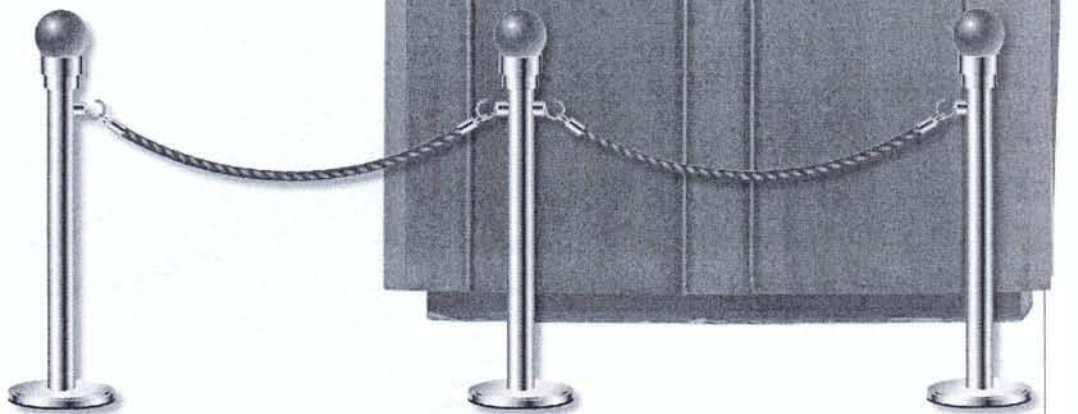


Global local

The pub is a British icon and a big tourist pull especially in the summer, but you don't want to make your regulars feel pushed out. **Andrew Don** looks at ways to attract visitors without alienating your regulars



Fred leans at the tourist sitting on a stool at the end of the bar. He turns to the landlord and bellows like one of the three bears: "Who's that sitting in my chair." No one would be allowed to perch on Fred's pew if this was a Wadsworth pub.

Paul Sullivan, the group's sales and marketing director, says: "The important thing is getting people to understand the rules of the house. Make the most of the pub trade from tourists but, at the same, time don't alienate locals. If Fred's got a stool at the end of the bar we let people know that it's Fred's stool," he says.

VisitBritain has calculated that if every tourist that comes to Britain visited a pub, they would contribute at least £40m annually to tills based on beer takings alone.

Joss Croft, VisitBritain's marketing director, says: "Our pubs play a huge role in enhancing the overall visitor experience and go a long way in helping improve global perceptions of the British welcome."

Jennifer Allen, mystery shopper and client liaison co-ordinator at Amber Arch, the market-research-

to-mystery-shopping company, says: "Locality and authenticity are things that tourists crave, going out of their way to experience a true representation of the place they're visiting. You can recreate that by tailoring your menu to the tourist market, although it's also advisable to spare a thought for your locals and their preferences."

Allen says musical and comedic performances are another way to achieve the balance between attracting tourists and keeping locals entertained. "Use the local hotels, shops and tourist information offices to

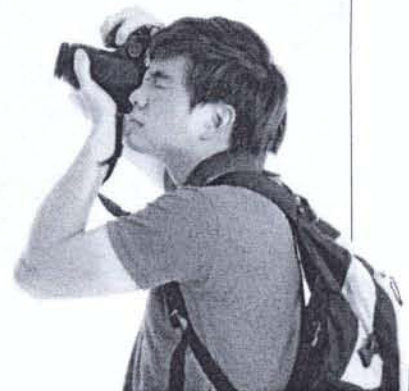
advertise these nights and be sure to boast that the artist appearing is from the area," she says.

Loyalty schemes and special privileges are always a good idea, irrespective of the time of year or the market targeted, she suggests.

"However, if you're looking to reward the loyalty of a customer base that uses your services throughout the year, maintaining some of these offers exclusively for those customers is a good way of showing your gratitude.

"Don't be tempted to highlight fantastic offers... only when the tourists are in town. Come the end of the season, if you withdraw these offers, the locals will disappear as quickly as ►

“ Don't be tempted to highlight fantastic offers... only when the tourists are in town



the travellers, frustrated that they're only able to grab a bargain during the peak season," Allen says.

She advises keeping something back for the end of the summer, such as a new menu or an event the locals will enjoy. "Tourist locations breathe a sigh of relief at the conclusion of a busy, if lucrative, summer season. Reflect this with a relaxing night for the locals. Any straggling tourists soaking up the last of the sunshine will love the authenticity of the event and locals will be reminded that you're to carry on serving them through the rest of the year, she says

Catering to the tourist market should not take too much extra effort if St Austell Brewery's research among 5,000 customers at its 24 managed pubs applies across the board.

St Austell marketing and communications director Jeremy Mitchell says: "The research showed that among our customers there was absolutely no difference between what locals want from their pub and what visitors want."

The top three factors when choosing a pub were a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, followed by an attrac-

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The key to keeping all customers happy is to ensure no one has to wait to be served

tive location and serving freshly prepared food.

"The key for us in keeping all of our customers happy during the peak tourist season is to increase staffing to ensure no one has to wait to be served and that staff still have the time to smile, enjoy their job and make customers feel welcome," Mitchell says.

Rob Brewer, landlord of St Austell's Rashleigh Arms, in Charlestown says most regulars know tourism is a huge part of the local Cornish economy and their income is connected to it in some way. "A good mix of locals and tourists helps to provide a great atmosphere, which sometimes can't be provided by a few locals alone."

Top tips from Charles Wells

Christine Crofts, head of sales and marketing at Charles Wells Pub Company provides the following tips:

- Make every customer feel they're the most important in the world and keep service levels consistent for everyone
- Offer a loyalty incentive for the locals to make sure they know how much you value their custom

- If a group arrives shortly before your regulars, direct the visitors away from locals' favourite seats
- Let your regulars know what you are doing to attract tourists and involve them
- Ask regulars to try new menu ideas for tourists and give their feedback but keep a balance of tried and tested dishes so they still feel at home.



£40m
the annual boost to takings if all tourists visited a pub while they were in Britain

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