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Cask Beads Offer New Solutions To Old Problems with 'Real Ale'

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ABSTRACT

The availability of cask-conditioned ales in the U.S. has increased dramatically in recent years, creating a wave of interest in this U.K. tradition with brewers and consumers alike. However, the average craft brewer and personnel in their serving outlets have no background in the peculiarities of conditioning, keeping, and serving this specialized beverage. Not only is cask beer fermented in the serving vessel, but also it needs to be served at a different temperature than other beers. It needs to be stillaged, or left in one spot for days to clear to the proper brightness before tapping. One new solution to the stillage and serving dilemma is an encapsulated conditioning yeast product that sediments quickly and allows tapping within an hour or so of moving the firkin. LessTime Cask Yeast offered by Ales Well may be the solution. Bright or filtered beers can be cask conditioned normally with yeast beads as long as residual sugars are present. The bead-conditioned beer can be moved to the serving site, vented, allowed to come to proper serving temperature, and served in short time. This feature is particularly attractive for festivals where cask ales are served. Pelleted yeast allows more of the cask to be dispensed because there is little loose sediment in the belly of the firkin. Another cask beer issue: some customers may not be aware that isinglass, a common fining ingredient, is made of animal products, making many cask beers non-vegetarian. The Fishless Finings are vegan, and function exactly like isinglass when the powder is dissolved in beer and added to primed firkins. With new technologies and novel approaches to an old tradition, cask ale sales and production will grow. The U.K. has experienced notable increases in cask-conditioned beer sales recently, and there is indication that it is happening here in the Midwest and elsewhere.

What Cask Ale is Doing for the U.K. Market

Greener, more local products are selling well. Small independent brewers' combined cask ales sales rose 4% in 2009 over 2008.

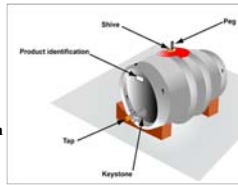
The smaller capacity independent brewers had a 8.5% cask ale increase in a recession.

—the Guardian News, Sept. 2010

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Commercial Attractions of Cask or Real Ale

- Its flavor and mouth-feel are exceptional.
- It's unique, at least in the Midwest.
- It's an attention-getting product that helps sell other beers.
- It's eco-friendly and fits into the "slow foods" concept.
- It can command higher prices because it requires special handling from brewery to the pub.

Challenges of serving Cask Ales

- It's a live product and if not handled correctly it loses its flavor, its body, and its salability.
- It's *not* warm and flat and the firkin needs to be vented, tapped and served at about 55 F.
- Taverns are not familiar with the cellaring and serving of this specialty beer.

Process Point	Standard Cask Fill and Serve	LessTime Yeast Cask Fill and Serve
Beer into cask	Not-so-bright, may or may not need yeast added	Bright, can be serving tank ale or even filtered; yeast in beads do 2 fermentation
Charging	With sugar if needed	Same, sugar as needed
Conditioning	1 ½ to 2 weeks	Same, no differences
Stillage before serving	2-3 days if you do it right!	30 minutes is more than enough
Serving Temperature	Really warm if it's on the bar for 2 days of stillage!	Just right if insulated with cover or chilled w/ ice pack

References:

1. <http://www.fastcask.com/hobgoblin.asp> (nice video of cask beads results)
2. <http://extwww.patent.gov.uk/p-find-publication-getPDF.pdf?PatentNo=GB2475397&DocType=A&JournalNumber=6365>
3. <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/aSGuest89555-883958-real-ale-present-in-ppt/>



Rapidly Settle to Bottom



(A)

Fishless Finings for Traditionally Carbonated Real Ale

- "Fishless Finings" do the job of fish-derived isinglass. Most cask ales are fined with isinglass, which produces non-vegetarian beer.
- Dry powder finings, suspended in beer, are added to the firkin at filling. Conditioning is done normally.
- Bright beer is not required, but yeast must be present to carbonate.

(B)

LessTime Cask Yeast, used *without* isinglass finings

- Yeast beads, used *without* isinglass finings, lead to vegetarian (vegan) ales.
- Porous, food-grade, and heavier than ale, they sink fast and ferment strongly.
- The result is *real ale*, fermented in the cask.

Considerations for LessTime Cask Yeast

- Pelleted yeast is stored at refrigerator temperature.
- Dosing Less Time Yeast is easy-- add one vial per cask at filling.
- Its cost is a small fraction of the retail value of the cask ale.
- Pelleted yeast allows serving of more beer per cask-- there's very little sediment and little waste.

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