



Kingdom Breweries: Cambodia's New Craft Beer

By [Gemma Price](#) Thursday, Sep. 23, 2010



Cambodia might not be counted among the world's most eminent beer-producing countries, but change is brewing. From its premises on the banks of the Tonle Sap, Phnom Penh's newest boutique brewer, Kingdom Breweries, is gearing up to give local brands a run for their riel — using only the best German and Czech hops, premium German malt and top-quality water to produce its flagship pilsner.

"Can I offer you one?" CEO Peter Brongers asks, proffering an ice-cool bottle of the first batch ever brewed. "Some of the locals might think it's too bitter, but I think it's perfect." **(Watch TIME's video "Five Beers to Try This Summer.")**

You'll probably think so too, if you like the crisp, light and dry style of European lager. Kingdom's bearded German brewmaster Peter Hauptenthal is hoping to win the locals over with his product's body and consistency — important attributes in a town where microbrew is popular but varies wildly in quality, with poor heads, soapy textures and artificial colors (bright red or acid green anyone?) being not uncommon. After plenty of experimentation and patience, Kingdom has only recently arrived at the final recipe that it hopes will educate the market. "Unfortunately, making a good beer takes time," Hauptenthal says, "and we can't speed up the process."

The fledgling brand will officially launch on Oct. 1, and visitors are welcome to observe the production process. Tours of the brewery can be arranged and include a chat with Hauptenthal and a drink in the on-site bar, with its leather upholstered bar stools, studded Chesterfield couch and hardwood counter.

"When we launch in the market, we want to establish Kingdom as one of Southeast Asia's leading boutique breweries," says Brongers. Looks like Cambodia could finally be taking its place on the world's beer map. See kingdombreweries.com for more.