

aware of the range of glasses available

Bar staff

- do they look the part? Aprons and branded clothing present a professional image associated with selling a quality product – dirty jeans and faded football shirts do not!
- do they interact well with the customer? Are they friendly, welcoming and helpful?

Beer and food

- does the food menu make recommendations on beers to drink with the food options?
- do the staff make beer and food recommendations?
- are the staff trained to make recommendations?

Each section carries a maximum of 20 points in the assessment process and a score of at least 10/20 must be

achieved in each section, with 60/80 for all four sections. To date, only a handful of outlets have been assessed for the Platinum Award but the results are encouraging, with only one failing because of inadequate beer range and lack of staff knowledge.

The Beautiful Beer Awards are tough to win – and rightly so! In the UK, beer sales in the (pub and bar) trade have declined dramatically over the past twenty years as competition from other alcoholic drinks, (notably wine) cheap off-trade (supermarkets) prices and rising consumer expectations have dulled the enthusiasm for beer in pubs.

Reversing or even halting this decline will not be easy but it must start by addressing the fundamental issues about both the quality of beer offered in the bar and the whole beer experience. It can be done – but don't take my word for it, try the White Horse, The Noerrbro Bryghus or any pub where you see the Beautiful Beer Platinum Award plaque! ■



● The author

After completing a Ph.D on yeast research at Birmingham University's Brewing School in the mid-70s, George Philliskirk has spent almost all his working life in the brewing industry where he was Head of the Technical Dept. for Carlsberg-Tetley Brewing. In 2004 George joined the Beer Academy, an educational trust dedicated to helping people understand and appreciate beer. He is a member of the BBPA's Beautiful Beer Awards Standards Group. He frequently presents beer tastings in the media, most notably on the Richard and Judy TV Show, various radio programmes as well as at the BBC's Good Food Show at the NEC and Earls Court where he is introduced to the audience as 'The Beer Doctor'!

● For more information visit:
www.beautifulbeer.com
and:
www.beeracademy.org

How to become a Beautiful Beer Platinum pub

George Philliskirk's article explains the standards you have to attain to receive the Platinum accolade and plaque which shows customers that a beer experience awaits the other side of the pub door. If you think pubs in your estate have what it takes, do not hesitate to contact the Beautiful Beer Hot Line on 0207 627 9159 or register on line at www.beautifulbeer.com.

The Salisbury in Covent Garden (pictured) was the second pub in Britain to achieve the Beautiful Beer Platinum Award. The situation was slightly different from the White Horse which had been a beacon of excellence for years. Staff at the Salisbury read about the Platinum standard and decided to go for it. Manager Jas Teensa thought he was about 90% there as the pub has always prided itself on its beers. He worked with Spirit Group Beer and Bar Experience Manager Mark Peters to invest time and resources to improve the total 'beer experience'.

The Salisbury team attended a beer appreciation course so that staff could describe the beer portfolio and recommend matching foods. Jas created a new beer menu, which includes tasting notes for each of the pub's 20 beers and items from the food

menu that they would complement. The menu is displayed on all tables. The pub bought new, stemmed half-pint glasses, which will be used to serve all beers apart from those with their own branded glass.

Jas summed up: "Preparing for the assessment made us rethink our approach to beer in the pub. We are all now more knowledgeable, confident and enthusiastic about beer and that's having a

positive effect on customers' perception of the pub. It's been a great experience and I'd certainly recommend it to other pubs which care about their beer."

Over at the Swettenham Arms which is near Congleton in Cheshire, Frances Cunningham is the licensee of the first free house to gain the Platinum Award. Frances told the *Morning Advertiser* that she would not have minded failing as it was a great exercise to get the staff to appreciate more about beer. Her hard work paid off. The pub web site even lists the beers on offer with tasting notes.

The Cherry Tree at Stoke Row is our old friend Michael Parsons' local and the current Editor can only describe the quality of the Brakspears on sale as 'nectarial' from his

occasional visits! So good luck to these Platinum pubs, the effort will translate on to the 'bottom line' and the Cherry Tree will have to make a larger car park or else poor old Michael will have trouble getting into his drive!



As we go to press, there are four Platinum pubs in the UK:

- The White Horse, London SW6.
- The Cherry Tree, Stoke Row (near Henley-on-Thames, Oxon).
- The Swettenham Arms, Swettenham (near Congleton, Cheshire).
- The Salisbury, St Martin's Lane, Covent Garden, London WC2.