

# Thirsty Westminster MPs guzzle £1.4m of booze a year at taxpayer subsidised House of Commons bar

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POLITICIANS and staff in the House of Commons guzzled their way through £1.4million of booze last year.

As the rest of Britain struggled with the cost of living crisis, bars in the Houses of Parliament served up 8670 bottles of champagne.

And another 2954 bottles of champagne were sold in the gift shop.

When it came to bottled beers, Peroni topped the list with 10,800 bottles sold in the year to December 2013 – closely followed by 10,248 bottles of Becks.

The Commons bars also dished out 3600 bottles of Fosters, 2904 bottles of Westons Organic cider, 1956 bottles of Bulmers Cider and 1296 bottles of Corona.

But there were only 408 bottles of alcohol-free Becks sold.

Aided with a taxpayer subsidy of more than £5million for catering at the Houses of Parliament, the Commons bars sold 522 bottles of Gordons Gin and 257 bottles of Pimms No1.

When it came to whisky, the bars and Commons gift shop sold more than 5700 bottles along with more than 26,000 bottles of Merlot and 49,000 bottles of Chardonnay.

Although prices in the Commons bars and restaurants are subsidised, bottles of alcohol are sold at Westminster's gift shops at a profit as part of a plan to reduce the taxpayer subsidy.

In December, it emerged that peers in the House of Lords get £1.3million in taxpayers' cash to subsidise their dining rooms.

The cost of running the eight bars, restaurants and cafes and three function rooms in the Lords was £2.3million last year, with more than half of the bill met by the subsidy.