



introduction

Walk into nearly any establishment that serves beer these days and you're likely to find draught beer for sale. Of course, you find well-known brands served through familiar taps. But these days you'll also see fancy options like nitro beers and even some bars with highly spritzzy German Weissbier and lightly carbonated English-style "cask" ales. Glassware varies from run-of-the-mill pints to shapely half-liters and diminutive snifters with every possible shape and size in between.

We find draught taps so often that we assume it must be relatively simple to keep and serve beer this way. But behind the simple flick of a handle that sends beer streaming into our glass at the bar you'll find systems that require precise design, exact operating conditions and careful, regular maintenance to ensure the proper flow of high-quality beer.

In this guide, we'll consider the equipment and anatomy of draught systems then look at their operation and maintenance. We'll include a brief discussion of temporary systems such as picnic taps and jockey boxes, but the majority of our attention will be given to systems usually seen in permanent installations: direct-draw and long-draw draught equipment.

While equipment and system layout drive the initial performance of a draught system, other factors play an equal role in the consumer's experience. To help you understand and operate your draught system, we'll look at the balance equation that can keep perfect beer flowing from the taps. We'll also review pouring and glassware cleaning and show you how to check to see if a glass is "beer clean." Finally, we'll focus on the cleaning and maintenance of your draught system. Without regular—and proper—maintenance, your investment in draught technology won't bring you the dividends you expect. We'll conclude this manual by telling you what to look for in proper system maintenance, whether doing it yourself or supervising the work of a supplier.

To present this information, we have divided this manual into two sections. Section I focuses on draught system components and complete system layouts. From a simple party tap to a complex long-draw draught system, we reviewed all the options.

Section II of this manual covers all the operation and maintenance issues for draught systems. It begins with a look at system balance then progresses to the details of pouring, glass cleaning and other essentials of the perfect pint before finishing with cleaning and maintenance. ■