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MEMBER UPDATE

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If you have any questions concerning your organization's member benefits, please contact Dawn Rigaud at 703.578.4200.

NABCA HIGHLIGHTS

The Public Health Considerations of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (White Paper)

Native American Nations & State Alcohol Policies: An Analysis (White Paper)

Alcohol Technology in the World of Tomorrow - (White Paper)

The Control State Agency Info Sheets. Please view website for more information.

NABCA Survey Database (members only)

Upcoming NABCA Meetings

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LICENSE STATE NEWS

CO: Full-strength beer is good for grocery stores, but Denver liquor stores get stuck with the hangover
The city has 205 grocery and convenience stores competing with 233 liquor stores.

Denverite

By David Sachs

May 23, 2019

Almost 90 years removed from Prohibition, people can now buy full-strength beer at Denver grocery stores and convenience stores, but the change could make Denver's alcohol market wobbly.

The law repealing a Prohibition-era ban on full-strength beer in grocery stores and convenience stores took effect January 1. Since then, sixers and twelvers have been flowing out of Safeway, according to company spokesperson Kriss Staaf.

"Beer sales have been good," Staaf said. "We've only been at it for about five months but overall, the feedback has been great."

Staaf would not share specific sales numbers for "competitive reasons," but said customers like the convenience of buying beer where they shop for food. Denver's other major grocers did not return interview requests.

Liquor store owners probably did not mind the old days when buying regular beer was slightly more inconvenient. They often set up shop near groceries for that very reason — to provide customers with boozy beer (plus wine and liquor) that Safeway and King Soopers could not.

The city now has 205 grocery and convenience stores selling full-strength beer, competing with 233 liquor stores, according to the Colorado Department of Revenue. They've sniped some customers from Argonaut Liquor, with beer sales down about 8 percent over last year, according to owner Ron Vaughn.

"Our beer sales have been impacted by groceries for sure, and increased competition is always going to do that," Vaughn said. "I think the jury's out on where it ends up, but our contention is because of our selection and personal service, people will be drawn back."

Argonaut is a big, popular store across the street from a Natural Grocers that does not sell beer. Washington Liquors is not. It's a small, independent liquor store across the parking lot from a Safeway that sells a lot of beer.

Manager Waldo Gebre says beer sales are down significantly since the law change.

"The beer selling is probably down 50 percent since (the new law) started," Gebre said. "We're selling half the beer as before."

The rules of economics — time is money — apply here.

If a busy mom or dad at the grocery store can go an aisle over to grab beer instead of to another store, the market will reflect that, says Andrew Friedson, assistant professor of economics at the University of Colorado Denver.

"It's all about convenience for the consumer," Friedson says. "The cost of making a purchase is not just the dollar price. It also includes travel cost and time cost. For a lot of people, convenience is a really big deal."

Economists literally put a price on time. Friedson and his colleagues label the idea "opportunity cost." Basically, if you make \$20 an hour and spend 30 unnecessary minutes going to a liquor store to buy beer, that's \$10 of your time down the drain, the way economists see it.

Mike McColgan is a living, breathing, beer-drinking, opportunity-costing Denverite!

His beer-buying behavior has not changed since January 1. McColgan told Denverite he still goes to his liquor store to grab beer because it's close. If that liquor store was a grocery store, he would go there, he said.

"There's (a liquor store) two doors down. It's just a matter of convenience," McColgan said.

Highland resident Mikaela Newmuller was on her way to buy a bottle of wine near Whole Foods at Union Station, frustrated that the grocery store doesn't sell it. She mostly drinks wine, a market segment grocery stores can't get their hands on. Still, she said her habits have changed.

"I guess I bought beer at Safeway last week when I was there anyway," Newmuller said.

Safeway's Staaf says the upcoming Memorial Day weekend is a consistently a good time for big beer-buying. Maybe all boats will rise.

TX: Take your Texas beer to go: TABC director talks alcohol law changes

KBTX TV

By Kathleen White

May 23, 2019

An amendment is making its way through the statehouse that would allow Texas breweries to sell their product in bottles or cans for you to take home to your fridge.

Right now, the beverages must be drunk on the brewery premises.

Bentley Nettles, head of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, says his agency cannot advocate for any specific amendments, only advise the legislature on how it will affect TABC.

However, Nettles did says he thinks it's a "great concept."

"It will put the Texas marketplace on par with the other states that already have it," said Nettles.

Still, the change wouldn't come without challenges for the TABC.

"When you have the manufacturer of a product starting to act like a retail member, [there are challenges]," said Nettles, "but what I expect if and when this bill is passed into law, we will work with industry to make sure that public health and public safety continue to be protected."

This amendment is part of legislation that allows the TABC to continue operating to regulate alcohol sales in the state. Nettles says there are other important amendments, including one that would reduce the number of alcohol permits from 72 to 36.

SC: 'Dramatic' change in state liquor license policies could affect thousands of SC bars

The State

By Jeff Wilkinson

May 23, 2019

South Carolina bars, dance clubs and all other businesses that serve alcoholic drinks to customers will have to start proving they also serve a certain amount of food before their liquor licenses will be issued or renewed.

An attorney for the Department of Revenue announced the change Thursday during a hearing on whether the license for a Five Points bar — Cover 3 — would be renewed. Previously, the department had not used food sales as a factor in approving licenses, despite a state Constitution requirement that an establishment be "primarily and substantially" engaged in the sale of food to sell liquor by the drink for on-premise consumption.

The new policy could impact thousands of tiki bars, honky-tonks, dive bars, dance clubs and road houses across the state.

The change came after a Monday meeting between Gov. Henry McMaster, revenue department officials and state Sen. Dick Harpootlian, the Columbia attorney who is representing Five Points neighbors opposed to the issuance or renewal of liquor licenses to bars that primarily open late and cater to University of South Carolina students, many underaged.

McMaster spokesman Brian Symmes said the governor “is supportive of Sen. Harpootlian’s efforts in Five Points to establish some clarity in how this law will be enforced moving forward.”

The state Constitution does not specify what percentage of a bar’s business must come from food sales. The revenue department could not be reached late Thursday for comment on what threshold it would use.

But Harpootlian, who called the change “dramatic,” said the food percentage would likely be determined “on a case-by-case basis.”

“It’s like pornography,” he said. “You’ll know it if you see it. If you have a big open concrete floor with a bar down the side, it’s probably not a restaurant.”

In Thursday’s hearing, revenue department attorney Patrick McCade did not set a standard for food sales, but said that “one percent is not enough,” referring to the less than one percent of food sales Cover 3 has reported.

Five Points neighbors are going after the liquor license of two more bars, including the landmark Group Therapy.

The neighbors are protesting the liquor license renewals of Group Therapy, owned by former University of South Carolina football great Steve Tanneyhill, and Cover 3, a late-opening college bar on Harden Street.

They claim the bars cause a nuisance in nearby neighborhoods when thousands of drunken USC students and others disgorge from them after late night binge drinking.

“Five Points is a mess,” said Chris Kenney, an attorney with Harpootlian’s firm. “Is it suitable to have another college bar serving cheap liquor to mainly underage students?”

A hearing on the license renewal for Cover 3 began Thursday in S.C. Administrative Law Court. The hearing for Group Therapy begins next week.

In opening statements Thursday, Ken Allen, a former chief of the former Alcohol Beverage Commission who represents Cover 3 owner Max Mannillo, said the opponents are trying to change the long-standing enforcement practices of Department of Revenue regulators and SLED inspectors and punish Mannillo retroactively. Mannillo also owns Five Points Saloon and The Barn.

“You can’t make up different rules for him,” Allen said of his client.

A study last year by the S.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association found 1,022 establishments that identified themselves on the 2012 U.S. Census as “bars” or “nightclubs.” The researchers assumed that the establishments self-identified themselves as bars because they sell less food than alcohol.

In testimony Thursday, Cover 3 manager Connor Hobbs said that the bar, which doesn’t open until 8 p.m. and usually stays open until 2 a.m., took in \$1.4 million in gross sales in 34 months and had only \$8,500 in food sales, mostly Chick-fil-A sandwiches purchased from a nearby Five Points store and resold for \$5. That’s a percent of 0.07 in food to alcohol sales.

Allen noted that Cover 3 has since begun serving pressed sandwiches, and has had no license violations since it was last renewed two years ago.

“Yes, Five Points is a mess,” he said. “Bad things happen there. But it’s not my client’s fault.”

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canada: Restrictions on alcohol in sugary drinks take effect across Canada (excerpt)

A 568-ml can now contain only 4.5% alcohol, down from 11.9%

CBC News

By Verity Stevenson

May 23, 2019

New regulations restricting the amount of alcohol allowed in potent, sugary, premixed drinks take effect Thursday across Canada.

Until now, a 568-millilitre can of what Health Canada calls a "flavoured purified alcoholic beverage" could contain up to 11.9 per cent alcohol, the equivalent of about four standard alcoholic drinks, or portions, such as four regular beers or four five-ounce glasses of wine.

Under the new regulations, a drink of the same size can't contain more than 4.5 per cent alcohol by volume, Health Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor told CBC News.

"Basically what we've done, we've minimized the amount of alcohol is permitted in these drinks and also the portion sizes is going to be limited," Petitpas Taylor said.

"So now when people purchase these types of drinks you'll only have 1.5 portions per container."

Earlier this year, a Quebec coroner concluded that consuming several cans of the malt-liquor drink FCKD UP contributed to the death of 14-year-old high school student Athéna Gervais.

In February 2018, Gervais drowned in a small creek behind her high school in the Montreal suburb of Laval after she reportedly drank most of three cans of the beverage, which contained 11.9 per cent alcohol, on her lunch break. Gervais had stolen the cans from a convenience store.

Coroner Martin Larocque said Gervais and her friends drank the equivalent of about 12 glasses of wine in under 30 minutes, with Gervais consuming most of that.

He also said Health Canada needed to do more to prevent teenagers from consuming the drinks, which use bright colours and vibrant ads to attract young consumers.

The regulations announced Thursday do not address the labelling of such products. Petitpas Taylor said the priority was to get sugary, premixed drinks with high alcohol content off the shelves.

She said labelling was "another conversation, as I've indicated, that I'm interested in having."

In the weeks following Gervais's death, the company that produces FCKD UP, Geloso Group, halted production and removed cans from store shelves in Quebec, the only province where the drink was sold.

In June 2018, the Quebec government also adopted legislation that limits the alcohol content of the sugary drinks sold in convenience and grocery stores to seven per cent.

In December 2018, Health Canada announced it would take steps to reduce the amount of alcohol allowed in premixed purified alcohol beverages, but didn't say when the restrictions would be enacted.

A Health Canada analysis published in December 2018 of the potential impact of new regulations found that although provinces and territories outside Quebec supported the new legislation, "many indicated that they were not aware of these types of products being sold in their jurisdictions."

The exception appears to be Ontario, according to the document, which reads: "the products ... are entering stores in Ontario, where there are no such restrictions," referring to the Quebec legislation that restricts their alcohol content to seven per cent.

Four Loko, an American beverage similar to FCKD UP which has 11.9 per cent alcohol in a 568-millilitre can, had been available at The Beer Store in Ontario. However, the retailer told CBC News that drink is no longer sold at its outlets.

Health Canada faced criticism following Gervais's death for not enacting regulations sooner.

Here are the new limits to alcohol content, according to container size:

- 7.2 per cent in a 355-millilitre container
- 5.4 per cent in a 473-millilitre container
- 4.5 per cent in a 568-millilitre container
- 3.6 per cent in a 710-millilitre container

INDUSTRY NEWS

U.S. Beer Industry Blames Trump Tariffs for 40,000 Job Losses

Bloomberg

By Joe Deaux

May 23, 2019

The U.S. beer industry is blaming a jobs hangover on the Trump administration's tariffs.

A report by two trade groups showed U.S. beer-industry jobs dropped 40,000 since 2016 as metal tariffs boosted aluminum-can costs, leading to a drop in investment. The biennial study by the Beer Institute and National Beer Wholesalers Association said direct, indirect and induced jobs fell to 2.19 million in 2018 from 2.23 million in 2016.

"Aluminum tariffs are increasing brewers' costs and are an anchor on a vibrant industry," Jim McGreevy, the chief executive officer of the Beer Institute in Washington, said in an emailed statement. "Each brewer is deciding for themselves how to absorb that expense, whether it's raising prices, laying off workers or delaying innovation and expansion."

The shipping and logistics charge for delivering aluminum to the U.S. Midwest, known as the "premium," more than doubled as Trump slapped a 10% tariff on imports of the metal. Molson Coors Brewing Co. estimated last year that the levies would create a \$40 million hit to its bottom line.

Still, tariffs may not be the only thing hurting employment in the industry. Total cases of beer, wine and spirits consumed in the U.S. dropped 0.8% in 2018, the third consecutive year of declined, according to a report from IWSR, which studies the beverage market. The main culprit is the beer slump, with consumption down 1.5% as more drinkers gravitated to spirits and wine.

A Beer Industry spokeswoman said Thursday in a statement that while the group can't say tariffs are "100% to blame," the evidence "supports that brewers are making fewer investments because of the added cost of aluminum." The Beer Institute said jobs grew in the prior two-year period by 27%.

US trade body creates Craft Advisory Council

The Spirits Business

By Nicola Carruthers

May 24, 2019

The Distilled Spirits Council has formed the Craft Advisory Council, which will address policy issues impacting 'craft' distillers.

The new council will also "enhance the member experience for its craft members" and guide the trade body's programming and benefits for 'craft' distillers.

"Discus [Distilled Spirits Council] is fully committed to understanding and advancing the issues important to our craft distiller members," said Chris Swonger, president and CEO of Distilled Spirits Council and Responsibility.org.

"This new Craft Advisory Council, comprised of leaders in our industry, will help us to unite distillers of all sizes to speak with a single, powerful voice."

The Craft Advisory Council will be chaired by Ted Huber, co-owner of Indiana's Starlight Distillery. It will hold quarterly calls and meet twice a year.

"As one of the first Discus craft members, I fully understand the critical importance of distillers large and small working together to advance the spirits industry's public policy agenda," said Huber.

"From securing a permanent federal excise tax cut to urging an end to retaliatory tariffs, there are challenging days ahead.

"Craft distillers play a significant role in educating lawmakers about these critical issues as well as the role we play in our communities."

The Craft Advisory Council, which currently has 22 craft distiller members, includes Scott Harris of Catoctin Creek Distilling, Paul Hletko of Few Spirits, Rob Sergeant of Alpine Distilling, and Amir Peay of James E Pepper Distillery, among others.

DAILY NEWS

Teen prom after-party shut down by deputies after 'enormous' amount of alcohol found

TC Palm

By Sara Marino

May 23, 2019

PALM CITY — A prom after-party was shut down before it started after Martin County sheriff's deputies said they found a rented house filled with Jello shots, an "enormous" amount of alcohol and marijuana cigars.

"The refrigerator was stocked with mixers and Jello shots, there were stripper poles that had been placed (inside the rented home)," Lt. Ryan Grimsdale said. "My understanding was that they were planning on having a bikini contest and on the second and third floors the bathrooms were fully stocked with alcohol."

Sheriff's deputies said they were called the morning of April 12 by a school resource officer for West Boca Raton Community High School who told them a house party with alcohol might happen at a Palm City home in the 3300 block of Southwest Grass Trail. The officer said about 100 to 200 teens were expected to attend.

Deputies said they researched the home and found it had been rented by a 19-year-old for April 12 on Airbnb, an online home rental website.

Deputies said they called the property manager and learned the house owner lives in Austria. They said the manager didn't know the home was going to be used for a party possibly involving under-aged drinking and drug use. The manager cancelled the scheduled rental.

Grimsdale said no one was arrested regarding the incident because deputies did not see any minors in possession of alcohol or drugs. Deputies said because the party was called off early in the day, teens didn't go to the house that night.

"We were able to prevent the party from occurring and subsequently any of the problematic behaviors that would have been associated with it," he said.

The 19-year-old who organized the party told deputies that when he went to the home on April 12, he was organizing the event, but hadn't bought the alcohol or marijuana that was in the house, and that someone else had.

Grimsdale said deputies took the marijuana on April 12 as evidence when the 19-year-old was at the home, but left the alcohol and Jello shots inside the home because the owner of the home was over the age of 21.

Deputies said they did not arrest the 19-year-old because he didn't have any marijuana or alcohol in his possession and they couldn't prove if he stocked the house with it.

"This was going to be an alcoholic, drug-infused party and when you get adolescents that don't always make good choices to start with and you throw intoxicants into the mix, it is a recipe for absolute disaster," Grimsdale said.

Butler Man Learns Selling Alcohol Without License Is Illegal, Even If It's Pappy Van Winkle

KDKA 2 CBS Pittsburgh

By **Jon Delano**

May 23, 2019

BUTLER COUNTY, Pa. (KDKA) — UPDATE (5/23): *The state has withdrawn the misdemeanor criminal charge and has decided to lower it to a summary offense. McClain now has to pay \$267 in fines along with court costs. He reportedly told police he would prefer they drink the bottle rather than destroying it, so it doesn't go to waste.*

For whiskey aficionados, there is nothing like a bottle of Pappy Van Winkle, a Kentucky-made bourbon sold in Pennsylvania only through a special lottery each fall.

"We received over 113,000 entries, and of those, we selected 1,911 winners," said Elizabeth Brassell, spokesperson for the PA Liquor Control Board.

That's about one out of one hundred chances to buy bourbon that sells between \$335 and \$380 per bottle. But once you have your bottle, warn state police, remember this:

"You should not be purchasing alcohol to make a profit from it," Sgt. Shawn Fischer told KDKA money editor Jon Delano on Friday. "If you do not have a liquor license, you should not be selling the alcohol in Pennsylvania."

In a criminal complaint, a Butler County man is accused of going on Craig's List to resell his bottle of Pappy Van Winkle for \$550.

Fischer from the State Police's Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement told KDKA via Face Time that state law is clear — alcohol is for personal enjoyment only. "These people will buy and turn around because it's so popular and expensive, they'll try to turn a profit on it which is illegal if they don't have a license to sell alcohol," he explained.

According to the complaint, Barry McClain of Lancaster Township was unaware that state law prohibits individuals from selling their alcohol to family, friends, or strangers. "He said he was not aware you could not sell alcohol without a license at this point. We educated him on that," said Fischer.

State police confiscated his bourbon and charged him with a misdemeanor with a hearing before a district magistrate set for next month. If McClain is found guilty, will he get his bottle of Pappy Van Winkle back?

"Ultimately the alcohol will be destroyed, per our regulations," Fisher told KDKA's Jon Delano. "A \$550 bottle of bourbon gets, what, flushed down the drain?" asked Delano. "Unfortunately, yes, that's what happens."

The Legal BAC Limit Might Drop Lower, And An Italian Study Has A Wine Suggestion For That

Forbes

By Thomas Pellechia, Contributor

May 23, 2019

According to NOLO, a legal website with a mission to "help consumers and small businesses find answers to their everyday legal and business questions," every U.S. state has set the maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at 0.08%. The move to set the 0.08% legal limit began in the 1980s, heated in the '90s and ended when the last state to comply, Delaware set the limit in 2004.

The primary industries that resisted an 0.08% BAC were alcohol producers and restaurants, the latter often claiming impairment statistics did not take into account how taking food with alcohol slows down its metabolic activity. But the arguments just about ended when the federal government used the threat of cutting off highway funds to coerce every state into setting the 0.08% limit.

Now, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) suggests states lower the BAC limit to 0.05%, saying at that limit a person will still be impaired and have steering problems behind the wheel.

A NOLO chart tells us it takes about four drinks an hour for a person weighing around 160 pounds to hit the 0.08% BAC. That 160-pounder can meet the 0.05% standard at two or three drinks within an hour—the official measurement of one drink equals either 1.5 ounces of spirits, 12 ounces of beer or five ounces of table wine.

Thus far, only Utah has lowered its legal BAC to 0.05%, but other state legislatures have it under consideration, including Delaware. Meanwhile, a study recently released purports to give a BAC edge to consumers of “natural wine.”

After a randomized, triple-blind, controlled trial using students at the Polytechnic University of Torino, Italy, the study’s authors say, “Different alcoholic beverages can have different effects on blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and neurotoxicity, even when equalized for alcohol content by volume...Anecdotal evidence suggested that natural wine is metabolized differently from conventional wines.”

Conducted by six Italians in the food, nutrition and wine worlds, in both industry and at university level, the stated purpose of the study was to “determine whether the absorption of ethanol from two wines produced from the same grape (with similar alcohol and low sugar content) might be affected by differences in the farming and winemaking techniques used in their production.”

The researchers say they gave dozens of healthy males 24 grams of alcohol of a wine produced from grapes cultivated without pesticides and agrochemicals, fermented using wild yeasts, unfiltered and with no fining agents and then they gave the group the same amount of a so-called conventional wine (pesticide and agrochemical use, commercial yeast starter, filtered and fined). The wines were served one week apart under the same experimental conditions.

Study participants were all university student volunteers, which had been screened using the Italian Ministry of Health Surveillance Questionnaire (PASSI) to collect data on their height, weight, body mass index, dietary habits, and use of prescription medicines.

According to the researchers, peak BAC reached after drinking a natural wine was significantly lower than after drinking the same amount of a conventional wine: “The BAC level 20 and 40 min[utes] after drinking the natural wine was lower than that after drinking the conventional wine, and the peak blood alcohol response to drinking natural wine was also lower than the peak response to drinking conventional wine. This supports the hypothesis that natural and conventional wines are metabolized differently .”

Its authors claim the study was designed to rule out the numerous factors that influence alcohol absorption rates, from type of beverage to the different types of people and their individual metabolic mechanisms. They sought to confirm its findings by analyzing the total dry extract of the two wines (sugars, polyphenols, fibers, and minerals). They say, “...samples revealed substantial differences in the total dry extract of the two wines...This is a direct consequence of differences in farming and winemaking practices, with the absence of filtration processes in natural wine likely to be a key factor.”

The research abstract boldly states: “Our findings show that the peak BAC in response to natural wine is lower than that with conventional wine, meaning that natural wine is less likely to lead to alcohol intoxication .”

Perhaps, but the abstract is filled with words and phrases like “anecdotal evidence...unable to provide precise information...it seems reasonable to expect...it is likely...it is unlikely...” Such phrases make the study appear aspirational; the abstract offers little scientific evidence that farming or type of wine production can affect the metabolic rate of alcohol in our bodies. In fairness, the authors also state: “More work is needed to fully understand the relationship between natural wine and BAC.”

Let's drink to that, and until that "more work" is completed, it's probably a good idea not to forgo assigning a designated driver.

Brewery Taprooms: Please Allow Half Pours. I'm Begging You.

The Paste Magazine

By Jim Vorel

May 23, 2019

There was a time when I was happy to walk into a brewery taproom and simply accept whatever I was given. In the heady, earlier days of the craft beer boom, simply being able to get fresh, local beer was really novelty enough. But people get older. Their palates change, and the common offerings produced by the industry change with them. The demographic of "craft beer drinker" ages along with you. And one day, you wake up and realize that the prevailing way of drinking beer at many breweries has simply become too limiting.

What I'm getting at is this: "Half pours" at brewery taprooms are great for the consumer. They serve a niche, allow for greater flexibility as a customer and help promote responsible consumption. They may complicate the serving process slightly for breweries (although far less than flights), but they really should be a universal part of the brewery taproom landscape by this point.

To be certain, many breweries do now offer half pours in their taprooms, whether that equates to a 6, 8 or 10 oz pour of any given beer. Some may charge a bit more per ounce for the inconvenience of pouring smaller glasses, but to be honest, I don't really mind—I'm just pleased to have the option, and I'm not the only one who feels this way. What really seems like a missed opportunity, though, are the breweries that still aren't offering any middle ground between "pints" and "tastes."

A Matter of Experience

Make no mistake, there are still plenty of breweries out there exclusively serving beer via "pints" and "flights." Just last week I ran into this situation not once, but twice in the Atlanta area while visiting brewery taprooms. In both locations, beers were available as either 16-20 oz pints, or within the context of a four or five beer flight of 4 oz taster glasses—no volumes in between.

Yes, as someone is no doubt preparing to type to me in an angry missive, the serving of half pours can sometimes necessitate the purchase and storing of new glassware, which is an expense/investment some breweries don't want to make. However, that doesn't stop some of my favorite breweries from simply offering "half pints" or half pours in their standard glassware, which is simply filled to a halfway mark. In these cases, the breweries incurred no extra expense, but are able to offer a much more flexible experience, just because they chose to make half pours available.

And that's just it—one of the biggest arguments in favor of half pours is the issue of the customer's *drinking experience*. If you've been drinking from taster glasses in brewery taprooms for years, you probably know exactly what I'm talking about. Put simply, a 4 oz tasting glass (even when properly filled, which many aren't) often isn't a great way of truly appraising a new beer you've never sampled before. For one thing, they warm very quickly, which might be desirable for an imperial stout, but is hardly what you want most of the time in a sample of lager or pale ale. You might be saying "so drink it quickly, then," but what happens when you've got five glasses in your flight? Even drinking at a normal rate, the tasters you get to later tend not to be at their best, especially if you're outside on a patio on a warm summer day. Rarely is the best version of any beer the one you drink from a 4 oz taster glass.

Flights serve a purpose, but they're cumbersome for employees and rarely the optimal way to appreciate any given beer.

This is not to mention the fact that with a lot of beer styles, you simply don't feel like you've had a complete experience in evaluating the product while consuming only 4 oz. I realize that it might sound a little arbitrary to claim that the experience is far superior if you double that amount in an 8 oz half pint, but to be perfectly honest, that indeed tends to be my experience, and I can only speak for my own perception here. An 8 oz pour of an IPA is just about the exact amount I want in most cases, if I'm trying to assess its merits before moving on to the next thing. Where 4 oz isn't enough, and 16 oz is really more than I genuinely need, 8 oz is the true sweet spot—a full beer experience that leaves me free for my next 8 oz pour.

In fact, I suspect that making half pours available at some breweries would largely relieve the need to offer those 4 oz “taster” pours at all, something that the bartenders would probably appreciate—not that I'm specifically advocating for it. It's still nice to be able to get a 4 oz pour in certain scenarios (especially for high-ABV monster beers), but their utility is decreased by the fact that some taprooms don't offer *individual* taster-sized pours, and only offer them within the context of a full flight. But presumably, incorporating half pours would reduce the number of cumbersome flights that bartenders have to pour in every shift.

To their credit, many breweries seem increasingly cognizant of the fact that sometimes, these mid-size servings are simply more satisfying, and have begun offering half pours in their taprooms as a result. Some have even gone a step further, introducing related concepts into their packaged beer lineups, like Hopewell Brewing Co.'s 8 oz cans of helles lager, or 21st Amendment's 8.4 oz cans of barleywine (really a perfect serving, there). It's clear that things have greatly changed since the craft beer world of the 2000s, where seemingly anything bigger than 8% ABV found its way into a 22 oz bottle. The greatly reduced bomber section at your local package store speaks to which way the wind has been blowing for years now.

A Matter of Consumption

Of course, the fact that we're looking for an 8 oz method of drinking barleywine rather than a 12-or-more one is suggestive of the other major reason beer fans are looking for half pours these days: Many of us are increasingly trying to be deliberate in our individual levels of alcohol consumption. And in a taproom environment, half pours can be a godsend for this reason.

This is another case of speaking from personal experience, for me. In recent years I've taken assessment of the amount of ethanol going into my body in any given week, and decided I should make efforts to bring that number down to a more moderate level, while still being free to sample new beer and you know, *do my job*. And when you're in that position, a half pour is often the best option, rather than full pints or flights that can only be had in sets of four or five. That goes doubly for higher gravity styles, even the ones we rarely think of as “higher ABV” these days. Pint of 7% ABV IPA? That's almost two “standard drinks,” folks. Hardly ideal as a “first drink,” especially if I'm intending to have more than one.

And to be honest, I've come to appreciate those smaller serving sizes as reasonable for a lot of beer styles. Sure, a 16 oz pint is fine for lagers, or classical British ales, or session-strength pale ales, wheat beers, porters or stouts. But DDH, hazy IPA? Heavily sugared fruited sours? Barrel-aged pastry stouts? The beer styles that, not coincidentally, are collectively driving the hype cycle of the beer world at the moment? I'd prefer them all in half pours, not only thanks to the alcohol involved, but the sheer caloric intake of all that sticky sweet beer as well. As numerous beer styles simultaneously trend toward the saccharine, does it not make sense that portion sizes should decrease almost automatically to compensate? I've certainly changed my own at-home drinking habits in that way, routinely splitting 16 oz cans of hazy IPA with my girlfriend. Surely, I'm not alone in this.

There will obviously always be a place for “full pours” and full pint servings of beer in the taproom setting. Hell, there are beers out there where liter servings will remain the go-to. But even more so than the too-small 4 oz taster, the “half pour” represents the most ideal, happy medium for both appreciating a brewery's taproom experience and remaining moderate in one's consumption at the same time. And for a lot of beer drinkers, myself included, that's exactly what we're looking for when we visit a brewery.

So please, breweries: Better serve your customers by embracing the flexibility that half pours provide. The taproom patrons will thank you for it.

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