

The story on the suds

Business Page

"Brandevor Enterprises Ltd. invites you to join us in welcoming Canada's newest imported beer... Simpatico," the invitation reads. It is tied with a silver ribbon to a tall, slim, black-matte beer bottle.

With beer companies in the news lately, and beer marketing campaigns reaching new creative heights, I decided to gather a small group of friends to taste the new Mexican import. Simmie, Sande, Char and I gathered around the kitchen table, pouring from the single bottle of beer.

At least Brandevor had not tried to buy a good review by sending over a six-pack, I thought. The beer flowed golden from the dusky black bottle, reminiscent of the one used for Freixenet, the Spanish sparkling wine.

"What a snazzy bottle," Sande exclaimed, exactly as the marketing company had hoped.

"Can I have it for my collection?"

Beer wars are all in the image, the packaging and the marketing. When it comes to the contents, beer is all pretty much the same, beer-makers confess. But is that true?

There are 75 domestic brands of beer sold in Canada. Sixty-seven per cent is light, crisp lager and 31 per cent is ale.

THE BOTTLE IS ALL

"It's very hard to distinguish between beers," says Robin Milward, vice-president of advertising for Carling O'Keefe. "Mainstream beer all tastes about the same. Image makes the difference." Mr. Milward should know. He and his boss, David Barbour, Carling's executive vice-president of marketing, once transformed a working man's beer, Black Label, into the trendiest brew in town.

The new Mexican beer tasted



Your Business
Diane Maley

Thomson News Service

light and sweet, kind of malty - not at all smooth and creamy, as described in the promotional material. "It tastes a bit like Carlsberg Light," I said.

"It sure isn't Superior," said Sande, referring to her favorite Mexican beer. "It tastes more like Carta Blanca."

"It tastes a bit like Kokanee," said Char, citing a beer sold in British Columbia.

Simmie, who had been silently sipping her beer, grimaced. "It's an acquired taste," she said after a

long pause. "Not what we Canadians are used to."

ELBOWING IN

Simpatico is vying for a place in that small part of the Canadian beer market not dominated by the big three Canadian breweries: Labatt, Molson and Carling O'Keefe. The big three account for 95 per cent of the 460 million gallons of beer Canadians drink each year. It will soon be the big two, as Molson and Carling O'Keefe announced plans for a merger.

Molson's Canadian is the top-ranked brew, followed by Labatt's Blue. Carling O'Keefe lost its popular Carlsberg brand to Labatt's in 1987.

If anyone doubted it, the arrival of the new Mexican beer signals

that the bottle wars are on. Several brands have revived the old-fashioned, long-neck bottles (including Coors and Korona); Elder's has a fat little bottle with a longish neck for its Foster's brand; Labatt's has an elegant green wine-bottle style for its Classic; and so it goes.

Whether Canadians will go for Simpatico in a big way remains to be seen. The brand did well in its first year in the United States, but the tastes of American beer drinkers are substantially different from our own.

"We think its distinctive black bottle makes it stand out from the crowd, and that's what people are really looking for," said Robert Imeson, Brandevor's president, in a news release. We'll see.

Tourism is big business here

The Region of Halton through its Business Development Department commissioned a study into the economic impact of tourism spending in Halton Region. The study results show that Halton Region hosted 4.5 million visitors per year who spent a total of \$168 million. That's a lot of money!

Halton Region of which Halton Hills is part of, also includes the municipalities of Milton, Oakville, and Burlington and has been actively promoting this area for the last 18 months. The Town of Halton Hills in an effort to promote tourism in Halton Hills encouraged the local Chambers of Commerce to become part of the Halton Hills Tourism Committee its purpose to foster and promote tourism growth.

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce provides the manpower and administrative support for this group. The long term goal is to make Halton Hills an attractive tourist destination for the over six million people who live within a two hour drive of Halton Hills.

The "HEAD FOR THE HILLS-HALTON HILLS" slogan and logo has been adopted by many of



WHO BENEFITS FROM TOURISM SPENDING...

We all do, the store where tourist shop, the gas station that sells them gas, the restaurant where they eat, the banks where they cash their cheques, the motel where they stay, and on and on.

As these businesses prosper, they will expand providing goods and services to not only tourist but you and I.

Tourism is BIG BUSINESS it has been estimated that the tourism industry will be the largest in the world by the year 2000. Let's all do our part, in Halton Hills make a tourist feel welcome.

For more information or to plan your own DAY IN HALTON HILLS call 877-7119 or if you prefer drop into the Chamber Office located in the lobby of the Gordon Alcott Arena.

Halton Hills tourism related businesses and this paves the way for tourism growth.

HOW CAN YOU AS A RESIDENT BE PART OF THIS INDUSTRY...

The answer to this question is very simple, just be friendly to all visitors to our Town. If they look lost ask them if they need help, recommend your favorite stop or restaurant, tell them of upcoming community events. Do you have a special street or road that you like to travel, if so tell them, finally just treat them like you like to be treated.



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