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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
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Professionals of Chicagoland,
founded in 2003, is one of the
fastest-growing chapters of the
American Culinary
Federation (ACF). Click [here](#)
for more information.

The Taproom

I am proud to say that the craft beer business has done something that I thought would never come back in style. They have brought back the true meaning and experience of a "local." I am not talking about chocolate imperial stout or a funky limited-edition DIP A. I mean the taproom!

The path I took to getting my Cicerone Certification took me on a winding trail of experiences, but it didn't just start a couple years ago during a mid-life crisis, when I had to figure out where to go after competing with Culinary Team USA. It began a long time ago when I would travel with my parents back to England. There was always a trip to a pub and the treat of a bag of crisps and a fizzy beverage. You went to the pub to relax and enjoy a simple drink. These were the days before the decline of the village pub and the emergence of the mega-brewers taking over the marketplace. There were publicans behind the bar of the little place around the corner. It was a place where it meant something to nurture a cask of beer in the basement or serve a simple mixed drink and the occasional morsel of food. You didn't care that it was simple. That was what they served, and you went in and were engulfed in the atmosphere. It was an oasis where family and friends found a moment to be together. I was on a quest to bring this simple and pure childhood experience back to adulthood.

This is what is happening across the country. Breweries are opening taprooms. The brewers began incorporating the taproom as an additional revenue source and an extension of business. It's the "we have beer why not pour it and make a few extra bucks" mentality. A great thing has happened-the taproom is bringing people from the community together, and it is more of the local than the dimly lit bar full of liquor bottles or the suburban "TF Chilibeas," as mass media would want you to believe.

These taprooms are simple and to the point-a bar serving beer or a simple variant such as a Shandy or Radler. There are no mixologists, no banks of TVs or high-energy servers handing out laminated menus and boasting that they have the largest selection of on-tap beers around. Who needs 180 tap beers? Give me 8 great ones served by someone who works in the brewery full-time and is pouring you an artisan product in their spare time because they love it. You can tell that it is a good brewery by the beard-to-dean-shaven ratio of the bar staff.

Every weekend somewhere, there is a taproom filled with families eating a makeshift picnic, a band of sweaty bicyclists, a poet writing on their laptop or the self-proclaimed Norm who stops by for the usual every Friday after work. Then, after the sun goes down, it becomes a hangout with a funky DJ or an

Trib Food

Recipes, reviews and resources for everything food and dining in the Chicago area. [Check out](#) what's happening this week.



Check out this great magazine, [Four](#).



Eater is the source for people who care about dining and drinking in the nation's most important food cities, like Chicago. A favorite of industry pros and amateurs alike, Eater has an uncanny knack for finding out what's opening where, who's serving what, and how it's all going down. Find out [what's new](#) in Chicago.



The Cicerone Certification Program certifies and educates beer professionals in order to elevate the beer experience for

open mic event. They host fundraisers, support local restaurants by offering delivery and support only the local team. This is what a pub was and what a taproom has become-an integral part of the community where all are welcome.

As for the Cicerone thing, the reason I got it was to ensure that the art and passion of the brewer is passed on to the customer. The purity and experience of the taproom is just as important to the service of the beer as the glass in which it is served. Drink local and relax!

PS: This is the pub of my childhood and the place my father wanted to own. His resting place is at the church across the lane.



- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

TAPROOMS

If You Haven't Been, a Must on the Bucket List



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CHICAGO TAPROOMS

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Russian River Santa Rosa, CA



Dogfish Head, Rehoboth Beach, DE

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