

Crowler®:

A BIG STEP FORWARD FOR SELLING GROWLER BEER

BY MICHAEL KUDERKA

On-premise, off-premise, brew pubs and breweries, everyone is filling growlers and beer consumers love taking them home. The upside to growlers and growler stations is being able to sell beer at better profit margins. Often these are “keg only” available brands, meaning you are selling limited or unique beer offerings. The down side is dealing with the large glass growlers, the leaking, the breakage, the sanitation, and the space.

On the consumer side of the growler, it is exciting to be able to take these brands home. There is a lot of waste; the beer doesn't stay fresh long and the growlers hold more beer than one would normally consume in one sitting. Additionally, many retailers and brew pubs only fill their growlers, so the big glass bottles end up being clunky and taking up a lot of space.

Well, push that all aside because Oskar Blues Brewery, one of the original canned craft breweries, is introducing a paradigm shift, will make both sides very happy – the Crowler. It is customizable, recyclable, durable, and we personally think it's very cool!

CAN + GROWLER = THE CROWLER®

The Crowler is the newest innovation coming from the Oskar Blues Brewery tap-room and their development partner, Ball Corporation, the pioneers of the American craft beer in-a-can movement.

So what inspired the Crowler? “We started talking about one of the little old seamers Ball was working on with their 32 oz. can and the idea to put it in the Oskar

Blues tasting room came up,” recalled Jeremy Rudolf, the man behind the Crowler integration at Oskar Blues. “The Crowler was an instant hit and it was also a great way to teach consumers about the canning process.”

“Craft beer drinkers dig their growlers filled in local tap rooms, but standard glass growlers are often brought into pubs and tap rooms without being cleaned correctly, which affects the taste and cleanliness of the refill. They also don't seal well and allow light in, while the Crowler is more portable and takes advantage of what the can has to offer by eliminating light-struck or skunky beer,” continued Rudolf.

“The Crowler is a clean, one-use, recyclable 32 oz. can that is filled and sealed right at the bar or growler station. This is a tabletop design commonly used for canning homemade food into steel cans and allows you to take home specialty beers. The filler was modified to work with aluminum and the height adjusted to accommodate the Crowler height. The Crowler is made from aluminum that has 68% recycled content and also is infinitely recyclable,” detailed Rudolf.

FRESH BEER, SIZED FOR ONE SITTING

“The Crowler keeps the beer fresh by adding a CO2 purge station to purge the cans before filling them, which helps assure that there is no beer-degrading oxygen added to the beer. The Crowler is purged and immediately filled. Then the lid is applied and the Crowler is placed onto the seamer pedestal. The pedestal is turned so that the

can is raised up and locked under pressure into the seamer. Turn it on, and push GO. Turn it off, twist the pedestal to lower the can,” Rudolf continued.

This way the beer is consumed in a single serving while the beer is in its prime, and the cans can be more portable and less breakable than glass, making the Crowler well suited for outdoor activities and traveling. Also, because of the 32 oz. size, consumers will be apt to purchase more than one Crowler and will more often be returning for another can!

HOW DOES ONE BUY A CROWLER® SYSTEM?

Oskar Blues has made it easy to bring the Crowler system into your store. Simply e-mail Jeremy Rudolf at Crowler@oskarblues.com for all Crowler facts and inquires. Additionally, Oskar Blues can supply Crowler cans, lids and labels. However, they encourage folks to look locally for label suppliers. The cans come by the pallet of 2400 and lids are available in sleeves of 384. Custom quantities are also available.

ARE YOU 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.

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