

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Tongue

Name Andy Mitchell.

Job Head brewer.

Where ARVO.

Why is it important? There are five basic flavour sensations on the tongue – salty, sour, sweet, bitter and umami. People used to say sweet was in the front, salt on the side, but modern-day science has proved there's no regional centre for taste buds; they are spread throughout your tongue. I taste beer all the way through the brewing process. My tongue gives me a chance to check and fix anything that is wrong. It helps me make sure the beer tastes as it should, and to monitor the flavour's stability.

What do your colleagues think?

The taste sensation gets stored in the brain and, actually, 80 per cent of taste perception comes from smell. I believe it's been proved women are better tasters than men! Being the master brewer, people get the impression my tongue should be the best, but usually you have a taste panel. Some people can pick up metallic flavours better than others; others pick up the green grassy flavour more accurately.

Unusual moment? Everybody I know has offered themselves as tasters.

[The job] can actually become unenjoyable, as every time you go out to drink a beer you're deciding if it's good or bad or old or stale.

How much does it cost? Nothing!

A bit of toothpaste in the morning and evening to clean my tongue as well as my teeth.

SUE WHITE



Sampler ... brewer Andy Mitchell.