

More craft brews turning to cans

By Tom Daykin, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

MILWAUKEE — For decades, the pffsst sound that comes from popping open a can of beer usually meant the drinker was about to imbibe a mass-produced brew like Budweiser or Pabst Blue Ribbon. Higher-priced craft beers, made in small batches for those seeking something outside the mainstream, were available in bottles only.



But a growing number of craft beers, including some made in Wisconsin, is being sold in cans, as brewers look to cut packaging and delivery costs, while finding a place at outdoor parties and other events where cans are preferred to glass bottles.

“It’s just a convenient package,” said Jeff Hamilton, president of Glendale, Wis.-based Sprecher Brewing Co. Sprecher is among Wisconsin’s oldest craft brewers, defined by the trade group Brewers Association as small, independent companies that use traditional brewing methods.

Sprecher this month becomes the latest Wisconsin craft brewer to sell its beer in cans, with its Special Amber brand.

That comes one year after Milwaukee Brewing Co. began selling two of its brands, Louie’s Demise and Flaming Damsel, in cans. Others selling canned craft beer include Stevens Point Brewery, which has begun putting some of its specialty brews in cans, and Middleton-based Capital Brewery Co. — Wisconsin’s second- and third-largest craft brewers behind No. 1 New Glarus Brewing Co., which does not sell its beer in cans.

“We’re really big on cans. We love them,” said Jim McCabe,

Milwaukee Brewing president. His company this summer plans to launch two new brands in cans only: Godzilla, an Asian-spiced wheat beer, and Monkey Paw, an English-style ale.

By selling beer in cans, craft brewers reach certain venues – such as golf courses and baseball stadiums – where glass bottles are discouraged, or even banned. Canned beer appeals to drinkers going to outdoor events, like tailgating and picnics.

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