

# Welcome to..... Cask Ale. Draught Beer Quality



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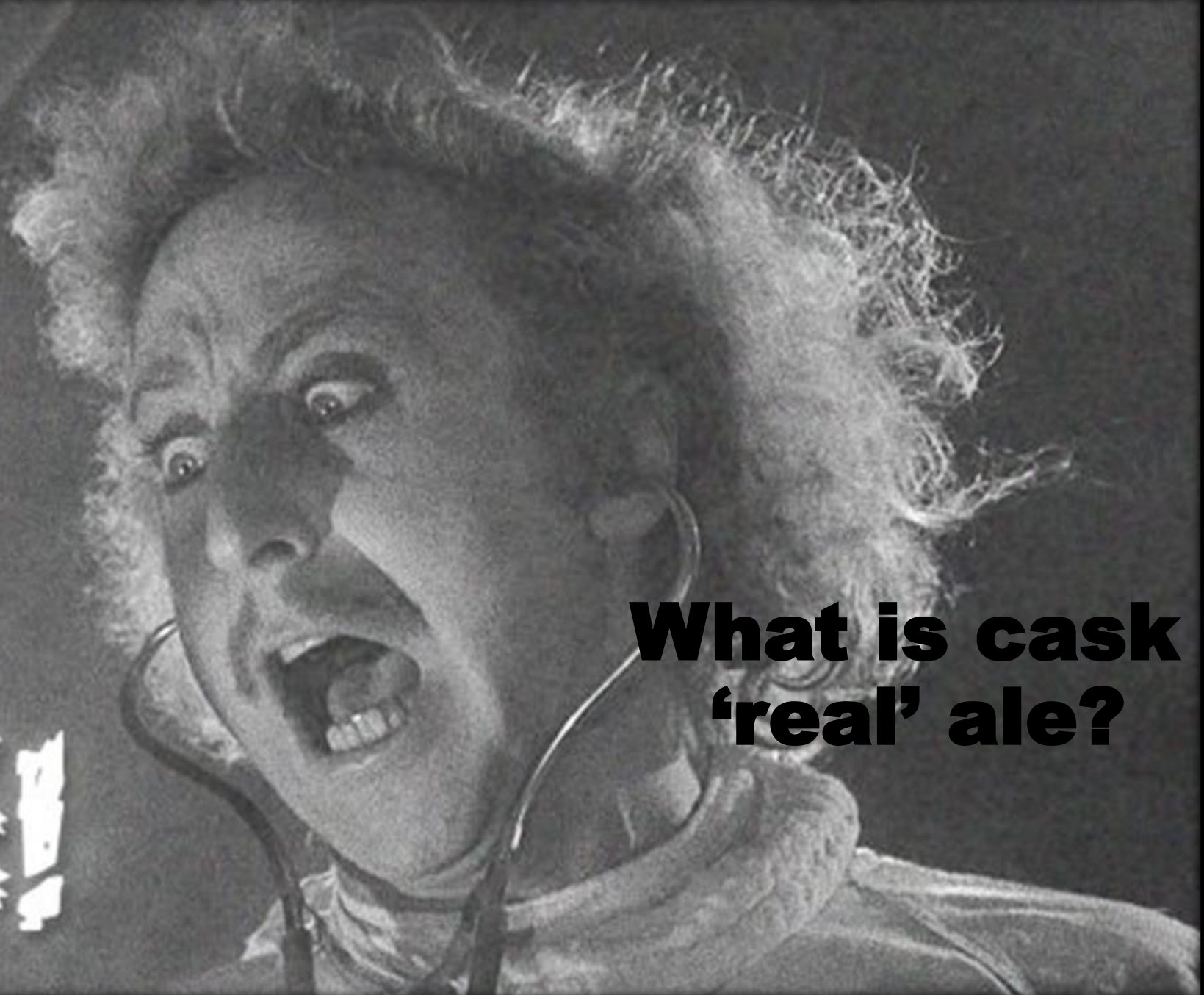
# Cask Ale – Our 45 minutes

- What is Cask?
- A little History
- Cask in the USA
- Where we were, where we are, Opportunity
- Equipment, cleaning your cask, filling and shipping
- Serving cask, equipment used and pouring cask
- Cleaning your bar equipment
- Returning cask to your brewer
- Resources



**IT'S  
ALIVE!**

**What is cask  
'real' ale?**



# What is cask 'real' ale?



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE



Real ale is a beer brewed from traditional ingredients (malted barley, hops water and yeast), matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed, and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide.





CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

1971



1688



1797



1797

# History of cask ale in the UK.



1688






**2020 Atlanta Cask Ale Festival –  
55+ beers and breweries with  
hundreds of consumers attending in one  
day!**





# History of cask ale in the USA



A tall, slender glass filled with a golden beer topped with a thick, white head of foam. The glass sits on a dark surface. In the background, a metal beer tap is visible, with a black handle and a black cap. Above the tap, a metal plate has the word "WARNING" and a downward-pointing arrow. The entire scene is set against a dark, textured background.

## What can you do? Three things.....

1. Do a Tuesday or Wednesday monthly or biweekly feature.
2. Keep it interesting, but drinkable
3. Sell. Sell Sell.





5.4 pin



Keystone



Shive



10.8

Not to size!!



# Cleaning your casks







# **Cleaning your casks**







## Filling and Sealing the Cask





# Shipping and Storing the Cask





Hard spiles



Mallet



Soft spiles



Cask of beer



Wooden stillage

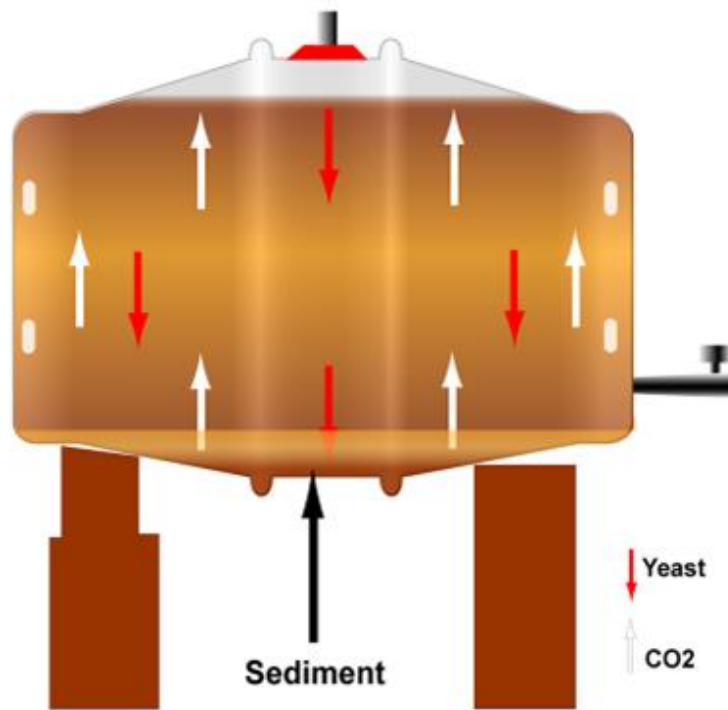


Cask tap faucet





# Handling of the Cask at Retail.





# Handling of the Cask at Retail



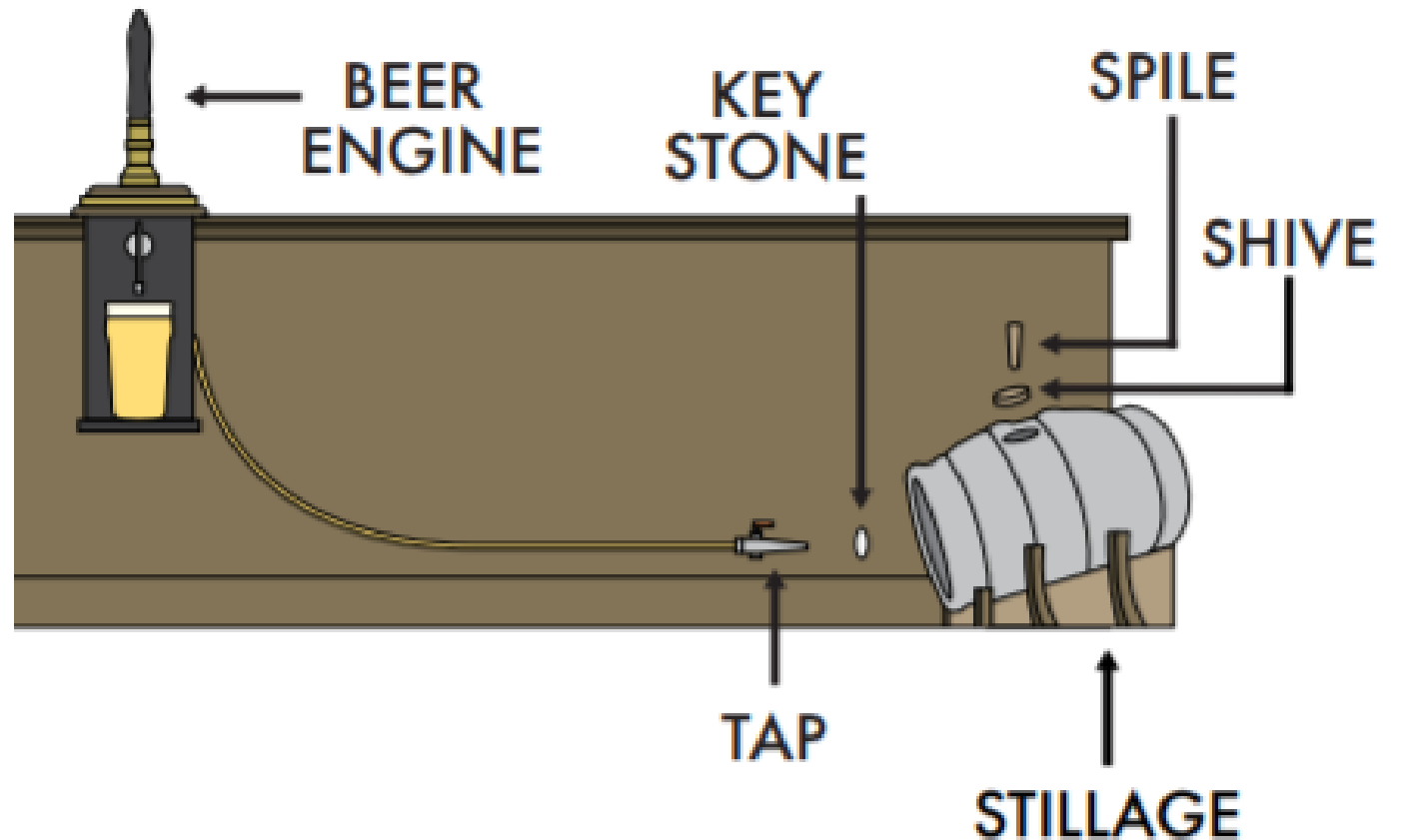


# Pour



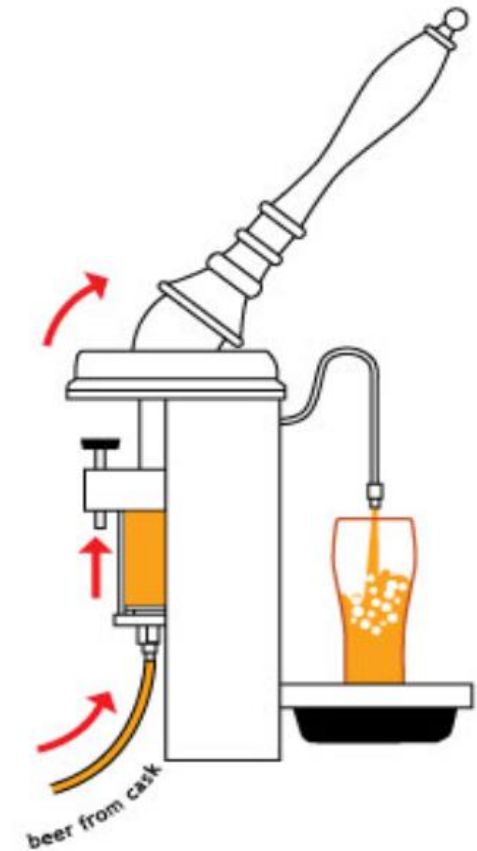
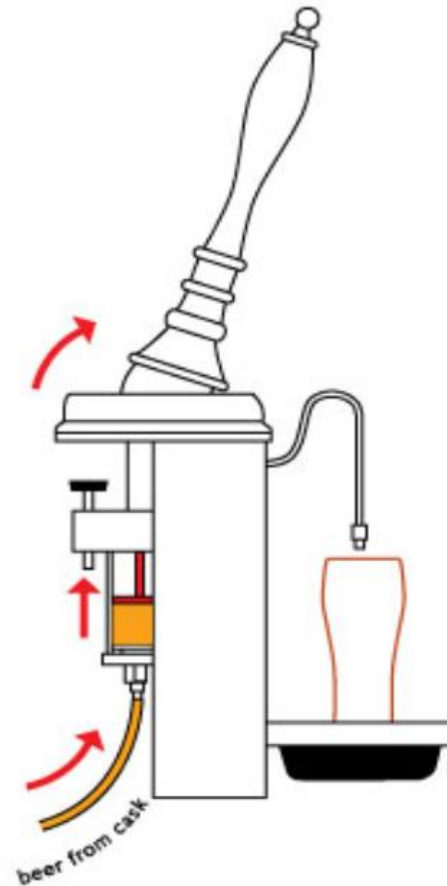
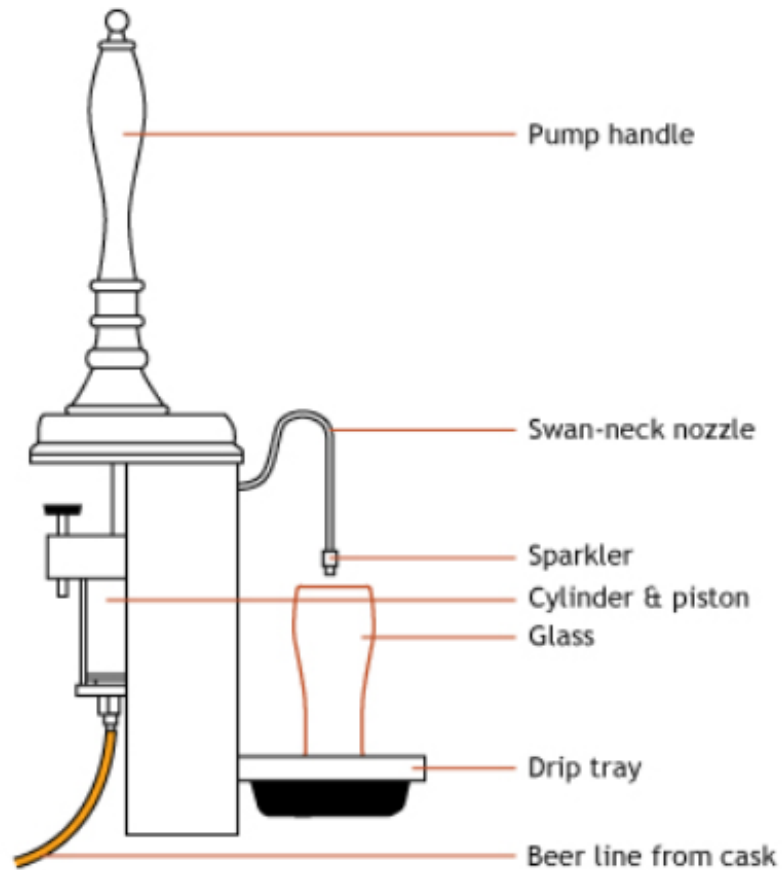
**BA**  
BREWERS  
ASSOCIATION

# A basic beer engine set up.





# The Cask Ale beer engine





# Alternate Tapping Systems





# Pouring(Gooseneck) with Sparkler





# Cask breathers





# **Cleaning your beer engine**













1. Clean and maintain your cask equipment.
2. Serve Quality fresh beer.
3. Get your customers excited for world quality cask ale.





**Returning an empty  
cask  
to the brewery.**





**Would you like some?  
Firkin  
Two Hearted Ale**

**Come to the  
Draught Beer Quality  
Subcommittee Meet-Up**

**TUESDAY, MAY 3  
4:15 PM - 5:30 PM  
ROOM-M100B**





## APPENDIX D

### NOTES ON SERVING CASK ALE

Cask ale, sometimes called cask-conditioned beer or "real ale," is draught beer dispensed and served in a traditional method. Cask ale is generally served at warmer temperatures than regularly carbonated draught beer, and without an extraneous propellant. The result is a beer with different presentation, flavor, and aroma, quite unlike that from the same beer force carbonated and dispensed with CO<sub>2</sub> or mixed gas applied pressure.

In this appendix, we focus on a few particulars of dispensing cask ale that represent basic knowledge and best practices. The production of cask ale is an art unto itself, sometimes referred to as caskmanship, the details of which are well beyond the scope of this manual.

#### TEMPERATURE

Cask ale is typically conditioned and dispensed at 45–55°F, unlike the colder 36–38°F range for regularly

carbonated draught beer. The temperature is warm enough to allow the beer within the cask to develop its own natural carbonation due to the presence of living yeast. The higher temperature also means that CO<sub>2</sub> is not as soluble in the beer, and the result is a beer that is far less carbonated.

#### CARBONATION

Because cask ale is handled at warmer temperatures, and since CO<sub>2</sub> is less soluble at warmer temperatures, cask ale contains much lower levels of carbonation than regular draught beer. Cask beer typically contains 0.8–1.2 volumes of CO<sub>2</sub>, far less than the 2.3–3.7 volumes typical of force carbonated draught beer.

The carbonation in cask ale arises from natural secondary fermentation within the cask, rather than from force carbonation at the brewery. The relatively warmer cellaring temperatures allow this fermentation to occur after the cask leaves the brewery.

#### DISPENSING CASK ALE

Cask ale is normally dispensed from a cask located relatively close to the bar, or even on the bar or back bar. Most modern casks are metal, although a few wooden varieties are sometimes still found. Most casks contain two openings that are filled with wooden or plastic plugs called shives (for letting gas in) and keystones (for tapping and removing beer). The cask is placed on its side with the shive up and the keystone down. A spile is used to vent the cask through the shive. There are two kinds of spiles available: soft spiles, which are porous, and hard spiles, which are made of denser, harder wood. The soft spile is used initially in order to allow gas to escape the cask during fermentation. Once this process is complete, the soft spile is replaced with a hard spile in order to prevent gas from exiting the cask. Cask ale is dispensed without top pressure, meaning that it either pours from the cask through a faucet-like tap directly into the glass using gravity, or the beer is pumped a short distance using a pump called a beer engine (fig. D.1).

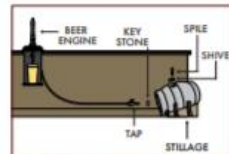


Figure D.1. Typical configuration for dispensing cask ale using a beer engine.

The cask should be allowed to settle for several hours, even up to a day, before serving. This process, called stillaging, allows the yeast in the cask to settle to the bottom and the beer to pour clear.

While pouring a cask, gas is allowed to enter the cask being emptied in order to prevent a vacuum from forming. Busy bars that empty a cask in one to three days will sometimes allow air to enter the cask. Another option is to use CO<sub>2</sub> at atmospheric

pressure to fill the head space. A device called a "cask breather" can be used to top-off the head space as the beer is dispensed, which prevents the ingress of air and potential beer spoilers (fig. D.2). Carbon dioxide is preferable to air in terms of preserving the beer, but there is some disagreement about whether this practice is "proper" because it is not traditional. This manual is not the forum for that discussion.



Figure D.2. Cask breather.

Cask ale dispensed directly from a cask using a gravity dispense tap will usually have very low amounts of foam in the glass (fig. D.3). Cask ale dispensed from a beer engine may be poured through a fitting called a sparkler that serves to create foam from the very low level of carbonation present.



Figure D.3. Pouring cask ale using a gravity dispense tap.

#### Beer Engines

Beer engines dispense cask beer (fig. D.4). Pulling the handle actuates a piston or chamber of the engine and pumps beer from the cask to the customer's glass. Beer engines can be clamp-on or built into a bar. Some breweries that make cask ales will require a sparkler (perforated disk) that attaches to the end of the pouring spout.



Figure D.4. Pouring cask ale using a beer engine.

#### CASK ALE BEST PRACTICES

Pouring cask ale from a even neck beer engine faucet is the only instance when the faucet should come into contact with the inside of a beer glass. Due to the unique nature of this beer dispensing system, a list of guidelines must be followed to ensure proper sanitation and high product quality.

1. At the start of the day, discard the first pull of beer to empty the beer engine cylinder of beer that has been sitting overnight.
2. Always use a beer-clean glass for every serving of cask ale dispensed from a beer engine.

This should be the case when pouring any draught beer, but even more so with cask ale due to the potential to transfer germs from one glass to another.

3. The closing bartender should do one final clean of the cask faucet, drip tray, and the surface of the entire cask pump when the bar closes. This cleaning should be done with restaurant/bar sanitizer approved by your local and state health code. If the cask faucet uses a sparkler, the sparkler should be removed and soaked overnight in the same sanitizer at a washing concentration listed by the manufacturer.
4. The opening bartender should wipe the cask faucet with a clean towel wetted with fresh water before the first cask beer is pulled to ensure any residual sanitizer from the previous night is removed. If the cask pump is fitted with a sparkler, thoroughly rinse the sparkler under fresh water before attaching it to the cask faucet.
5. After the cask has been emptied, remove the shive and rinse the inside of cask thoroughly with warm water as soon as possible.

#### Cask System Hygiene

Cleanliness is paramount in the handling of cask ale. Unlike kegged draught beer, items are being inserted into beer such as taps, spiles, and ale extractors. These all give an opportunity for bacteria to be introduced.

- Run clean, warm water through the beer line and beer engine between every cask.
- Perform regular beer line cleaning every 14 days, just like regular draught beer lines.
  - Be sure to check with the manufacturer of the beer engine to ensure the cleaning solution concentration is compatible with the piston, so as not to damage it.
  - Using the hand pump, draw the chemical solution through the beer line until beer engine is filled with chemical solution. Allow for 20 minutes contact time.
  - Purge the system of the chemical solution by drawing through cool water. Ensure that all of the chemical is removed by testing the pH of the rinse water.

#### Pouring Cask Ale with a Head

While some customers may ask their beer be "filled to the rim," brewers prefer beer poured with about a one-inch collar of foam, which is the beer's "head." The importance of a one-inch foam collar should not be underestimated. The purpose of a proper head on any cask ale is the same as a draught beer; the head helps to deliver the total sensory experience:

- a good pour has visual appeal
- the beer releases more aromatic volatiles
- the palate-cleansing effects of carbonation are enhanced
- the beer presents a better overall textural and sensorial experience to the consumer

Well-prepared cask ale will easily allow for one inch of head or more if a sparkler is fitted on the end of the faucet. Without the sparkler device, a full one-inch collar of foam may be difficult to achieve. The bar or restaurant manager should consult the brewer to discuss how their particular beer is intended to be served. ■



“I would love a FLAT, Headless pint  
in a DIRTY FROZEN shaker glass”

Said No One Ever!!