

2026



GOOD BEER

DRINKER

An Audience Insight Report →



Beer on purpose. Every pint has a job to do.

The Good Beer Drinker isn't drinking less — they're drinking more deliberately. Where 2025's story was about drinker confidence returning to beer, 2026's is about intentionality, experience and moment: beer has stopped being a default and become a decision. Every occasion, from the Tuesday-night can at home to the pub crawl, now has to earn its place, because the drinker knows exactly what they need from it — relaxation, reward, connection, escape, elevation — and they're choosing beer because it delivers this variety better than the alternatives.

This isn't a new occasion story. It's a sharper one. On the surface, the occasions haven't really changed; the intent behind them and what they mean to the drinker has. As choice has exploded, life has gotten busier and the lines between work and play blur, drinkers have built a private, mood-driven logic for when beer works — and brands that understand the job the beer plays in meeting the needs of the drinker are the ones winning selection.

Greg Wells - Co-founder, We Are Beer



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



4 Focus groups in Bristol & London



1200
People surveyed





GOOD BEER TODAY

Good Beer Matters More Than Ever

People are continuing to **spend consistently on good beer** and see it is playing an important part of their lives

Despite ever increasing economic pressure - **they are not trading down** or out of the category

Good beer remains an **affordable treat** - and represents value:

- On-trade - little cost benefit to drinking big / mainstream beer
- Off-trade - small investment to get a much better product

However, as the cost-of-living crisis continues, this increases the need for good beer to deliver a great experience every time and in every occasion

"I love Neck Oil, it can be expensive but I'm happy to spend on beer if I think it's worth it"

Pleasure Seeker

"Why go out and spend £6 on a beer that looks like crap when you can spend £7 on something really nice"

Deep Connector



actively make
an effort to find
good pubs and
taprooms



enjoy spending
time discovering
new beers and
brewers



say it's always
worth paying
more for better
quality food
and drink

GOOD BEER TODAY

Good Beer Is Everywhere

From local taprooms, independent pubs and bottle shops, to subscription services and D2C purchases it's **easier than ever to access good beer**

At a national level, the **supermarkets and large pub groups offer a great of beers too**

For the good beer drinker, it's become the norm to be **able to access good beer wherever you are**

The result is good beer now **plays a role in every occasion**

Independent
breweries are now
directly responsible
for operating and
licensing more than



2,000

retail premises
across the country*

"The Morrisons near me has Brew York, they have a Neon Raptor and a couple of others. Their selection is improving"
Beer Drinker

*Source: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/143933/html/#:~:text=Small%20breweries%20are%20by%20definition,more%20than%202%2C000%20licensed%20premises.>



Good Beer Is Worth Drinking, Even In Moderation

Drinkers are **paying attention to their health and wellbeing** more than ever

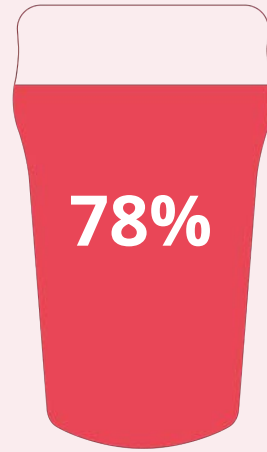
Whilst moderation is happening, it coexists with a recognition that **beer has an important social and community value** to them

People are **not retreating from beer** - they're being **more intentional** and more selective

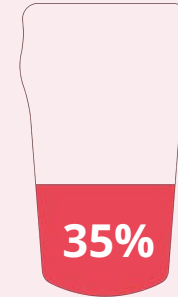
So when they choose to drink it needs to feel worthwhile - they want a great experience in every occasion, driving them to better beer

"I probably drink a little bit less than in the past, I guess I'm just being more conscious"

Beer Drinker



are trying
to lead
healthier
lifestyles
(+3pts YoY)



have changed
what/how they
drink to improve
health (switching to
gluten-free, lower
ABV, no/low, smaller
serves)



say the
social
benefits
of having
a beer are
important
to me



So we know that...

Our audience is consistently willing to spend on good beer

Our audience can easily access good beer wherever they are

Our audience are almost exclusively opting for quality

Because good beer is:

AFFORDABLE

It's seen as equal to and often better value than big beer

EASY TO FIND

It's no longer something drinkers have to seek out

A BETTER EXPERIENCE

If you're going to drink it's only really worth drinking good beer

Within this context and the well documented changes in work and lifestyle, the way the good beer drinker is choosing beers is changing...

Within this context and the changes in work and lifestyle, drivers of choice are more personal to how they're feeling and what the experience delivers



Their needs in the moment is now what shapes choice
- every beer has a purpose



BEER WITH PURPOSE: *NEEDS & OCCASIONS*

There Are **Six** Needs Shaping How The Good Beer Drinker Chooses Their Beer

These are what are shaping drinkers decision making

ELEVATE THE EVERYDAY



AMPLIFY THE EXPERIENCE



INDULGENT DAYS & NIGHTS



CELEBRATE MY EFFORT



DEEPENING BONDS



ESCAPE THE RUSH





***ELEVATE THE
EVERYDAY***

What's driving this moment

THE MOOD

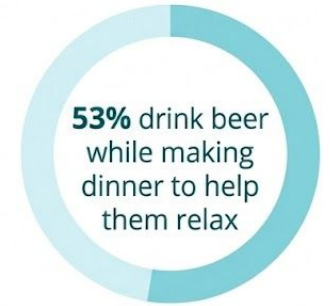
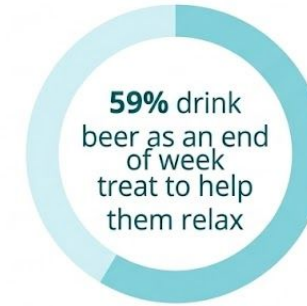
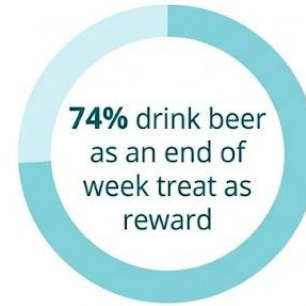
I feel like a small treat

THE FEELING

A moment of delight, relaxation and reward

THE NEED

Choosing good beer is a small ritual of pleasure that makes everyday life feel a bit more special



"Usually my kind of Friday night is just me and my husband getting a nice can out the fridge"

Beer Drinker

"Towards the end of the week as you are getting into the weekend, it's nice just to decompress and head out to a local for just a few"

Beer Drinker

Key characteristics of this moment

Who's there:

Solo or small group / pair



What are they drinking:

A go-to they know, love and trust

How often:

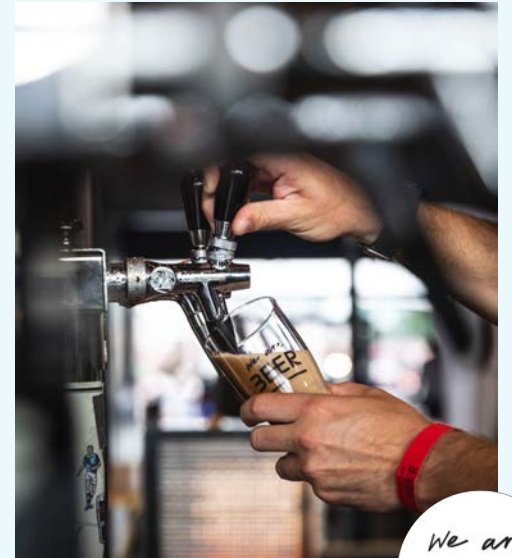
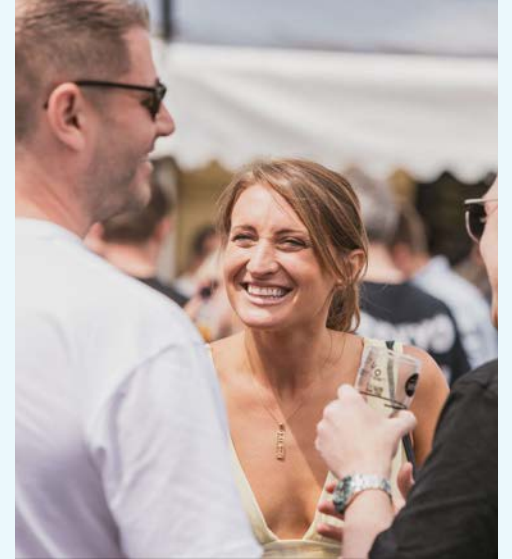
The most habitual occasion but it's a chosen, quality-oriented ritual rather than a mindless one

- **93%** drinking beer as an end of week treat at least once a month (the highest-frequency occasion overall)
- **40%** name drinking beer as an end of week treat a top 5 occasion, the fourth most cited overall
- **1/3** cite making dinner/cooking as a top 5 occasion for drinking beer

How much:

Tends to be lower volume, but quality is key; 1-3 beers at most

- **96%** drink 1-3 beers whilst making dinner
- **59%** drink 2-3 beers as an end of week treat



ELEVATE THE EVERYDAY

The occasions:

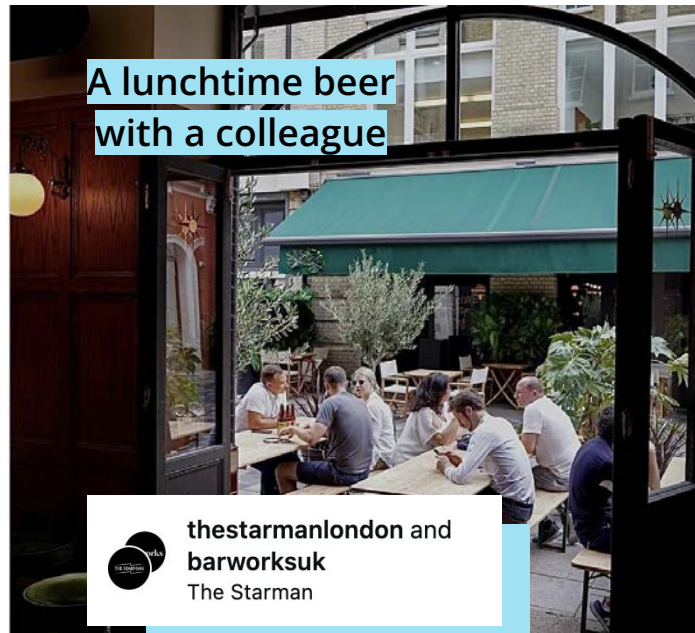
The activity, the action, when and where...



Stopping for a beer at the pub on the way home from work



barworksuk
Two Floors



A lunchtime beer with a colleague



thestarmanlondon and
barworksuk
The Starman



Picking up a nice can / bottle when passing a store



pauldavidkemp
Beer No Evil



Making dinner at home and dipping into a box ordered online from a brewery



ukyeastieboys

We are
BEER

INSIGHT

ELEVATE THE EVERYDAY

Meet the need:

Experience: This moment is about pleasure, relaxation and reward. Drinkers want depth of flavour, something that awakens their senses, but also feels refreshing.



It's a regular ritual so drinkers want styles and flavours that they know and love

It's lower volume and the emotional payoff from that first sip is key so they don't want to make the wrong choice

BEER CHARACTERISTICS

Drinkers are looking for beers with a mid-range or sessionable strength, typically between 4% and 5.5%

They are willing to experiment to a degree - signalling a note, hop or ingredient they recognise and know they like helps reassure





***CELEBRATE MY
EFFORT***

What's driving this moment

THE MOOD

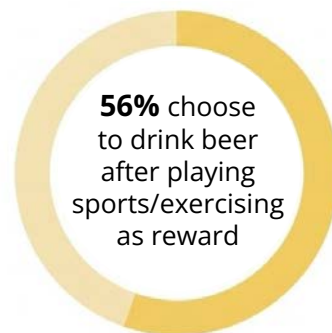
Lets celebrate ourselves

THE NEED

Mark the end of exertion - a collective reward for achieving a task, goal or activity

THE FEELING

It's about satisfaction, refreshment and sharing that moment with others



"Post exercise I know that I want something refreshing. I don't want to get cut, so I will probably just have one. I just want a refreshing lager that I know"

Beer Drinker

"It's about either celebrating or commiserating with your teammates. I normally go for a Guinness, IPA or a lager"

Beer Drinker

Key characteristics of this moment

Who's there:

More often a social occasion - decompressing with colleagues or bonding with teammates

What are they drinking:

Something refreshing, something that can work across the group



How often:

- **55%** have a beer after work with colleagues at least once a month. The post work pint remains important if less frequent
- **40%** have a beer after sports / exercise at least once a month. Drinking after exercise remains a consistent moment for a significant group



How much:

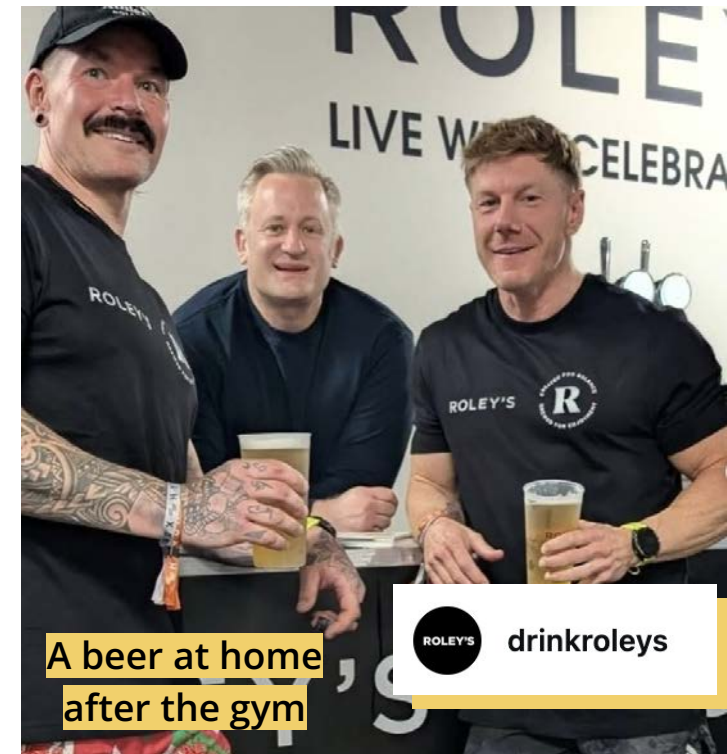
- Medium volume 1-3 pints
- **56%** drink 2-3 pints after work with colleagues
- People aren't drinking high volume on a regular basis with their work colleagues anymore
- **87%** drink 1-3 pints after playing sport / exercising. Over indulging after sports is counter intuitive



CELEBRATE MY EFFORT

The occasions:

The activity, the action, when and where...



Meet the need:

Experience: This moment is a mix of reward and connection - it's about earned satisfaction but it's also often highly social so people are looking for something that is easy drinking, refreshing, uncomplicated



BEER CHARACTERISTICS

less about flavour and more about refreshment. People stick with what they know rather than try something unfamiliar

About fitting in with the crowd - tend to stick with brands and styles they know and trust

ABV: 0-4.2% - more about staying in control and health than other occasions so tends to be lower strength / sessionable strength beers

Low and no plays a role here given people don't want to over indulge around colleagues and are mindful of their health around sports



AMPLIFY THE EXPERIENCE

What's driving this moment



THE MOOD

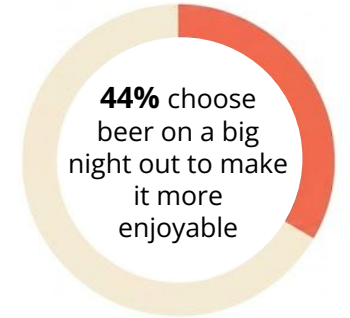
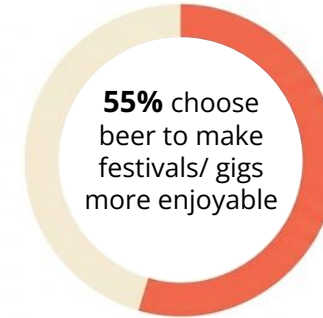
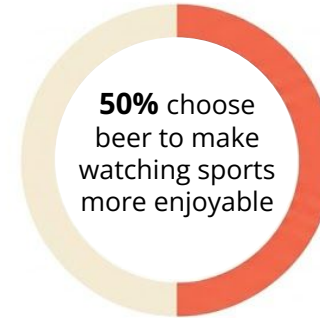
Let's turn it up and enjoy

THE NEED

Good beer helps to 'level up' the moment, it adds more depth, more energy, more fun

THE FEELING

It's about enriching other experiences, making them feel more enjoyable and exciting, adding fuel to the atmosphere and occasion



"At a festival the beer is equal to the music. Drinking with your mates, listening to bands and DJ's, going around with your little backpack, figuring how many beers can you fit in"

Beer Drinker

"One of the big things that plays a factor is whether or not they are showing certain sporting events. If the beer selection is good it makes the experience so much more enjoyable"

Beer Drinker



We are
BEER

INSIGHT

Key characteristics of this moment

Who's there:

One of the most social occasions, often in a big group. Entertainment + good beer is a powerful combination that brings people together

What are they drinking:

Can be restricted by brand deals but the aim is to find best session beer on offer. When beer matches the experience it's high value all round

How much:

Medium to high volume, entertainment gives people license to drink more and motivates them to keep drinking

- **79%** drink 2-5 beers at gigs, music festivals, or concerts.
- **83%** drink 2-5 beers whilst watching sport

How often:

Enhancing entertainment experiences is a big driver to drink beer, a moment that many cite as one their most important beer drinking occasions

- **1 in 3** drinkers cite sports, and gigs or festivals as a top 5 occasion
- **47%** drink beer whilst watching sport at least once a month

Gigs and festivals are slightly less frequent but it's something many partake in once in a while

- **45%** drink beer at music festivals or gigs 2-3 times a year
- **55%** drink beer at music festivals or gigs at least once a year
- **44%** attended a festival in the past 3 months



AMPLIFY THE EXPERIENCE

The occasions:

The activity, the action, when and where...



Meet the need:

Experience: This moment is not just about the beer, but more about what beer brings to the table, it's about complementing and enhancing the occasion, not about being the focus



Whilst beer isn't the focus here the right beer elevates the moment, the wrong one flatters to deceive

So drinkers still want quality in these moments, they are not willing to compromise on flavour

They look to styles that deliver on flavour but don't dominate the moment

BEER CHARACTERISTICS

ABV: Mid-strength 4-6% - ABV plays a key function in providing the fuel to the fire here

But overly strong beers could begin to overwhelm and take away from the entertainment





DEEPENING BONDS

What's driving this moment

THE MOOD

Quality time with my closest

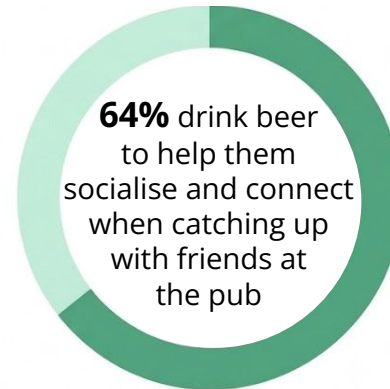
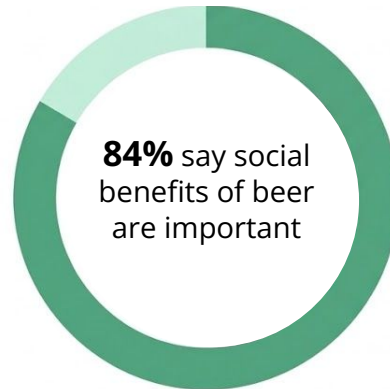


"For a lot of my friendship group, we will just go to the pub, it's our way of communicating. It's the time where we have actual chats and I think beer is something that really supports that"

Beer Drinker

THE NEED

Good beer helps to provide a focal point for bonding, it's an anchor for conversation and camaraderie



THE FEELING

It's about sharing experiences, time together with friends, engaging with community



"Beer is a social link, it brings down the barriers a little bit and pulls people together, it breaks down barriers even between old friends"

Beer Drinker

Key characteristics of this moment



Who's there:

Socialising is at the heart of this occasion, but it's more about close ties than big groups

What are they drinking:

Flavoursome favourites - timeless classics

How much:

Medium to high volume; drinkers are willing to invest more in the moments when they are sharing a few jars with their nearest and dearest

- **85%** drink 2-5 beers when catching up with friends at the pub

How often:

This is by far the most important occasion to drinkers and one of the most frequent

- **76%** drink beer when catching up with friends at the pub at least once a month
- **73%** name catching up with friends at the pub as a top 5 occasion, the highest overall
- **55%** drink beer whilst dining out with friends at least once a month



DEEPENING BONDS

The occasions:

The activity, the action, when and where...

gas_station_kingsx and
barworksuk
King's Cross



Catching up with
friends at the pub



houseonthegroves and 2 others
Allerton, Liverpool

BBQs at home



Grabbing a bite -
casual dining
experiences



fullerskitchen

Having friends over
for dinner



the_bible_of_the_beer
Totti's Lorne

We are
BEER
INSIGHT

Meet the need:

Experience: This moment is about community, camaraderie and, bonding, and the beer plays a key role in facilitating connection; beer has to do more here than in other occasions



BEER CHARACTERISTICS

Quality of beer needs to reflect the quality of company. The experience needs to reflect the depth and meaning of the moment, so drinkers look for rich and deep flavour, or a brand known to make a great example of a style.

They are willing to experiment a little bit more here - trying something new can be a conversation starter

ABV: Mid-high strength 5%+
ABV is important to these moments as a social lubricant

Stronger beers can be noteworthy, and help signify the gravity of the moment



INDULGENT DAYS & NIGHTS

What's driving this moment

THE MOOD

Fun and pleasure

THE NEED

Release - but good beer adds more energy, depth and variety to high volume occasions with the opportunity to discover

THE FEELING

It's about enriching other experiences, making them feel more enjoyable and exciting, adding fuel to the atmosphere and occasion

"Me and my family do a thing at Christmas where we have our own kind of beer festival where we try and bring the most interesting and niche beers we've tried throughout the year and then we can taste them all together"

Beer Drinker



"If we go away for the weekend with our mates we're always working out where the pubs are beforehand, we want to make sure we find places we like and it's fun discovering a new city through its best pubs"

Beer Drinker

72% visit taprooms to discover and try new things

42% cite family get togethers and celebrations as a top 5 beer drinking occasion

1-4 drinkers cite big nights out as a top 5 beer drinking occasion

We are
BEER

INSIGHT

Key characteristics of this moment

Who's there:

A highly social moment, this is about big groups, parties and celebrations

How much:

A high volume occasion, this moment gives drinker permission to drink more

- **76%** drink 4+ beers on a big night out
- **40%** drink 4+ beers on a visit to a tap room
- **40%** drink 4+ beers at family get together and celebrations



What are they drinking:

Variety is the spice of life

How often:

A fairly regular occasion for the majority of drinkers, with beer a key component of these celebrations, days and nights

- **67%** drink beer at a taproom every 2-3 months
- **50%** drink beer when catching up or celebrating with family and friends every 2-3 months
- **86%** drink beer at Christmas

The occasions:

The activity, the action, when and where...



durationbeer

City breaks



fullersbreweryshop
Fullers Brewery Tour



Taproom days and
craft pub crawls

Big nights out at
bars and clubs



freightislandmcr



lcbfestival •



Beer festivals



hoptilidrop
Arnside



Celebrations and
parties: Christmas,
birthdays, family
gatherings, weddings,
stag and hen dos

Meet the need:

Experience: This moment is about celebration, indulgence and pleasure it's an occasion that allows people to go in on discovery



BEER CHARACTERISTICS

As a higher volume moment people are willing to experiment and try new things more than in other occasions

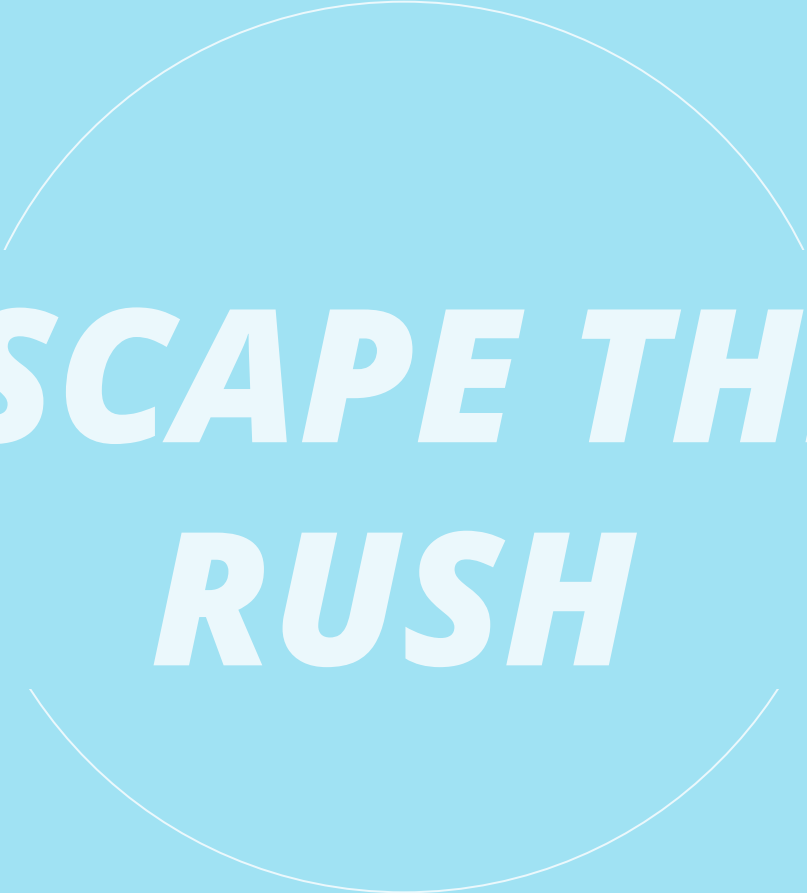
They're drawn to new and exciting flavours, and open to styles they've never tried before

But it's not just about discovery, it's important to offer classics and favorites as a counter balance

ABV: 0-10%+ Drinkers are open to a range of ABVs in this moment

Bigger celebrations call for something special, and they want to be able to dial up their intake to indulge

But low&no and sessionable strength beers can help make the moment last longer

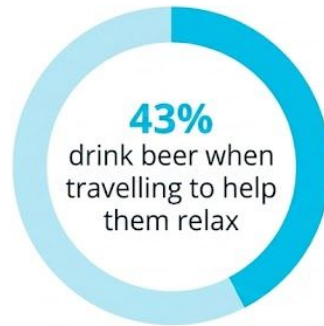
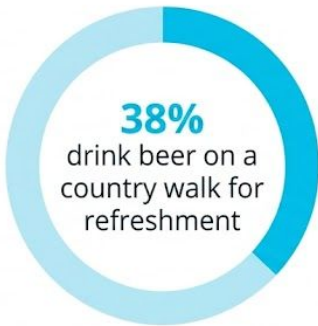
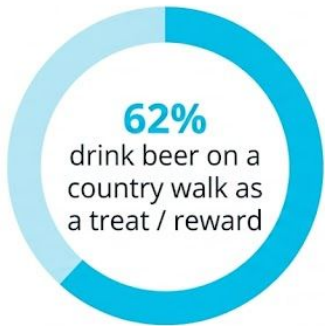


ESCAPE THE RUSH

What's driving this moment

THE MOOD

Switch off, reflect, relax



THE NEED

Good beer helps people to truly unwind, it's become a ritual with which people mark the escape from their regular lives to give them a sense of freedom; beer as mental punctuation

THE FEELING

This is a moment of ultimate relaxation, it's about forgetting everything else and just being in the moment



"The airport is the start of the holiday. Let's have a beer"

Beer Drinker

"We did a really long walk in Cornwall. We ended up at a place with a massive garden drinking a really refreshing local crisp lager. Being out in nature with a beer that's kind of a whole vibe"

Beer Drinker

Key characteristics of this moment



How often:

Whilst it's more of an infrequent occasion it holds a strong emotional resonance, it's a highly desired moment even though people aren't able to enjoy it all that often

- **65%** drink beer on a country walk at least once a year
- **82%** drink beer when travelling at least once a year
- **61%** have drunk beer on holiday within the last 3 months

Who's there:

Solo or with one or two others, it's less about big social energy and more about quiet contemplation and relaxation

How much:

Mid volume 1-3 beers

- **83%** drink 1-3 beers on a country walk
- **82%** drink 1-3 beers when travelling on the train / at the airport

What are they drinking:

Light - refreshing - provenance connects them to the moment



We are
BEER

INSIGHT

ESCAPE THE RUSH

The occasions:

The activity, the action, when and where...



woolpackslad
Woolpack Inn, Slad Valley



Country walks with a
stop at a local pub



jay_drinks_beer_uk



Picnics and
park beers



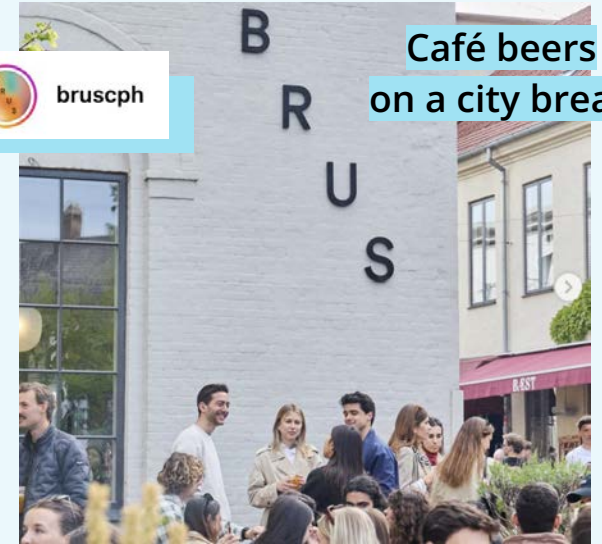
fullers
Original audio



Trips to rural
breweries



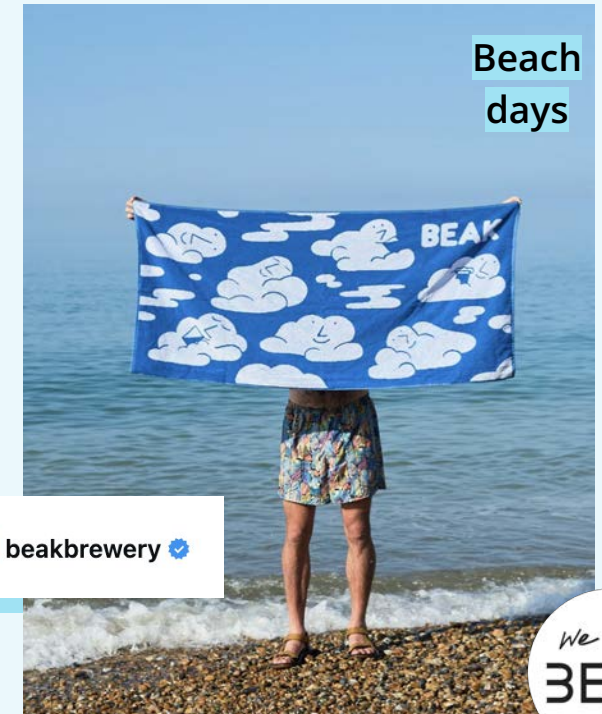
bruscph



Café beers
on a city break



beakbrewery



Beach
days

We are
BEER

INSIGHT

Meet the need:

Experience: This moment is about relaxation and contemplation so people are looking for an uncomplicated and easy drinking experience, but quality is really key here given it's a less frequent and highly desired moment



BEER CHARACTERISTICS

Less about experimenting, drinkers turn to brands and styles they know are going to hit the spot in this moment

Drinkers look for classic styles and flavours they know have depth of flavour but it's more about refreshment than very rich and robust beers

ABV: Mid-strength 3-6%. ABV is important to deliver the sense of relaxation and help people switch off

But given it's a more contemplative, almost meditative moment people don't want to over indulge

2026

THANKS



An Audience Insight Report →

