



Pouring the Perfect Beer Every Time

INTRODUCTION

Pouring the perfect glass of draft beer is simple and easy when you know a few basic tips and techniques.

The purpose of this article is to provide a quick guide to pouring the perfect draft beer. Following the steps below will help assure you are serving and consuming keg beer at its best.

Presenting Draft Beer to the Customer

Brewers excel at brewing and packaging superior quality beer in kegs.

System manufactures, such as Micro Matic, invest significant time and effort to provide the latest technology and knowledge for the dispensing of draft beer.

However, even if the beer from a keg is delivered clear, and the quality is unchanged on the way to the faucet, the presentation of the brew is still not complete.

The condition of the glassware and how the beer is poured is all in the hands of the serving staff. The quality of the glassware and the presentation to the customer relies completely on the knowledge and skills of the bartender.

Retailers who understand and successfully apply these skills enjoy optimum profit from their investment in draft beer. They encourage repeat purchases and give their customers a reason to return.

A Clean Glass is the Start of the Perfect Pour

Perfecting the perfect pour is an essential part of being a great bartender. Whether you are serving beer in a bar or from the comfort of your own home, learning the techniques for the perfect pour will ensure you are always serving draft beer the way the brewer intended. The perfect pour is an art, affecting not only the presentation of the beer but more importantly the flavor.

Watch out for Dirty Glasses

Glassware can have a significant effect on the taste of the beer you are serving. Yet, it is often forgotten. Proper cleaning techniques for glassware will ensure the best presentation for draft beer. Dirty glasses can cause excessive foaming and overflow resulting in lost beer and lost revenue. Make sure you are using the proper detergent; if you use bleach or iodine your customers will smell it; and oil-based detergents affect head retention.

Mind the Glass

Your glass will tell you a lot about your pour. The perfect pour has a foam head that is about an inch thick. There should be no bubbles. If there are bubbles rising or clinging to the sides of the glass, it is an indication there is film present in the glass. A perfect pour will achieve lacing. Lacing is when the ring appears on the inside of the glass at each sip of beer. As the beer nears its end, a series of rings should be present on the glass wall.

Using the following techniques, the glass of beer can be successfully presented to the customer.

Faucets are either opened or closed.

Opening a faucet partially or slowly will result in an abundance of foam.

Never grab the tap marker or knob at the top.

How to pour a beer

Positioning a hand low on the tab knob just above the faucet is a technique that minimizes the distance your hand must travel to open and close the faucet.

This allows the faucet to open and close quickly, which improves the quality of the pour.

Be careful not to disturb other faucets.

Place the glass at a 45 degree angle slightly below, but without contacting the faucet spout.

With a one swift motion, open the faucet and allow beer to hit the inside of the glass, approximately one inch from the top.

As the glass fills, gradually tilt it upright until vertical.

Allow beer flow to stream into the middle of the glass to allow for proper CO₂ release.

Place the glass upright quickly for a $\frac{3}{4}$ " foam head, slower for a $\frac{1}{2}$ " head.

Pushing with thumb, close faucet with swift motion. Close the faucet by snapping it back in one motion to the closed position.

Pouring the perfect Beer requires a beer system that is operating at or near 38 degrees F, and is set up and balanced properly.

Pouring beer at Special Events or Parties (Plastic Cups)

When dispensing beer at a special event or party it is best to use plastic cups only.

Wax lined cups or Styrofoam cups should not be used. The inside surface of the container is coarse, or may have a residue from the manufacturing process that will conflict with the beer, resulting in excessive foaming.

Beer Clean Glassware

The purpose of this section is to explain the importance of clean beer glassware and to describe the proper technique for cleaning glassware as to insure the dispensing of a visually appealing, great tasting beer.

A “Beer Clean” glass is the first step to serving an enticing and appetizing glass of beer.

Glass Washing Procedures

(Prepare the Sinks)

Depending on the sink configuration, three or four, clean sinks with a brush and sanitizer before each shift. Fourth sink is used for dumping unconsumed product. Thoroughly rinse sinks.

Using a detergent and sanitizer that are compatible with each other, begin preparation of the sinks.

Pre-portioned packets are convenient and assure proper sink mixtures.

Choose time-release sanitizers to assure glasses are always hygienic during an entire shift

If heavy mineral content is suspected in water, mineral solvents should be added prior to adding detergent and sanitizer.

Always follow manufactures recommended procedures and rotate cleaning products to keep them fresh.

For electric brushes, use low suds detergent. Fill sinks to overflow down tubes.

Add Glass Washing Detergents to the Sinks

Fill the first sink based on desired workflow direction, with warm to tepid water.

Accurately measure the detergent, sprinkle a small amount onto brushes, and then the rest into the sink.

Use clean and correct size brushes.

Fill the next sink with cool water.

Add Glass Washing Detergents to the Sinks, Cont.

Using two clean glasses, fill one $\frac{3}{4}$ full with hot water.

Place measured sanitizer into the hot water.

As the third sink fills with warm water, mix sanitizer and hot water back and forth between two glasses above the third sink.

When thoroughly mixed, pour into the full third sink.

Use test strips to measure for an appropriate amount of sanitizer. Always follow local health regulations.

Allow water from faucet to trickle into middle cool water rinse sink. This skims soap residue off the water surface into the overflow tube.

The sinks are now prepared for glass washing.

Prior to washing glasses, dump beverages into a dump sink (four sink systems) or into a funnel placed into an overflow tube.

Rinsing glasses from the faucet prior to washing extends the detergent's sink life.

Push and twist the glass onto the brushes while washing. Increase action for lipstick or heavily soiled glasses.

Assure the inside bottom of the glass is cleaned thoroughly.

Submerge the glass in the third sanitizer sink, again using the heel in, heel out procedure. This method prevents air pockets, and facilitates complete rinsing.

Submerge the glass in the third sanitizer sink, again using the heel in, heel out procedure.

Dry the Glass

Place the glassware on a clean raised grated surface to allow for proper drainage and to accelerate drying.

Dry the Glass, Cont.

This is critical to allow the sanitizer sufficient contact time to disinfect the glassware. If beer is dispensed into glasses prematurely, before they have dried properly, contamination conditions may exist.

Always let the glassware completely dry prior to placing in chilled storage.

Dedicate chillers for beer glasses only.

Do not store food goods with glassware.

How to Validate the Beer Glass is Clean (Test with a Glass of Beer)

Normally, after correctly dispensing a glass of draft, the appearance of this “package” should be a significant test.

The freshly dispensed glass of beer should have approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch foam head.

The froth should inhibit the glass during consumption.

No fish eye or large inconsistent bubbles, which dissipate quickly, should be present.

The glass of beer should be crystal clear with no bubbles clinging anywhere on the walls or bottom of the glass. Bubbles rising from the bottom of clinging signify presence of film or contaminant.

As the consumer drinks the beer, each drink should appear on the inside wall of the glass as a uniform ring of foam residue. This is referred to as “lacing”. Strive for even rings versus sporadic, uneven lacing.

No unusual odors are detectable

Tests

Water Test

Submerge a glass in water. If water droplets cling to the glass, this would be a sign of film present. The water should sheet off a properly cleaned glass.

Carbonated Water Test

Use the soda water button on a soda gun, or pour from a bottle of carbonated water into a beer glass. If the water is perfectly clear with no bubbles clinging to the glass, this is a sign of a beer friendly clean glass. If bubbles cling anywhere, there is a film or some other contaminate present.

Salt Test

Wet the inside of a glass with water, then shake table salt all around the inside of the glass. The salt will stick where the glass is clean, not to the surfaces that aren't clean.

Beer Test

Dispense a beer into the glass, examine the beer in the glass, and look for any bubbles clinging to the side or bottom of the glass. Are there bubbles on the glass surface? Are the bubbles rising to the top of the beer? If so, the beer glass is not clean.

The CO₂ gas contained in the beer will leave the beer, and attach to a film residue left from the detergent, or lint, or other objects foreign to the glass.

Enjoying the Beer (Head on the glass is imperative)

Head on the beer brings out the flavor and aroma. Many breweries suggest that a well-poured beer should have a ½ inch (nickel width) to ¾ inch (quarter width) foam on the top of the beer.

Looking closely at the foam it should consist of small bubbles of the same size that should be tightly clinging together. As the beer is consumed, a lacing of foam should collect on the side of the glass indicating each

swallow. This is a sign of a good beer, a clean glass, and is said to bring good luck.

If the foam is excessively thick and foamy, this may indicate that the gas pressure applied to the beer is too high and the beer is over carbonating.

What Can Go Wrong?

Alert! Glassware may look clean, but can have an invisible film or odor that can destroy the flavor and aroma of beer.

Glassware issues originate from sources such as, using the wrong detergents like dishwashing soap or bleach for disinfecting.

Additionally odors may be acquired from chilling glasses with smelly food items.

<i>Cause</i>	<i>Effect</i>
<i>Using oil bases detergents such as household dishwashing soap leaves a film on the glassware that impedes the formation of a 1/2 to 3/4 foam head during dispensing.</i>	<i>The CO2 bubbles, which make up this desired foam, release the flavor and aroma of beer during consumption. The foam head also represents a significant portion of the glass volume, resulting in a very profitable presentation. Clean glasses can yield many additional glasses per keg.</i>
<i>Using bleach or iodine to disinfect the glassware will also leave a film as well as impart a medicinal odor onto the glass.</i>	<i>What you smell is what you taste.</i>
<i>Chilling/freezing glassware with other food items or on bleached towels can also impart odors onto the glass. Frosted glasses, although considered visually appealing, end up diluting the product and contaminates the flavor with disinfectant frozen onto the glass.</i>	<i>Ice coating inside wall of the glass, makes dispensing very difficult, resulting in significant waste, and flat beer.</i>
<i>Mineral deposits build-up forming a film if hard water or if high mineral content is present.</i>	<i>Appearance of glasses can become cloudy.</i>
<i>Hanging glassware overhead exposes them to smoke or other contaminates.</i>	<i>What you smell is what you taste. Appearance of glasses can become cloudy.</i>
<i>Using bleached bar towels to dry glasses leaves behind an invisible film, lint and, or odor behind. Storing glassware on a towel transfers these odors and impedes drying time.</i>	<i>What you smell is what you taste.</i>
<i>Incorrectly sized, dirty or warm brushes affect the washing process.</i>	<i>The bottom of a tall glass cleaned by a brush that's too short results in CO2 bubbles clinging to the bottom, and then rinsing and escaping, allowing the beer to go flat.</i>

Additional Considerations (A Few More Tips)

The use of automatic glass washers save time and effort and perform quite well providing they are used correctly.

Always refer to manufactures recommended procedures for maintenance and chemical usage.

Detergents and sanitizers must be designed for beer glasses.

Assure that detergents and sanitizers are beer glass friendly. More chemicals are not necessarily better.

Always clean sinks and change solutions before each shift.

Water used at the right temperature is critical.

Use beer dedicated glassware.

If possible, utilize sinks for beer glass cleaning only.

QUALITY DRAFT SYSTEMS

