

**TAG DES DEUTSCHEN BIERES / GERMAN BEER DAY
DEUTSCHER REINHEITSGEBOT / GERMAN PURITY LAW**

der 23. April 1516

**German brewers cheer 500th birthday of beer
purity law**



German brewers will be clinking glasses this year to the 500th anniversary of their "purity law", even as craft label designers complain the decree is cramping their style.

Known in German by the verbal mouthful "das Reinheitsgebot", one of the world's oldest food safety laws limited the ingredients of the amber brew to just water, barley and hops, although yeast was later added to the approved list.

A Bavarian nobleman and early consumer rights advocate, Munich's Duke William IX laid down the law on April 23, 1516, worried that the medieval staple was being adulterated with sawdust, soot and poisonous plants.

Today the regulation -- far from being a remnant of the days of knights and castles -- is a global selling point for German lager, pils and weissbier varieties around the world, say brewers.

"In contrast to our colleagues abroad, German brewers don't use artificial flavours, enzymes or preservatives," said Hans-Georg Eils, president of the German Brewers' Federation, at the Green Week agricultural fair in Berlin.