

# THE GENDER PINT GAP

A study into UK female attitudes and behaviours towards beer



DeaLafis

BRINGING BEER TO WOMEN



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**This research project was supported by The Worshipful Company of Brewers with a grant from The Brewers' Research and Education Fund.**





## Women drink beer.

**This isn't likely to be a revelation because there's a good chance that you know a woman, or several, who drinks beer. Maybe you are a beer-drinking woman yourself?**

Women also brew, package, sell and market beer. This isn't news to anyone who has been on a brewery tour, attended a beer festival or heard of beer industry names such as Marston's Emma Gilleland or Fuller's Georgina Young. Similarly for anyone who has encountered passionate female advocates for beer such as Melissa Cole, Jane Peyton and Emma Inch.

Beer itself doesn't have a gender and there is nothing remarkable about a woman drinking a beer. But it is impossible to ignore the larger questions swirling around women, gender and beer: Are women drinkers marketed and targeted differently to male drinkers? Beer labels and pumps clips displaying near-naked women and risqué double-entendres have been quite rightly 'called out' by female commentators and have, this year, been banned from competitions by the Campaign for Real Ale and the Society of Independent Brewers.

Should breweries be doing more to reach out to consumers outside their standard demographic? Is the brewing industry itself endemic in perpetuating and validating sexist stereotypes?

Some of the results in this report throw up more questions than we had the time or money to address but as one of very few major surveys to address this topic we had to start somewhere.



**Melissa Cole**

Beer writer, sommALEier & Certified Cicerone®

*"An important piece of research that's based on intelligent and insightful questions to unearth the simple ways the beer industry has managed to disenfranchise women from their once-loved drink over the last 70 years or so. It highlights everything from societal pressures to inappropriate serves to ingrained misogyny and more as just some of the issues and challenges the brewing industry to do something about it.*

*But it's not just criticism, it's got rational advice on how the new, and old, guard of brewing can make beer relevant to 51% of the population again; but it's also only just the start and I hope more long-overdue funding is provided to help address this issue."*



## Bridging the gap

**Britain has one of the lowest percentage of female beer drinkers in the world, despite the much lauded craft beer boom.**

**Outdated sexist marketing, fear of the 'beer belly', and negative perceptions about flavour are all contributing to British women spurning our national drink:**

### The challenges:

Only 17% of women drink beer at least once a week (compared to 53% of men).

Male oriented advertising is the main barrier to over a quarter (27%) of women drinking beer – rising even higher for the 18-24 year-old female group to almost half (48%).

A fifth of women (20%) find the thought of calories in beer and putting on weight to be the biggest reason for not drinking beer.

17% of women feel that 'being judged by others' is the third biggest barrier to drinking beer.

Taste is the great divide: Of the women who drink beer 56% do so because they like the taste; conversely, of the women who never drink beer 83% do so because they don't like the taste.

### The opportunities:

Women are first encouraged to sample beer by their friends (33%) and family (25%).

71% of female respondents in the 35-44 year old bracket cited taste as the reason they like beer, a massive opportunity for volume growth if these consumers are targeted appropriately.

Restaurants and 'third space' occasions are prime opportunities for women to drink and sample beer.

Clear, concise information about flavour profiles is key to encourage sampling, whether that's through bar staff or promotional materials.

Push the quality and quantity message to overcome the weight gain fear by offering different sizes and formats.

Premiumisation of beer and a swerve from the mainstream stereotypes will attract women who feel being judged by others to them drinking beer.



**Jane Peyton**

Events producer and host, drinks educator, public speaker, drinks writer, Beer Sommelier and founder of the School of Booze

*"The stats are fascinating and so insightful. I learned a lot about attitudes.*

*This report should be read by everyone who makes and sells beer."*



## RESEARCH BACKGROUND



**The UK beer market has undergone a seismic shift over the past decade in terms of what we drink, how much we drink, how beer is distributed, the beer duty escalator and education.**

**During that time there has been some research done around women and their beer drinking habits.**

## Bittersweet Partnership 2009

The last major study into the drinking habits of UK women and their relationship with beer was conducted in 2009. The Bittersweet Partnership, funded by Molson Coors', stated that only 13% of beer consumed in the UK can be attributed to women (compared to 44% in Spain and 61% in Turkey).

Molson Coors' response to this research was to launch Animee, a beer targeted at women. The brand was unsuccessful and commentators at the time suggested that women do not want a 'beer brewed for women'. They already have beer.

## The Cask Report 2010

The 2010 Cask Report trumpeted the announcement that the number of female cask drinkers had doubled. Great news, but they still only accounted for 15% of cask ale consumed in the UK.





## Dea Latis women and beer survey 2016

In May 2016 Dea Latis conducted a small-scale survey amongst its subscribers to 'test the water' about female attitudes towards beer.

The online survey, which received 600 responses asked for respondents' perceptions about women's consumption of beer and what would make them more likely to buy beer in the on and off trade. Both men and women completed the survey.

The majority (73%) of respondents felt that brewers' approach to women had improved over the last 10 years, but that there was 'still a way to go'.

A similar number (74%) thought that more women are now more likely to include beer within their drinks repertoire, while 17% believed more women are choosing it as their main drink. On both questions, responses from men were slightly more optimistic than from women.

Asked to rank a number of ways in which more women could be encouraged to choose beer as a drink of choice, respondents gave their highest score to beer lists and taste descriptions, in both on and off trade (33%).

Offering try before you buy samples of beer was also viewed as effective across pubs and supermarkets (27%), while there was also support for a wider selection of beers in the off trade (31%).

Staff recommendation was a strong 'middle' choice for many respondents (21% voted it 2nd and 3rd most important), indicating a need to equip bar and store staff with beer knowledge.

Beer and food matching received a similar rating (25% of respondents put it in 3rd place), though women felt it would be more effective than men.

A wider selection of beer glassware was seen as only moderately motivating, while providing more information on beers calorie content or health benefits received low scores from both sexes, across on and off trade.

Whilst the results were revealing, our 2016 survey relied upon a sample of self-selecting respondents already engaged with the beer category.

## More adhoc surveys in 2017

In February 2017, Pioneer Brewing Company conducted a piece of research which showed that despite there being a year-on-year increase in female beer drinkers, 18% of women still feel as though they are being judged when drinking beer. While 27% of female respondents are interested in increasing their beer knowledge, a fifth (20%) said they felt uncomfortable asking for beer advice.

In March 2017, M&B released their own survey conducted within their Nicholson's brand which created some exciting headlines about craft beer: Their survey concluded that given a choice between craft beer, gin, whisky or soft drinks, 57% of female respondents would chose the craft beer option.

However, on closer inspection, this survey did not reflect a representative sample group that was given a realistic drinks choice: Wine was not included in the choice of drinks; the percentage of female respondents was not cited; and the venues within the Nicholson's estate are predominantly in the London region so this survey did not accurately reflect the nation's female drinking habits.

## What was the real picture?

That there was an urgent need for a bespoke programme of research, education and engagement with the female market was becoming apparent Dea Latis believed that a widespread study into the drinking habits of UK women and their relationship with beer was the starting point to bring about understanding and, if necessary, change.

They applied for, and were successful in securing a grant in July 2017 from the Brewers' Research and Education Fund, held by the Worshipful Company of Brewers. Dea Latis then commissioned YouGov to complete a twelve-question omnibus survey in October 2017 comprising 2,000 men and women from Great Britain.



Sarah John,  
Director,  
Boss Brewing

*"As the craft brewing revolution has exploded with the number of breweries now reaching 2000 across the UK, younger people with more modern ways of thinking have welcomed the right people with the right attitudes into their organisations regardless of gender. The barriers, assumptions and stereotypes are not at play from those working within the craft breweries at least. It's a different story outside of the craft beer bubble however."*

## Dea Latis Survey Methodology

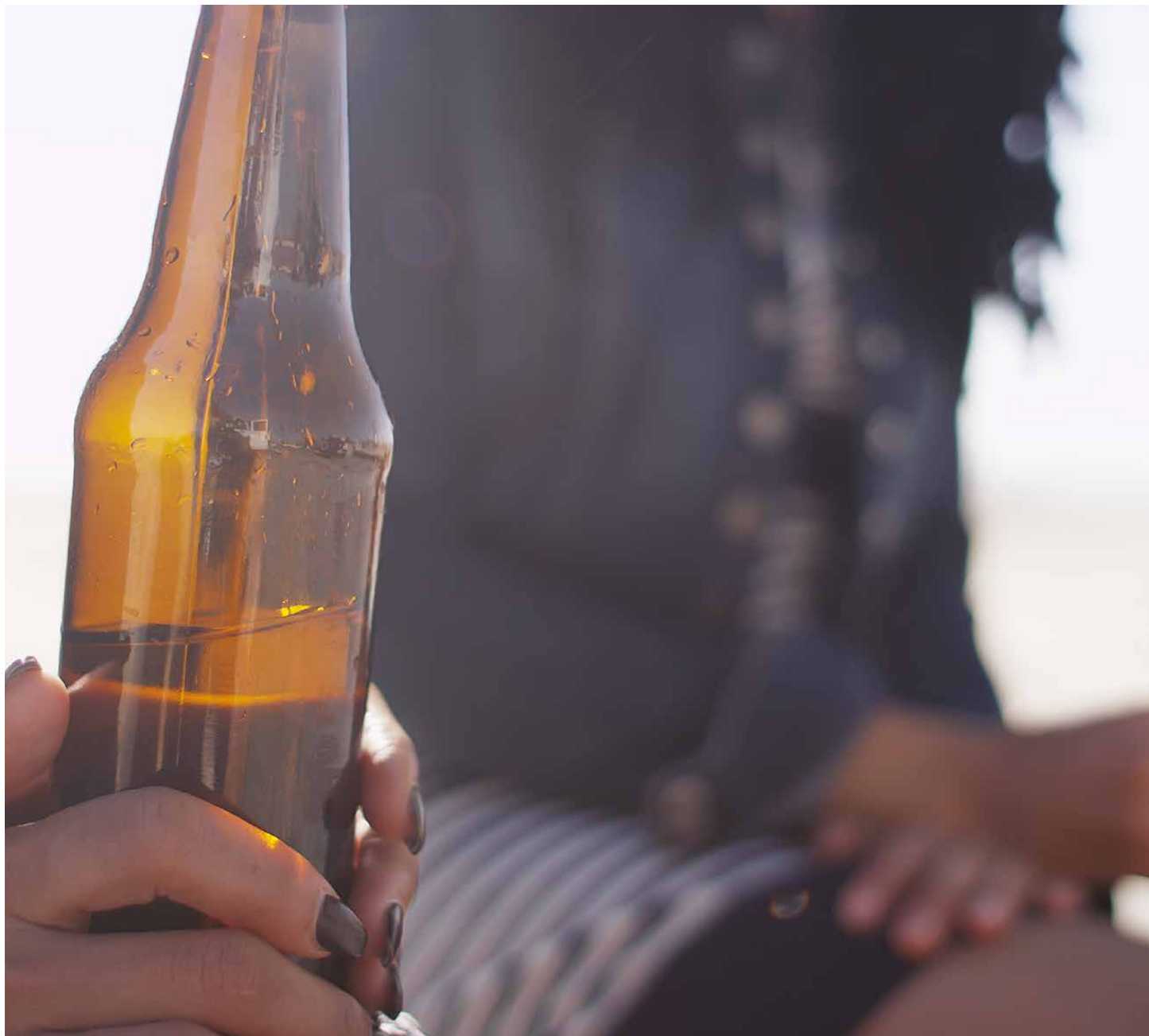
The Dea Latis survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of 800,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Emails are sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample. The email invites them to take part in a survey and provides a generic survey link.

Once a panel member clicks on the link they are sent to the survey that they are most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas. (The sample definition could be “GB adult population” or a subset such as “GB adult females”).

Invitations to surveys don’t expire and respondents can be sent to any available survey. The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2026 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd - 4th October 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

**YouGov**<sup>®</sup>

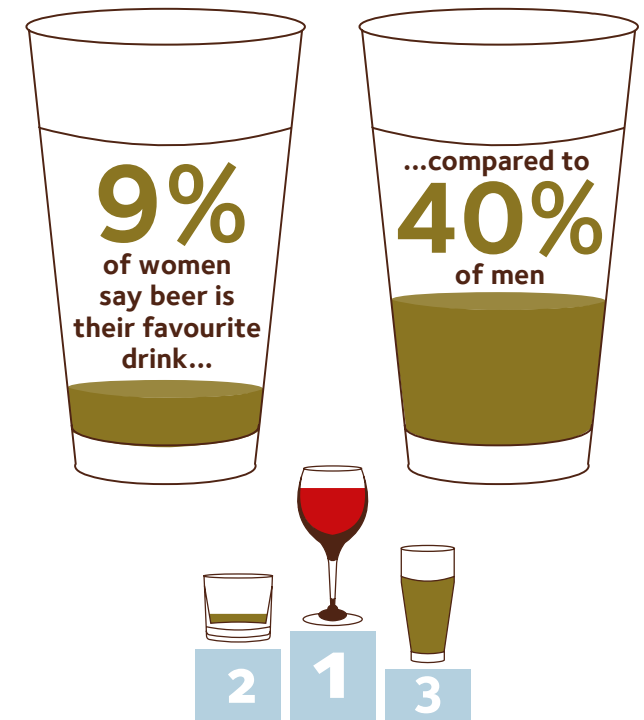
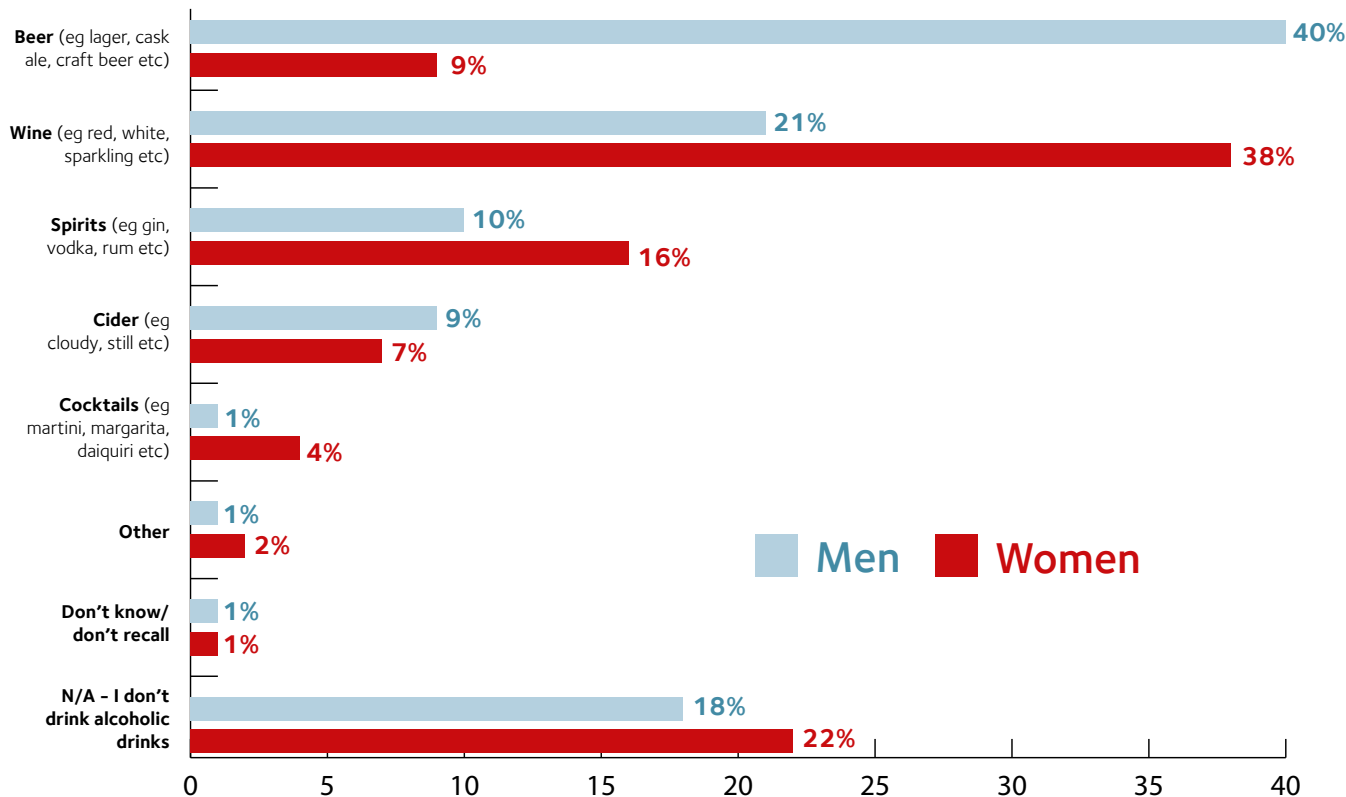






**WOMEN'S DRINKING HABITS**

# Which one of the following alcoholic drinks do you drink most often?



Beer is the third most popular choice for women after wine and spirits

- Only 9% of women say beer is their favourite drink, compared to 40% of men.
- But beer is the third most popular choice for women after wine and spirits
- 22% of women say that they never drink alcohol

## In more detail:

- Cohabiting couples are most likely to rate beer their favourite drink (12%).

- Beer is a more classless drink than wine: 9% of all women name it as their favourite drink, while 43% of ABC1s cite wine but only 32% of C2DEs.
- In Scotland only 5% of women put wine top of their drinks list but in the North it's 11%.
- Women in full time work are most likely to name beer their favourite drink (13%) and students least likely (7%) – though students are among most frequent beer drinkers (21% drinking once a week or more).

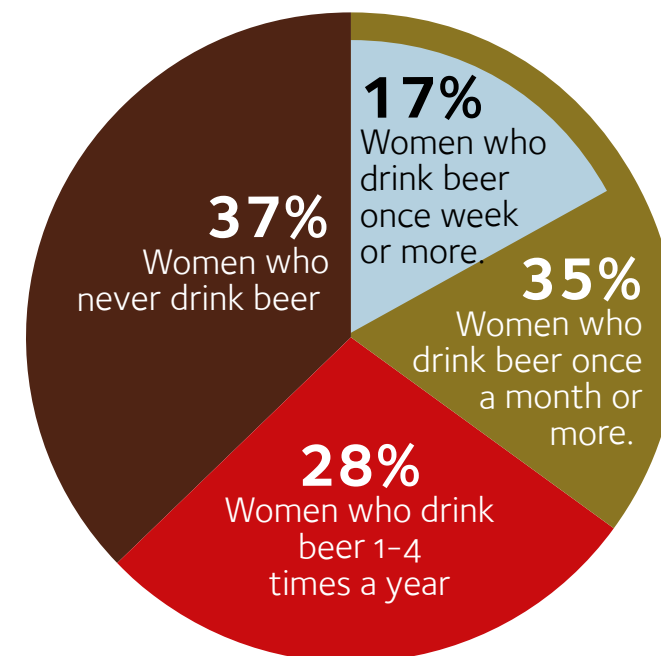
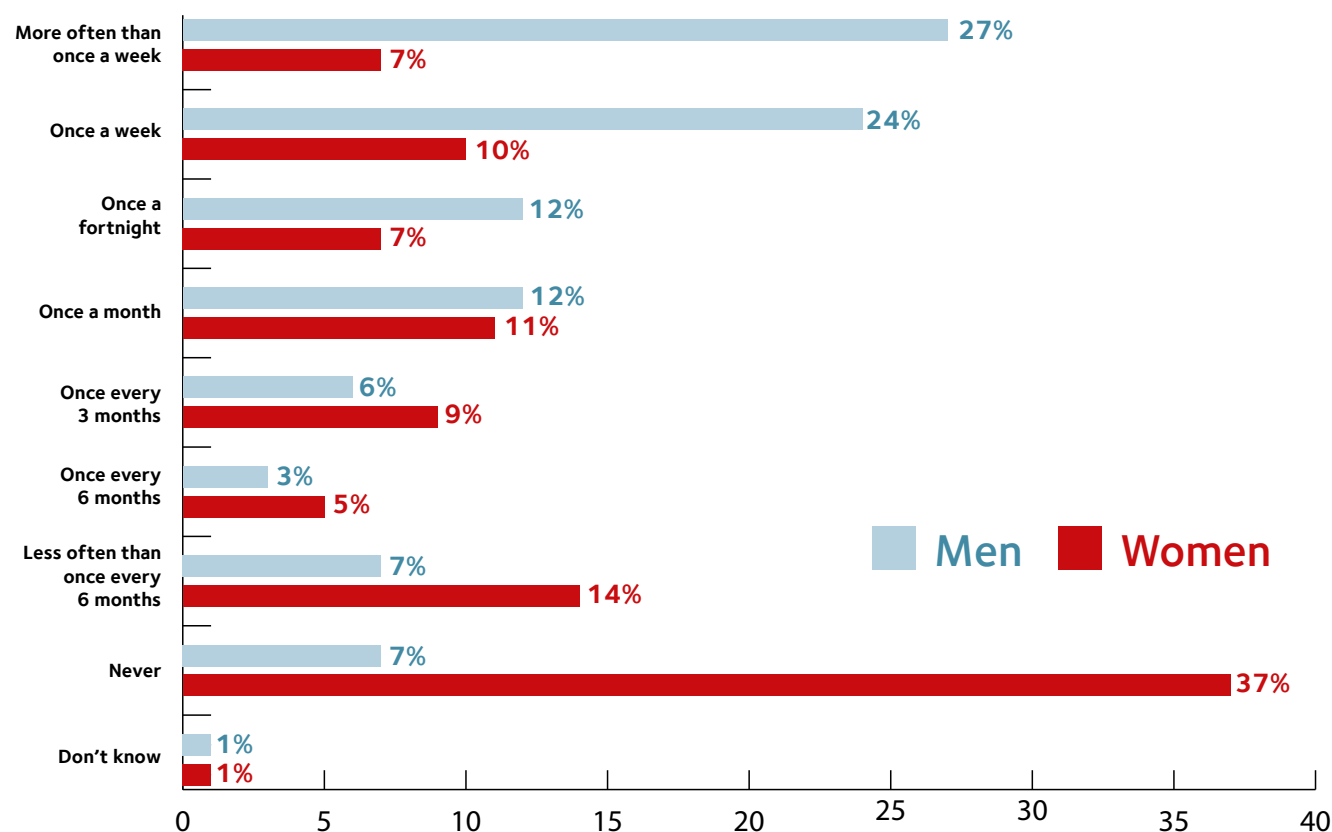
## Bittersweet Partnership Research comparison:

In 2009 a similar sample of women (2002) aged between 18 and 64 were interviewed by ICM. Less than 10% of women would order a beer above anything else.

In a rapidly changing beer landscape, women's attitudes towards choosing beer as their favourite drink do not appear to have changed in the last eight years. Is it the case that no-one has addressed their needs and likes or are there too many barriers in the way?



# Approximately how often, if at all, do you drink beer?



The positive news here is that 17% of women are regular beer drinkers i.e., those who drink beer once or more each week. Overall, 62% of women drink beer with over half of them (52%) drinking it on a monthly basis.

Compare this to the US where 26% of women are weekly beer drinkers (Consumer Edge) and in Italy, where although there is a lower per capita

consumption (14 litres), they have the highest percentage of female beer drinkers in Europe: 6 out of 10 (Doxa – AssoBirra survey).

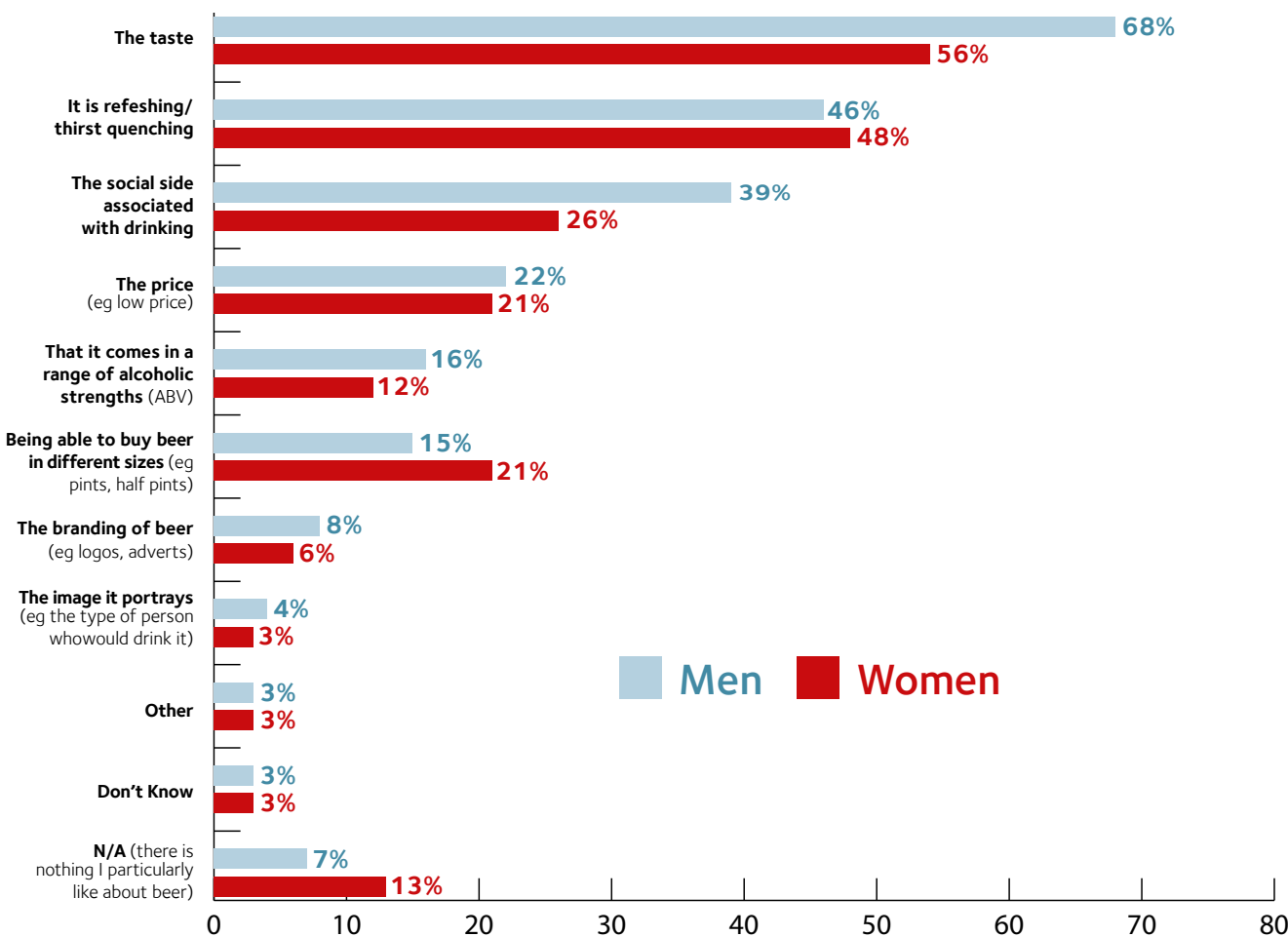
## In more detail:

For the women in the UK who drink beer once a week or more, this figure is higher in the North at 20% and lowest in Scotland at 10%.

Women aged 25-44 drink beer most frequently, with 22% drinking once or more a week.

Students are most likely to drink beer more than once a week (12% compared to the 7% average). Only 28% of women aged 25-34 never drink beer, compared to 42% aged 55+.

# Which, if any of the following, do you like about beer?



Respondents were asked to tick any options that applied to them.

We can see that women's reasons for liking beer are very similar to men's but there are a couple of variances in attitudes: women like the fact that they can choose the serve size (thirds, halves, pints) more than men, and women identify the refreshment element of beer as desirable, more so than men.

When it comes to taste women aren't quite as enthusiastic and similarly don't rate the social side of beer drinking as highly as men.

### In more detail:

Taste scored highest at 71% among the 35-44 year old female category compared to just 46% of the 18-24 year olds.

This younger age group like the social aspect of drinking beer (44%), as do students (49%). Full time workers also enjoy socialising with beer (31%).

Price is, unsurprisingly, more of a factor among younger drinkers, with 42% of 18-24s citing it, compared to 21% for all women, and was a stronger factor among women in the North (29%).

Refreshment is more important to older age groups - for 51% of 45-54 year olds and 61% of 55+ group.

Should breweries be doing more to reach out to consumers outside their standard demographic? Is the brewing industry itself endemic in perpetuating and validating sexist stereotypes?

**Bittersweet Partnership Research comparison:**  
Of the women opting for beer as drink of choice, taste was the biggest draw factor at 75%.

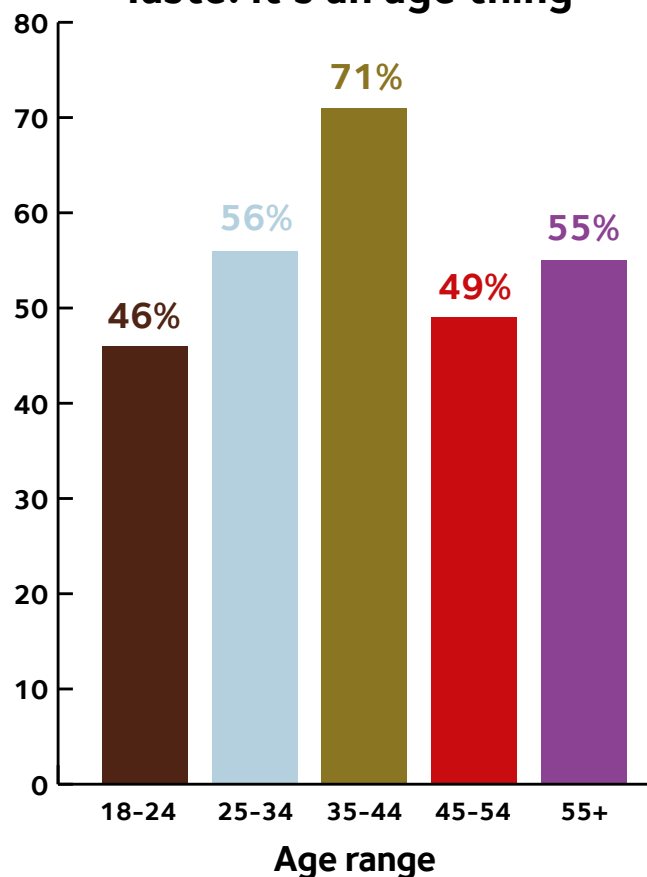




42% of 18-24s  
cite price as a  
major factor



### Taste: it's an age thing



Natalya Watson,  
Certified Cicerone,  
Duvel Moortgat

*"My mom once told me it wasn't ladylike to drink beer!"*

*I think that once women find other female friends who like drinking beer, they realise their tastes are totally normal and become more confident asserting their preferences."*

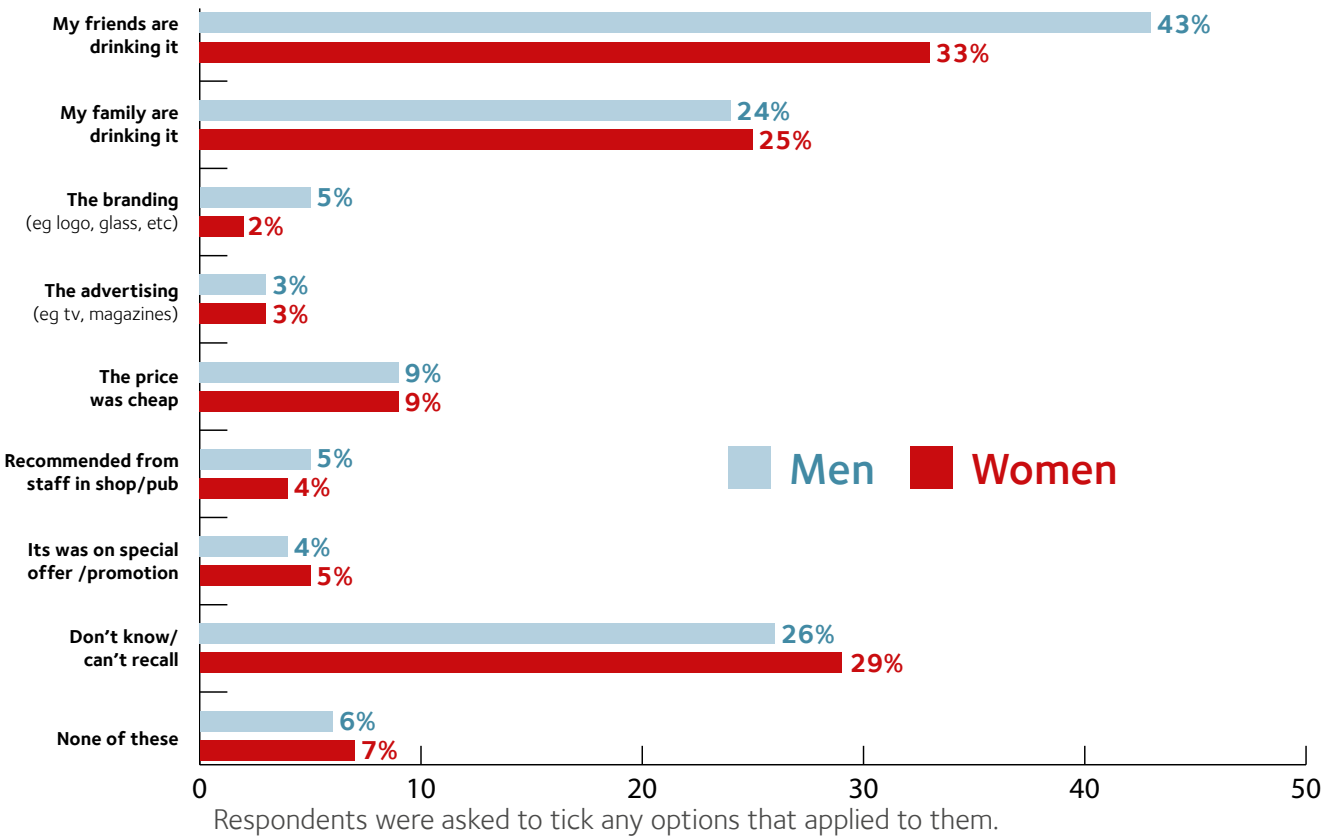


Jo Frith,  
beer drinker,  
Wakefield

*"I would choose beer over other drinks in a pub, as there is often always something new to try. My preference is stouts, porters and milds, they have a deep rich taste and there are so many varieties of flavours."*

*I love the atmosphere in pubs that I have visited that sell cask beer, great friendly welcome, provide guidance on the beers you may like if you tell them your preferences and allow you to taste each of the beers you may like."*

# Which, if any of the following influenced you to first try beer?





Branding and advertising only influence 5% of women to first sample beer

Family and friends are a big influence for 58% of women first trying beer. The relatively low price of beer is the next reason but only for 9% of women.

Branding and advertising only influence 5% of women to first sample beer and a surprisingly low number recall being influenced by staff selling or serving beer.

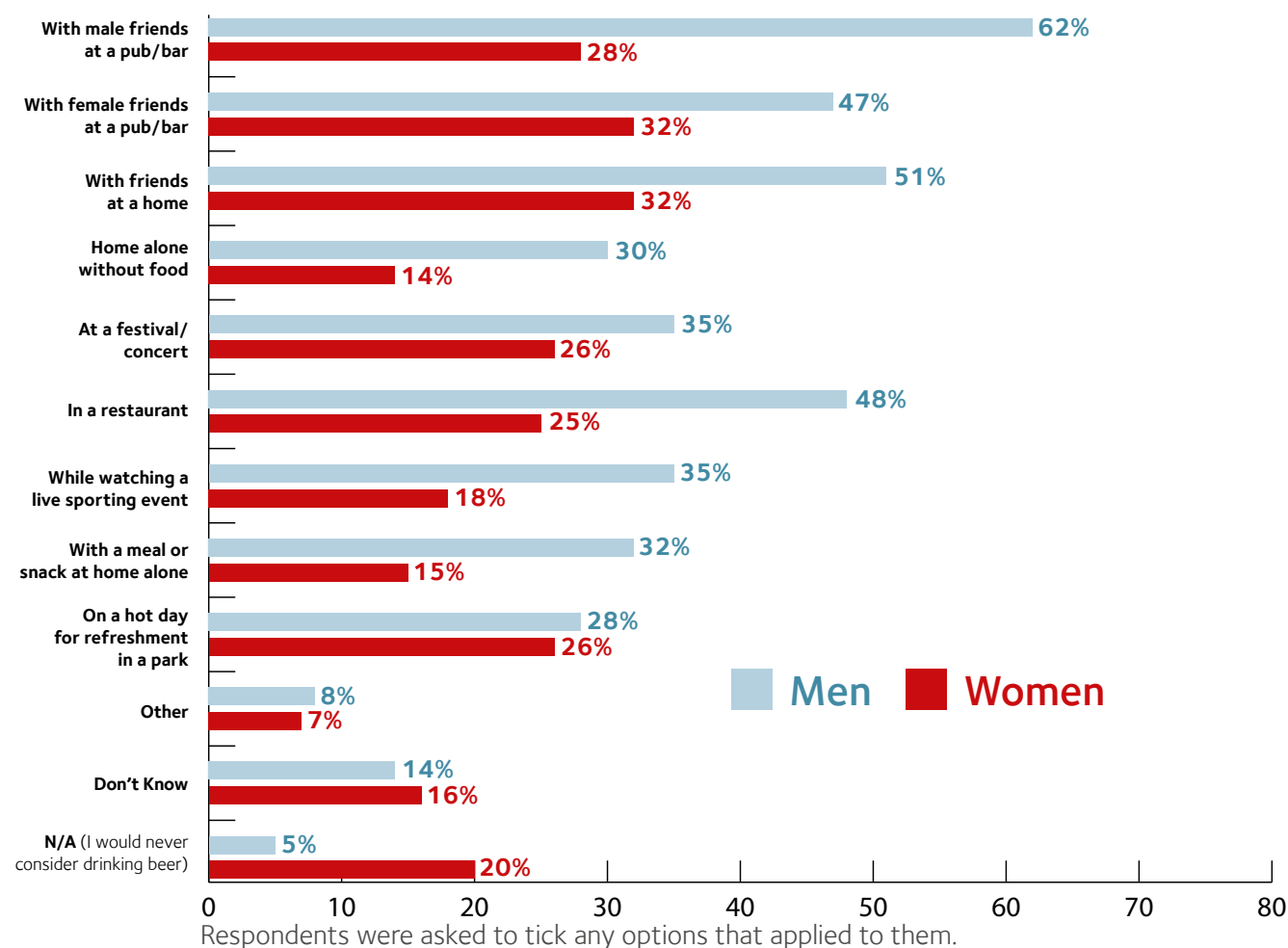
### In more detail:

Friends were a bigger influence among 18-24s (40% compared to 33% overall)) and Londoners. The same groups were also influenced by family, with 41% of 18-24s and 33% of Londoners citing it (compared to just 25% overall).

Regionally, advertising encouraged 9% of women in the East to sup their first beer (compared by just 3% overall). Cheap beer influenced only 5% of women in the South, but 13% in Wales.



# When, if ever, would you consider drinking beer?



Drinking beer is a very social activity – for both men and women – and enjoying a beer with friends is a big driver, whether in the pub or bar with male friends (45%), female friends (40%) or with friends at home (42%).

In fact, 65% of women are more likely to drink a beer if they arrive at a social occasion where their friends (male or female) are drinking beer.

However, women are 4% more likely to drink a beer in a pub or bar if they are with their female friends than their male friends. Do they feel more comfortable or confident in their choices or are they more influenced by their female peer group? Or do women feel they shouldn't drink beer in front of men because they have been conditioned to think it's 'unladylike'?

It tends to be younger women from the 18 to 44 age group who choose to drink beer with male friends (39%) compared to just 20% of women over 45 years old.



Julie O'Grady,  
'Ladies That Beer'  
social group,  
Liverpool

*"An increased visibility of women enjoying beer can encourage other women to attend our gatherings and also try new beers."*



## 18 Women's drinking habits

Regionally 40% of women from the east of the country would consider drinking beer with female friends, 8% higher than the national average but only 29% of women from London would choose to drink beer with female friends.

Perhaps more surprising is that a quarter of women (25%) would chose to drink a beer in a restaurant – a lot fewer than men at 48% – but nonetheless an interesting sales opportunity with drinks menus, glassware and staff knowledge.

### Why is beer ignored in restaurants?

In July 2017 Tony Naylor wrote 'Beer is still the pour relation' in Restaurant Magazine in which he said:

"In many discerning restaurants this acceptance of the importance of beer is often grudging. That box is ticked, but poorly. Wine knowledge is seen as a sophisticated transferable skill. Beer is regarded as something cold and wet you chug down at the end of service."

There has always been a strong connection between traditional male sports and beer. The recent success of women's rugby, cricket and football teams on the international circuit could prove an opportunity for brewers to consider sponsorship to reach a wider female audience.

Breweries using overtly male cues when promoting their brands, such as promotional girls, are alienating the modern female consumer.

Affluence is a factor for both men and women in choosing to drink beer with ABC1s scoring more highly on the social occasions than C2DEs.

### Bittersweet Partnership Research comparison:

Only 3% of women would choose beer as a drink of choice when having a 'girl's night in', so there has been a massive increase in this percentage in the space of nine years.

What has caused this increase? Is the off trade more attuned to making beer a more appealing proposition than the on-trade? Back in 2009 women reported that buying beer was as exciting as buying a 'can of veg'. What lessons could be learned from the way the off-trade displays, categorises and promotes beer?

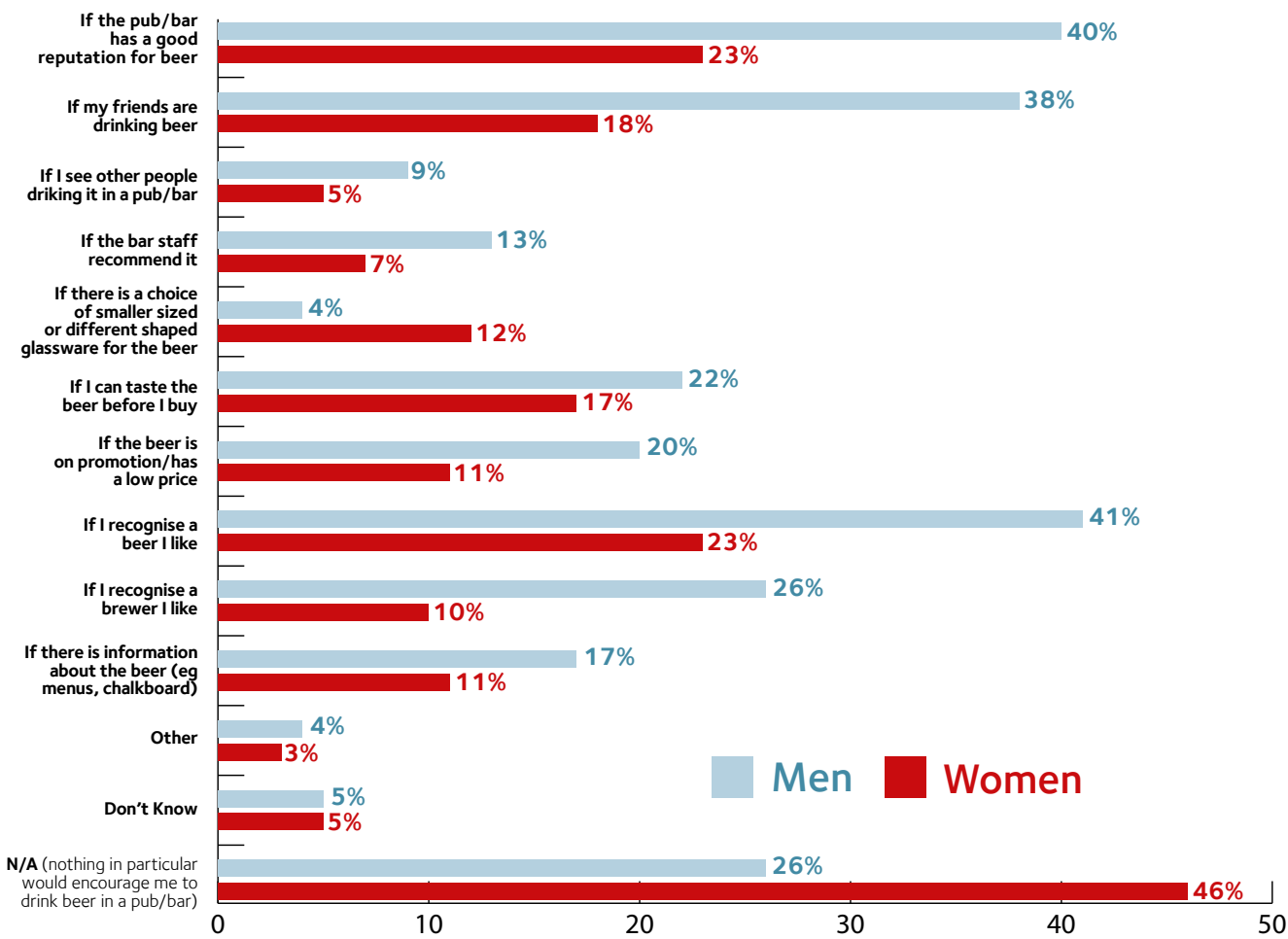




**KEY INFLUENCERS  
FOR WOMEN**



# Which, if any, of the following would encourage you to drink beer in a pub or bar?



Respondents were asked to tick any options that applied to them.

Alongside its reputation, recognisable branding is a key influence in encouraging women to purchase beer in a pub/bar. Across all age groups, over a quarter of women cited this as a key reason in their decision to choose a beer as a drink of choice.

### In more detail:

For 34.5% of women in the the 18–34 year old age group, a pub or bar which has an established its reputation as a specialist beer outlet influences their decision on the drink they purchase far more. How do they know the outlet has a reputation as a beer led venue?

Social media usage is high amongst this age group, so pubs and bars could consider attracting female drinkers through effective use of social media platforms and tailoring their messaging.



Julie O'Grady, 'Ladies That Beer' social group, Liverpool

“Basic education sessions around beer would help support women. Knowledge around styles and tastes so they can make a more informed choice when buying for themselves or others.

Friendly engaging staff, encouraging people to try beer is a big help”.



Beer flights, a nip (third of a pint) or just offering a try before you buy sample are a very compelling way to encourage a potential customer to try a beer.

Whilst glassware is not a key influencer in women's decision to purchase beer in a pub/bar, it becomes significantly more important in the decision process for women than men.

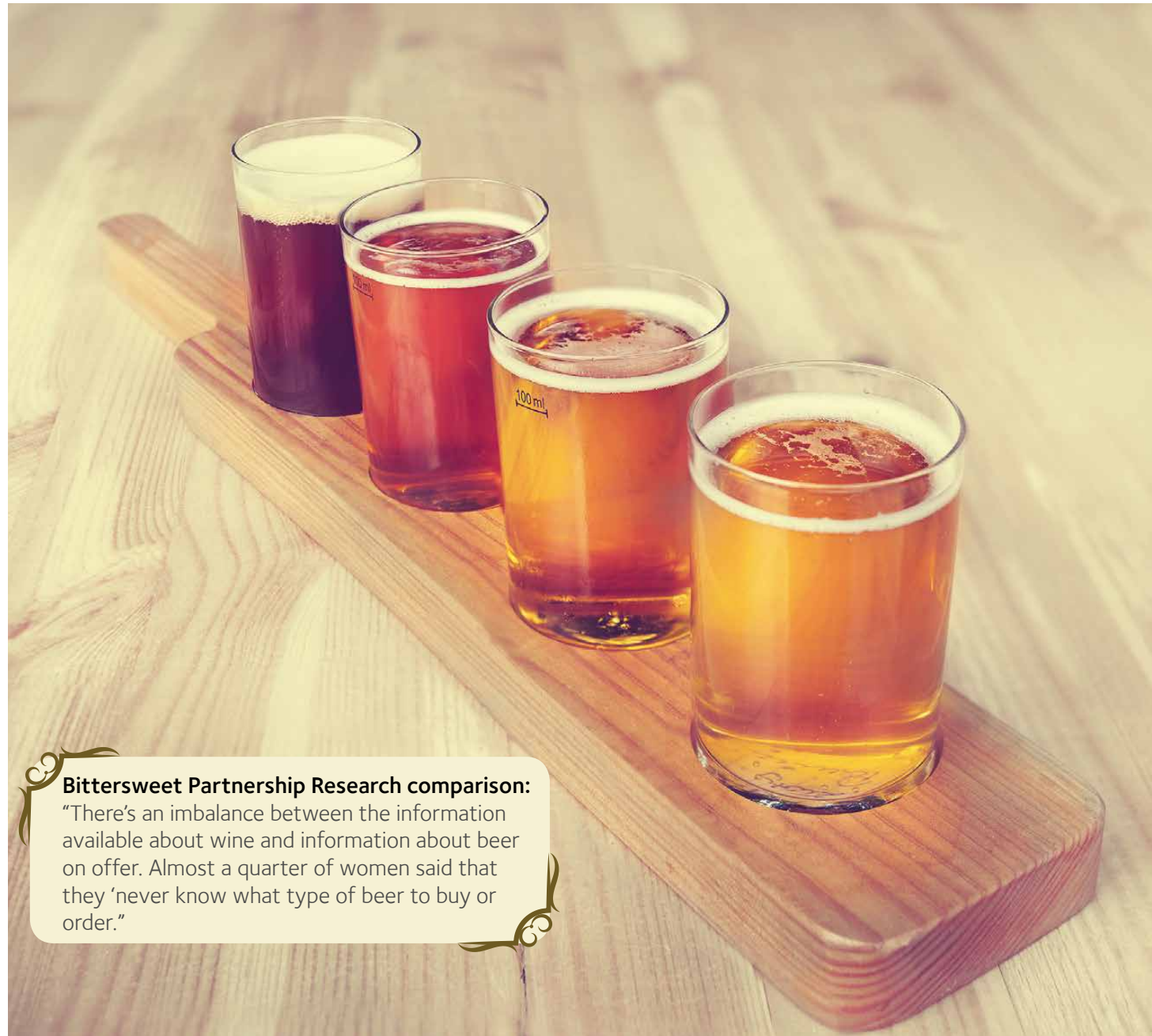
Only 4% of men cite this as a reason for influencing their choice of drink, rising to 12% for women.



Sara Barton,  
Brewster and Co-  
Owner, Brewster's  
Brewing Co

*One concern that I have is that amongst the so called craft brewers it is very much a "bro" culture with the majority (apart from Jaega at Wild Card) of the "rockstar" breweries being male led and very oriented towards the male market with "skulls and spaceships" imagery which I think primarily appeal to young men.*

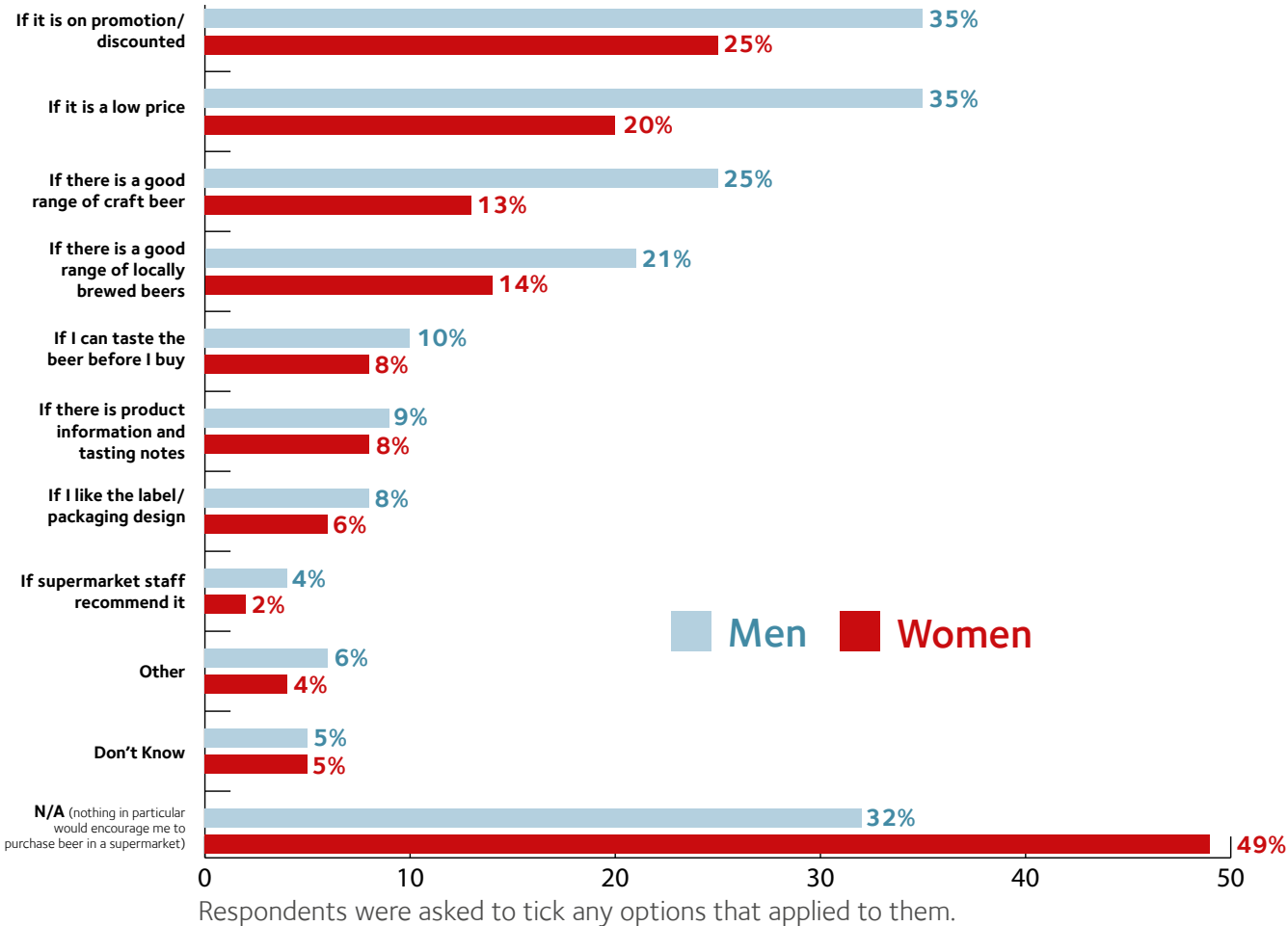
*Also there is possibly the point where middle aged women (and men) become invisible to the young trend setters. But that is perhaps another issue altogether.*



**Bittersweet Partnership Research comparison:**

"There's an imbalance between the information available about wine and information about beer on offer. Almost a quarter of women said that they 'never know what type of beer to buy or order.'"

# Which, if any, of the following would encourage you to purchase beer in a supermarket?



Price and promotions are the biggest factors in the decision to purchase beer in the off trade, but less so for women than men. Is that because women are proxy buying for men and they buy what they know they drink?

The range of beer is far more important to males than females, particularly if there is a good selection of craft beers.

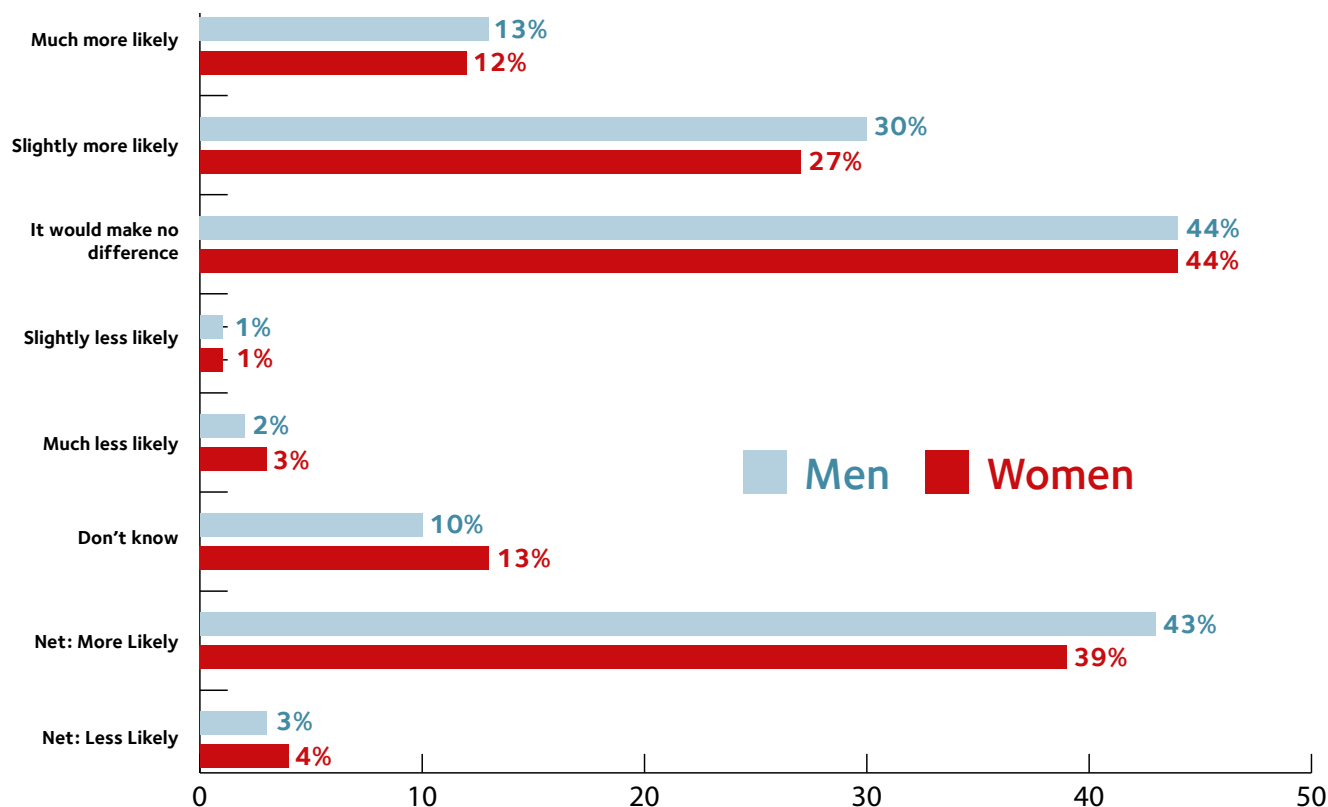
Are women overwhelmed by the range offered, and choose by price led promotions, rather than making an informed choice about flavour and style? Could



descriptions such as “if you like gin, you would like this style” override this price led decision making? Arming women with knowledge about beer through tasting notes, sampling and personal recommendations would overcome the price-led decision.

## Local provenance

How much more or less likely would you be to choose a beer for yourself that has been brewed locally compared to one that has not?



36% of women say provenance, or where the beer has been brewed has very little relevance to them drinking beer with 44% of all women saying it has no influence on them choosing a beer brand.

The same figure applies to male drinkers. There are slight variations regionally but nothing to suggest any local loyalty.

### The experience economy

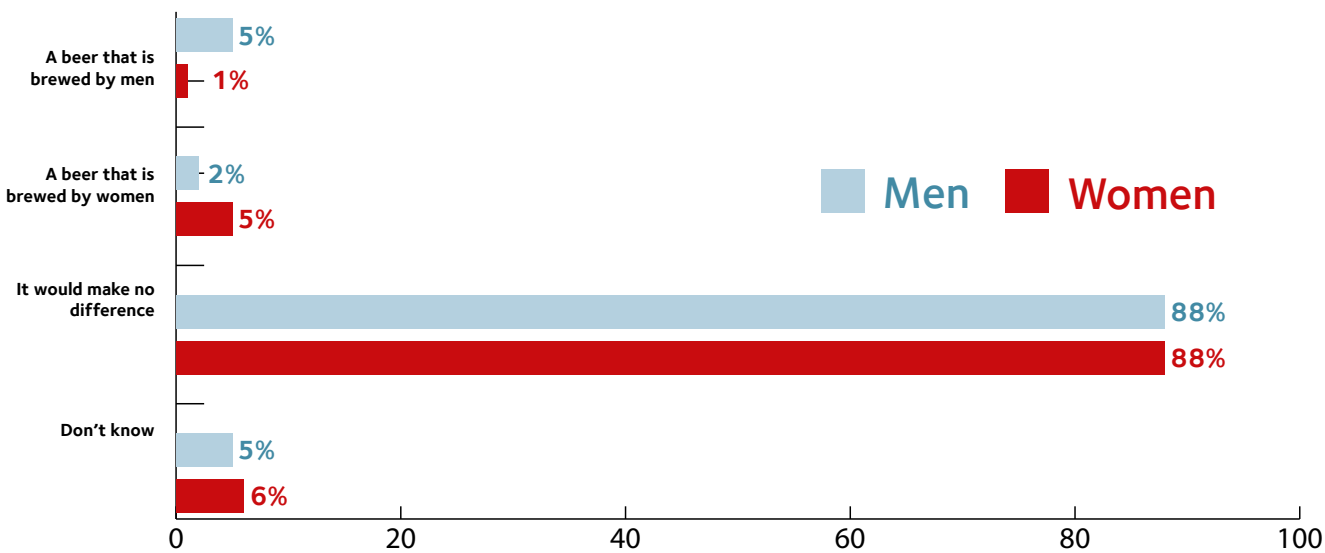
A number of brewers have acknowledged our choice of drink is influenced by the 'experience economy'. Put simply, if a consumer associates a brand or style of drink with a great experience, such as at a festival, or on holiday, they are likely to want to recreate that 'feel good' factor by experiencing the same drink again in their own environment.





# The brewster effect

Which one, if either, of the following would you be more likely to drink?



Would the knowledge that a beer has been brewed by a women be an attractive proposition?

The simple answer is no, although women are slightly more influenced by the idea than men.

88% of all respondents say that it makes no difference. However, there is a slight variation to the general consensus amongst female students, with 14% stating the knowledge that the beer is produced by a female would influence their decision more than their working counterparts.



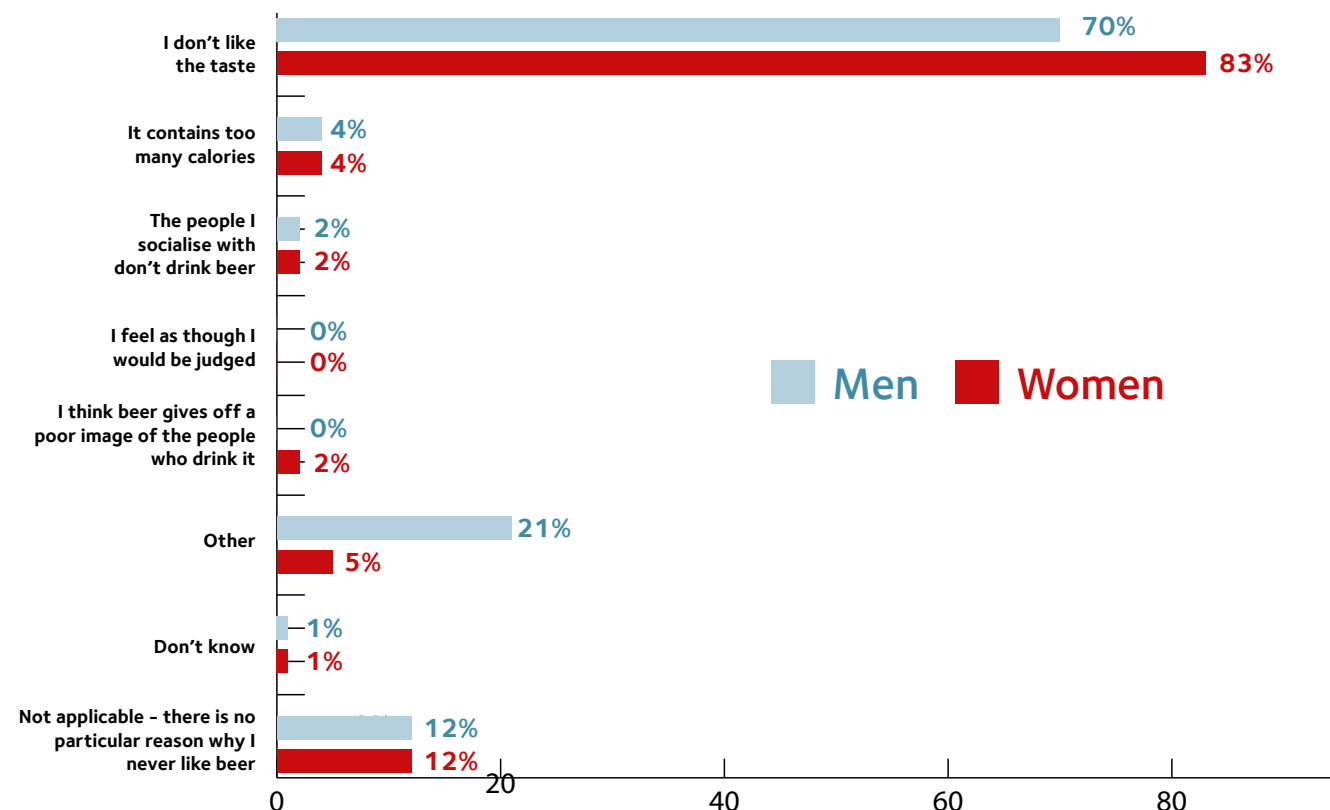
Kirsty Dunsmore,  
Head of  
Marketing,  
Edinburgh Beer  
Factory

*"Half of our brewery team is female, so it's all been pretty welcoming, though I do work in the more traditionally female area of marketing. It's whenever I've been involved in the classically male tasks - van driving, forklift truck driving - that I've experienced responses ranging from amusement to outright sexism (quote "she should have got her boyfriend to drive")."*



# Why don't women choose beer?

We asked the women who never drink beer whether there was a particular reason:



The overwhelming reason for 83% of women who don't ever drink beer was because they didn't like the taste. Can the taste of beer really be gender-specific or are there other underlying reasons which need to be considered?

For both male and female drinkers, rejection of beer as a drink of choice based on taste can be attributed to their first experience of beer. They may have tasted a

beer which was entirely not suited to their palate, for example, a beer which was too intense or too bitter. Their sensory experience of this drink will have left an undeniable negative imprint about all beer which is difficult to reverse.

Furthermore, if any consumers' first experience of beer is a poor quality one, regardless of gender, beer is associated with negative connotations. It is

essential that beer is presented as a premium product, particularly to females.

The perception of 'bitterness' as a positive attribute is notably problematic for women in the UK. Our European cousins embrace bitterness within their diets. Foods such as chicory, endive, olives and intense shots of espresso coffee are revered by Europeans, which may be the reason why there is a far higher percentage of female beer drinkers in every country in Europe except the UK. In other words, women in the UK are not exposed, or schooled, to accept the bitter element in beer.

Even the word 'bitter' is dubious to women. The perception of bitterness is interpreted far faster by the brain than any other sensory flavour sensation. Previous studies have shown that women are more sensitive to bitter flavours than men, and there is a natural rejection to this flavour element.

So how do we overcome this? There are two really simple solutions: train retailers to offer a beer low in bitterness to novice female drinkers, for example, a wheat beer, to encourage female drinkers onto the beer 'ladder'. Secondly, stop using the word 'bitter' to describe beer! Beer has a wealth of positive flavour descriptions ranging from bready, to biscuit, to chocolate to fruity. Each are more positive words.

Over the years brewers and beer advocates have attempted to broaden the appeal of beer by demonstrating the breadth of beer styles or how well beer can pair with food. It can change the way beer is perceived by women, and smooth out any intense bitter notes which are adverse to the female palate.



Sarah John,  
Director,  
Boss Brewing

*"I think it is partly true to say that perhaps women (and also men) are not aware of the vast array of beer styles and flavours out there.*

*Women who would traditionally have reached for a glass of wine are perhaps still not aware that there is more to beer than a brown bitter or a lager – and that with a bit of exploration, everybody can find a style of beer to suit their taste buds.."*



Sara Barton,  
Brewster and Co-  
Owner, Brewster's  
Brewing Co

*I think among the younger generation the proliferation of craft beers has meant there is no real barrier as far as young women are concerned. For the older age group I think there is still perception for men and women themselves that beer is a man's drink and wine or spirits are for women.*

*The old arguments about bitterness and calories are still out there and I think it will just take time and reinforcing the message to change how the over 40s women perceive beer.*



Alice Batham,  
Technical Brewer  
at Brewster's  
Brewery,  
Grantham

*"Last year I completed an MSc in Brewing Science at Nottingham University and was one of only two women in my cohort. There was a definite lack of women on the course. I distinctly remember being told in a lecture about hop oils that brewers can isolate floral characteristics and use them to sell beer specifically to women – obviously we don't like bitterness!"*

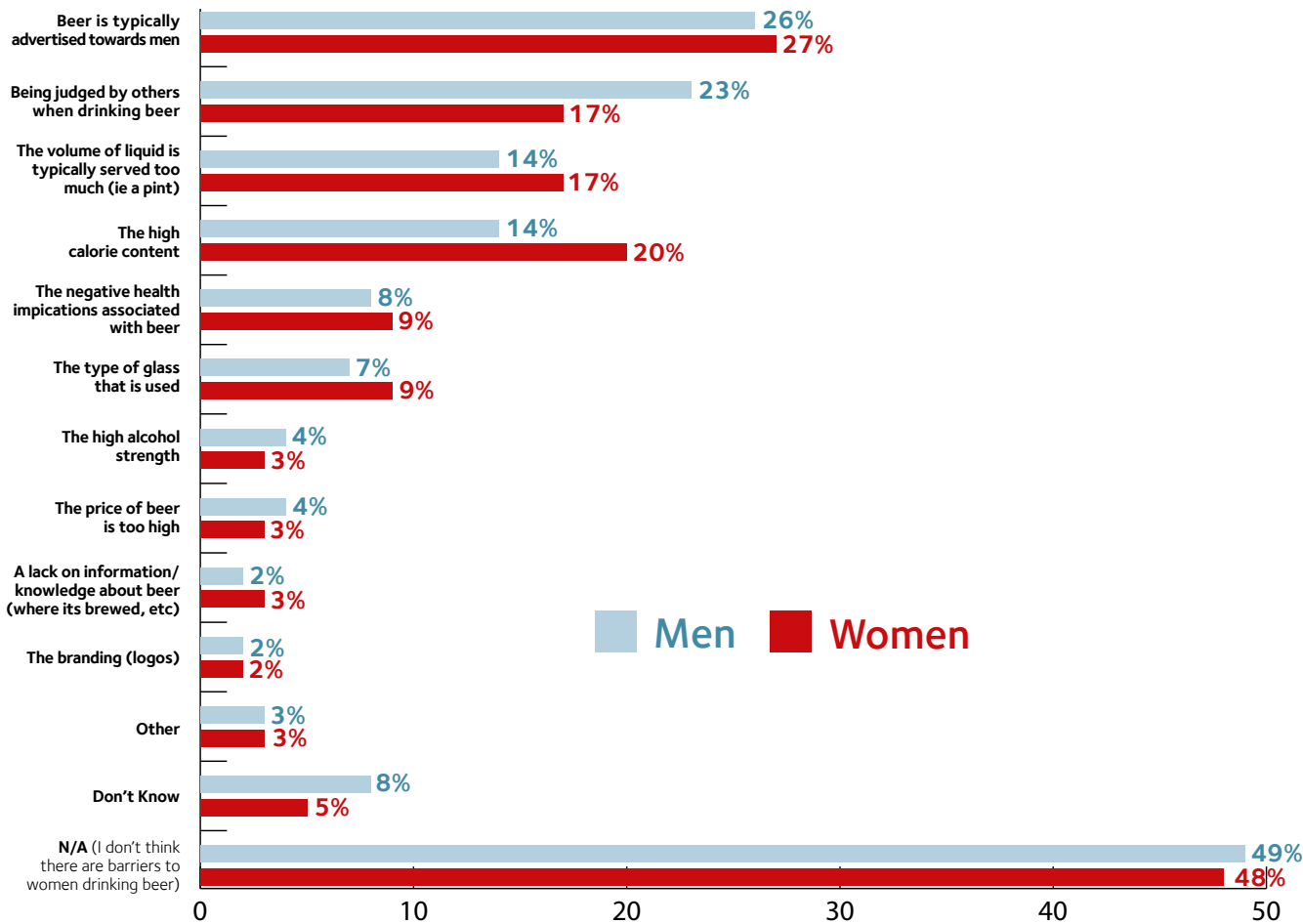
*I think it is sometimes difficult to navigate the advocacy of women in the industry; brewing talent should be praised regardless of sex. It would be nice to see female brewers talk at events about something other than being female."*





# **BARRIERS TO WOMEN DRINKING BEER**

# Which three, if any, of the following do you think are the main three barriers to women drinking beer?



## Advertising

For both men and women, the main barrier to women drinking beer is male oriented advertising at 27%. However, for 18-24 year old women this figure is 48% and for 18-24 year old men it is 39%.

The younger age group finds inequality in advertising and promotion of beer jarring while the older age groups are either more accepting or just cynical.

Regionally, 36% of women from London also chose this reason as their main barrier to women drinking beer, while only 18% of women in Wales chose this reason.

**Bittersweet Partnership Research comparison:**  
42% of women said that “changing the advertising” is the biggest thing that could be done to make beer more appealing to women.

Clearly some progress has been made but there is a lot of history to unravel.





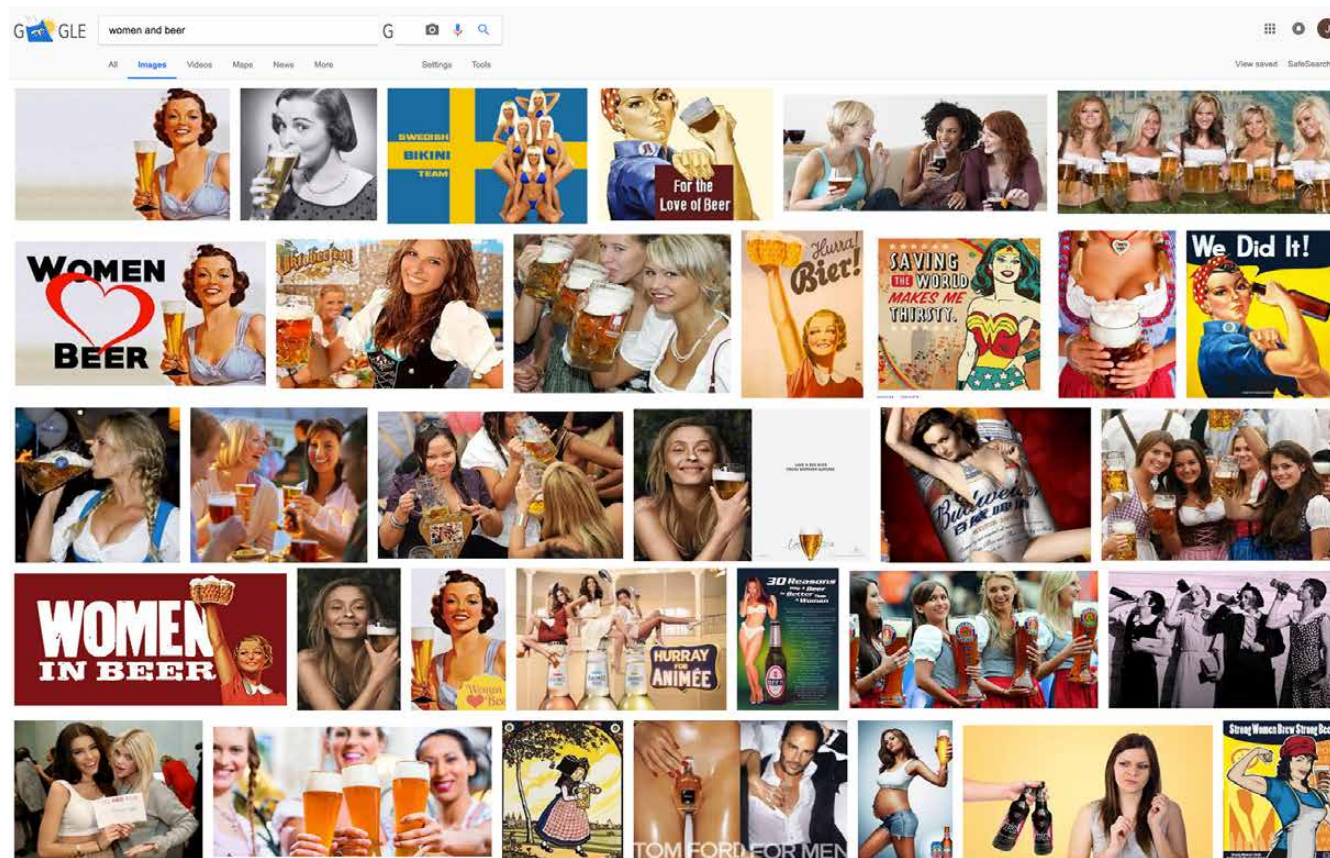
Sarah John,  
Director,  
Boss Brewing

*"As a woman working in the brewing industry, people assume on first meeting you that you must be the promo girl or the sales rep. They assume that you don't know anything about beer, and it doesn't enter most people's minds (men or women) that you might have an ownership position or a brewing operations role such as that of Head Brewer."*

*It used to shock people when I first launched the company in early 2015 that I was the Owner and Director and I still get the same reaction now. Upon first meeting someone, I've come to expect the question 'How long have you been their sales girl then?'*

*When I explain that I founded the company, invariably the question that follows is 'You mean you drink beer?'.*

*It's sad that I've come to expect the question as when you stop and think about it, the way the whole scenario plays out is riddled with false assumptions and stereotypes which could make a less confident woman question her place and 'belonging' in this industry."*



With barely any TV advertising around beer these days perhaps it is the poorly conceived beer names and labels gathering lots of media attention that skew this result?

Google 'women and beer' images and see what you come up with – happily there are quite a few images generated by Dea Latis over the years, otherwise it's the busty bierkeller barmaids that dominate.

## An industry response

In 2017 the American Brewer's Association introduced a Marketing and Advertising Code of Practice stating that beer should not, "contain sexually explicit, lewd or demeaning brand names, language, text, graphics, photos, video or other images that reasonable adult consumers would find inappropriate."

In the UK in 2017 the Society of Independent Brewers Association and the Campaign for Real Ale made a commitment to ban beer with sexist names or labelling entering any of their competitions.





## Calorific content

When it comes to the calorific content of beer, men and women differ in that only 14% of men think that it is a barrier to women drinking beer while women chose this reason as their second main reason for not choosing beer at 20%.

The beer belly myth persists despite this being about volume drunk not about ABV. It is also about the lifestyle and choices some drinkers make: the unhealthy food options. But this could be levied at all alcohol drinkers.

This view is even more prevalent in London and the south of England from 24% of women but much less

### Bittersweet Partnership Research comparison:

45% of women stated they thought they would put on weight if they started drinking beer, and 15% of women said they don't drink beer because it has more calories than other drinks.



Julie O'Grady,  
'Ladies That Beer'  
social group,  
Liverpool

*"The perception that beer is bitter or heavy in general and loaded with calories is still there!"*



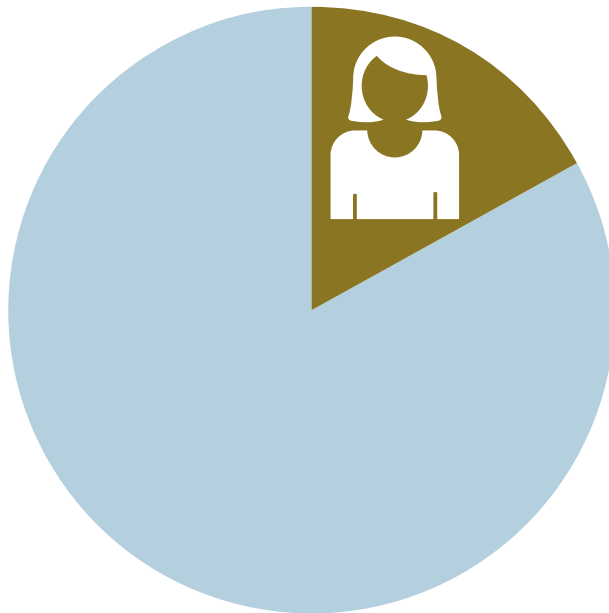
**A report in 2013 by a nutritionist, Dr Kathryn O'Sullivan, concluded that swapping two large glasses of wine a day with two bottles of lager could save 58,240 calories a year.**

**'Beer & calories; a scientific review' 2013**

## Being judged by others

Secondly, and surprisingly, men and women chose 'being judged by others' at 20%. Split by gender 23% of men think it is a barrier while only 17% of women do.

**17% of women don't choose beer in case they are judged by others for doing so.**



Does this suggest that women have been influenced by years of male orientated marketing which has led to ingrained attitudes about women drinking beer? Has this marketing led to women subconsciously rejecting beer because they believe it is a "man's drink"?



Julie O'Grady,  
'Ladies That Beer'  
social group,  
Liverpool

*"There still seems to be some women who either view drinking beer as not being very feminine, or are worried that they would be perceived as being less feminine if drinking beer, so tend to go for wine or gin."*

*There are also those that think because they have not enjoyed beer they've tried in the past it means they don't like beer at all, whereas actually they might enjoy a different type of beer if they tried it."*



Sarah John,  
Director,  
Boss Brewing

*"Beer is still absolutely seen as a man's drink. I truly believe that this stereotype still exists and that there are many women, particularly the younger generation, who would not feel confident ordering a pint of beer at a bar."*

*There are more women trying beer than there were when I first entered the world of brewing, but not enough. It is still not fully socially acceptable."*

## Volume, glassware and health implications

The volume of liquid is the fourth reason chosen for women not drinking beer at 16% for both sexes but split by 14% by men and 17% by women. This finding could be linked to the calorie content reason but also to poor options on glassware or staff training/retail operations in offering different sizes.

The choice of glassware available for beer then comes in as the fifth barrier for women drinking beer for both sexes at 9% but negative health implications, perhaps again linked to calorific reasons are also a factor for women respondents at 9% too.

The word “pint” is closely associated with beer in the UK, more so than any other country in the world. It’s a matter of semantics: change the phrase “fancy a pint of beer” to “fancy a glass of beer” and perceptions of the drink also change.

Stronger more flavourful beers now available offer the drinker the chance to drink less, but better – this is something that brewers and retailers can build on.







**CONCLUSION: Mind the gap**

## Conclusion: Mind the gap

At the beginning of the report we talked about the huge changes we've seen in brewing and the beer industry over the last 10 years: a massive growth in micro-breweries, accessibility to more brands and styles than ever before, and a shift in what people drink, when and where. Times have certainly changed and beer has become more inclusive, acceptable and diverse.

The last few years has seen a lot of coverage and interest about sexism in the brewing industry too; whether that's the number of women employed in brewing and the distribution of beer or about the sexist branding and names given to beers.

But as some of the women brewers, brewery owners and interest groups quoted in this report have said, we may be guilty of living in a 'beer industry bubble'. Here, we assume everyone knows it's more inclusive, there is a lot more choice and that we are eliminating tired old views about sexism.

While the industry thinks it's making great strides forward, the female consumer hasn't come on the same journey. Compare this latest research to that done by The Bittersweet Partnership in 2009 and it seems that not very much has changed in terms of female attitudes about beer in the intervening years.

Overtly masculine advertising and promotion of beer has been largely absent from media channels for a number of years – the brewers get it: why promote your product to only half the population? But there is a lot of history to unravel. Women still perceive beer branding is targeted at men. Factor in the many misconceptions which women still hold

about beer, such as calorific content, self-image and pre-conceptions about taste, there is much more the industry as a whole could do to engage and entice female engagement. The results in this report demand a much 'deeper dive' into the psychology of female relationships and attitudes towards beer. This would require more detailed qualitative research and commitment from the beer industry to address these issues.

One statistic which has really stood out in our research is that many women say they just don't like the taste of beer. Is this tempered by inherent beliefs and opinions, or is it reality? Have they just had a poor experience of beer, and their conclusion is that all beer is the same? For any consumer, regardless of gender, if their first experience of a product is poor, it is difficult to get them to reconsider that product again. Have they had the opportunity to experience a diverse range of flavours, styles and colours, and encouraged to form opinions – without judgement or ridicule? Are female role models the answer? Is it down to Madge, Meghan or Kim drinking beer to change opinions?

Dea Latis has always advocated gender neutrality when it comes to beer – so no 'pinkifying' please – but what are the solutions for closing that gender gap?

We know it's about perceptions, glassware, volume of liquid, range of beer styles, better training – none of this is new. But who is addressing this and making this happen so that the female drinking consumer starts to get the same story? Is there a fear in the industry that such an initiative would be seen as commercially unviable, or worse, patronising? Well, from talking

to hundreds of women at Dea Latis events over the several years, we believe it makes economic sense for the brewers to actively embrace this market opportunity. Potential female beer drinkers are out there and waiting – who is stepping up?

As a bunch of like-minded beer-drinking women our part will be to carry on educating drinkers and to spread the word in a beer-drinking woman's manifesto (see the next page). We've started it off but would welcome suggestions. We would like to run this survey again, perhaps in two years and see how times have changed.

For brewers and anyone involved beer supply or sales it's about time we burst the beer industry bubble with a few bold moves:

- Don't just acknowledge the challenges facing female consumers: confront and address them with confidence
- Identify and grasp the commercial opportunity that is the female market
- Pioneer change and create positive ground-breaking initiatives
- Discredit and prohibit any form of sexism surrounding beer

**Let's bridge that gap.**

# Beer drinking women's manifesto

## Be Passionate



If you're drinking with friends, buy them a beer – encourage the barperson to give them some samples.

If you have young adult people in your family or friendship groups encourage them to sample beer as an alternative to spirits or wine.

Next time you go to a friend's house for dinner or a drink, take a bottle of beer to try' to 'On social occasions, such as meeting friends for dinner, take a selection of beer styles to try.

## Educate



Demand the type of glassware you prefer to drink your beer – whether that's a pint glass, a half pint handle or a wine glass.

Inform non-beer drinkers that beer is no more fattening than any other alcoholic/soft drink.

Be experimental and try beer with food – it creates a totally different experience to wine, and can complement many dishes equally as well, if not better than wine.

## Challenge



What is this beer?

What beer do you recommend?

What beers do you have on the menu?

Lobby brewers who use misogynistic labelling and promotions.



Don't feel judged by others – it's your informed choice.

Beer is the most imbibed alcoholic beverage in the world.

Beer doesn't have a gender.





**Jaega Wise,**  
head brewer at Wild Card Brewery

*"There is massive growth potential for brewers who reach out to a female audience. If we want to change, we can change organically.*

*That will take decades. But if we force change, and make meaningful changes, we can see change in the next two to three years."*

*Photo: Jaega Wise @carmelkingphoto*

**Dea Latis is an established voluntary-run organisation founded in 2009. During that time it has created brand awareness of the name and its aims and has achieved national recognition as an independent cross-industry voice.**

**It has a website, social media streams and a subscriber list for its eNews of hundreds of people, both men and women.**

It has run a programme of established beer and food matching events, undertaken some research and collated data about women working in the sector, achieving widespread coverage for events and news across trade and consumer media.

A review in early 2017 established a set of aims and objectives for the organisation:

1. To **create a forum** for women working in the beer industry to meet, network and share ideas and contacts.
2. To **engage female consumers** and get them to consider beer as a drink of choice through events and social gatherings with an educational twist.
3. To **attract and inspire women to work** in the beer industry at all levels via contacts, leads and education.
4. To **conduct research** into female attitudes towards beer, their relationship with it, and understand how commercial organisations can change their proposition to meet needs and expectations.

Dea Latis is a group of women united in the belief that beer is far too good to be enjoyed only by men.



## About the authors



Annabel Smith

Annabel has worked in the beer and pub industry for almost 30 years. She is a Beer Sommelier, writer, beer and food matching presenter and trainer. Annabel is an ex-publican whose previous roles include training manager at Diageo and Cask Marque.

She was also the first female Beer Inspector for the Cask Marque Trust with whom she spent 10 years. In 2015 she founded BeerBelle, a company specialising in developing and delivering bespoke beer related training courses and events for corporate and consumer clients.

She was one of the first female Beer Sommeliers accredited by the Beer Academy. She is also an IBD and BII accredited tutor. She hosts tutored beer tastings throughout the UK for a diverse range of clients, and advises on matching food with beer for a number of organisations and companies. She is a regular guest on both radio and TV, and has been instrumental in creating a number of e-learning programmes designed to teach bar staff about beer. She is currently Imbibe Educator of the Year 2017.



Lisa Harlow

Lisa has worked in beer and brewing for over 20 years, starting at Marston's Brewery in Burton Upon Trent.

Since then she has worked in a number of PR and marketing related roles in the sector and set up her own business in 2005 working for a range of drinks brands, licensed retailers and suppliers including Marston's Beer Company, WaverleyTBS (The Beer Seller), Krombacher, Morrissey Fox, Freedom Brewery and Brewers Select.

She is a member of the British Guild of Beer Writers and has taken two of the Beer Academy Courses on beer styles and beer and food matching.

Additional thanks to Ros Shiel for her advice and support in helping to prepare the questions and analyse the results.



Thank you to all the organisations, companies and individuals who have supported Dea Latis since its conception in 2009, and provided a wealth of information for this report.

Thank you to all the brewers and brewery owners who gave us their time and thoughts on a number of questions that we posed. We hope their anecdotes and insights give a flavour of the industry mood today.

A big thank you to the Worshipful Company of Brewers who awarded Dea Latis a grant from the Brewer's Research and Education fund and has made funding this report possible.

**Want to discuss this report?**

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BRINGING BEER TO WOMEN

