

# Beer, Beer Everywhere; a Shelf Evaluation

BY MICHAEL KUDERKA

With craft beer hitting the market at previously inconceivable volumes and in every imaginable configuration, it is probably the right time for many stores to step back and ask themselves “just how well are we handling the craft beer boom?”

Without question a large beer selection will have customers coming through the doors. However, without a well thought out display and store flow plan, these same customers could be turning around running out the doors because your store is just not a comfortable place to shop.

## Out-of-the-Box

This month's Out-of-the-Box tips were sent in from Jay Wulff and Bob Jines who are Directors of Marketing for Beer World Stores, located in Catskill, Kingston, and New Windsor, New York. These stores sell only beer because in New York beer is sold separately from wine and liquor, and is primarily available in food stores and Walmart.

This means that Beer World Stores need to be very creative because consumers need to choose between the convenience of one stop shopping with a more limited beer selection, or making a special trip to a stand-alone beer store.

## Organization is key

“We have our craft beer organized geographically by region on our shelves, with nice clean signage that shows the states



and names of breweries from the regions at the top of all of our shelves,” explains Bob Jines. “These shelves display beers going from east coast to west coast in the store, with all of our 4 and 6 packs on free-standing shelves and all big bottles organized the same way on

our walls”.

“We pay special attention to our local beers by placing New York breweries on their own shelves, and the big bottles for New York segmented further by Hudson Valley, Downstate-New York City and Long Island and Upstate-New York,” explained Jay. “All of our local New York beers, are displayed below I Heart NY Beer signs”.

## The Beer Cave and Themed Displays

“We also have a huge walk-in space that we call the Beer Cave,” detailed Bob, “unlike the main floors of the stores, this huge square of beer is organized by style. So, there's a whole section of just IPAs for hop heads, just stouts and porters for the dark beer fans, and so on. Our customers like this approach and we are constantly restocking the cave”.

“Another way we keep customers coming back is our full rack of ever-changing themes, which are always 10% off”, out-

lined Jay. “We just used a Barrel and Oak-Aged theme and in the past we had beer display themes inspired by Staff Picks, Music, Movies, TV and for Valentine's Day we had Flower beers, Chocolate beers and Sexy Time beers with saucy names, which customers also got a kick out of”.

Beer World Stores also use the power of beer ratings by displaying together RateBeer.com's Top 50 Beers in the World along with a digital sign that informs the customers who may not be familiar with vintage beers and the concept of verticals.

## Bottom-line

You have the ability to make beer hunting fun for consumers, and with organized creative displays your store can stand out by being an Out-of-the-Box place to shop. Invest some time in de-cluttering your aisles, re-thinking your displays, and don't reply on a massive beer selection alone to differentiate. Remember, there is never a bad time to shelf evaluate.

## Thinking Out-of-the-Box?

How innovative is your store at selling beer? We would like to know. If you have promotions that go beyond refilling the cold box, we would like to hear from you and share your “out-of-the-box” thinking with our fellow Beer Trends readers.

E-mail me at [mkuderka@mcbasset.com](mailto:mkuderka@mcbasset.com) with your successful ideas for selling beer, along with your contact information. If we write about your program in our column we will send you a free copy of The 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of The Essential Reference of Domestic Brewers and Their Bottled Brands.

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