



Top 10 Tips for keeping cask ale

1. ORDERING

Ordering the correct size of cask and aim to sell it within 3 days.

Why? If the cask is left for more than three days, the beer will start to taste dull and tired, so people will buy less of it and you'll make less from it.

You'll also get a reputation for selling tired beer, which no one wants.

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2. STORAGE

Cask conditioned beer must be stored in a temperature controlled cellar at between 11°C and 13°C (52-55°F), ideally at 12°C (54°F).

Why? Beer needs to be at the right temperature to condition correctly. Too warm and it becomes over-conditioned, too cold and it lacks condition which may even cause a chill haze.

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3. STILLAGING

All casks should be firmly scotched on delivery and stillaged level for at least 3 days before sale. If some casks have to be stillaged later, roll them before stillaging. Cask conditioned beers will normally drop bright within 48-72 hours.

Why? Level stillaging creates a gas pocket directly beneath the shive, and encourages good venting when soft, porous pegs are inserted.

As the sediment drops, it falls safely into the belly of the cask, away from the tapping point.

If the cask is stillaged on a forward tilt, the gas pocket will be at the back of the cask, so beer and not carbon dioxide gas will be pushed through the soft porous tap.

And the sediment will collect directly behind the tapping point, so there will be several pints of soft, cloudy liquid to be extracted before you get to the beer.

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4. PEGGING & VENTING

All casks should be vented with a soft porous peg 2-6 hours after delivery. Check the cask frequently and change the peg if it becomes blocked. When strong fermentation has finished, insert a hard, nonporous peg. Remove that peg before serving and replace it when you're closed.

Why? Pegging and venting will bring the beer to its ideal condition for the customer. It also helps with the clarification process and, once the beer is on sale, it will help maintain the right amount of carbon dioxide in the beer.

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5. TAPPING

Tap all casks 24-48 hours before they go on sale. Always use a clean tap.

Why? This eliminates the opportunity for micro-organisms to spoil the beer.

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6. SAMPLING

Sample beers for clarity, aroma and taste after tapping and each day before serving. Always sample from the cask before connecting the beer lines.

Why? Pulling through to the bar wastes beer and if the beer isn't ready, the customer notices.

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7. SERVING

Once on sale, the beer is exposed to air which causes rapid deterioration. So empty casks as soon as possible, ideally within 3 days.

Why? Air drawn into the cask causes oxidation, which spoils the beer. If the cask is not emptied within 3 days, the customer will notice the beer is spoiled.

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8. TILTING (STOOPING)

Gently tilt the cask when its between 1/2 and 2/3 full, either by raising the back or lowering the front, whichever is easiest. About 3 inches either way should be sufficient.

Why? Tilting the cask too far or too quickly could disturb the sediment, risking hazy beer.

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9. CLEANING

Clean beer lines and equipment every 5 days, using the equipment and methods recommended by your Marston's Beer Company cask supplier.

Why? One of the most important factors in consistently high quality cask beer is the cleanliness of the dispense equipment.

As well as harming the taste and clarity of the beer, dirty systems can cause malfunctioning and uncontrollable fobbing.

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10. DON'T COMPROMISE

Follow our tips and you'll get a perfect pint of cask ale.

Why? Our tips are based on years of brewers and licensees experience on consistently serving the best pint.

To keep on serving your customers great beer use our 10 step process.

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