

## The DRAUGHT frothy

With draught beer being more expensive than bottled beer, one would expect a draught's superiority above its "unscrew the cap and drink" counterpart. Unfortunately, many publicans tend to serve draught beer without following the necessary requirements. The correct type of gas, keg storage, servicing and maintenance, and even cleanliness of the glass and pouring technique are all crucial elements in serving a good draught.

Each type of draught beer requires a specific mixture of gas and serving technique in order to ensure an attractive presentation and, more importantly, not affect the taste of the beer in any manner.

According to Mark Fuller of Afrox, the gas pressure of most draught beers is fairly constant; the only difference being the type of gas used.

"During the brewing process CO<sub>2</sub> is generated by the beer," explains Fuller. "The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> generated depends on the process and ingredients used. In general the more CO<sub>2</sub> that is added the larger the head when pouring the beer and the bitterer the beer. For this reason beer brewers are usually quite strict as to the type of gas used to dispense their beer. Dispensing gasses are usually a mix of CO<sub>2</sub> and Nitrogen. CO<sub>2</sub> when absorbed by a liquid adds fizz and a slightly bitter taste. Nitrogen is not absorbed so has no impact on the drink."

Depending on the brand, the following Afrox mixed gas cylinders are used: Suremix 100 (100% CO<sub>2</sub>) for standard draught lager; Suremix 60 (60% CO<sub>2</sub> and 40% nitrogen) for draught lager stored at cooler temperatures; and Suremix 30 (30% CO<sub>2</sub> and 70% nitrogen) for nitrogenated stouts and ales.

There are two keg sizes available to the foodservice industry locally: the 30-litre keg, which can serve roughly 57 pints (500 ml) of beer; and the 50-litre keg, which can serve around 95 pints.

Once the correct gas mixture is installed at the correct pressure, a draught beer can still be negatively influenced by two key elements: cleanliness and maintenance. As beer contains living organisms that can easily decompose and promote the commencement of bacterial growth, all kegs should be stamped with an expiry date. If a keg has not been used within the designated period, it should be discarded.

The pipe lines that connect the tap and the keg should be thoroughly cleaned and serviced by the beer supplier, and the beer glasses should be thoroughly washed, rinsed, sanitised and left to dry on a corrugated drain board.

Many publicans may claim that these necessary procedures are carried out, but the inconsistent quality of pints being poured proves the opposite.

### The correct way of pouring a draught

1. Use a clean beer glass that has been sprayed with cold water.
2. Place the glass at an angle, about 2.5 cm below the tap. Open the tap quickly and all the way.
3. Fill the glass until half full, gradually bringing the glass to an upright position.
4. Let the remaining beer run straight into the middle of the glass. This will ensure that you get a 20 ml to 25 ml foam head.
5. Close the tap completely and quickly.
6. Serve the pint immediately.

### How to pour a stout

1. Use a clean beer glass.
2. Place the glass below the tap at an angle of 45° and pull the lever towards you.
3. Fill the glass about three quarters, gradually bringing the glass to an upright position.
4. Stop the pour and leave the surge to settle.
5. Once the surge has completely settled, push the lever away from you and fill the remaining quarter. According to legend, the whole pint should take 119.5 seconds from the time it's poured until it's ready to be served.

### Troubleshooting

- If the head is too thick or too thin, do not serve it to the customer. Check the keg and gas pressure or get your supplier to fix the problem. Some barman simply tilt the glass while filling to remove excess foam. Not only will this lead to serious wastage, but the customer will definitely not be impressed.

If the head does not have a white creamy appearance and instead has a brown colour, the glass is probably not clean enough. Do not serve it to the customer. Thoroughly clean a new glass instead and start again.