

What is Real Ale?

All the ales at this booth are Cask-conditioned Ales, or “Real Ales” of the British and Pre-prohibition American tradition. This style is distinguished from other more widely available beers by the brewing and handling methods employed to produce it. Like all ale, Real Ale results from the fermentation of malted barley by yeast. Real Ale and other ales are produced by the action of top-fermenting yeast, distinguishing them from lagers. This yeast provides some of the complex flavors in ales, and especially Real Ales. Hops can be added at different stages to provide additional flavors. The fermentation usually takes place in two stages before the ale is ready to be drunk. Real Ale results from different and more stringent conditions of production.



Real Ale is served from the vessel in which it is secondarily fermented. This might be the brewer's cask (cask-conditioned), or the bottles used by a home brewer or specialty purveyors (bottle-conditioned). Real Ale is alive; it is not pasteurized or filtered. It is placed into its secondary container with priming sugar, which is rapidly consumed by the yeast to produce carbonation. The residual complex sugars provide complex tastes and continued fermentation. Real Ale must be handled differently from other styles. The lack of filtration means variable pressure and yeast remain

in the cask. This creates problems for the cellarman to solve. Various techniques are employed to provide clear beer such as careful tapping into the cask and the use of finings (materials added to the cask to bring down yeast and protein). The cask must not be moved once it is enthralled (placed onto the stillage and chocked in place). The cellarman's job is as crucial as the brewer's to the quality of Real Ale.

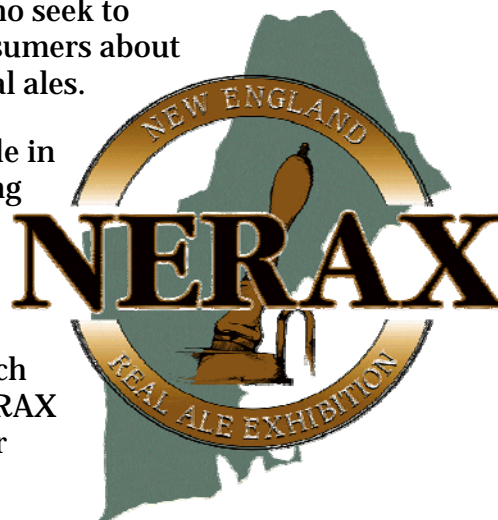
Cask Ale can be drawn with a hand pump, electric air pump, Scottish tall font, or poured through a tap. No pressurized or additional gas is added except atmospheric air as the cask is emptied. The serving temperature is considered best at 55 F, cellar temperature. The higher temperature and infusion of oxygen from replacement air effects the ale. Some of the initial changes can be pleasant-tasting, but over-oxidation spoils the beer. Once opened, Cask Ale must be consumed quickly: 48 hours in summer, 72 hours in winter. It is particularly interesting to note the changing flavors from a cask over the days from tapping until it is finished.

Flavor and texture is what Real Ale is all about. Cask lovers enjoy the broader range of flavors that result from the live, natural ale served at cellar temperature. There is less gassiness, less head on the beer, more beer in a glass! Some devotees want to drink nothing else. Here is your chance to sample some real cask ale from New England. Enjoy!

The Story of CASC

The Cask-conditioned Ale Support Campaign (CASC) is an organization established to promote and educate brewers, publicans, and the public about the brewing, distribution, and pleasures of Real Ale. We are dedicated to the sensible enjoyment of top-fermented, traditionally brewed ales that undergo a secondary fermentation in the vessel from which they are served. CASC is a group of like-minded individuals who seek to expand the awareness of producers, distributors, and consumers about the use of traditional ingredients in, and dispensing of, real ales.

CASC was formed in the spring of 1997 to promote Real Ale in the Boston area. CASC has an open membership consisting of professional brewers, publicans, homebrewers, and beer lovers who volunteer their time to plan and execute Real Ale events. The main events have been the annual New England Real Ale Exhibitions, featuring open tastings of real ales collected from the UK and the US. Each NERAX has been larger in size and scope. This year's NERAX served 30 British and 40 American Cask Ales over the four days of the event.



In addition to the Real Ale tastings, our festivals include educational sessions, a Cellaring workshop, and Brewer's Symposiums featuring experts from Britain and the US explaining the technology used in producing fine Real Ales. This outreach is crucial for the spread of cask-conditioned ales in our area.

Keep up-to-date with CASC by checking our website at www.nerax.org for information about upcoming meetings and events. And watch out for the 10th annual NERAX, scheduled for May 3-6, 2006 at the George Dilboy Post in Davis Square, Somerville, MA.

Where to find Real Ale

In the Boston area, check out

Redbones	Somerville	
Cambridge Brewing Company	Cambridge	Tuesdays only
Bukowski's	Boston and Cambridge	
Watch City Brewing	Waltham	
Rock Bottom	Braintree and Boston	
The Horseshow Pub	Hudson	
The Tap Brewpub	Haverhill	Friday evenings only

For additional locations, check out the two following two web sites

www.nerax.org/where.htm

home.comcast.net/~izandal/cask.html