

Brown delves deep and hits the spot with heady book

Beer is a big issue even with COVID-19 restrictions gripping the country. A cool, refreshing bottle fresh from the fridge is a pleasure.

It is particularly good if you are sitting with your feet up next to the fire watching a good TV programme on a cold, winter night.

However, how does one pick a brew or, even more importantly, which label catches the eye during a visit to the off-sales or supermarket.

That point is particularly relevant when you ask your wife to bring some beer back from her shopping trip.

There is a massive choice currently. Award-winning Peter Brown, in his latest book, indicates that breweries have soared in recent years.

At the Millennium there were 500. By 2018 there were over 2,500. They brew ranges not just one product and these ranges are added to by special editions and seasonal ales.

Then you add foreign beers and there are now thousands of choices. The range has also increased in pubs.

Around two decades ago most sold a handful of beers. Now some can sell around 20. At the same time, off-sales choices have soared. Just look at the selection on any major supermarket site.

Pete, in his excellent book, *Beer by Design*, published by CAMRA Books (£15.99), said that there may have been an increase in the number of breweries but beer sales have gone down.

He added: "This means we now have five times as many brewers chasing four-fifths of the demand compared to 20 years ago."

So, the message is clear, if you want to get noticed get your branding right. The art of good beer branding is covered extensively in this book.

Facts pour out of this heady words package and I was hooked. If you like beer then this could be for you this Christmas.

The writing style is engaging and there are some great pictures. The book provides a valuable insight into the history of beer marketing.

Pete a former beer writer of the year, is well qualified to comment and this publication is spot on for publicans.

It is also applicable for those who wish to delve deeper into the history of beer which has been pivotal to the social scene in this country down the centuries. Cheers.

PICTURE: Volunteer Arms, Musselburgh, an award-winning pub