# From Brewer to Brand Voice

## An Interview with Budvar Global Brand Ambassador Radim Zvanovec

**Radim Zvanovec combines the art of brewing, quality management, and brand communication on the international stage. In this interview, Budweiser Budvar's Global Brand Ambassador discusses the future of the beer industry, the unique role of Czech beer culture, and how the Doemens Beer Sommelier training program has further honed his sensory skills, storytelling, and his work in creating moments of enjoyment.**

**Brewing and Beverage Industry International (BBII):** Radim, how do you assess the development of the Czech beer industry

**Radim Zvanovec:** The Czech beer industry is in an interesting position. On one hand, beer consumption has been gradually declining, following broader demographic and lifestyle trends seen across Europe. On the other hand, Czech brewing remains one of the world's strongest benchmarks for quality, consistency, and brewing tradition, particularly in the lager segment. I see growing opportunities in premiumization and export markets, where authenticity and provenance are increasingly valued.

**BBII:** ... and the global beer industry?

**Zvanovec:** Globally, the beer industry has entered a more mature phase. The explosive growth of craft beer has slowed in many established markets, leading to consolidation and increased competition. At the same time, consumers are becoming more selective, seeking quality over quantity, and showing interest in local products, lower- and no-alcohol options, and more diverse flavour experiences.

**BBII:** How important is it for breweries to have their own beer ambassadors?

**Zvanovec:** I believe beer ambassadors are becoming increasingly important, especially in a market where consumers have more choices than ever before. Brewing great beer is no longer enough on its own—the ability to communicate its story, ingredients, production process, and cultural background has become a significant competitive advantage.

**BBII:** What qualities should a beer ambassador definitely have?

**Zvanovec:** From my perspective, the best beer ambassadors combine technical expertise with storytelling skills. They should be able to discuss brewing science with professionals while also making beer approachable and exciting for casual drinkers. In an increas-







Images: Radim Zvanovec

ingly competitive beer market, that ability to educate, inspire, and connect with people can be just as valuable as the beer itself.

**BBII:** Can you please describe your role and responsibilities as a beer ambassador at the renowned Budweiser Budvar?

**Zvanovec:** My official role is Global Brand Ambassador, which means I wear many different hats across the business. My responsibilities are built around three main pillars: the ambassador team, quality and training, and marketing activities.

One of my key responsibilities is leading and supporting a team of 16 beer ambassadors across our most important international markets. I work closely with them, as well as with our sales teams, importers, and distributors, to support a wide range of activities, from educational programs and trade events to customer engagement initiatives.

The second pillar is quality and training. While I still regularly conduct trainings and masterclasses myself, my focus has increasingly shifted toward supporting beer quality in the market. This includes helping resolve challenges related to beer handling, draught beer quality, and dispense technology, ensuring that consumers experience our beers exactly as intended.

The third pillar covers marketing activities. This involves supporting and participating in events, international collaborations, influencer partnerships, PR activities, workshops, and other projects that help strengthen the Budvar brand and communicate our brewing heritage to a wider audience.

**BBII:** What makes the role particularly exciting?

**Zvanovec:** Its variety! No two weeks are the same. One week I may be delivering technical training, the next supporting a market launch, judging beer competitions, collaborating with industry partners, or working on an international marketing campaign. That diversity is one of the things I enjoy most about being a Global Brand Ambassador.

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>
> Radim Zvanovec, Global Brand Ambassador, Budweiser Budvar

**BBII:** What are the most important messages and values that you represent around the world?

**Zvanovec:** The most important message I represent is that great beer starts with uncompromising quality. Everything we do at Budweiser Budvar is built on a commitment to quality, authenticity, and long-term thinking rather than short-term trends.








Radim Zvanovec, Global Brand Ambassador at Budweiser Budvar, is at work around the world (from left): in Beijing, at a brewing collaboration in Australia, in a brewing cellar in Seoul, in the Mikkeller cellar in Denmark, and at a training session at Sacred Profane in Maine, USA.

I also strive to communicate the unique value of Czech brewing culture and the craftsmanship behind traditional Czech lager. Many consumers know Czech beer for its reputation, but fewer understand the attention to detail, the quality of ingredients, the long maturation times, and the brewing expertise that contribute to its character. Part of my role is helping people appreciate what makes Czech lager one of the world's great beer styles. And I also talk a lot about the foam and its importance.

**BBII:** You're also a brewer and quality specialist. As a beer ambassador, isn't this very important knowledge that you possess?

**Zvanovec:** Absolutely. I believe that my background as a brewer and quality specialist is one of the most valuable aspects of my role as a Global Brand Ambassador. While communication and storytelling are essential, having a deep technical understanding of beer allows me to speak with credibility and confidence to a wide range of audiences.

Beer is a complex product, and many of the questions I receive go far beyond marketing or brand messaging. Whether I am speaking with brewers, quality managers, distributors, hospitality professionals, or consumers, my brewing and quality background enables me to explain not only what makes our beer special, but why it tastes the way it does and how we ensure its consistency and quality around the world.

I think the most effective beer ambassadors are those who can bridge the gap between technical knowledge, consumer communication but can also work with and understand other departments – sales, maketing. Iti s very hybrid role and on a daily basis you work with many different professionals.



As part of the beer sommelier training program, Radim introduced the participants to the Czech art of pouring beer.




We did it! Radim has successfully completed the Doemens Beer Sommelier training program

**BBII:** As a beer ambassador, you bring many important skills to the table, as described. But that's not all—why did you also complete beer sommelier training at Doemens?

**Zvanovec:** I completed the Doemens International Beer Sommelier program because I wanted to deepen my understanding of beer beyond brewing and production. The Beer Sommelier program offered a broader perspective on sensory evaluation, beer styles, food pairing and consumer communication. One of the aspects I appreciated most was the opportunity to learn how to translate technical brewing knowledge into language that is engaging and accessible for different audiences. The program also allowed me to connect with beer professionals from around the world and gain insights into different beer cultures and market trends, and consumer expectations.

**BBII:** What is the personal benefit for you?

**Zvanovec:** Throughout the program, beer is explored not only as a product but also as a cultural phenomenon. Participants are exposed to brewing traditions and beer styles from around the world, while also gaining insight into how beer is perceived, consumed, and communicated in different markets.

The Doemens team brings a wealth of experience from personally visiting numerous beer-producing countries and breweries. It was fascinating to hear their stories while learning about different beer styles and the cultures behind them.

On a personal level, the program helped me develop an even greater appreciation for the beers I have had the pleasure of tasting throughout my career. It also inspired me to travel more, explore different beer cultures firsthand, and continue learning from the people and traditions that shape them.

**BBII:** What were the highlights of the training for you, and what aspects of the curriculum can you now apply

even more effectively as a beer ambassador?

**Zvanovec:** One of the main highlights of the training for me was the strong focus on sensory evaluation and structured tasting. Although I already had a technical background in brewing and quality, the program helped me refine how I consciously analyse beer, describe flavours, and communicate those perceptions in a way that is clear and engaging for different audiences. It strengthened my ability to translate complex sensory impressions into language that resonates equally well with professionals and consumers.

**BBII:** … and from a practical perspective …

**Zvanovec:** … I found the modules on food pairing and consumer communication especially relevant. As a beer ambassador, a significant part of my role is creating memorable experiences, whether through tastings, events, or trainings. The ability to confidently pair beer with food and explain those pairings in an engaging way is something I now apply much more consciously and effectively.

**BBII:** What is your overall impression of the two-week training program?

**Zvanovec:** My overall impression of the two-week training program is very positive. It is an intensive and well-structured experience that successfully combines technical knowledge with practical application and a broader cultural perspective on beer. What stood out to me most was the balance between depth and accessibility—the program manages to cover a wide range of topics without losing focus, while still allowing participants to fully engage with the material.

**BBII:** Your impressions of the tutors?

**Zvanovec:** Another strong aspect of the program is the quality and experience of the tutors and the way the content is delivered. The combination of theoretical and practical input, guided tastings, brewing and interactive discussions ensures that the material is not only understood but also internalised. It never feels purely academic, everything is clearly linked to real-world application in a positively interactive way.

**BBII:** In summery?

**Zvanovec:** Overall, I see the program as a very well-designed foundation for anyone who wants to deepen their understanding of beer and develop stronger communication skills around it. It is both professionally enriching and personally inspiring, and it leaves you with tools that you can immediately apply in practice.

**BBII:** To wrap up our conversation, please complete the sentence: As a Doemens Beer Sommelier, I am now ….

**Zvanovec:** … better equipped to connect technical knowledge, sensory understanding and storytelling in a way that is both credible and engaging.

**BBII:** Thank you very much for the interview. (mon)

Doemens at BrauBeviale:
Hall 12 booth 311

