

IT'S SO GOOD TO BE A BREWER!

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Dear readers,

The Danish brewing industry has changed significantly within the last decade. The number of breweries and exciting beers has increased rapidly; as a consequence, the general public's interest in tasting new and different beer types and their curiosity about

the beers has been awakened. In the late '90s, we saw a rising interest in beer knowledge and tasting, exactly as seen within the wine industry. Companies, organisations, universities, etc., started asking for presentations and tastings – in the beginning, mainly from people without a brewing background, but with a lot passion for the product.

In 2000, Leif Typkær, at that time chairman of the Danish Brewers' Guild and the Danish Brewers' Association, started 'Brygmesterkorpset' (The Master Brewer Corps) consisting of experienced and educated Master Brewers offering combined tastings and beer presentations with professional knowledge and an experienced attitude, thus, raising the general image of beer, also in the interest of the Danish brewing industry.

During the last eight years, I have been a part of 'Brygmesterkorpset', having done probably close to a hundred arrangements in total. And I must say that I have enjoyed every single one of them. People are so interested in our industry and our products, and they ask so many good questions. By giving competent answers to these, we create an understanding of the universe of beer. We get to communicate directly with our consumers about the history of beer, how it is brewed, how

we ensure a high and consistent quality, and how to actually perform taste testing of beer accurately. All of this helps to elevate consumer knowledge, for sure benefiting the brewing industry both in short and long term.

Personally, I have learned a lot by having this direct contact to our consumers. By listening to all the questions, I have gained a much better sense of how consumers understand quality, and in which direction they believe we should go when introducing new brands. This has been a benefit whenever I have had good discussions with marketing people, who do not always seem to have this direct understanding of the consumers.

Today, 'Brygmesterkorpset' is managed by the Danish Brewers' Guild, and the new set-up with a new design for the presentations was launched in January 2010. After more than a year 'out of business' and with much more competition, it is difficult to reach the numbers of arrangements we saw earlier. However, it is the hope of the board of the Danish Brewers' Guild that by changing the marketing strategy, we can get back to the previous numbers, giving the same level of direct contact to our consumers. The board will closely evaluate how to proceed further, and, personally, I believe that 'Brygmesterkorpset' has a future supporting our business, enlightening the consumers and inspiring the brewers holding the arrangements.

I urge that all our members and other readers will support 'Brygmesterkorpset' and try to sell this great concept through their personal connections.

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Cheers,

Thomas Søndergaard