

## **SHATTERING TRUTH ABOUT GLASS:**

### ***IT CAN SHAPE THE TASTE OF YOUR BEER***

Almost every day, precisely at noon a solemn ceremony is conducted behind closed doors in a quiet room hidden behind the huge, glistening brew kettles at the Labatt brewery in London, Ontario. A similar ceremony takes place regularly at all the Labatt breweries across Canada. It is the official taste test for those beers which have reached full maturity. One by one the beers are poured and tasted by the brewmaster and a select panel of tasters. There is no small talk, jokes or gossip. This is the Final Judgment. The glasses used by the panel are always specially cleaned, rinsed thoroughly and air dried. And, here's the point which may surprise you; all the glasses must be of uniform shape and size - a tall tapered glass that is narrower at the top is best.

The shape is important because it is a well known fact that the design of the glass affects the taste of the beer. The taste test glasses are narrower at the top to concentrate the aromatics of the beer. Brewmasters have known about the relationship of glass shape to taste for centuries. They have perfected the art of selecting the exact shape of the glass to complement the attributes of a particular style of beer. In Europe, some glasses are used only in one geographical area for one specific beer. Berliner Weiss, with its balloon-shaped projecting lip design is a perfect example, Pilsener-style lagers (like Blue) are traditionally served in tall, inverted cone glasses. Dimple barrel shaped mugs are reserved for full flavored brews. A Danish bartender wouldn't dare serve a Carlsberg in anything other than the official Carlsberg glass.

Generally speaking, the bigger the flavor (especially the maltiness) of the beer, the bigger the bowl of the glass. Canadians and Americans, by and large are not quite as fussy as the Europeans. Labatt has, however, selected a glass style to suit each of their major brands. There is no disputing the fact that a beer always tastes better from a glass, any glass, than one chugged straight from the bottle. A glass brings all your senses into the act. Nothing looks so refreshing as a well poured beer. The rich aroma of the malt and hops definitely enhance the taste.

One final note: Purists insist that a glass should never be frosted - personally on a hot day in August I say "pour me an ice cold frosty one" - CHEERS!