

# Brewers work to tap into female market

"Many people hate the taste of beer to begin with. It is, however, a prejudice that many have been able to overcome."

—Winston Churchill

BY PATRICK MANGION  
Staff Writer

The latest statistics seem to prove what beer companies have likely known for years: getting women to put down their wine glass and raise a beer stein is no easy task.

A study, conducted by the LCBO its stores, showed while women make up more than 40 per cent of beer buyers, 80 per cent of beer is consumed by men.

According to Labatt, 83 per cent of beer is sold to men in Canada.

While some brewing companies have taken the high road, hoping to glean more female beer drinkers, objectifying the fairer sex has been a mainstay for many Canadian brewers.

Last week, the beer mavens at Steam Whistle Brewing in Toronto offered insight into one of the world's oldest beverages, essentially, a Beer 101 for women.

"We are offering a challenge to women to educate themselves about beer," said Alexandra McLellan, retail store manager for Toronto's Steam Whistle Brewing.

"By learning about the traditions of brewing, women will appreciate the effects various ingredients have on taste," she added.

Wine has cleverly positioned itself as a beverage of choice for women, said Stefan Atton, director of marketing for Steam Whistle.

"Beer is gassy, it fills you up. I think that's uncomfortable for some women," Mr. Atton said.

But changing that perception is an uphill battle when you consider total beer sales in Ontario were more than triple wine and cooler sales combined in 2003.

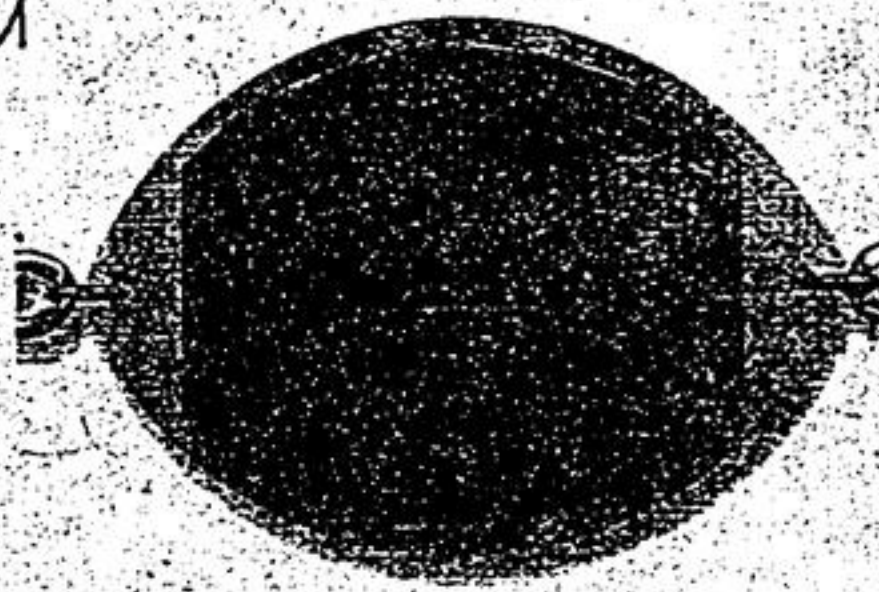


STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Sandy Jeapes, Donna Clark, Reta Tuckey, Tara Krebs, Marion Mendes and Joan Thomas toast with drinks other than beer at the Unionville Arms Pub. Brewers have launched campaigns aimed at increasing the number of female beer drinkers.

See BEER, page 31.

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