

# DERBY – GREAT PLACE, GREAT BASE

## Being Ale and Hearty in Derby

Derby will be hosting the 2014 National Winter Ales Festival from February 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, and offering overnight accommodation in city centre hotels from £24.50 per person per night.

The Festival is one of CAMRA's flagship events, and the decision to hold it in Derby is the Real Ale equivalent of "raising a glass" to the city which has been dubbed one of the Beer Capitals of Britain.

The Festival itself showcases a selection of the very best real ales from around the UK, including real ciders and perries, meads, and a variety of continental beers. But it will also give visitors the chance to take a gentle stroll, or crawl, around the city's 120-plus real ale pubs - and to be amongst the first to take advantage of some special hotel rates through the Visit Derby website.

Overnight stays based on two people sharing a room during the Festival at the Smart Aston Court Hotel, for example, start from £27.50 per person per night, B&B; from £24.50 pppn, B&B, at the Ramada Encore; and from £34.50 pppn, B&B, at the Holiday Inn Riverlights. For full details, and further offers, visit <http://www.visitderby.co.uk/whats-on/national-winter-beer-festival-hotel-offers/>.

While British pubs are currently said to be closing at the rate of around 18 per week, Derby appears to be at the forefront of a real ale revival - and can boast the largest number of real ales per head of population, several micro-breweries, two annual CAMRA Beer Festivals, Britain's first and only "Beer King", and a recent accolade from *Lonely Planet* magazine (no less), describing the city as the "best place to drink real ale in the world".

The Brunswick Inn (the first railwaymen's hostelry in the world) and Ye Olde Dolphin (dating back to 1530) are just two of the historic pubs in the city worth including on any real ale pub crawl of Derby.

But, elsewhere, The Exeter Arms ([www.exeterarms.co.uk](http://www.exeterarms.co.uk)) - owned by former AntiPasti punk rock band member Martin Roper - is arguably the first pub to offer its guests a full "British Tapas" alongside its carefully kept rack of real ales. Roper has also just opened the Silk Mill Ale and Cider House in the city.

Less than five minutes walk away, in the Cathedral Quarter, another slumbering giant is being brought back to life. The Old Bell Hotel in Sadler Gate has now come under the ownership of Paul Hurst, who has already proved his credentials in Derby with the Black Rock Grill, and who is now setting about breathing new life into one of the most historic properties in the city.

A former coaching inn, it's also renowned world-wide for having one of the most haunted rooms anywhere on the planet. Like the rest of this Grade II listed property, the attic is currently being renovated, and - once that is ready - will be ready to host guests who don't mind sharing their room with an odd spirit (or two!).

For all tourist information, visit [www.visitderby.co.uk](http://www.visitderby.co.uk)

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