

= Stones Bitter =

Stones Bitter is a bitter style of beer manufactured and distributed in the United Kingdom by the North American brewer Molson Coors . It has a straw @-@ golden hue ; it was first brewed in 1948 by William Stones Ltd at the Cannon Brewery in Sheffield . It was designed for the local steelworkers and became successful in its local area , becoming one of Sheffield 's best known products .

The brewing giant Bass acquired William Stones in the 1960s , and began to heavily promote the keg variant of Stones Bitter , which eventually became the highest selling bitter in the country . However the keg version was promoted at the expense of the traditional unpasteurised and unfiltered cask conditioned version . During the 1990s the ABV of Stones was gradually reduced , and as ale sales declined , Stones reverted from a national into a regional brand . Following the closure of the Cannon Brewery , Stones has been brewed at a number of different breweries . When Bass exited its brewing business , Stones became a Coors brand ( later Molson Coors ) .

Stones was promoted through a series of television advertisements during the 1980s that starred Michael Angelis and Tony Barton . It eventually became the United Kingdom 's longest ever running bitter campaign . Stones sponsored the Rugby Football League Championship and its successor the Rugby Super League throughout the 1980s and 1990s .

= = History = =

The head brewer Edward " Ted " Collins first produced Stones Bitter at the Cannon Brewery in 1948 . It was designed for the steelworkers of Sheffield 's Lower Don Valley . The product was formulated as the working classes began to favour bitter over the dark mild style of beer . The beer 's straw colour made it reasonably unique for the time , and its individuality helped it to become an immediate success . By the 1960s its local reputation was " colossal " , and it accounted for 80 per cent of William Stones ' sales . Stones had such a strong local following that it was described as being " more of a religion than a beer . "

From 1979 , keg Stones began to be promoted heavily nationwide , and the beer was introduced to the South of England for the first time . The beer was promoted following the withdrawal of the unpopular Brew Ten , which was itself intended to replace Bass 's regional ales . Originally the beer would be produced at the Cannon Brewery and then transported to Bass ' Hope & Anchor brewery , also in Sheffield , for pasteurisation and kegging , but eventually demand for Stones Bitter became too great for the Cannon alone , and production was also extended to other Bass breweries . In the early 1980s it was produced at Bass ' Runcorn brewery , although this was quickly halted after drinkers complained of headaches from the poorly manufactured beer . The Runcorn beer had been brewed at a higher temperature , which increased the amount of hangover @-@ inducing fusel oils in the beer .

By 1989 Stones was the ninth most popular beer in the United Kingdom , with 2 per cent of all beer sales . Demand was such that the Cannon Brewery was paying up to £ 1 @. @ 5 million per month in duty by 1991 . Cask conditioned Stones won silver in the Bitter category in the CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain in 1991 . By 1992 Stones was the UK 's highest selling bitter , a million barrel a year brand , with Bass describing it as " a tremendously important brand with untapped potential " . That same year , Bass were criticised for reducing the ABV of Stones from 4 @. @ 1 per cent to 3 @. @ 9 per cent ABV in order to reduce the impact of beer duty . The current packaging was introduced in 1994 , and evokes Vulcan , the Roman god of fire and blacksmiths , and protector of craftsmen .

In 1997 the Yorkshire Post described the beer as " one of Sheffield 's most famous exports " , and " a name which carries as much pride as the Made in Sheffield stamp . " In 1997 , Bass decided to deprioritise Stones in order to concentrate on promoting Worthington as their national ale brand . Stones ' ABV was further reduced to 3 @. @ 8 per cent in August 1998 , and then to 3 @. @ 7 per cent a few months later leading to its derision in the Yorkshire Evening Post . Following the closure of the Cannon Brewery in 1999 , canned Stones has been brewed in Burton upon Trent and keg Stones in Tadcaster .

The cask conditioned variant was brewed by Highgate Brewery of Walsall , Thwaites Brewery of Blackburn and finally Everards of Leicester . It was restored to 4 @. @ 1 per cent ABV and its original recipe in August 2006 , with Coors claiming that it would be " like [ how ] Stones used to taste . " The product was discontinued in 2011 .

In 2006 Off Licence News identified the canned variant as " continuing a slow but sure decline that has seen its status redefined from national brand to Yorkshire regional over the last decade . " As of 2012 Stones Bitter is among the twenty highest selling ales in the United Kingdom , with estimated annual volumes at over 100 @, @ 000 hectolitres .

= = Recipe and flavour = =

The recipes for brewery conditioned and cask conditioned Stones differed :

Brewery conditioned Stones is brewed with a blend of hops from America ( Columbus and Zeus ) and Europe ( Magnum and Admiral ) . The barley variety used is Pearl . The beer comes in kegs and 440ml cans , and is described as having a " fragrant grapefruit @-@ citrus hop aroma , [ which ] cuts through a characteristically sulphury background with a fruity edge . The unusual salts balance ensures that the bitterness isn't dry . "

Cask conditioned Stones used Challenger hops , and was dry hopped with English Goldings . It was described as having an aroma of hops , sulphur and grapefruit , with a salty , moreish and zesty taste .

= = Advertising = =

A major television campaign ran nationally from 1983 until 1991 with the tagline ( coined by playwright Peter Whelan ) : " ( Wherever you may wander ) there 's no taste like Stones " . The series initially starred Bernard Hill and Tony Barton , although Hill was replaced by Michael Angelis from 1984 onwards . The advertisements followed the characters of Jeff and Dave as they got into scrapes in various overseas locations , with humorous results . By 1987 it had become the UK 's longest running bitter campaign of all time .

From 1993 Stones was only advertised in the north of England . The 1994 @-@ 96 " Sheffield Gold " campaign was set in a steel foundry : a nod to the city 's heritage , although it was filmed in the Czech Republic because Sheffield 's own foundries were considered to be too clean and automated for the desired gritty and industrial effect . A spokesman for Bass explained : " We wanted sparks and goggles . " It was to be the final major marketing push for Stones , and as of 2012 the only marketing support for the brand is the provision of Stones branded glassware and bar merchandise for regular stockists .

= = = Sponsorships = = =

Stones Bitter famously sponsored the Rugby Football League Championship from 1986 to 1995 , and then its successor the Rugby Super League from 1996 ? 7 . A 1986 ? 8 set of poster advertisements with the tagline : " Stones . Sheer poetry . " supported the sponsorship . In 1995 and 1996 Stones sponsored the Doncaster Handicap and the Park Hill Stakes horse racing events .