



## Press Release

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### **Munich – the beer city of the world, the world city of beer**

The big city atmosphere and rural charm, art treasures, customs and high-tech: This very special "Munich mix" has helped the capital of Bavaria to achieve world renown. But what adds the final touch to the city's popularity is the drink that is associated with Munich throughout the world: beer.

Internationally Munich is undoubtedly the Number One beer metropolis. The Oktoberfest, a festival of Munich's beer and one of the Bavarian capital's trade marks, is a household term in all parts of the world. It is not without good reason that there are around 3,000 "sister" Oktoberfests spread out all over the world. And who doesn't dream of experiencing the original in Munich sometime in their life or at least of visiting the "beer Mecca" one day? There are opportunities for revelling in the joys of Munich's beer on the River Isar at all times of the year.

### **The strong beer season – tapping the barrel on the Nockher Hill**

In Munich it is looked upon as the fifth season of the year, the strong beer season. We owe this to the monks who used to brew a strong, nutritious beer in the monasteries at this time of year so that they could survive Lent with no ill effects. The enjoyment of Lent beer was not regarded as a sin: "Liquid nourishment doesn't break your fast". The tradition of strong beer lives on to this day. During the weeks of March strong beer is served in all the breweries' restaurants; there are music and festive events on the programme.

The strong beer barrel-tapping is opened each year by the merry drinking bout called the "Salvator Polit Show" on the Nockher Hill (Nockherberg) at which cabaret artistes pour forth a good deal of ridicule and not a few scathing remarks over the heads of the powerful political figures. In addition to the strong beer barrel tapping of the "Salvator" (strong beer) at the Paulaner Brewery on the Nockher Hill, there is another spectacle that stands out: in the Löwenbräu Cellar strong men from all over Bavaria take part in a stone lifting competition to pit their strength against each other with a 508-pound stone belonging to the legendary figure of Hans Steyrer. Using his middle finger only, he reportedly lifted the huge block of stone. In keeping with this is Löwenbräu's slogan: Off we go to the "Triumphator" (strong beer).

Incidentally, the names of the tasty strong beer sorts of the other Munich breweries also end in "-ator": "Maximator" at the Augustiner Brewery, Spaten's "Optimator" (for export only) and "Animator" at the Hacker-Pschorr Brewery. Even though Hofbräu has no longer their own "-ator", but instead a strong May Bock beer.

## **Beer gardens – Munich's zest for life**

Munich's beer garden season lasts as long as the sun permits from spring to autumn. The 29 traditional beer gardens and the innumerable other outdoor areas serving drinks offer around 180,000 guests a seat in the open-air. Two of the largest beer gardens are the Hirschgarten with 8,500 seats and the Augustiner in the Arnulfstrasse with 5,000. Other popular meeting places are the beer gardens at the Victuals Market, around the Chinese Tower in the English Gardens and the Waldwirtschaft (Forest Pub), where jazz livens things up.

The shady chestnut trees, an integral part of a beer garden, originally served to cool down the beer, as the Bavarian Brewing Regulations did not allow beer to be brewed in summer, which made it necessary to store large quantities of winter beer in a cool place. Then the obvious thing to do was also to consume it on the spot. Although, following protests by the landlords, King Ludwig I prohibited the provision of food, the Munich people brought everything they needed along with them, from radishes to tablecloths. An excellent custom, which has continued to this day, even though the ban on serving food has long since been forgotten. The Munich citizen orders his "Mass" (1 litre) of beer without batting an eyelid. And in most beer gardens (and at the Oktoberfest) beer is only served in 1-litre mugs. It is only "Weissbier", brewed from wheat, that can be bought in ½-litre glasses.

## **The Oktoberfest**

The Oktoberfest has its origins in the celebrations of the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig, later to become Ludwig I of Bavaria, to Therese von Saxe-Hildburghausen in 1810. The Oktoberfest grounds in the centre of the town are also named after her: the Theresienwiese (Wiese meaning meadow), affectionately referred to by Munich folk as the "Wiesn", which has also become the term for the world's biggest funfair itself. Every year in the last week of September, this huge area at the foot of the statue of Bavaria is turned into a vast "Festwiese" for 16 uproarious days until the beginning of October (the Oktoberfest always begins on the last Saturday but one in September and ends on the first Sunday in October). The Wiesn is a festival for all the senses, a merry mixture of sideshows, traditional roundabouts, high-tech switchbacks, a Ferris wheel and "Super Loopings", small and larger sales stands for such delicacies as candy floss, gingerbread hearts and roast almonds or for balloons, stuffed animals and other souvenirs, and, of course, the "landlords' alley" with the 14 beer tents of the Munich breweries. In 2010 the Oktoberfest will be commemorating its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday with a great jubilee celebration.

Munich's importance as the beer metropolis is also underscored by the international trade fair "drinktec-interbräu", which takes place every four years at the same time as the Oktoberfest (next time in 2009).

## **Hofbräuhaus**

One of Munich's trademarks, 418 years old, its name world-famous: that is the Hofbräuhaus. Beer lovers from all nations flock to the Hofbräuhaus throughout the year. There is room for 3,000 guests. Since 1589 it has been situated at the Platzl in the heart of the Old Town, and since 1852 the State of Bavaria has been responsible for brewing its beer. Today its name as a brewery is "Staatliches Hofbräuhaus" (State Court Brewery). The brewing facilities had to be moved from their original site as early as 1897 on account of the huge crowds of visitors. But the original house, rebuilt in neo-Renaissance style, still stands at the Platzl.

## **The history of Munich's beer**

Soon after Munich was founded as a town (in 1158) by the Guelph duke, Heinrich the Lion of Brunswick, the Wittelsbachs came to power (1180). They turned Munich into their seat of royal power (1255) and quickly realised how important beer was for the town's tax revenue, but also for their own pockets. Brewing rights were only issued by the ruler of the day.

Brewing itself was a matter for the monks. The Augustinians – Munich's oldest still extant brewery goes back to them – set to work as far back as 1328. In order to put a stop to adulterating the beer from the outset Duke Albrecht IV issued strict Beer Regulations for the royal seat of Munich in 1487 – so before the official Bavarian Purity Requirements, which were decreed by Duke Wilhelm IV in 1516. The Munich Beer Regulations are the oldest written food laws in the world. They stipulated that beer could only be brewed using barley, hops and water. The word yeast did not come up in the regulations. Its use for certain brewing processes had long been accepted. And at that time wheat was in such short supply that it had to be reserved for baking bread. The Munich brewers still adhere to this historic decree to this day.

On Brewers' Day, which was already a tradition in the Middle Ages, the Munich brewers solemnly swore an oath to observe the Purity Requirements. In even years the Brewers' Day is celebrated together with the Town Foundation Festival and is a festival for all Munich's citizens and guests, with a pageant, groups in local costumes, brass bands and brewery coaches with their magnificent teams of horses.

Munich Bock beer has a history of its own. About 450 years ago it was imported to Munich from the town of Einbeck in the Netherlands. The beer had to be brewed especially strong for the long journey. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century Munich brewers themselves began to brew it in the Einbeck way. This then became known as Einbeck and was popularly referred to as Bock beer. It is brewed as Festbock in Advent and as May Bock after the Strong Beer Season.

## **Six large breweries for Munich**

Whereas at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were still 25 breweries, today six large breweries are responsible for keeping up Munich's reputation as the beer metropolis: Augustiner, Hacker-Pschorr, Hofbräuhaus, Löwenbräu, Paulaner and Spaten-Franziskaner. These six world-renowned brands together brew some 6 million hectolitres of beer each year.