; gleaming premises; and spick-and-span presentation at the bar.

The industry’s greatest asset – and at the same time its greatest liability – are the bar staff whose job is to serve a great pint. Happy, smiling staff, trained in pouring the perfect pint into the correct branded glass and who, crucially, are knowledgeable about the beers that they are serving, are indispensable to dispensing.

Yet bar staff change frequently, with industry experts estimating turnover at 40 to 50 per cent in a year and undoubtedly more so in city centres. Greene King’s Richard Maisonpierre comments: “One of the biggest challenges for the industry is training good bar staff. All too often they are hired to simply pour beer and take money.”

At the gastro pub-end of the licensed trade there is, perhaps surprisingly for the casual observer, evidence of how seriously beer service is regarded. Welcome the arrival of the beer sommelier, trained in matching and recommending beers as any good wine champion would do for their clientele. Witness also, in pubs of all qualities, specialised beer and food menus, recommending a citrusy hoppy India Pale Ale with a spicy chicken salad.

And as for our example of the three-deep-at-the-bar pub? Good pubs attract repeat business; if in doubt, a busy bar is a useful first indication of beer served properly.



Stars pulling the punters' pints

CELEBRITY PUBS There is something about running a pub that appeals to stars of stage and screen. **Richard Brass** goes celeb-spotting at hostelrys up and down the country

Next time you step into a pub for a pint, take a closer look at the landlord because the face behind the bar might ring a bell.

Traditionally, the landlord was likely to be an ordinary geezer, somebody from one unobtrusive walk of life or another who had opted for the publican's life in the mistaken belief that it would be easy, lucrative and fun. But a new group of initiates has recently joined the ranks of the beer-dispensing fraternity and their faces are likely to be far more familiar.

From superstar household names to actors you would only recognise if you spent too much time watching soaps, a wave of celebrities are turning up behind the bar. It is hard to say whether they are attracted by the financial uncertainty, the unsocial hours or the need to throw the occasional over-exuberant customer into the street. But something about running a pub has become impossible to resist for a growing variety of

talented people who have made their names in very different areas.

Probably the biggest name of all to have turned his hand to the pub game is Michael Parkinson. After a career in which he interviewed pretty much everyone worth interviewing, and quite a few who were not, he took over the Royal Oak outside Maidenhead in Berkshire, and turned it into a destination pub for jazz-lovers and fans of Michael Parkinson. The walls of this fine place in the middle of nowhere are jammed with photos of Parky's more legendary chat mates, the pub recently earned a Michelin star for the quality of its food and the man himself is frequently to be found there, glass in hand, happy to exchange a few words with whoever might have the courage.

Another convert to the pub game from the interviewer's chair or thereabouts is Chris Evans, radio DJ and formerly renowned good-time boy. As well as having come over all Radio 2 and respectable in his middle years, Chris has established

a mini-pub empire, clearly having decided there is more of a future on the serving side of the bar than on the drinking-all-day-and-staggering-about side. Starting with his local, the Ram's Nest in Chiddingfold, Surrey, which he turned into the Mulberry Inn, he has since added the Lickfold in Petworth, West Sussex, and the Newbridge in Tredunock, Monmouthshire. They are all largely food-led establishments, but that is only sensible when you have put your wild days behind you.

MADONNA

One of the key moments in making pubs cool among celebrities was probably five years ago when Madonna said her favourite drink was a half of Timothy Taylor Landlord at

Guy Ritchie runs the Punchbowl in London's Mayfair

the Dog & Duck in London's Soho. Her sudden enthusiasm for beer may not have been enough to save her marriage to Guy Ritchie, but the relationship held together long enough for the two of them to take over the Punchbowl in Mayfair. Guy got the pub as part of their divorce settlement, and it has since become something of a hang-out for related celebs and celeb-spotters. But it also attracts fans of good traditional pubs, which is what, despite the up-market restaurant at the back, the occasional paparazzo outside and the complaints from the neighbours, the Punchbowl undoubtedly is.

Not quite at the Madonna-Guy Ritchie level, in terms of celebrity recognition but still a familiar face to movie-goers, is Jason Flemyng, who featured in Ritchie's *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and whose performances since have included appearing alongside Sean Connery in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. Not wanting to be outdone by his former director, Jason has become one of the owners of the Duchess pub in Battersea in southwest London. Acting commitments both here and in the United States mean he cannot get down to his pub as often as more leisured landlords like Parky, but he is there when he can be, and occasionally gets behind the mike to host the quiz.

From superstar household names to actors you would only recognise if you spent too much time watching soaps, a wave of celebrities are turning up behind the bar

Running a pub has long been a favourite second career for worn-out footballers, particularly the ones who never quite made it to the top. The role has not traditionally appealed as much to rugby players, or at least not top-level ones, but that was before Lawrence Dallaglio, a brooding presence that could put the wind up the sternest opposition, decided to try his luck in the rough and tumble of the landlord-ing business. The former England captain is part-owner of the Havelock in Kensington, west London, a nice airy place in a quiet part of town and the boozier-of-choice for many well-heeled locals.

Other, less familiar, celebrities are also making a respectable go of it in the pub world. Andrea Cathwood, former ITV news presenter, runs the Carpenter's Arms, a successful and much-admired gastro pub in Chiswick, west London. And Loui Batley and Simon Lawson, young actors who have both recently lit up the TV screen in *Hollyoaks*, have taken over the Princess Victoria, a great little local on a busy road in London's Earls Court. Fame clearly has not gone to their heads, because they are often to be found behind the pumps when a rush is on. And very wise too; celebrity or not, you do not keep a thirsty punter waiting.

Shape of beers to come

FUTURE Quality not quantity may be the future of beer as online drinkers discover varied tastes from around the world. **Ben MacFarland** gazes into the crystal ball of brewing

At first glance, beer's glass may look half empty. Pubs are closing all over the place – around 150 every month – and people are drinking less beer than ever before. You would be forgiven for thinking things are rather gloomy.

But do not be fooled by the bean-counting doom-mongers, they have got it all wrong. For beer's shiny tankard of optimism is not just half-full, it is frothing over. The nation now boasts more than 500 regional, micro and craft breweries. Supermarket shelves are sagging under the weight of fast-selling boutique bottled beers while, in the nation's pubs, cask ale is in the midst of a remarkable revival and showing little sign of slowing down. It was not long ago that critics were hammering a nail in cask ale's coffin but now, having recorded growth figures for the first time in decades, the future is more bright than bleak.

Much of the credit for this must go to regional breweries such as Fuller's, Marston's, Wells and Young's, Shepherd Neame, St Austell and Greene King. Not only have they improved the quality and consistency of ale in casks, they have also innovated and introduced new ales to lure drinkers across the right-thinking Rubicon.

What is more, new-world British brewers such as Thornbridge, Meantime and Brewdog have helped British beer shed its socks and sandals, and seen it slip into something a lot more stylish and contemporary.

But the UK is not alone, it is part of a worldwide renaissance, a global brewing revolution in which the old world and the new are uniting in the boundary-pushing pursuit of flavour and taste. Broaden your beer horizons beyond British borders and you will soon realise that these

are truly blissful beer drinking days in which we live.

Countries that were once barren bland lands of brewing, such as Australia, Italy, Japan and America, are now home to fertile, thriving beer cultures while deep-rooted beer-drinking nations, such as Germany and Belgium, are enjoying a new lease of life.

From Portland to Prague and Munich to Melbourne, talk of great beer is getting louder and the breadth of choice is growing wider. Old styles are being revived and new styles are being discovered



Beer is frothing over with optimism

spread the word of the finest brews on the planet. Ten years ago, your local supermarket dictated what you could drink. Today, a quick wander around the web and you can have American India Pale Ales, Japanese abbey-style ales and Italian barrel-aged beers delivered straight to your door.

As long as consumers retain their curiosity, as long as they keep on questioning what they drink and as long as they continue on their

unwavering quest for quality not quantity, beers brewed with integrity, passion and flavour will continue to thrive.

We may have been drinking beer for more than 10,000 years, but never has there been a better time to be a beer drinker. So come, slide yourself on to the bar stool of discovery and raise a glass to beer's dynamic and really rather wonderful future.

The internet will continue to shrink the world of beer and help spread the word of the finest brews on the planet

as brewers are exploring the past but not getting stuck there. A new breed of brewmasters are using increasingly adventurous ingredients; they are borrowing techniques from winemakers, distillers and chefs; art, science and history are being melded in the mash tun; and people the world over are waking up to the joys of matching beer with food.

The internet will continue to shrink the world of beer and help

Drink to your health

HEALTH Drinking beer in moderation may be good for the human spirit, but is it good for the body as well as the soul? **Peter Archer** investigates

What makes up a healthy diet is a mishmash of confusion and contradiction. The menu for good health and long life seems to change every time a new piece of research hits the headlines.

And it is the same with alcohol. So who should the sensible drinker believe when it comes to imbibing a pint of beer?

Of course, over indulgence does no one any good. But is a responsible level of drinking beer actually beneficial to mind and body?

Not so long ago, scientists in Spain reported some cheering results which they said showed that a pint of beer was far better than drinking water to rehydrate the body after exercise.

So all those footballers and rugby players, enjoying a pint after the game, not to mention the beer lovers queuing at the bar after a workout in the gym, may be right after all.

Researchers at Granada University suspect that the sugars, salts and bubbles in a pint may help people absorb fluids more quickly.

The news will ease the worries of those still digesting research from cancer experts who linked alcohol

and other products to an increased risk of some forms of the disease.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) believe that drinking moderate levels of beer have beneficial health effects.

Studies have shown that sensible drinking of one or two units a day can reduce the risk of heart disease, dementia, type 2 diabetes and Parkinson's Disease.

Certainly, the ingredients of beer, including malted barley, hops and yeast, are rich sources of vitamins and minerals.

As the Beer Academy points out, in days past beer was known as "liquid bread". Cereals are good for us and beer is made from cereals, yet we often fail to make the healthy connection.

The ingredients of beer, including malted barley, hops and yeast, are rich sources of vitamins and minerals

A pint of beer will actually supply about 5 per cent of the body's daily protein needs, it has no cholesterol or fat and contains useful quantities of soluble fibre.

For the weight conscious, beer has no more calories than a glass of wine and a lot less than milk or apple juice.

According to a recent report, backed by the Beer Academy, beer contains vitamins which can help maintain a well-balanced, healthy diet. It contains readily absorbed antioxidants, which may protect against heart disease and some cancers, as well as minerals, such

as silicon, which may lower the risk of osteoporosis.

Beer is also low in sodium (salt) and high in potassium, a mineral that helps to control the balance of fluids in the body and possibly contributes to controlling blood pressure.

In addition, beer contains alcohol which, when taken in small amounts, is thought to be a protective factor in a whole range of health issues. As well as type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's and dementia, these include strokes, gallstones, and atherosclerosis, an inflammatory disease of the blood vessel walls.

Alcohol raises the amount of good blood cholesterol, which is associated with lowering the risk of coronary heart disease.

But no one is claiming that drinking too much is good for you. If you stay within sensible drinking guidelines, then you may reap the rewards of all that beer contains; over that amount and the benefits start to decline and the risks increase.

And, as the latest report points out, for some people – definitely children, pregnant women and drivers – the only safe option is to avoid alcohol altogether.

Prost... cheers for German beers and healthy ingredients



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