

Budweiser Budvar

Independently Czech through and through



Owned by a Czech brewery, using Czech capital and run by Czech management – Budweiser Budvar is the last remaining independent international Czech beer brand.

The brewery is still located on its original site, in Ceske Budejovice or Budweis, where it was founded in 1895. The town itself has a brewing tradition dating back 700 years that has been continued by the Budweiser Budvar Brewery. The all-Czech nature of the brewery remains crucially important, both culturally and racially, to the brand; the brewery was created with Czech know-how and money, in direct response to the German economic and political domination of the town. Today, the brewery is once again a Czech rallying point in a new struggle against internationalisation and globalisation, as demonstrated by its 100-year trademark dispute with Anheuser Busch.

Budweiser Budvar has built up a reputation for being uncompromising; the brew-master takes precedence over the accountant with no corners cut during the production process. Temptations to introduce cheaper, inferior materials and cut lagering times (of Budvar's 112 day brewing cycle 90 are taken up just lagering, 20 days is the norm) have been resisted, reinforcing the brand ethos that, 'good beer takes time, great beer takes even longer'.

Only whole Saaz hops, malt made from Moravian barley, water taken from the 10,000 year-old Ice Age lake (located under the brewery) and the brewery's own strain of yeast are used for brewing Budweiser Budvar, exactly as it was back in 1895. Every drop of beer is brewed at the Ceske Budejovice

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brewery, not under licence anywhere else in the world, upholding the company belief that 'great beer can't be replicated'.

Combining the status of craft beer with an international brand is part of what makes Budweiser Budvar unique. Put in context its 1,600,000 hectolitres capacity equals that of a provincial brewery, but an unusual one, given that 50% of products are exported – it is the UK's top imported Czech beer. The brand's global position is further enhanced, by being awarded Protected Geographical Indicator status, by the European Union. This prestigious honour puts beer brewed in Ceske Budejovice on a par with Champagne, Cognac and Newcastle Brown, noted for its quality and for being produced only in the region specific to the product name.

Brand advertising in the UK operates mainly at trade level whereas in the Czech Republic there are consumer campaigns, the latest based on 10 brewing commandments. These mainly dictated what brewers shouldn't do – like use hop extracts instead of whole hops, use treated river water instead of pure spring water and malt substitutes. The campaign caused a stir in the Czech Republic, which spilled over to the UK via a variety of beer mats depicting the



10 commandments in faux illuminated manuscript style.

One of Budweiser's enduring qualities is its universal appeal, being equally at home in a stylish bar as in a cask ale pub. The brand is also cross generational, making the brewery slogan 'Treasured by Generations' a dual concept – a recognition of the long time popularity of the brand and a reference to the fact that it appeals to all age groups.

However, Budweiser Budvar's success has mainly come about through word of mouth marketing. Its heritage, (that includes a trade mark dispute and uncompromising support of traditional brewing) and 'in your face' attitude is designed to appeal to an emerging group of forward-thinking, cerebral drinkers, not easily impressed by the encroachment of big brewers; an independent beer for independent drinkers.

