



European Refillable Award 2021

Award Winner: Dutch Brewers Association (Vereniging Nederlandse Brouwers)

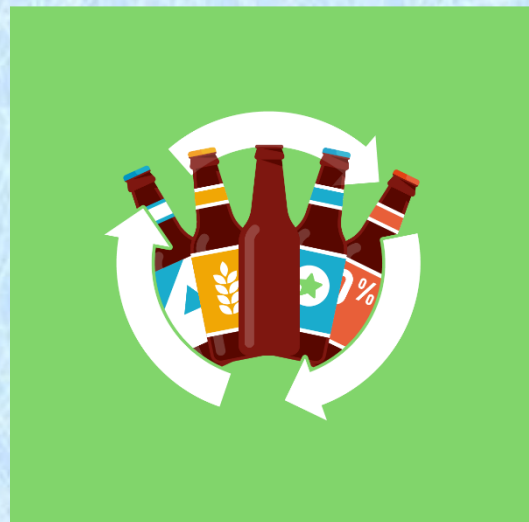
Awarded for operating a particularly environmentally friendly refillable bottle pool system for beer in the Netherlands

Who is the Dutch Brewers Association?

The Dutch Brewers Association is a cooperation between the largest breweries in the Netherlands accounting for more than 95 per cent of beer production in the country. In the eighties, they aimed to create a standard refillable bottle complying with the highest quality standards, which lead to the development and implementation of the Brown Dutch Refillable Bottle (BNR bottle). Up to this day, the BNR-bottle is still the most widely used refillable bottle for beer produced in the Netherlands: Approximately 45 to 55 percent of refillable beer bottles in the Netherlands are BNR bottles these days. In the past years, more and more brands have joined this successful pooling system.

Why are BNR Bottles beneficial for the environment?

The use of the BNR bottles instead of single-use beverage packaging creates big advantages regarding climate change mitigation, resource protection and energy savings. One of the benefits of the BNR bottle is that all participating breweries can use it equally. As a pool bottle, it is simply taken to the nearest breweries for refilling. This leads to shorter transport distances and resource conservation. Through its many rotations – it can be reused up to 40 times – the BNR bottle not only avoids waste, but also protects the climate. In addition, pool bottles are particularly consumer-friendly: Consumers can return them in almost every supermarket in the Netherlands – most of the time regardless of whether the brand is actually sold there. If you add up supermarkets, the hospitality sector and food retailers, throughout the whole country, there are over 35 000 take-back points for BNR bottles. They can be returned as a set of 24 bottles in a reusable crate. When a single bottle is returned to a take-back point, it can be placed into any branded or non-branded crate that are part of the system and designed specifically for the standardized bottles. The bottle then goes back to the closest participating brewery in order to be cleaned and refilled.



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