

# Get drunk in seven languages

By Tom Solomon  
Battalion Reporter

The "national beer of Texas" and its U.S. relatives are facing some stiff international competition these days.

Import beers make up about 25 percent of all beer sales in Bryan-College Station, area liquor store managers agree.

"Domestic beers still sell the most, but import beers are getting more popular all the time," Robert Heath, owner of the Icehouse in Bryan, said. The Icehouse sells 60 of the more than 200 imported beers available in the United States.

"Heineken is still number one," Heath said. This popular beer from Holland was on the market long before any other import beer was well-established in the United States.

The Canadian import Moosehead is the second best seller, not so much because of its taste, but because of its "The Moose Is Loose" advertising campaign, he said.

"After Heineken, (competition) is pretty close," Heath said. He listed St. Pauli Girl from Germany, Duvel Ale from Belgium, and the Australian Foster's Lager as the third, fourth, and fifth biggest sellers at the Icehouse.

Mike Saul, manager of Coach's Liquor in College Station, gave a similar listing for his store's best sellers. He said Moosehead and Heineken are the most popular of the 43 imports Coach's sells, followed by Carta Blanca from Mexico, Foster's Lager, and another Mexican import, Dos Equis.

Other popular import beers in Bryan-College Station are Swiss Lowenbrau; Grolsh, another Dutch import; and Mexican beers Bohemia and Tecate.

"Tecate is the number one canned import beer in the United States," Heath said. "It's known as the 'poor man's margarita.'" Tecate is traditionally served with a wedge of lime, like a margarita.

"You squeeze the juice out on top of the can and let it trickle in as you drink," Heath said.

Those with more bizarre taste can experiment with several more obscure import beers. Among these stranger offerings are Krakus, a Polish beer; Sapporo and Kirin, two beers from Japan; and an Italian beer, Moretti.

While not as popular as the more established imports, these beers do find customers.

"People will come in and try out something they've never had before, just for the variety," Heath said.

Sampling all the import beers available doesn't necessarily call for a fat wallet, but import buyers should be prepared to spend 40 to 60 percent more than they do for American beers.

While the popular American beers like Miller and Schlitz cost around two and a half dollars per six-pack, imports can range from \$2.95 a six-pack for the Mexican beer Corona to \$6.89 a



Photo by Brian Tate

When American beers seem too domestically boring, imported beers from Au-

stralia to Belgium offer a new experience for your taste buds.

six-pack for Lorimer's, a Scottish beer.

At one area liquor store, Moosehead costs \$3.99 a six-pack and Foster's Lager sells for \$4.19, while a four-bottle pack of the Irish Guinness Stout costs \$3.52.

Heath said there are two groups of people who are willing to pay the extra amount to get imported beer. There are those who buy import beer because they enjoy the different taste, and another group that's "into image."

"They think they're in a certain upper class because they drink imported beer," Heath said.

Mike Saul agrees. "Drinking imports is a step up," he said. "It's a status symbol, like wearing good boots."

Some people who drink import beers for the status they impart are being fooled, though. Many of the bottled imports they drink with pride aren't the same as the original foreign versions that have the same label.

"Most of them aren't the same here as in the country they came

from," Saul said. "(The import versions) have to be in accordance with American laws. A lot of them aren't as strong as the original beers they claim to be—Foster's is a lot stronger over there (Australia) than it is here."

Import beers do come in varying strengths and tastes. While some like Moosehead are very similar to American beers because they are brewed in much the same way, many import beers have tastes not found in the United States because of the different brewing techniques used in other countries.

A lot of people who drink Lowenbrau think they are drinking the original German beer when they are actually drinking a beer brewed right here in Texas, in Fort Worth, Heath said.

"You can tell the difference between foreign Lowenbrau and American Lowenbrau from which way the Lion faces (on the beer bottle's label)," Heath said. On foreign Lowenbrau beer bottles, the Lion faces right, while on the American version of the beer the lion on the label faces

left.

Some import beers are popular as novelties. People like to collect the sometimes elaborate bottles they come in, like the bottle for Carlsberg "Elephant" malt liquor, which features a picture of an elephant. Other novelties include the Foster's Lager 24-ounce can.

The most widely sold beers are lager beers, Jim Pillans, general manager of Brazos Bever-

ages, said. Brazos Beverages is a local wholesale beer distributorship.

The word lager is derived from the German word *lagern*, meaning to stock or store. During the storage time after the beer's ingredients are fermented, the taste characteristics of the beer develops. Lager beers, which are 3-4 percent alcohol content by volume are light to dark amber in color.

Most American beers are pilsner beers, a type of lager beer that is lighter and drier than other lagers, Pillans said.

Ales are slightly dark, with up to 6 percent alcohol content by volume. They are more tart in taste, as they are brewed at a higher temperature with more hops. Hops are the blossoms of the flowering hop plant that give beer the bitter taste.

Duvel Ale from Belgium and the Scottish Belhaven are two ales that are locally popular.

Stout beers are very dark, with 5-7 percent alcohol content. They are heavy, and also are brewed with a high hops content. Guinness from Ireland is the most popular stout in Bryan-College Station.

British and Irish beers like Guinness Stout are generally heavier, Heath said. Guinness is so heavy and thick that many people drink it "half-and-half," mixed with another, lighter beer.

Whether your beer preference be light or stout, you'll find something to suit your taste among the many imports available.

Bottoms up!

10% Discount With Current Student I.D.

**THE  
LOOKING  
GLASS**

**CRAFTS  
-N- ARTS**

- Classes — Beginners & Advanced
- Latest in equipment, supplies & techniques
- Quantity discounts to qualifying non-profit organizations
- Now accepting local finished crafts and art for exhibits & sale
- Complete stained glass department

3601 E. 29th St., Bryan, 846-8103  
OPEN MON.-FRI. 10-6

*Diamonds and 14K Gold*  
*An Exotic New Look* ..... \$1,225

## DIAMOND ROOM

3731 E. 29th  
846-4708  
Bryan

707 Texas Ave.  
693-7444  
College Station