

RESTAURANT TRENDS
WITH KEITH SCHLABS

KOCH & CALAGIONE DISCUSS THE
FUTURE OF BEER & THEIR BIG BRANDS

The Beer Connoisseur®

THE
200
BEST BEERS
of 2019

THE
BEST
BREWERIES
OF 2019

TRENDING
BEER STYLES
FOR 2020

#1
RATED
BEER
OF 2019

2020
INDUSTRY
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THE
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2020



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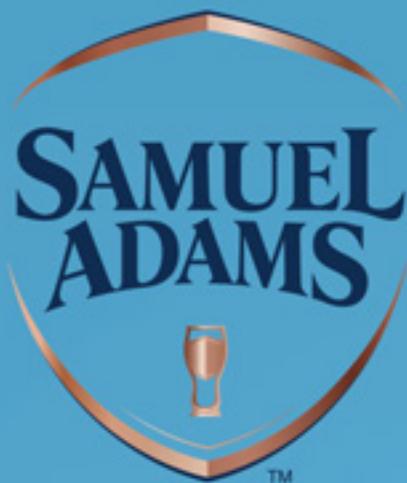
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For the fifth generation, the private brewery C. & A. VELTINS brews one of the leading premium Pilsener brands in Germany. This is where beer has been brewed in accordance with the German Purity Law (Reinheitsgebot) since 1824, thus laying the foundation for the company's successful history. Word soon got around that high-quality, flavourful Pilsener beer was brewed there. After the first pubs in Grevenstein itself, a large number of other innkeepers from Sauerland and Westphalia came forward and wanted to treat their patrons to fresh VELTINS, and with this, the brewery developed into a well-known family business throughout the Sauerland region. A status

that the company has maintained to this day. The family owned brewery has always relied on a consistent growth strategy and has always invested in state-of-the-art production facilities – this is how the brewery C. & A. VELTINS has secured its premium position in the highly competitive market. The brewery's success is based on a passion for the art of brewing, a willingness to innovate, investment strength, entrepreneurial vision and a corporate culture that is characterised by team spirit and the highest quality standards. Even today, brewing is carried out using selected raw materials, strictly in accordance with the German Purity Law of 1516.



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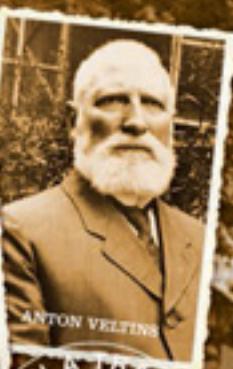
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With over 5000 products from German breweries, you would think that the beer market would be sufficiently developed. The reality though, it's far from it: Beer lovers in the USA and Germany are always looking forward to new specialities – so long as they enjoy the taste and its a positive impression. With the unfiltered lager Grevensteiner Original, the Grevensteiner brand from the brewery C. & A. VELTINS offers such a taste.

The interest in exceptional beers, characterised by special brewing methods or interesting flavour variants, is greater than ever before. Above all, it is speciality beers such as Landbier or Helles that are preferred and are a tasteful alternative to the ancestral Pilsener. It is undoubtedly true that once again we're discussing beer and its origins to a greater extent. And it is precisely those beers which are characterised by traditional recipes and full-bodied flavours that are so popular. Nothing is invented or even imitated, it's just supposed to be the Landbier original. This is where the Grevensteiner brand sets itself apart. It succeeds in satisfying the wishes of speciality beer lovers with a lot of intuition and taste. Grevensteiner's path to success does not come about by chance - the trend of tracing back our roots is something that unites city dwellers and people in the countryside. With the Grevensteiner specialities, the brewery C. & A. VELTINS

brings the time-honoured craft of brewing back to life. What the second generation of founders (the twin brothers Carl and Anton Veltins) brewed for the catering trade in the 1890s has now been re-interpreted in a contemporary way.





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Featuring



WINTER 2020, ISSUE 46

THE BEER IN REVIEW

CHRIS GUEST

COVER | *THE SAGE* by ARCHETYPE BREWING | PHOTO BY SALLY TANNER

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“2019 was yet another great year for great beer. Cheers to all the breweries that submitted beers to our Official Review, and congratulations to the brewers of our best beers of the year!”

– Chris Guest, Managing Editor

Welcome to the 46th edition of *The Beer Connoisseur* magazine. Last year provided plenty of intrigue and great flavor in the world of beer, and, in this edition, we look ahead to the coming year and also harken back to the best beers, beer styles and breweries of 2019.

Seeing as this is our second annual *The Beer in Review* winter edition in print, we’ve loaded up all the brew that’s fit to drink in this issue, and we keep you in the loop on how the wonderful world of beer continued to evolve and grow in 2019. Whether a brewer or beer fan, we believe this issue has something for everyone.

This issue is split into three sections. First, our Industry Outlook details the year that was for the beer industry in 2019 – while also keeping the future in mind – from the perspective of the consumer, restaurants and the craft beer segment. All three are in-depth explorations featuring statistics, research and interviews with industry insiders to offer the full picture of the craft beer business.

Of course, any beer magazine worth its weight in IBUs features an abundance of beer reviews, and this edition of *The Beer Connoisseur* lives up to that. Our most robust section features the Top 200 Beers of 2019 as featured in our *Official Review*. With a wide range of styles from fruit lambics to chocolate peanut butter stouts, our Top 200 Beers has it all. Beyond that, our Best Beers by Style Category outlines the finest beers in a wide range of different styles, and we award our Best Breweries of 2019.

Closing out the issue is our 2019 Trends section, which details emerging styles to keep an eye on next year, as well trending hops that brewers will employ in 2020 to provide new avenues of flavor.

More than anything, *The Beer in Review* is a love letter to the wondrous fermented beverage that is our namesake, and we hope you read this issue while imbibing a fresh new brew. Thank you for reading, and we hope you enjoy the 46th installment of *The Beer Connoisseur*!

FLANDERS SOUR ALE



BREWED IN BELGIUM

HISTORY

In 1892 in the village of Bellegem located in the Flanders region of Belgium, Omer Vander Ghinste began brewing and distributing its beers via horse-drawn carriages in the brewery's immediate vicinity, such as the region of Kortijk. To promote his "Beers Omer Vander Ghinste," Omer commissioned beautifully ornate stained glass for the front windows of his pubs. Thinking ahead, he thriftily named his first-born child (and heir to the brewery) after himself so these expensive and time-consuming windows would not need to be replaced. 126 years later, the custom continues and the first-born children of the Vander Ghinste family, now in their fourth generation of family ownership of the brewery, are still named "Omer!" Local pubs still proudly display their vintage signs today, and a visit to the brewery will find many originals casting multicolored light over patrons.



SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION

To ferment spontaneously, hot wort is pumped into the coolship (pictured) on top of the brewery to cool overnight. Wild yeast, such as *Brettanomyces*, inoculate the wort. The morning after brewing, it is pumped into large oak barrels, or foeders, where it ferments and ripens for 18 months. During aging, deep sour flavors and complex aromas develop, giving Omer VanderGhinste's beers their trademark flavors and aromas. This richly flavored mature and subtly sour foederbier is the base for VanderGhinste Oud Bruin and Cuvée des Jacobins, two of the brewery's most well-known beers.

JACOBINS?

The name refers to the Hospice Saint Jacques in Paris, a famous Dominican monastery located in the Rue des Jacobins. Omer Rémi Vander Ghinste (the first Omer in the brewery's history) was given refuge there during World War I. In gratitude to his kind and caring hosts, he named his beer after them, putting their friendly likeness on brewery signs. Omer VanderGhinste's famed line of Jacobins beers includes Cuvée des Jacobins Rouge and Cuvée des Jacobins Prestige, which both feature a subtle sourness and rich and delicate flavors and aromas.



VanderGhinste Oud Bruin

This was the first beer that Omer Vander Ghinste created in 1892. A top-fermented ale is blended with the perfectly aged foederbier to create something new: Flemish Red Ale. It is a balanced, slightly sweet and sour beer with a refreshing, thirst-quenching character.



WORLD'S BEST DARK BEER
World Beer Awards (2015)

Cuvée des Jacobins

This ale is not blended, it is 100% foederbier that's matured in oak for 18 months or more. Robust and sophisticated, Cuvée des Jacobins features notes of vanilla, dried cherry and cocoa. Beautifully sour, rich and complex, this elegant beer represents the historic expertise of Omer VanderGhinste's brewers.



GOLD MEDAL
World Beer Awards (2014)



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Buffalo Bill's Brewery, CA
Bullfrog Brewery, PA
Cabarrus Brewing Co, NC
Cape May Brewing Co, NJ
Community Beer Co, TX
Coronado Brewing Co, CA
Devils Backbone Brewing Co, VA
Diebolt Brewing Co, CO
East Brother Beer Co, CA
Evil Genius Beer Co, PA

Flying Dog Brewery, MD
Fulton Beer, MN
Garage Brewing Co, CA
Gate City Brewing Co, GA
Gnarly Barley Brewing Co, LA
Heathen Brewing, WA
Heavy Seas Beer, MD
Highland Brewing Co, NC
Holy City Brewing, SC
Mercier Orchards, GA
Mockery Brewing Co, CO
Monday Night Brewing, GA
Motorworks Brewing, FL
New Holland Brewing Co, MI
Odell Brewing Co, CO
Pike Brewing Co, WA
Pedernales Brewing Co, TX
Peter B's Brewpub, CA
Pontoon Brewing, GA
pFriem Family Brewers, OR
RavenBeer, MD
Reformation Brewery, GA

Riverwatch Brewery, GA
Rogue Ales & Spirits, OR
Seedstock Brewery, CO
Short's Brewing Co, MI
Somerville Brewing Co, MA
Southbound Brewing Co, GA
StillFire Brewing, GA
Stone Brewing Co, CA
Sun King Brewery, IN
The Boston Beer Company, MA
Two Roads Brewing Co, CT
Uinta Brewing, UT
Uncle Billy's Brewery & Smokehouse, TX
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Urban Artifact, OH
Wild Leap Brew Co, GA

INDUSTRY

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The Big Picture

CONSUMER TRENDS | STORY BY JIM DYKSTRA

2019 was an interesting year for craft beer, seeing it stray further than ever from the ideals of beer purity laws from a by-gone Bavarian era. While hops, barley, water and yeast are as relevant as ever, adjuncts have mostly lost the purist stigma they held not long ago. In fact, additives of all kinds are largely what are fueling the latest craft beer craze. Let's pick apart the data and see what we can extrapolate about the state of beer and where it may be headed.

Total dollar sales for all beer over the last 52 weeks rung in at more than \$36 billion, which is up 2.8 percent from the previous year, while total volume sales were up just 0.4 percent, pointing to continuing customer willingness to pay more money for beer, along with gradual, consistent inflation, which has contributed to higher prices among most commodities. While the days of the \$8 dollar six-pack are more or less gone, there's more to blame than simply inflation. The styles that are commanding the most attention also require a ton of raw materials – namely massive hop, fruit and grain bills, which drive prices up considerably. Often, the selling point is more to do with the quality of a special ingredient rather than the quantity – think name-brand, designer hops or Madagascar vanilla with Ceylon cinnamon sticks.

The Numbers – As always, the data we've examined comes from IRI Worldwide, a market research firm that tracks category-wide sales trends of beer sold in numerous retail outlets and then produces a monthly report of its findings.

These findings can be used to provide real-time insight into the ever-changing beer marketplace, both Craft and Macro. They can also help industry participants adapt to the marketplace and help you make more informed choices as a consumer. To save you the spreadsheet-trawling, we've pieced together the most important changes in beer sales over the year 2019 and will compare them to the prior year.

Before we delve further into this year's data, here are a few things to keep in mind – these numbers are on an international scale and may not represent individual brewery or regional sales accurately. The numbers also do not draw a hard line between beer styles within certain categories, which could mask sales trends of smaller brewers. They track sales of packaged beer only and from a few different sources, including convenience stores (think gas stations), a general "food" category (grocery stores, etc.), and a combined multi-outlet and convenience (MULC) store category (a combination of grocery, drug, Wal-Mart/Sam's Club, dollar stores and military stores, among others). We will focus on the MULC category. While not all-encompassing, it's a great, well-rounded resource.

Big Styles in Craft – 2019 was another solid, stable year for Craft beer sales, which saw the segment's dollar sales grow 2.6 percent compared to the previous year, in line with both beer's growth as a whole and just slightly less than last year's increase.

To the surprise of no one, IPA reigns supreme once more, with dollar sales up more than 13 percent from the previous year. This single category



2020 CONSUMER TRENDS

*IRI Worldwide
U.S. Consumer Sales Data*

THE DAYS OF THE \$8 DOLLAR SIX-PACK ARE MORE OR LESS GONE.

now comprises over 37 percent of total Craft beer sales. At around \$1.6 billion of Craft's total \$4.3 billion share, it remains a force to be reckoned with, currently deriving its energy from juicy, hazy, milkshake examples of the style.

The popularity of these styles is now bona fide, well beyond a passing trend. The question is no longer "What will come next?" after milkshake brews,

but "How will they evolve?" To that end, we can expect brewers to assimilate all of what is currently in vogue and follow a natural progression of creativity and technical mastery. Whereas "hazy" may have been the selling point, you can tack on "brewed with lactose" (for mouthfeel), a variety of fruits that would make Edible Arrangements jealous, and even more adventurous grain bills. The brewers making

To the surprise of no one, IPA reigns supreme once more, with dollar sales up more than 13 percent from the previous year. This single category now comprises over 37 percent of total Craft beer sales.

these beers aren't just pulling ingredients out of a hat. The beers that stand the test of time within this stylistic realm will reflect a mastery of the craft, with an enhanced focus on mouthfeel and the white rabbit of flavor balance and order, one of the most difficult elements to perfect within a brew. When the stated goal is to brew a beer with all the qualities of an apple pie, you'll ideally taste the key flavors in the same order and proportion you would in the actual baked delicacy, which takes intense attention to detail, along with trial and error. Otherwise, you're left with a bland or overpowered mix of spices, which fails to form a cohesive whole.

While most IPAs we see require an esoteric level of skill to brew, their more readily palatable and recognizable flavor profiles are making beers more accessible to those who might otherwise be turned off at the first hint of bitterness. Every brewer's foray into territory typically held by a wine or dessert is a chance to convert more craft drinkers. But that

Among the other styles contributing to the Craft category are golden ales, which grew nearly 14 percent compared to last year, making it the segment to see the largest growth after IPAs.

doesn't mean traditional, subtle styles have once again been kicked to the curb.

Among the other styles contributing to the Craft category are golden ales, which grew nearly 14 percent compared to last year, making it the segment to see the largest growth after IPAs. It makes sense – they're the perfect palate-cleansing antithesis to thick, enamel-stripping milkshake brews approaching double digits in ABV.

Other refined, less in-your-face styles fared similarly. Pale lagers, which saw an enormous 41.1 percent jump last year, are up another 24 percent in 2019, placing them at number eight within the top ten most popular styles. That's rather surprising, but again, it can be viewed as a natural evolution of taste – along with the search for reprieve from heavier IPAs – without totally sacrificing the intrigue of hops.

Belgian ales saw an increase of nearly 12 percent, marking another year of double-digit increase in





sales, while the omnipresent pilsner saw moderate growth at 6 percent. Again, these are generally clean, easy-drinking styles, which also make it no surprise that craft light beer grew by another 12 percent this year.

Naturally, the success of certain styles means other former champs have to ride the bench, if only for a while. Such is the case with seasonals, which have dropped 10 percent compared to last year, despite remaining the second highest-selling style. Most likely, the increase in experimental flavor combinations among IPAs and sours have stolen some of this category's mojo.

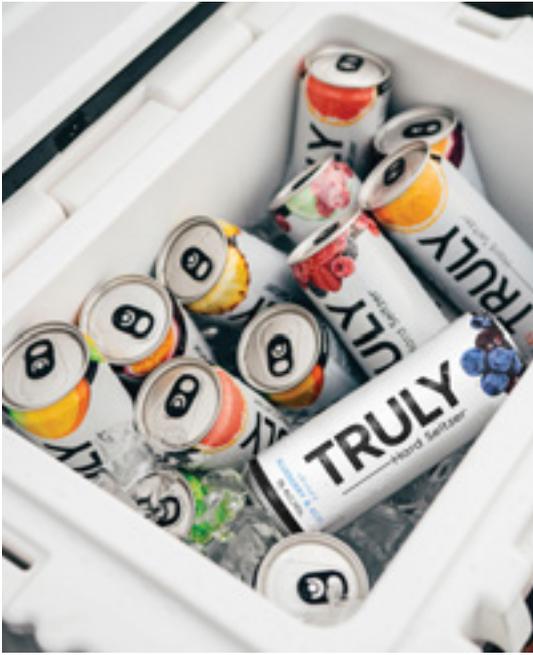
Belgian wits and pale ales, the third- and fourth-most popular styles, respectively, are also down by 5.5 and 3.5 percent. Again, their drop is likely tied to the increase in popularity of other easy-drinking or hop-heavy styles.

Continuing last year's trend, just about every dark beer style is selling less than the previous year,

save for stouts and red ales. Again, this is to be interpreted as a result of what has currently got the market's attention. Consumer interest is dictating what is brewed, so while drinkers are less interested in darker styles currently, brewers are also just brewing less – contributing to lower sales figures.

Demographic and Cultural Shifts

Part of this shift in interest is cultural. One of the most common sentiments you'll hear in today's clime is that beers are "just too sweet." Regarding the maple glazed donut stout phase that gripped drinkers in recent memory, the people aren't wrong on that front. This also brings to mind the ever-increasing awareness of what is and is not healthy among the average consumer. With every Whole Foods that opens, another birthday cake beer is



Both White Claw and Truly hard seltzer brands rank among the top-selling alcoholic beverage brands in the U.S. after seeing triple-digit growth in 2019.

The non-alcoholic beer segment, which includes Athletic Brewing Co. in Stratford, Connecticut, grew by nearly 10 percent last year, with sales over \$116 million.



forsaken in favor of a lager with lime. Both have flavor, but there's about a 500-calorie difference as well as the difference between a morning run and a roaring, crippling next-day hangover.

In fact, the non-alcoholic beer segment grew by nearly 10 percent in the last year, with over \$116 million in sales. Those numbers are nothing to scoff at, and have paved the way for breweries like Stratford, Connecticut's Athletic Brewing Co., a non-alcoholic brewery that has found success tapping into niche athletic markets such as endurance races, along with being the shiny new Corvette of N/A beer next to the clunky sedan of O'Douls.

Drinkers, especially young, internet-savvy drinkers know what they want more than ever, and with more choice than ever before, simply showing up to the taps and shelves isn't cutting it anymore. Lest we all forget, there are people of legal drinking age born after Bill Clinton's impeachment, and these are by-and-large not salt of the earth folks who cozy up to a sixer of Michelob after a hard day at the steel mill.

Of all beer segments, the only two that saw a decline in sales this past year were top-selling Domestic Premium (macro brews) and Domestic Sub-Premium (brown paper bag brews). Though still in the top spot ahead of Imports, which saw solid growth at 6.5 percent, Domestic Premium sales dropped by 4 percent, which translates to over half a billion dollars less sold in the past year. While much of that deficit was made up for with Domestic Super Premium sales ("crafty brews"), which grew almost 14 percent, the message is clear – people are more attuned to choice and exploration before, which probably explains why you saw Budweiser Copper Lager and Harvest Reserve on shelves this year.

If you want an even more telling sign, consider that Molson Coors recently announced it would pivot away from beer towards hard seltzer and CBD beverages, changing its name to "Molson Coors Beverage Company." One of the biggest brewing conglomerates has apparently seen the writing on the wall for total light lager domination, and is poised to capitalize on the "hybrid beverage" market, which is already well under way with the success of White Claw and Truly hard seltzer brands, both of which rank among the top-selling alcoholic beverage brands in the U.S. after seeing triple-digit growth in the past year. The top-selling seltzer, White Claw's variety pack, grew by 300 percent, and shows no signs of experiencing a slowdown in the near future.

Hard kombucha and CBD beers, which don't have their own categories yet, are no longer surprising to see on shelves, and further outline the

“customization” option that younger drinkers crave.

These styles, which fall into the Flavored Malt Beverages category, grew by 22.5 percent this year, which was more than any other category. These numbers have real gravity and suck sales away from all other categories, again contributing to why some stalwart brands have dropped significantly, and further driving home the fact that drinkers prefer less sugar in brews – hence brut IPA. Brewers take heed! If you want to sell a stout, brew it dry!

Takeaways – There is no “black and white” in beer (unless you’re talking about IPAs, of course). More people are spending more on beer and flavored alcoholic beverages than last year, but they’re more discerning in what they choose. Less people are drinking dark and viscous beers, but more people are drinking heavy, thick IPAs that aren’t very different from a stout once digested. More people are drinking lighter beers with flavor, such as gooses and other fruited sours and craft light lagers. Still more are drinking alcoholic seltzers. It’s humanity’s nature to over-analyze and try to peg each as a different beast, but at the end of the day, it’s all alcohol, and more of it is Craft alcohol than in years past. Even the non-craft brewers are brewing beer that is for all intents and purposes, Craft, save for certain moral and political lines drawn in the sand. There is more variety than ever before. If you’re a beer drinker, take heart, and also take a moment to consider how you can tailor your drinking experience in a way that maximizes your enjoyment in life, because beer is never a means to an end in itself. That may mean drinking one DIPA a night, or a few dry-hopped lagers during a weekend hang with friends, or choosing styles that agree with your digestive system and don’t leave you crawling for the bathroom like a pilgrim lost in the desert.

For brewers, brew with health-conscious drinkers in mind, but don’t forsake the opposite, because for every action there is a reaction, and for every beer trend there is a total 180 within a decade. Why? It’s human nature. Exciting flavor combinations are as pertinent as ever. Currently, fruit is having its day, largely within the confines of sour beer. Bitter has taken a backseat, as has sweet. What’s that leave among the basic flavor types? Salty and savory, otherwise known as umami. Those are harder sells in beer, and at first glance seem laughable. But then again, if you told someone that seltzer water and CBD beer would be the next big thing a decade ago, you may well have been laughed out of the room.



More people are spending more on beer and flavored alcoholic beverages than last year, but they’re more discerning in what they choose.

Next Year – Whether or not the American palate has become more sensitive is still a hazy subject. What is clear is that some drinkers are willing to sacrifice raw power in exchange for efficiency or sacrifice a standard beer altogether in favor of what is healthier (though whether alcoholic kombucha, seltzer and so on is truly healthier is a matter of debate). Expect to see a cavalcade of CBD, cannabis and hemp-infused beers, along with any other “super ingredient” you can dream up. If you can imbue it with alcohol, somebody will buy it, at least for a little while until they realize it might do nothing for them. The marketable ingredients that do have noticeable positive effects will last.

In terms of beer, American drinking preferences reflect the contrast between American muscle cars and clean-burning hybrids. Some are resource-heavy to make, yet powerful, and attract those who care more for look and feel, while others are unassuming and often unimpressive at first glance but allow for greater mileage.

Without getting too philosophical, they represent different ideologies, both with their own merit, and for now, there’s room for both, but the vocal majority seems to be in favor of less gas-guzzlers and guzzling less of beers with the viscosity of gasoline. The beauty is that you never have to be one or the other. Drink what you like with no shame – just make sure you enjoy the experience.



TRENDS IN CRAFT

STORY BY JONATHAN INGRAM

Have you tried Hazy Little Thing from Sierra Nevada? Perhaps you've dipped into the new, health-conscious Slightly Mighty by Dogfish Head, or maybe tossed back a Jai Alai IPA from Cigar City.

If so, you've joined almost every current trend in consumption of IPAs, a style that continues to lead off-premises packaged sales by a wide margin as measured by IRI Worldwide, a market research firm that tracks category-wide sales trends of beer sold in numerous retail outlets and then produces a monthly report of its findings. The market has shifted its collective tongue when it comes to IPA, one that favors softer-on-the-palate, juicy IPAs where the old lines of distinction between malts and hops are less prominent.

Introduced from its bayside residence in Tampa at Cigar City Brewing, the jazzily named Jai Alai is another growth leader. An early response

to the juicy craze, albeit with bitterness still in play, it has been penetrating new markets faster than a pelota hurled from a cesta. For those not familiar with its parlance, Jai Alai is a high-speed

UP, AS IN MIXED



betting game imported from the Basque country and loved by generations of Florida tourists. CA-Narchy, the private equity-driven team that bet on a collective approach to craft brewing and counts Oskar Blues, Three Weavers, Deep Ellum, Perin and Wasatch & Squatters in its portfolio, has scored biggest with the popularity of Jai Alai by making Cigar City beers available in widespread markets following acquisition.

The jump in Jai Alai sales underscores how the current “hazy, juicy craze” continues to drive innovation in the IPA category that enjoys nearly 40 percent of overall packaged retail sales by craft brewers in the U.S., according to IRI. Those statistics, of course, include all craft brands and not only the tighter box drawn by the Brewers Association that eliminates brands with more than 25 percent ownership by a macro brewer.

At this year’s annual migration to Denver known as the Great American Beer Festival, there was an undercurrent of disquiet, underscored by a lack of ticket sellouts the first two nights. It was as if the trend to juicy, hazy beers has brewers preoccupied about how to deal with it at the packaged, retail level. Joining the trend would require lots of research and risk due to the less-than-stable nature of the style. Waiting for the trend to end might take a long time. And, if it ends, where will beer sales, which are closer to flat these days, go? Which way is this train headed?

Currently, there are three associated trends in the regional or super-regional craft arenas in response to the IPA trend at the local level in tasting rooms, where brewers are less concerned about packaging and shelf life.

One established trend is the “change in place” offered by Stone Brewing, which took its flagship IPA to a more citrusy profile by changing the hops in the dry hopping in 2016 (which has not led to new growth). Others may take this same approach more subtly and without necessarily announcing it. Another methodology as demonstrated by Jai Alai and Hopsecutioner, a classic bitter IPA from Terrapin (owned by Molson Coors) concerns introducing an established IPA into new markets. This approach also includes Space Dust IPA from AB InBev’s Elysian brand. These IPAs all continue to show growth in the IRI numbers due to an expanded distribution footprint.

The remaining trend among volume craft brewers is using brand power to hitch a new line to the juicy, hazy train. On that front, witness the efforts by Sierra Nevada and New Belgium. Leading the way is the former’s Hazy Little Thing, whose success is relatively meteoric since its debut in December of 2017. Packaged sales of Hazy Little Thing grew 118 percent in year-over-year comparisons for the first 6.5 months of 2019 (which helps offset declining sales of the classic West Coast pale ale and IPAs offered by Sierra Nevada). In the high alcohol category of Imperial IPA, New Belgium’s Voodoo Ranger Imperial IPA is another of the handful of big-name IPAs that is showing growth.

Dave Williams, vice-president at Bump Williams Consulting, a longtime beer analytics group,

believes some of the national-level brewers have turned a corner on the “juicy, hazy” phenomenon found so often in tasting rooms, which enjoy the advantage of close-to-home distribution or no shelf life required when served across the in-house bar.

“I think those larger breweries, the more super-regional or national ones are catching up to some extent,” said Williams. “I don’t think they’ll ever get to be as nimble or prolific in terms of churning out new brands under that hazy umbrella like the smaller local guys. The larger craft brewers have been able to zero in a bit on what has stuck and what has worked underneath that umbrella. Then they went to work perfecting that and launching their own version of it in a wider footprint. It may be a bit more shelf stable and not as volatile. I think that’s where they’re catching up. They know what’s working from a profile or characteristic perspective, and they’re now rolling it out to the masses.”

Juicy and hazy beer will remain a style better suited on a local scale as demonstrated by the success of New England craft brewers who are growing rapidly through self-distribution without rapidly expanding their footprint outside their respective states. Those beers that are being targeted for national distribution by larger craft operations such as Sierra Nevada, CANarchy, New Belgium or Lagunitas (whose year-round “tropical” entry is 12th of Never) are less likely to have an arpeggio of flavors such as those found in tasting rooms. Instead, they capture the style in a more monochromatic, one-note approach that has the characteristic mouthfeel and heavier hopping and bold citrusy flavor of the juicy IPA trend, but without the complexity. Apparently, that’s where shelf-life considerations start.

There are two other trends in the wake of the haze craze, which are moving out of the beer business or severely cutting back before hard times force a company out. The owners of Boulder Beer Co., for example, have decided to stop distributing and instead will maintain a seven-barrel system and a tasting room. This after four decades of being in the forefront of craft’s Front Range phenomenon.

The biggest story in the wake of this year’s GABF had a local angle and was also a response to the question of which way beer is headed. Molson Coors will drop “Brewing” from its name in favor of “Beverages.” It will also move its headquarters to Chicago from Denver and will more aggressively pursue product lines outside of beer. Pretty heady stuff after four years of the hazy, juicy IPA trend and an ongoing decline in sales of traditional American premium beers, including those of Golden, Colorado-based Coors Brewing Company.

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Perhaps we should stop here and ask, “What, precisely, is the flavor profile of a juicy, hazy IPA?” For starters, not all of them are so hazy. Some opt for an unfiltered approach that is less clear but not opaque.

Brewers have numerous ways of adding a wide variety of the popular citrusy hops in the boil or whirlpool as well as dry hopping to steer clear of bitterness. Then there’s a choice of non-flocculating yeasts that end up in unfiltered beer.

No longer can a break between malt flavor and hops be counted on – especially in tasting rooms. Rather, it’s the new arpeggio effect that craft drinkers are becoming increasingly attracted to – a mixed bag of hops and malt with either less structure or a more subtle structure, depending on your point of view. In general, there’s more citrusy hops as well as a bolder nose and flavor profile. The old predominant bitter boldness is all but gone.

Perhaps because tasting rooms are so driven by rapid turnover, there seems to be no new challenges to Founders’ All Day IPA when it comes to the session IPA category. The brewery spent three years developing the first session IPA and its amazing ability to sustain distinctive malt and hop profiles at a low ABV. The beer continues to help the Michigan brewer expand its market footprint with new distribution.

“Maybe the paradox of choice has come back and presented itself in the form of hard seltzer.”

Interestingly, other styles that are growing in favor harken back to a more fundamental time. Lagers, pilsners and golden ales have become buzz words at the local and national craft level. It’s as if drinkers are looking to cleanse their palates after the onslaught of new-style IPAs. The leaders in packaged retail among these not-so-complex styles in the IRI data are Firestone Walker’s 805 Blonde Ale and Kona’s Big Wave Golden Ale. Down considerably in sales, meanwhile, is the innovative lagered ale from The Boston Beer Co., Sam ‘76.

Yet, innovation continues to drive craft brewing. Anyone sampling some of the lagers out there—including “Mexican” versions, a market chauffeur for Vienna lager—can come across a variety of approaches. It seems as if brewers are tweaking the “simpler” formulas in hopes of engaging the palates that have gotten more sophisticated due to IPAs and sours. One innovative example of “easy, yet slightly complex drinking” is Abita’s 30° 90°. In the catch-all category of golden ale, it has the mouthfeel of a

lager along with crisp elements brought on via the use of Cascade hops.

If lagers, pilsners and golden ales are the utility players in the game of SKUmageddon, there’s another beachside favorite that has made its way into the market with the slightly scary look of a large dorsal fin.

Hard seltzer may be hard to figure for some, but it is rapidly gaining market share. Can a lightly flavored malt beverage that goes down easy be seen as a response to searching through brainwaves when surveying a beer case rampant with newness? Is that the theme music from Jaws we are hearing behind this style that makes no apology about having one single, even faint, note of flavor?

Lester Jones is the chief economist for the National Beer Wholesalers Association. The arrival of hard seltzers, in his view, can be connected to terms like “paradox of choice” and “consumer fatigue,” phrases which also sound like SKUmageddon. “Is it coincidental,” he said, “that a lot of people are coming to hard seltzer, which has very little complexity, when the market is full of more complex beers that make people stop and think about what kind of hops it uses, who made it, where it’s from and what medals it has won? Hard seltzers are very simple and easy to choose from,” continued Jones. “I can choose grapefruit, mixed fruit or berry. It’s basically water so I don’t need to know the brewer. Maybe the paradox of choice has come back and presented itself in the form of hard seltzer.”

The hard seltzer trend is tipped to continue not only because of the huge jump in sales registered in the IRI data. Market leader Mark Anthony Brands of White Claw fame has added capacity and some heavy hitters, i.e. macros, are beginning to get involved. One suspects that may mean Molson Coors in addition to variations of, say, Bud Light.

Will the trend toward less alcohol carry us to a non-alcoholic future? That seems more likely to be associated with cannabis beers that cannot contain alcohol, an interesting market trend that continues to be too small to accurately sample on the same scale as IRI’s national statistics. What Williams notices is that old buzz word of innovation. Non-alcoholic beers are gaining when it comes to flavor, as witnessed by the recent rollout of Heineken’s 0.0.

“Non-alcoholic beers still account for less than 1 percent of all beer sales,” said Williams. “I’m not sure how much bigger that slice can get, based on the drinking environment. Heineken 0.0 is getting a lot of buzz. Within that non-alcoholic universe, you’re seeing success with imports or craft brewers offering it for families (who visit a brewery).”

Both Williams and Jones see innovation continuing across all brewing categories without a severe



STONE BREWING CO.

price being paid at the retail level in terms of consumer fatigue or distributor fatigue. Beer sales may be relatively flat, but a lot of it is still moving off the shelves. A good portion are new arrivals, especially when it comes to local brews. “Today companies are carrying 1,200-plus varieties of beer and some larger distributors have three to four thousand SKUs,” said Jones. “As logistics providers, distributors are more than capable of handling these SKUs. Retailers want variety for consumers, but there is some pushback. We may have reached maximum SKUs at retail.”

Perhaps the best new example on shelves is Slightly Mighty from Dogfish Head, a beer that hits every trend head on. It’s a low-calorie brew similar to others in the “let’s drink healthily” category such as ongoing leader Michelob Ultra, whose sales continue to grow. Like a hard seltzer, Slightly Mighty has low alcohol at 4.0 percent and a dollop of monk fruit extract for flavoring. The hops in this not-too-clear beer rival a session IPA. Meanwhile, it’s billed as a “lo-cal” beer, one that’s distributed nationally to boot. Get it?

Slightly off kilter in several directions, maybe, but its success shows that innovation continues to rule in the marketplace.

***Non-alcoholic** beers still account for less than 1 percent of all beer sales. I’m not sure how much bigger that slice can get, based on the drinking environment.*

RESTAURANT TRENDS

By Jim Dykstra

Whether you like to lay a solid foundation for your drinking session or prefer to snack while you sip, a rendezvous with food is essential if you're planning to drink. Unless you're relaxing by the fireside after a home-cooked meal, chances are you'll have few reservations about making reservations at a restaurant. After all, the good ones always serve beer.

Given that legislation and the stratification of the craft beer scene have made brewpubs a likely strategy to focus on for brewers, as opposed to shooting for national distribution, the number of operating brewpubs in the U.S. are steadily increasing, and so too is the need for mastery of more than just the liquid realm. With that in mind, here's what's been hot in the kitchen in 2019, and what we might expect looking ahead.

No One Knows Food Like the National Restaurant Association

The first set of data we'll look at is, fittingly, the National Restaurant Association's "What's Hot" Culinary Forecast, which asked chefs to rank 140 items as either "hot," "yesterday's news" or a "perennial favorite."

News flash for anyone who's been living under a rock, or perhaps more suitably, a stone: the taboo of cannabis is a thing of the past. According to the report, nearly 77 percent of chefs ranked cannabis- or CBD-infused drinks as 2019's top trend, while 76 percent of them ranked cannabis- and CBD-infused food as the second-most popular. The chefs noted that "infusing foods with [cannabis-related] ingredients could create unique cuisine opportunities and potential new markets for experiential dining occasions.

Considering that AB InBev, Molson Coors, Heineken and Constellation Brands have all begun exploring THC



77% OF CHEFS RANKED CANNABIS- OR CBD-
INFUSED DRINKS AS 2019'S TOP TREND



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PREPARATION : 20 MIN | COOKING : 40 MIN | SERVINGS : 6 AND +

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil	¼ cup cognac
8 oz. small diced pancetta	1 cup chicken stock
½ lb. whole peeled pearl onions (frozen is okay)	1 quart La Fin du Monde
½ lb. cremini mushrooms, washed and quartered	5 thyme sprigs
kosher salt and freshly ground pepper	2 tsp unsalted butter, room temperature
1 (3 lb) whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces	1 ½ tsp all-purpose flour
1 medium white onion, small diced	¼ cup piquillo peppers, seeded and julienned
12 baby carrots, tops removed and peeled	¼ cup cerignola olives, pitted and quartered
1 tsp minced garlic	1 tsp finely chopped parsley

PREPARATION

- 1 In a Dutch oven or pot with a tight fitting lid, heat 2 tablespoons of the extra virgin olive oil over medium heat. Add the diced pancetta then cook for approximately 8-10 minutes, until lightly brown.
- 2 Remove the pancetta with a slotted spoon and reserve the rendered fat. Place the pancetta on a plate and set aside.
- 3 Brown the pearl onions in the pancetta fat and cook until soft, about 5-7 minutes, then set aside.
- 4 Add the remaining olive oil to the pot then cook the mushrooms over medium heat until golden brown, about 5-10 minutes. Season the mushrooms with salt and pepper. Remove the mushrooms and place to the side.
- 5 Preheat the oven to 250° F.
- 6 Dry the chicken pieces with paper towels and season liberally with salt and pepper.
- 7 Brown the chicken in the pancetta fat, without crowding the pan, in a single layer for about 5-7 minutes, until evenly brown. Remove the chicken and place on the plate with the pancetta. Repeat until all of the chicken is done and set aside.
- 8 To the pot, add the diced onions and carrots then season with salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally until the onions are slightly browned. Add the garlic and cook for another minute.
- 9 To the pot, add the pancetta, chicken (including the juices), cognac, chicken stock, and La Fin du Monde. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, add the thyme then cover the pot.
- 10 Place the pot in the oven and cook for 30-40 minutes, until the chicken is no longer pink.
- 11 Remove the pot and place back on the stovetop.
- 12 Melt the butter in a skillet over a low heat. When the butter starts to bubble, add the flour and stir constantly. Cook until the mixture is a golden brown. Remove the mixture from the heat.
- 13 Take 1 cup of the liquid from the pot and add it to the mixture and stir until well incorporated. Add that mixture to the pot with the chicken and bring to a boil stirring to incorporate it fully.
- 14 Lower the heat to a simmer then add the pearl onions, mushrooms, olives, and peppers to the pot with the chicken.
- 15 Simmer for 10 minutes and season to taste. Serve over potato purée and garnish with parsley.

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and CBD drink options, there is no doubt that the major players have gotten wiser about the future of bud.

Even Coca-Cola has announced it will look into CBD-infused “functional wellness beverages around the world,” which may have partially been spurred by a Pepsi announcement that it had no plans to do so, which resulted in a drop in the company’s stock prices.

If you’re wondering about the specifics of each venture, Constellation Brands (parent company to Modelo and Corona, among others) has invested \$4 billion into Canopy Growth Corp., Canada’s largest cannabis producer, while Heineken has already launched Hi-Fi Hops via Lagunitas, a THC-infused beverage that tastes like beer, which is currently available in medical marijuana dispensaries.

Meanwhile, AB InBev is looking to cannabis-related products as their green savior, as their strongest brands continue to lose market share to all things craft. AB has partnered with Tilray, a Canadian cannabis company, and will invest \$50 million into researching alcohol-free THC and CBD options. Molson Coors Beverage Co. literally changed its name in the face of declining beer sales, announcing it would pivot to focus more on non-alcoholic, cannabis-infused drinks. The first, Flow Glow CBD-infused spring water, is already available in Canada.

And that’s all just on the beverage side of things. It doesn’t take a huge stretch of the imagination to picture restaurants solely dedicated to cannabis-infused foods. While it may be a few more years before it becomes commonplace, the future is already here: The country’s first licensed cannabis restaurant opened in West Hollywood in October, thanks to an ordinance allowing business licenses for just this purpose.

As such, Original Cannabis Cafe became the first of what will soon be many more. All in all, 300 businesses applied for a license, and eight more were approved based on “factors from social equity and innovation to community and design.” While it’s still illegal to consume cannabis in public in all states where it’s legal, the ordinance makes an exception within the walls of the restaurant, allowing for consumption of both cannabis food and drink.

Obviously, there’s a cultural shift afoot as “boomers” age and “millennials” start swinging their legislative kettlebells. Big beer businesses can see it coming, and until other governmental decision-makers catch on to the cash cow of legalized

marijuana, places like Original Cannabis Cafe will reap the rewards. Reservations are booked a solid 30 days in advance, and Le Cordon Bleu graduate executive chef Andrea Drummer put together a menu “designed with flavor profiles to complement [cannabis] strains offered in-house.” If that sounds incredibly similar to what you might find at a classy brewpub, you’re right. There are many similarities between the path of craft beer to its current level of social integration and cannabis, which is anywhere from a couple years to decades behind, depending on how progressive your legislators are.

So, brewers and restaurateurs, take note. There’s no obligation to incorporate anything cannabis-related into your business, and for many, it would make no sense to do so. But if younger demographics make up a significant portion of your business, it’s something to at least be aware of. Expect to hear much more about CBD and THC in the coming year.

Indeed, per Keith Schlabs, venerable co-founder of the Flying Saucer Draught Emporium, his restaurants have not yet implemented CBD beverages. “CBD and THC beverages are not a thing in the markets that we occupy yet,” Schlabs said. “I do know many people that use the CBD oil to ease pain, lessen anxiety or aid in sleep, but it is not something our restaurants and bars have been presented with currently.”

A Different Kind of Green

Let’s take a look at what else has sparked the interest of the restaurant scene. Apparently, it’s “zero-waste cooking,” which 70 percent of survey participants ranked as the third-hottest trend. This practice is defined as when you cook every part of an animal, including its eyeballs and testicles. While it seems counterintuitive to pay for what might be deemed “lesser” cuts or things better suited for the dogs, think of it this way: people are paying for a feeling – specifically, the feeling that they are doing their part to save the Earth.

Conservation is as hot as the planet’s poles, and regardless of whether you believe in climate change, there’s not much to laugh at in terms of altruistic desire to conserve resources, no matter how nominal or hypocritical it might seem. And while that’s all well and good, what you can take away from a business standpoint is that people are willing to pay for that feeling.



This is why “organic” labeling is important, and why paper straws can earn you more return customers. When people know a business entity cares for the environment, it is humanized in a way all the advertising money in the world could never achieve. Even if you’re a member of the other NRA, the one with guns, if you care about profits, it doesn’t take a prophet to see that eco-friendly moves resonate with the public. The same goes for brewers – find a home for your spent grain, and let people know you’ve switched to eco-friendly packaging like Heineken, which recently announced it would drop plastic packaging in favor of a more environmentally conscious alternative. As of this writing, its stocks have risen steadily since the announcement. Green equals green in terms of positive PR, but also can net you long-term savings in terms of water usage and other raw materials.

“There’s no obligation to incorporate anything cannabis-related into your business, and for many, it would make no sense to do so. But if younger demographics make up a significant portion of your business, it’s something to at least be aware of.”

Thinking Global

The fourth and fifth entries on the “What’s Hot” list pinpointed “global” dishes, for breakfast and for kids, as the next hot-ticket items. Unless you own a restaurant, that’s probably as much as you care to know regarding those items, but here’s what you can take away as a brewer – people are interested in continuing to expand their horizons. While “hyper local” is still in vogue and will remain so (it’s next on the list), people are less afraid of what’s beyond their borders, and more interested in experiencing things from the comfort of their dining table.

Moreover, they want the same for their kids, meaning this is likely more symbolic of a generational shift in perspective than a mere passing fad. Unless the next generation of whippersnappers takes a hard, nationalistic turn, we’re looking at a future of shared culture. If you like exotic tastes, or just don’t hate other cultures, that’s a good thing. And if you’re a chef or brewer looking to capitalize on the next big thing, you may very well find it in a dish or drink from the other side of the world.

Down the List and Into 2020

As mentioned, “hyper local” ranks at number six on the list, and that shouldn’t be news at this point. It’s a driving ideological feature in the artisan/craft movement. So, we’ll skip to the next few, which are “new cuts of meat” and “veggie-centric” cuisine. Again, more evidence that people are willing to explore new horizons, or even sacrifice their addiction to the sensory ideal in favor of other ideals. New cuts of meat are likely inspired from other cultural traditions, which goes hand in hand with using every bit of the animal. In other words, this is an offshoot of conservation, while focusing on more vegetable-forward dishes points to a growing group of people who value their health over what might make for a more delicious meal. Tastes are being recalibrated in real time, and brewers should be

able to make an easy connection – healthy beer will sell well. Dark, sweet beers are out in favor of lighter, more subtle brews. This is a shift in mentality that goes well beyond beer – but a simple stroll through the supermarket could have told you that.

Rounding out the list is “chef-driven fast casual concepts” at number nine, and “craft/artisan/locally produced spirits” at number ten. Regarding fast casual concepts – this could be interpreted as a representation of American cultural preferences – we’re busy, and our time is important, but so is quality. Chef-driven fast casual concepts make for a happy compromise. Historically, this sort of model is already well-attuned to the desire for craft beverages among its customer base, so the only other observation worth making is that these establishments would be more likely to find success with lighter styles that don’t put its patrons on the floor. If they’re there to get in and out, they don’t need anything heavy, because they’ve got other business to attend to. Worst-case scenario, they buy two beers instead of one.

In terms of drinking establishments, immediacy isn’t really a problem – it’s on tap, ready to go. What you might take away is that people would be more likely to show up for a quick business meeting, in which case it would also make sense to offer something of quality that is relatively light. Suffice it to say, it’s far more socially acceptable than it used to be to enjoy a beer during the middle of the day, so it makes sense to offer tasty, light options.

And that brings us to the tenth item on the list, craft spirits. For any brewer hoping to expand but struggling to find space on big retailer’s shelves, this is an ideal solution. It’s hyper local, it often allows for more economical overlap with your brewing operations, whether on the production or distribution end, and it’s easy to manage without over-expanding.

Canned cocktails have also seen a jump in popularity, along with cocktails on tap – more avenues of delivery for your artisan spirit, which restaurants also appreciate due to their simplicity.

Whether you run a brewery or restaurant, on-site barrel-aged drinks, fresh-made sodas or seltzers or fruit-infused waters offer low-risk ways

“Our gastropubs that focus on craft beer have seen a slight shift towards craft cocktails. Our liquor sales have surpassed beer sales for a few years now. However, our beer lists are better today than they’ve ever been. We must continue to focus on supporting the incredible breweries we hope to keep in the market. We believe a bar should be well stocked for everyone – with a slight advantage toward the beer drinker.”

- Keith Schlabs

*Co-Founder, Flying Saucer
Draught Emporium*



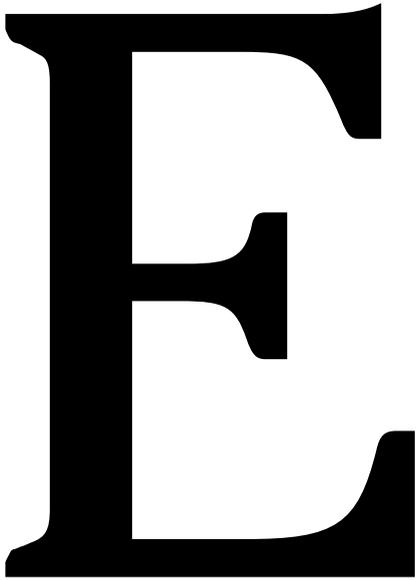
to capitalize on drinking preferences that fall between the cracks, while also offering means of fine-tuning the vibe of your establishment.

According to Keith Schlabs, his establishments have seen an increase in craft cocktails and other beverage types while maintaining robust beer lists:

“Our gastropubs that focus on craft beer have seen a slight shift towards craft cocktails. Our liquor sales have surpassed beer sales for a few years now. However, our beer lists are better today than they’ve ever been. We must continue to focus on supporting the incredible breweries we hope to keep in the market. We can’t just jump the

shark and chase trends. We believe a bar should be well stocked for everyone – with a slight advantage toward the beer drinker.”

For all those options and ones previously mentioned, consider what might work for your business, and what they say about the consumer. All signs point to the desire for more choice, and options that consider the health of the individual, and the planet, in mind. Like it or not, this is the wave of the future, and it’s generally positive. We’re becoming more aware and conscientious, and with the future in mind, the more your establishment can reflect those ideals, the more you will win customers for life.



Each year, we collect the highest-scoring beers evaluated in the *Official Review* and combine them into a list of the finest examples. 2019 saw the continuation of the hazy IPA trend into being a hallmark style with real staying power, as many of our hoppy IPAs, pale ales, double IPAs and session IPAs featured hazy, unfiltered elements.

All manner of sour beers, ranging from goeses to Flanders red ales to wild specialty beers were reviewed by our judges, and they enjoyed the impressive depth of flavor and mouth-puckering tartness that many sours provide.

Belgian beers were exceptionally well-reviewed this year, with our judges' favorite styles being the bigger, boozier Belgians like tripels, golden strongs and dark strongs. Speaking of strong and boozy, specialty wood-aged and wood-aged beers aged in all manner of barrels continued their popularity among our judges in 2019.

We hope you enjoy reading about the Top 200 Beers of 2019 and that you use this list to help navigate the vast expanse of beers available today.

ABOUT

The *Official Review* is conducted in a single blind tasting format that adheres to the Beer Judge Certification Program 2015 Style Guidelines. This method provides the best opportunity to rely on facts and to avoid favoritism, ensuring a level playing field for all brewers. It serves both the industry and the consumer to have unbiased and objective scores from qualified experts.

In effort to provide the most credible evaluations, The Beer Connoisseur hand-selects judges with a minimum BJCP ranking of "National" or Master Cicerone®. Judges are required to work with an assistant that handles beer prior to evaluation, and breweries are not allowed to solicit judges directly.

In the single blind tasting format, judges are presented with a chilled, properly poured beer and given its style category. Scoring is then done on the following basis using a 100-point scale: Aroma (24 points), Appearance (6 points), Flavor (40 points), Mouthfeel (10 points) and Overall Impression (20 points).

The score breakdown is as follows:

100 to 96: World Class – You need this beer in your life.

95 to 91: Exceptional – Don't hesitate.

90 to 86: Very Good – A brew to savor.

85 to 75: Average – Somewhat unimpressive.

74 and below: Not Recommended – Just walk away.

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TOP 200 BEERS OF 2019



OFFICIAL REVIEW



VERY GOOD

86-90

#200 - SYNOPSIS BLACK CURRANT

RATED 86

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 34 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 16 / 20

Area Two Experimental Brewing Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com/areatwo

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 6.4% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

Judge's Review by John C. Tull

The sourness is the first thing you notice when you taste it. It is tart from start to finish with significant acidity. The black currant is subtle and masked by the sour character. The sourness comes across as lemon and grapefruit juice, almost puckering. The body is light, and the carbonation, which was not very visible, is present and adequate as more carbonation would only heighten the acidity further. This is an intensely sour beer with quite a lot of acidity. The fruit may have added more tartness, though that could be entirely driven by the fermentation. For me, the main detractor is the lack of complexity. With that said, it is still a good sour ale, particularly if you crave extremely sour examples.

#199 - DRUPES E. DAISY

RATED 86

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 34 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Peter B's Brewpub Monterey, CA | www.peterbsbrewpub.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 5.8% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 40°

Judge's Review by Randy Scorby

Moderate mixed dark stone fruit of plums and black cherries are up front, with a hint of bready malt and light tartness developing behind as the beer opens up. Prominent clean, lactic sourness hits in the flavor first followed by moderate grainy malt and sour dark stone fruit. The fruit peaks mid-palate then falls off. The lactic sourness is quite dominant and steals the balance, lasting through the medium finish into the aftertaste. The fruit in the aroma was pleasant but tended to be a bit muddled in the flavor, lacking freshness. The lactic acidity was quite high and needs to be tamed a bit to create better balance with the fruit and base beer.

#198 - DOLCE MIO

RATED 86

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 7 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Baxter Brewing Co. Lewiston, ME | www.baxterbrewing.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 8.5% | IBUs: 40 | Serve at: 45°

Judge's Review by Pat Mulloy

This has an intriguing ingredient list – cacao, vanilla bean, lactose and lemon that, in the wrong hands, could've gone off the rails. An initial cannoli smell backs off to allow more traditional brown ale aromas through. The cacao flavors work with the malt flavors, the vanilla bean is used with a light touch to enhance flavors rather than dominate, and the lemon is a light accent. The hop flavors are low, but the hop bitterness is just big enough to keep the lactose and vanilla bean from being cloying. It crosses the line briefly wandering into porter territory, but for me, a little more creaminess would put it over the top.

#197 - CITRA CANNON

Heavy Seas Beer Baltimore, MD | www.hsbeer.com
Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 86

Aroma: 19 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 16 / 20

Judge's Review by Rick Franckhauser

The beer pours a golden hue with a light orange cast to it. The lemony aspect of the hops is most dominant in the flavor, but a slight grapefruit element and some rather nondescript citrus pith comes up mid-palate. There is some low-level, slightly sweet pale malt in the finish. Moderately bitter, somewhere between what is expected for an American IPA on the low end and a NEIPA on the high end. Medium-dry finish with the lemon hops lingering into the aftertaste. A little pineapple shows up in the aftertaste and is a welcome surprise. The beer has a medium body with moderately high carbonation. There is a slight hop astringency, which is expected.

#196 - PINWHEEL

Urban Artifact Cincinnati, OH | www.artifactbeer.com
Style: Fruit and Spice Beer | ABV: 4.5% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 46°

RATED 87

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 7 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael McGuire

In the glass it formed a very temporary thin white head atop a slightly hazy gold-orange brew. The aroma consisted of dominant fresh orange notes followed by a lesser lactic sourness. The flavor profile also featured orange up front with vanilla in a secondary and pleasantly complementary role. Malt and hop flavors were not part of the profile, consistent with many goses. The mouthfeel was characterized by a light body, modest carbonation, light creaminess and no astringent or alcohol warmth, consistent with style except for the carbonation. Overall this was a simple, tasty, refreshing, easy-drinking beer perfect for summer drinking sessions.

#195 - HAMMER CHAIN

Odell Brewing Co. Fort Collins, CO | www.odellbrewing.com
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 45 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 87

Aroma: 19 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Brad Darnell

My first quaff offers malt sweetness supporting a moderate hop bitterness. The finish is dry and the body medium-full. A pleasant soft alcohol warmth rounds out the initial experience. The large head takes a while to drop but persists with a ¼" remaining on top. Further sniffs reveal tangerine, mango and pineapple hops, a faint alcohol nose and light crackery malt. The malt is doughier in the flavor and the hop aromas transfer to the flavor. This is well-balanced and cleanly fermented. The hops linger alongside a bit of malt sweetness into the finish. Overall a substantial Double IPA that uses the malt bill to create a sweetness supportive of the hops.

#194 - SWEET ORANGE WIT

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com
Style: Witbier | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 16 | Serve at: 32°

RATED 87

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 4 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 7 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Richard Wong

The pour revealed a wonderful light yellow/orange hue along with good carbonation. The aroma of this beer had a nice malt sweetness along with a very light orange aroma almost reminiscent of Fanta. Negligible hop aroma in the pour is fine and indicative of the style. This style of beer should not be hoppy at all. The flavor of this beer had a nice malt wheat backbone that was lightly hopped, and, again, it had an orange soda-like flavor that can be appealing to a certain beer drinker. The body and mouthfeel of this beer were both very light and refreshing. I can see this beer enjoyed during a hot day.

#193 - MONK'S UNCLE

Pike Brewing Co. Seattle, WA | www.pikebrewing.com

Style: Belgian Tripel | ABV: 9.0% | IBUs: 34 | Serve at: 42°

RATED 87

Aroma: 19 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Rick Franckhauser

The beer pours a pale gold with some noticeable haze and a fine creamy white cap that lingers to the end. Lots of tiny bubbles springing up warn of its carbonation levels. The flavor brings the huge spicy phenolics that the aroma warned you about. An even more distinct clove, mace and pepper quality is exaggerated by noticeable alcohol. There is a slight candy-like sweetness from the alcohol as well. The grainy malt comes across a little rough around the edges. This may also be a result of the high phenolics. Firmly bitter and a dry finish. A touch of floral hops shows up for the first time in the aftertaste along with ever-present spice. Medium-light body with effervescent carbonation and noted alcohol warmth. The carbonation level lends a little sharpness.

#192 - LOG CABIN

Pure Project Brewing San Diego, CA | www.purebrewing.org

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 14.0% | IBUs: 40 | Serve at: 55°

RATED 87

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Scott Birdwell

The aroma features a roast grain/coffee character right off the bat. Then, it morphs into more of a mocha note as the cocoa kicks in. You can detect the oak barrel in the aroma, but it is surprisingly subtle. There is a hint of maple syrup in the finish. The head dissipates quickly after pouring, which is common in high-alcohol beers. As for the flavor, the roast grain flavor wins the initial race, followed closely by other sweet specialty grains. The bourbon barrel, subtle in aroma, is more evident on the palate. It melds nicely with the cocoa in the finish. The body is heavy and carbonation is low. Considering everything, especially the barrel-aging, there is almost no astringency in the finish whatsoever. Very smooth!

#191 - BRAVUS RASPBERRY GOSE (NON-ALCOHOLIC)

Bravus Brewing Co. Newport, CA | www.bravus.com

Style: Fruit Beer | ABV: 0.5% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 38°

RATED 87

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by David Sapsis

The flavor starts full of ripe raspberry puree, with a hit of tart acid coming very early then trailing for the remainder of the flavor as the sweetness emerges with a lingering, pleasant and powerful berry flavor. There is very low bitterness as expected, but it diverges sharply from the base beer style in that it lacks a lemon-orange coriander element, and a modestly strong emergent sweetness and creaminess in the back mask any delicate salt character one might find. The body is light, and the finish is surprisingly long, fruity and distinctly off dry and tart. I get a touch of salt, but it's very hard to find. Carbonation is distinctly low for the style.

#190 - DRUIF ROUGE

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 7.3% | IBUs: 6 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 87

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

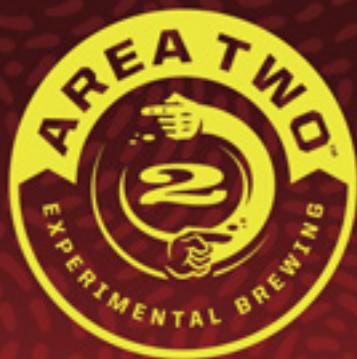
Mouthfeel: 7 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Jason Johnson

The beer is fermented well and sits well on my palate. It's a bit under-carbonated, and I'm not sure if that's intentional as some lambics can be served near still. It's interesting and certainly not a run of the mill lambic. I would personally like to see a bit more pop from the carbonation, and more character from the fruit as opposed to Brett being the dominant player. I want those pinot noir grapes to shine though more and let the Brett and lactic tartness support the fruit in this beer. I just feel that would work a bit better for me, though this is still a very solid beer worth trying.

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#189 - MODEST MAIDEN MÄRZEN

Big Boss Brewing Co. Raleigh, NC | www.bigbossbrewing.com

Style: Märzen | ABV: 4.7% | IBUs: 15 | Serve at: 48°

RATED 87

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Dan Preston*

This beer pours a brilliant clear deep golden color with some hints of copper and an off-white head that clings to the glass. The aroma is malty and subtly complex – crackery pilsner-like graininess, light toasty melanoidins, soft caramel and a sweet fruity smoke – without any overbearing character. Beyond the malt are mild spicy/grassy hops and low red apple-like esters, but otherwise clean lager yeast. The flavor is similar to the aroma but with stronger notes of smoke, toasty Vienna malt and a fruity sweetness. The flavor flirts the thin line between festbier and märzen, being more crackery and less rich than most American versions of the latter. It's a nice twist on a classic style.

#188 - OKTOBERFEST

Motorworks Brewing Bradenton, FL | www.motorworksbrewing.com

Style: Märzen | ABV: 5.6% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 87

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 16 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

This Märzen pours amber in color with a small cream-colored head and excellent clarity. The aroma is of moderately toasty bready malt with a light herbal hop character and a clean lager profile lacking esters. The flavor is similarly toasty but with a light grainy aspect. The finish is moderately bittered with a light toasty malt flavor. While the toasty malt flavor is to style, this example lacks the malt complexity compared with more traditional märzens from Bavaria. The bitterness is on the high side, which seems to disrupt what should be a smooth, malty finish. This is a pleasant, well-made amber lager but lacks a little authenticity compared to its German counterparts.

#187 - FIVE WEEK SAIL

Arches Brewing Hapeville, GA | www.archesbrewing.com

Style: Baltic Porter | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 35 | Serve at: 38 to 40°

RATED 87

Aroma: 19 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

This beer pours dark brown, almost black, in color, is clear and shows a light brown head. The aroma is moderate chocolate and toasted malt with a light burnt note; light dark fruit of plums complements the dark malt. The body is medium with a hint of pleasant warmth. The flavor is moderate chocolate and toasted malt with a light plum ester and a hint of sweetness. This is a very good strong porter but misses the mark for the Baltic porter style. The malt character is a little aggressive and the malt and ester flavors could be more complex. Regardless of style, enjoy this strong porter for the very good beer that it is.

#186 - TASTES LIKE SPACE

Belching Beaver Brewery San Diego, CA | www.belchingbeaver.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 5.3% | Serve at: 45 to 55°

RATED 87

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 34 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Tracy Hensley*

The creamy tan head clings and slowly cascades down the side of the glass. The beer is an attractive opaque dark brown that appears to be brilliantly clear with amber-dark brown edges. The first taste carries intense notes of chocolate syrup and brown bread malt that feel smooth and creamy. Upon returning, flavors start with melted semi-sweet chocolate and then evolve into roasted nut butter and dark caramel before finishing like creamed oatmeal sprinkled with vanilla sugar and cocoa powder. Unfortunately, the mouthfeel feels cloyingly thick and slick, yet somewhat hollow in flavor. The milk stout base is spot on. It is smooth and creamy with a slight twang and complex, lightly warming vanilla notes.

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#185 - CHANUKAH, HANUKKAH: PASS THE BEER **RATED 87**

Shmaltz Brewing Co. Clifton Park, NY | www.shmaltzbrewing.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 8.0% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

Aroma: 20 / 24
Appearance: 4 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Heniff

Chanukah, Hanukkah: Pass the Beer pours black and opaque with a large, fluffy brown head. The aroma is chocolate and roasted malt with lighter ashy notes; there are no hops or esters in the aroma. The flavor is similarly chocolate and roasted malts with hints of added chocolate and a subtle sweetness. The beer finishes moderately bitter with lingering roasted and chocolate malts. Chanukah, Hanukkah: Pass the Beer is a pleasant stout-like strong ale but the added chocolate flavor does not stand out enough from the base beer. Regardless, the beer is an enjoyable stout-like strong ale that stands well on its own despite the less-than-desirable chocolate character.

#184 - ALDERSBACHER KLOSTER DUNKEL **RATED 87**

Aldersbacher Brewery Aldersbach, Germany | www.aldersbacher.de

Style: Munich Dunkel | ABV: 5.3% | Serve at: 40°

Aroma: 20 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 34 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Dan Preston

This beer pours a deep brown color with a creamy tan head that clings to the glass. The aroma is very rich and malty; full of bread crusts, melanoidins, toast, nuttiness, medium caramel, hints of cocoa and dark fruit (raisins, plums). There is not much else beyond the malt as there are no hops and a very clean yeast profile. The flavor is similar, but takes on more sweetness, not so much from higher caramel character but rather from low bitterness leading to a semi-sweet finish. The body is medium-full yet not cloying with a rich, crisp mouthfeel. This is a great classic example of the style, though a bit on the sweeter side.

#183 - POIRE **RATED 87**

E.Z. Orchards Salem, OR | www.ezorchards.com

Style: Traditional Perry | ABV: 5.9% | Serve at: 45°

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 34 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Richard Wong

The appearance of this perry revealed a hue that was almost clear (like water) with very little carbonation in the pour. The perry had nice light, subtle fruit flavors that were hard to discern from apples and/or pears. It had a nice subtle sweetness and light acidity, which balanced nicely with one another. The body and mouthfeel of the perry was light. It had very good carbonation that was sparkling in the palate. The aftertaste was crisp, clean, light and refreshing. However, as light and subtle as the fruit flavors were, there was a distinct taste of freshness in this nicely made perry.

#182 - NELSON SLAYER **RATED 88**

Alvarado Street Brewery Salinas, CA | www.alvaradostreetbrewery.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 8.5% | IBUs: 38 | Serve at: 45°

Aroma: 20 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Susan Ruud

Before even getting the glass close to my nose, I could smell a huge dank, melony and citrusy hop aroma. The hops pretty much overpowered any malt aroma in this beer. At first sip this beer was full of hops – dank, garlic and a touch of citrus. A low level of malt was in the background but hop flavor dominated. Despite all of that hop aroma and flavor, the finish was just slightly hoppy with very low levels of bitterness lingering while the flavor lingers in your mouth for a long time. The body of this beer was on the medium-full side and smooth throughout. This is a beer for a cool fall day sitting out by the lake.

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#181 - DEDUCTION

Taxman Brewing Co. Bargersville, IN | www.taxmanbrewing.com

Style: Belgian Dubbel | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 50°

RATED 88

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

This beer pours a brilliant deep red-brown with a creamy beige head that persists. Upon tasting, it is fruity and sweet with a deep malty richness, toasty and clean. The beer does finish a bit sweet, but it is buffered somewhat by the alcohol and phenolics. The body is on the fuller side, warming with medium carbonation. Some sticky sugar on the lips and palate through the finish. Overall, this beer checks all of the boxes but it seems a bit too sweet overall. If I had to wager a guess, there is some crystal malt that bulks this up rather than allowing it to be lean. Nice beer, just on the sweet side overall.

#180 - CA PHE

Urban South Brewery New Orleans, LA | www.urbansouthbrewery.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 24 | Serve at: 45 to 55°

RATED 88

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 16 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

In the aroma, this beer is definitely all about coffee. Notes of toffee and chocolate permeate, along with a milk-type note. Balanced overall. Great aroma! It's a deep brown/black and opaque, with a creamy tan head. Flavor-wise, this is distinctly a sweet/milk stout at the base, though it stops short of being too sweet. Fresh and clean-tasting with the coffee still present, though more subdued than in the aroma. I would say that a bit more bitterness could help to support the sweetness overall. The beer is creamy and medium-full-bodied with moderate carbonation. Overall, this is a well-made and well-interpreted expression of this style that could use a touch more bitterness to help balance it out.

#179 - WALK IN THE PARFAIT

Molly's Spirits Denver, CO | www.mollysspirits.com

Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 15 | Serve at: 35 to 40°

RATED 88

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by John C. Tull*

A fair amount of acidity is present, but the fruit takes the bite off of it. The combination of the fruit and acidity gives it a sweet grapefruit quality (a reminder of Ruby Red grapefruit). The body feels medium from the fruit. The carbonation is fairly light. Overall, this is an interesting experiment with fruit and wild yeasts. Though the aroma was initially off-putting, the balance of flavors with a strong, fruit quality and a relatively subtle sourness were a pleasant surprise. If you like fruit beers, particularly raspberry, you should try this. If sour beers tend to put you off, this is a sour beer that might change your mind.

#178 - JOGR

Reformation Brewery Woodstock, GA | www.reformationbrewery.com

Style: International Pale Lager | ABV: 4.9% | IBUs: 25 | Serve at: 38 to 45°

RATED 88

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Bury*

New world hops were definitely used as the nose is dominated by moderately high papaya, passion fruit and overripe mango. Restrained doughy malt helps to support the hops. Cleanly fermented. A similar hop presentation appears in the flavor with tropical notes dominating. The doughy malt also has elements of honey-like caramel malt, but the balance is tilted towards hops with middle-of-the-road bitterness. The bitterness lingers after a crisp finish with a green, raw hop character that detracts. JOGR is a well-made beer that's sure to delight many a beer drinker. But with a number of excellent IPLs already on the market, it has tough competition to measure up to. And with the raw hop bitterness and unfiltered appearance, it doesn't quite hold up to those superior examples.

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#177 - CHIMAY DORÉE

Abbaye de Scourmont Chimay, Belgium | www.chimay.com
Style: Witbier | ABV: 4.8% | IBUs: 16 | Serve at: 43 to 46°

RATED 88

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 35 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

The beer pours a hazy golden color with a big white head. The nose is herbal and grassy with a citrus tinge and a suggestion of coriander. Almost a citron or yuzu note as well, along with fresh tart apple. White pepper and some classic spicy phenols round out with soft wheat. Fresh and fairly clean. I also get a hint of cola as well. On tasting, it is fairly one-dimensional. Very drinkable, but all the interesting aromatics in the nose disappear and leave a fairly hoppy and bitter, fresh grainy beer. Very drinkable, but not a ton of depth. High carbonation. I could see this being a table beer for the monks at the Abbey, but not a ton of interest outside of this novelty.

#176 - HUBERT

Melvin Brewing Alpine, WY | www.melvinbrewing.com
Style: American Pale Ale | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 55 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 88

Aroma: 20 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 34 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

Hubert pours golden in color with a slight haze and a big, fluffy white head. The aroma is of strong tangerine hops with lighter notes of mango and pine; the malt aroma is very light. The flavor is again prominently hoppy with more of a generic citrus flavor with very light malt support. The beer finishes moderately bitter with moderate citrusy hops and a light resinous note. This is a very hop-forward APA that really drinks more like an IPA. The hops are very assertive, and the malt is not present at a high enough level to provide balance to the aggressive hopping. Regardless, this is a very well-brewed and enjoyable beer.

#175 - THE CANNIBAL

Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant Wilmington, DE | www.ironhillbrewery.com
Style: Belgian Golden Strong Ale | ABV: 7.8% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 88

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 4 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

Lightly peppery, lemony, almost saison-like aromas and low vanilla phenols support the citrusy notes and a relatively high spicy hop nose. At tasting, distinctly Belgian with white pepper and a hint of clove, along with vanilla undertones. I do note a distinct solventy ester that also adds to the mouthfeel. Quite well attenuated with a pleasing medium-high bitterness, perhaps accentuated by suspended yeast. Well balanced, though I wish the beer was fully bright, as this contributes a roughness rather than a pillowy note. This could be a function of difficulty in decanting from a can. Doesn't seem to have any refermented character, which is good. There is a peculiarity to the mouthfeel, almost umami-like due to the suspension.

#174 - LABATT BLUE CITRA

FIFCO USA Rochester, NY | www.fifcousa.com
Style: International Pale Lager | ABV: 4.7% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 36 to 42°

RATED 88

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 3 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 7 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

This has an international pale lager chassis: That perfect clean malt and fermentation character that only a large brewer can achieve. The brewer has beefed up the malt chassis a little bit to support the beautiful, big, rich citrusy hop treatment lightly seasoned with some pine and resin. The hop flavors are big, and the bitterness has substance but is not harsh. There is enough malt and hop flavor to knock the rough edges off. As a session beer, it makes no pretense to special or classic status but stakes a claim as an everyday beer, and a very drinkable, flavor-packed one at that. Despite its non-craft pedigree, I like this beer and will drink it again.

#173 - DIA DE LOS DEFTONES

Belching Beaver Brewery San Diego, CA | www.ironhillbrewery.com

Style: Fruit Beer | ABV: 5.0% | IBUs: 15 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 88

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by *Randy Scorby*

Dia De Los Deftones pours a deep yellow with a touch of haze and a white head that leaves a thick stand of fine bubbles on the beer. The aroma initially shows light sulfur (that is typical of lager yeast strains), moderate lime zest and very light grainy malt. A hint of spicy hop aroma emerges as it warms. The flavor follows the aroma, although the lime character is more prominent and tends to mask the other expected characteristics. A hint of grainy malt develops in the aftertaste. Any hop flavor is hidden behind the lime. Medium-low hop bitterness emerges mid-palate, growing as it lingers through the medium-dry finish. The medium body and moderate carbonation finish this beer.

#172 - I'LL HAVE WHAT SHE'S HAVING

Evil Genius Beer Co. Philadelphia, PA | www.evilgeniusbeer.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 9.4% | IBUs: 87 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 88

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 7 / 10

Overall Impression: 15 / 20

Judge's Review by *Dan Martich*

The alcohol flavor comes through as big and bold, as a reminder of the strength of the style. Astringent from the dark/roasted malts, with plenty of alcoholic warmth that is felt down the throat. Lacks the velvety texture of the base style. A big beer that drinks well but can become better with smoothness and balance. The alcoholic notes are higher than expected and the bitterness seems to dry out the palate some. Perhaps oats in the mash and a lower fermentation temp. to keep the fusel alcohols lower may help round out the mouthfeel. Lowering the carbonation can also help smooth the mouthfeel. I believe that with those few tweaks this beer can go from good to excellent.

#171 - CHRISTMAS ALE 2019

Anchor Brewing Co. San Francisco, CA | www.anchorbrewing.com

Style: Winter Seasonal Beer | ABV: 6.9% | IBUs: 43 | Serve at: 57 to 61°

RATED 88

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by *Michael Heniff*

This is the 45th edition of this holiday staple. Each year the secretive recipe varies, and a different tree is depicted on the label (this year is the Western Arborvitae). Anchor Christmas Ale pours dark brown in color, is clear, and holds a small off-white head. The aroma is of moderate chocolate malt with a light pine among other lighter spices. The flavor mimics the aroma with prominent chocolate malt with just a hint of sweetness and a light piney and spicy character. The beer finishes moderately bitter and dry with a lingering chocolate and nondescript spice that is reminiscent of a cola. This is a well-balanced spiced beer where malt is the predominant flavor and the spices complement without being overwhelming. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

#170 - JUICY IPA

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.2% | IBUs: 35 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 88

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

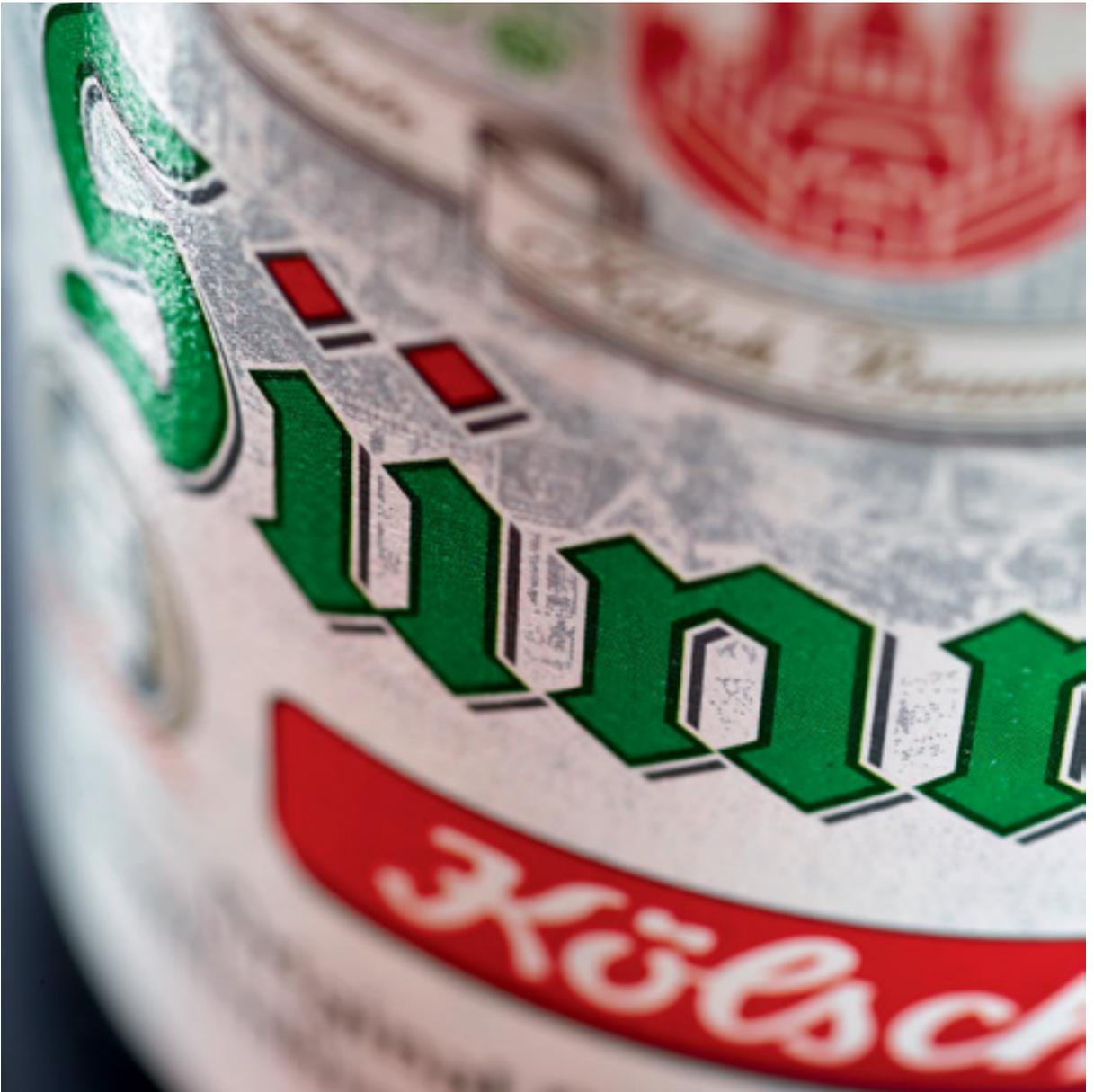
Judge's Review by *Rick Franckhauser*

A big punch of pineapple is first out of the glass and soon accompanied by some tangerine, kumquats and lemons. The beer pours a lightly hazy straw color, not quite the level of your average weissbier. Topped with a creamy white head with long lingering retention. The flavor provides lots of pineapple and resinous hops. Some additional herbaceous hop flavors come in with a touch of dankness. Moderately high levels of bitterness seem to be somewhat elevated by the resin as well aiding in a dry finish. The citrus hops provide a tart impression in the flavor and reappear in the aftertaste. Medium-bodied with moderate carbonation. No astringency but a touch of hop bite. Some alcohol warmth is noted.

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#169 - BRUT IPA

Devils Backbone Brewing Co. Lexington, VA | www.dbbrewingcompany.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 6.3% | IBUs: 26 | Serve at: 38 to 42°

RATED 88

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by James Link*

A very actively carbonated pale-yellow beer produced a substantial white head, which held up throughout this evaluation. The aroma was lightly fruity with defined citrus notes and just a touch of wheat. Hops lent a firm floral bouquet to advise the drinker that this was still a clear-cut IPA. This was a highly attenuated beer, which allows the aforementioned floral hop character to be showcased while increasing drinkability by means of a very thin body and well-hidden alcohol levels. The wine-like dryness created as a result of a thorough fermentation gives this style its uniqueness. The champagne-like qualities exhibited here make this beer an obvious choice for both beer and wine lovers.

#168 - MYSTIK BOCK

Arches Brewing Hapeville, GA | www.archesbrewing.com

Style: Dunkles Bock | ABV: 7.2% | IBUs: 28 | Serve at: 38 to 40°

RATED 88

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jim Koebel*

Mystik Bock by Arches Brewing was judged as a Dunkles Bock, BJCP Category 6C. True to type, this beer has a rich, Munich-type malt aroma. It becomes more distinctly toasty after a while in the glass. It pours with a low, tan-colored head and is reddish-amber in color. It is very clear. This beer has a sweet flavor impression but is attenuated. It tastes malty, toasty, and slightly herbal from noble hop additions. This beer finishes malty but dry, smooth and crisp. Carbonation is much higher than the relatively small head suggests. Overall, Mystik Bock is a clean, traditional representation of a Dunkles Bock, but without the complexity or depth of the best examples.

#167 - ROCK ME IMADAEUS

Peter B's Brewpub Monterey, CA | www.peterbsbrewpub.com

Style: Fruit Beer | ABV: 5.4% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 88

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 34 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Randy Scorby*

Rock Me Imadaeus pours a deep copper with a reddish hue, with a thick and creamy off-white head that lasts a long time. The aroma is prominent ripe raspberries and raspberry candy, with moderate bready, grainy malt following as the berries fade slightly. There is also a light tartness in the nose. No hop aroma or fermentation esters emerge under the raspberries. In the flavor, moderate raspberry seeds and skins develop right before a light grainy maltiness and medium hop bitterness emerge. The hop bitterness lingers through a medium sweet finish into the aftertaste and tends to steal the balance. The medium-light tartness is likely from the raspberry additions and adds a pleasant dimension to the beer.

#166 - BUENOS TIEMPOS

Belching Beaver Brewery San Diego, CA | www.belchingbeaver.com

Style: International Pale Lager | ABV: 4.8% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 88

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

There is a very light grainy malt aroma, with just a hint of floral hops, and a background herbal note. The flavor echoes the aroma with light grainy malt notes and light floral hops, but also light corn, and particularly a light cooked corn note. A very light body, balance between the malt and hops is about even (both very low), and a short finish that ends with an herbal/green-leaf/forest-floor type of thing. Carbonation is medium-low, and with light flavors all around, this is a beer best consumed on the cold side. Drink this after mowing the backyard with a big pile of freshly made tortilla chips and some homemade guacamole.

#165 - LIL' JUICY

Two Roads Brewing Co. Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 5.2% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 88

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

Lil' Juicy is double dry hopped with Galaxy, Citra and Azacca hops. Lil' Juicy pours golden in color with the requisite haze and a small, clingy white head. The aroma is of prominent tangerine with a lighter resinous character. The flavor continues the dominant tangerine hops with hints of mango with just a hint of malt flavor. The beer finishes moderately bitter and dry with a lingering tangerine hop flavor. This is a very pleasant, quaffable hazy IPA with the hops providing primarily tangerine flavors. A little more malt to balance the hop profile would be welcomed. Hop heads enjoy!

#164 - SAMUEL ADAMS NEW ENGLAND IPA

The Boston Beer Co. Boston, MA | www.bostonbeer.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 6.8% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 88

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The flavor follows the aromatics with lots of orange and lemon citrus. A little sweet malt is perceived mid-palate and assists in keeping the balance from being overly bitter. The higher carbonation levels are also assisting in elevating the perception of bitterness, perhaps slightly beyond what the style calls for. The finish is medium-dry with some lingering alcohol warmth. Medium body with moderately high carbonation and some alcohol warmth. The carb level is also responsible for increasing the perception of hop bite, spiking the mouth and rather unpleasant. Overall an enjoyable example of the style that could be enhanced with some additional tropical and or stone fruit hop character to aid in interest and dimension.

#163 - ALDERSBACHER KLOSTER WEISS DUNKEL **RATED 88**

Aldersbacher Brewery Aldersbach, Germany | www.aldersbacher.de

Style: Dunkles Weissbier | ABV: 5.1% | Serve at: 45°

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 34 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Dan Preston*

The aroma is very rich with a mix of wheat and Munich-like malts leading to a complex bouquet of toasty bread crusts, melanoidins, fresh bread, dark fruit (prunes, black cherry, raisins) and mild caramel. There are no hops to be found, though moderately low yeast character of spicy phenols (clove) and mild fruity esters (banana, apricot) are present. The flavor follows suit with a rich, malty forefront, low yeastiness and a very low floral hops character, but enough bitterness to keep it from being sweet. This is my kind of beer. It's a bit lower on the yeast and stronger on the malt than usual, but that is what makes it more enjoyable to me.

#162 - CAMPER

Big Lake Brewing Holland, MI | www.biglakebrewing.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 89

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brad Darnell*

A hazy orange beer sits in my glass and supports a medium-sized, frothy and rocky eggshell white head, medium-short retention with light lacing. The aroma is heavy candied mango, pineapple, and tangerine hops with light bread malt. Medium-high hop bitterness emerges from the sweet hop flavors, the same as those noted in the aroma. A dry bread malt supports the hops and provides some balance. The body is medium with moderate carbonation. Light, sweet vanilla notes are secondary aroma and flavor characteristics. The beer is fermented clean with no ester aromas or flavors. Mango dominates the flavor after every sip. While the hops present a candied sweetness, the finish is dry and there is a lingering soft bitterness.



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#161 - PALE (NON-ALCOHOLIC)

Partake Brewing Toronto, Ontario, Canada | www.drinkpartake.com
Style: American Pale Ale | ABV: 0.3% | IBUs: 18 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 89

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 7 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Tracy Hensley

Partake Brewing Pale's aroma begins with low caramel followed by low muted notes of pine needles and candied tangerine rinds, vanilla pods, low cocoa powder and frothy white wheat. Pale's ivory, creamy, persistent head sits on a slightly hazy golden-brown beer. While lacking in intensity, its flavor is reminiscent of crackers and supported by tangerines and pine needles with an aftertaste of restrained hop bitterness. The mouthfeel is crisp and refreshing balanced by a clean dry finish that is unmistakably watery. Overall, an easy to drink watery non-alcoholic pale ale. For the style, it needs more intense aroma, flavor and a fuller body, but its lack of alcohol is likely the main contributing factor to its watery elements.

#160 - CHALLENGE SERIES #11 DOUBLE BRUT IPA **RATED 89**

Bear Republic Brewing Co. Cloverdale, CA | www.bearrepublic.com
Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 15 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 7 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Tracy Hensley

The flavor begins as bright mouthwatering lemon oil supported by high warming rubbing alcohol and light, fresh-milled flour. Over time, the aroma evolves into lingering strong lemongrass and pine sap. The beer has a brilliant white creamy head that clings to the sides of the glass and persists on a hazy yellow-colored beer with pleasant persistent carbonation rising from the bottom of the glass. Flavor starts out as high fresh fruit cocktail of cherries, mango and pineapple with a spritz of lemon zest and pine sap supported by low pita chip malt. Moderate bitterness and a dry finish quickly turn to tart green apple hard candy and a medium-hot vodka aftertaste.

#159 - BARREL AGED SAISON III

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriember.com
Style: Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 6.5% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 89

Aroma: 19 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Rick Franckhauser

The beer pours a golden apricot color with significant haze and is topped by a creamy white head with great retention. The flavor profile provides some elevated levels of toasted oak and more white pepper spiciness. The phenolics are enhanced by some spicy hops. The funky notes bring a savory perception, somewhat like white balsamic vinegar minus the acetic acid. The spiced pickled lemon notes are accentuated by the moderately high levels of tartness and bitterness. The beer finishes dry as any good saison should. The bitterness and a touch of wood linger deep into the aftertaste. There is some prickling to the tongue but not astringent. A touch of alcohol warmth is noted when it's all said and done.

#158 - LLOYD'S LIGHT

Arches Brewing Hapeville, GA | www.archesbrewing.com
Style: American Light Lager | ABV: 3.8% | IBUs: 12 | Serve at: 35 to 40°

RATED 89

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Sean Coughlin

The flavor features a pleasant bread-like note that has a touch of richness to it. This drinks like an all-malt lager rather than a macro lager that has been cut with substantial corn or rice to lighten the body and flavor. The bitterness is minimal but enough to provide appropriate balance to this interpretation of this style. The mouthfeel is a bit heavy for style, lacking the lightness and crispness found in the best examples. Overall, this is a very well-made beer that's a grade or two above its intended weight class. Considering that this beer is crafted more than engineered, it should be applauded for its depth of flavor while staying true to being a clean, simple beer.

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ALC./VOL.

100
CALORIES

LEMONADE
Hard Seltzer

1g
SUGARS

3g
CARBS

#157 - VACANZA

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com

Style: Fruit and Spice Beer | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 89

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael McGuire*

In the glass, it formed a thin white head atop a somewhat hazy reddish-orange brew. The aroma consisted of floral hibiscus notes followed by sweet citrus ones from the tangerine and a mild lactic-citrus tart sourness. The flavor profile also featured both sweet and tart contributions from the tangerine up front with the hibiscus in a supporting role. A hint of saltiness is detectable, as appropriate for a gose. Malt and hop flavors were noted but not dominant. The mouthfeel was characterized by a crisp light body, low carbonation and no astringent or alcohol warmth, consistent with the gose style except for the carbonation. Overall this was a simple, tart, refreshing beer perfect for summer drinking.

#156 - CAPTAIN MAY IPA

Cape May Brewing Co. Cape May, NJ | www.capemaybrewery.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.4% | IBUs: 42 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 89

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael McGuire*

In the glass it formed a thick white head with moderately strong retention atop a slightly hazy orange brew. The aroma began with juicy and fruity (peach, mango, pineapple) notes complemented by base malt and lesser caramel ones. The flavor profile reflected the same ingredient influences and balance and progression as the aroma. The mouthfeel featured medium body and carbonation, slight but noticeable alcohol warmth, no creaminess or astringency – just a full fruity/juicy coating of the palate balanced by bittering hops for balance and enough malt backbone to escape a cloying finish. The overall effect was a clean, balanced and highly drinkable IPA with broad appeal.

#155 - BARRELED TREASURE

Odell Brewing Co. Fort Collins, CO | www.odellbrewing.com

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 11.0% | Serve at: 45 to 55°

RATED 89

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

There is a moderate level of bitterness from the roasted grain and hops, but the beer still finishes sweet. Some of the sugar comes off a bit raw and burnt, like molasses, but that works well in this beer. The flavors are intense and there are a lot of them, almost all from malt and the expected oxidation you get from extended aging. I get some dark caramel, a little molasses, chocolate, coffee, rum and even dates. What I don't get is much from the barrel. Maybe it's blended well, but I don't get any wood character or even vanilla tones from the wood. Rum notes come from the barrel and alcohol. This beer is full-bodied and chewy, quite smooth, with a little burn of alcohol when it goes down.

#154 - GRAPEFRUIT DEUCE COUPE DIPA

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.9% | IBUs: 100 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 89

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

The color is bright gold with excellent clarity. It pours an off-white head with good head retention and lacing. The beer does finish dry and bitter, which is good. It does have a low alcoholic warmth. The flavors are well balanced and classical for the style. The grapefruit plays a nice supporting role and does not overtake the beer. I get a medium body, no hop astringency and smooth creamy texture to the beer. This is a very well-fruited Double IPA. The grapefruit is present and not overwhelming, yet still I could use a little bit more. The beer as a whole is refreshing and quite nice for such a bigger beer. I recommend this one.



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#153 - SIPPIN' PRETTY

Odell Brewing Co. Fort Collins, CO | www.odellbrewing.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 4.5% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 89

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brad Darnell*

Moderate lactic berry and soft guava sourness invites a longer nasal pull, which then yields light cracker malt and a light sulfur nose. The pour is cloudy strawberry red/orange with a large, thick off-white/pink head. Head retention is long but there is limited lacing. A light lactic tartness and soft saltiness linger into the finish. The salt softens the sourness and slightly enhances the malt sweetness. Overall, this is a light-bodied beer that allows the berries and guava to remain the focus while presenting a light and crisp tart and acidic character. The malt is light but offers enough sweetness to keep the acidity from becoming unpleasant. This beer would complement a simple angel food or pound cake.

#152 - KILT LIFTER SCOTCH ALE

Pike Brewing Co. Seattle, WA | www.pikebrewing.com

Style: Wee Heavy | ABV: 6.5% | IBUs: 27 | Serve at: 42°

RATED 89

Aroma: 19 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The aroma provides a deep caramel malt presence with a low-level background hint of smoke. There is a very faint hint of earthy hops along with some fruity esters reminiscent of dried cherries. A touch of fleeting roast character is noted as it warms. The flavor brings a big deep caramelized sugar aspect that's neither burnt nor sweet. Rich dark caramel maltiness is accompanied by some cherry esters. Definitely balanced toward the hops with just enough bittering hops and dark malts to move it away from being cloying. There is a dark toast accompanying the medium-sweet finish. Lingering caramel malts last well into the aftertaste. Full-bodied and creamy with moderately low carbonation levels, which adds to the impression of fullness. There is no noted alcohol warmth expected of the style.

#151 - BATSQUATCH HAZY IPA

Rogue Ales & Spirits Newport, OR | www.rogue.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 6.7% | IBUs: 54 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 89

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

If you are looking for a well-made, hazy NEIPA that does not burn a hole in your stomach, this beer is for you. Tropical fruit aromas, melon and stone fruit are not as up front as I would like, but they get support from medium-low, clean, neutral malt aromas and a trace of onion. It pours hazy gold under a white cap with good retention. The flavor is juicy and fruity with papaya, melon, traces of stone fruit and a mild, but very welcome, bitterness. Bready, grainy slightly sweet malt flavors support the hops and lead to a mellow, lingering aftertaste. The beer stands out for its balance between the hop flavors, the hop bitterness and the malt and its drinkability.

#150 - PEANUT BUTTER KOROVA MILK PORTER

Gnarly Barley Brewing Co. Hammond, LA | www.gnarlybeer.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 6.2% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 89

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

For the flavor, I got a bit of sweetness from the malt, and while I had a hard time picking up much coffee quality in the aroma, I certainly pick it up in the flavor. You also get the peanut butter, which is not as overdone as I've experienced in other peanut butter beers, so that is a redeeming quality. The bitterness is a bit lower, and barely balances the sweetness, but I get the impression that's the intention. Overall, this is a very good, complex brew and makes a great dessert beer. Could I drink a lot of this? Probably not, but it's a great sipper after dinner, to say the least. For what it is, I like it.

#149 - CIDRE

E.Z. Orchards Salem, OR | www.ezorchards.com

Style: French Cider | ABV: 6.2% | Serve at: 38°

RATED 89

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by *Richard Wong*

The flavor of the cider has a nice balance of acidity and hints of apples throughout the flavor profile. It also had a nice farmhouse and freshness associated in the various deep flavors that I tasted. The body and mouthfeel of this cider was light, crisp and finished dry in the palate. The carbonation was moderate and sparkled in the mouth, but wasn't aggressive or overt like a champagne. Overall, I enjoyed this semi-dry cider with subtle hints of apples made in the farmhouse artisanal manner in small batches unlike some of the major ciders in North America. This cider would be particularly nice on a hot, sunny day quenching one's thirst.

#148 - TEARS OF OUR ENEMIES

WestFax Brewing Co. Lakewood, CO | www.westfaxbrewingcompany.com

Style: Wee Heavy | ABV: 7.1% | IBUs: 31 | Serve at: 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by *Michael Heniff*

This canned offering measures in at 7.1 percent ABV. This Wee Heavy pours a beautiful dark amber with light brown hues, excellent clarity and a small, finely beaded tan head. The aroma is expectedly of prominent malt with aromas of bread and bread crusts with hints of caramel chocolate; light dried fruit esters complement the malt. The medium-full body is rich with malt flavors of bread, bread crusts and chocolate with a light sweetness lasting long into the lightly bittered finish. The only detriment of this beer is stylistic; caramel malt is not the most prominent malt flavor. Regardless, this is a very pleasant rich, malt-focused strong beer.

#147 - LAKE KING

Big Lake Brewing Holland, MI | www.biglakebrewing.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 60 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by *Brad Darnell*

A huge piney, floral, and white grapefruit hop character reaches out upon first whiff. Behind the hops lies a soft, light cracker and bread malt character. My first quaff is heavy pine and pithy citrus hops with a supporting background of light bread malt. The balance is purely on the hops and a lingering bitterness tingles the tongue for a bit and accentuates the dry finish. Secondary aromas suggest faint, volatile apple esters. Oranges and tangerines round out the hop flavor, and a light floral alcohol enters late. The aroma esters are not present in the flavor. The hops provide a light astringency and the alcohol a slight warmth. Overall this is a bold, assertive West Coast IPA.

#146 - FEARLESS YOUTH

Grimm Brothers Brewhouse Loveland, CO | www.grimmbrosbrewhouse.com

Style: Munich Dunkel | ABV: 5.2% | IBUs: 22 | Serve at: 46 to 48°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by *David Sapsis*

The flavor is creamy and smooth with a modest but notable chocolate character mixed with low bitterness and a nice herbal spiciness. The mid-palate accentuates the full and richly deep malt flavors, while the finish is bright, crisp and somewhat dry. A lingering herbal malt note emerges in the aftertaste blending with what seems like some light carafa malt dryness. Body is medium, texture is smooth and creamy, carbonic bite is low – indeed, the beer could use a bit more conditioning for drinkability. Overall, a lovely, rich and toasty dark lager with clean flavors and a dry finish. The beer would pair well with tons of foods, but I'm thinking a well-darkened and seasoned risotto would work splendidly.

#145 - MONK'S CAFE GRAND CRU

Brouwerij Van Steenberge Evergem, Belgium | www.vansteenberge.com

Style: Flanders Red Ale | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 48 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

The beer pours a hazy and deep brown/red. The nose on this is fantastic. Strong cherry notes with a faint acetic background note that stops short of being vinegary. Bright acid pops out as well, along with some toasted malt and caramel. Also offers some pleasant oak notes to go along with raisin and prune. Upon tasting, it is a lot sweeter than expected and feels driven by specialty malts. There is a deep complexity, ranging from a high level of cherry to go along with raisins, dried apricots and prunes. The sweetness really impacts the drinkability, however. Cleanly fermented and complex, just on the sweet side. Medium bodied with carbonation on the lower end. Nice and complex but could use a bit less sweetness/more acidity to really strike a balance.

#144 - INSUFFICIENT CLEARANCE

Sketchbook Brewing Co. Evanston, IL | www.sketchbookbrewing.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 5.0% | IBUs: 65 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 34 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Dan Preston*

The aroma is full of lots of juicy hops – mango, pineapple, tangerine, grapefruit – with a clean, yet lightly estery (apricot) yeast. The flavor is similarly hop-forward with a moderately low bitterness that doesn't particularly linger on the tongue but still has enough to unmistakably be an IPA. Beyond all the hops is a low but noticeable malt character with crackery wheat-like note, which along with the juicy hops, is close to what I imagine a pineapple fritter would be like. Like a fritter, it's also light and airy with a soft mouthfeel and finish that makes it very easy to want more. All in all, this is an immensely enjoyable beer that is perfectly timed for summer swilling.

#143 - SINGLETRACK MIND IPA

Allegheny City Brewing Pittsburgh, PA | www.alleghenycitybrewing.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.3% | Serve at: 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Susan Ruud*

The beer poured a rich orange gold with a huge white head that left lacing on the glass and was quite hazy. The aroma was a huge hop aroma up front of dank, citrus (orange and lemon) and melon hop notes, followed by a light crackery malt background and clean alcohol that tied it all together. The flavor followed the aroma having huge citrus and melon flavors with just a touch of bready malt and clean alcohol. The finish was resinous with a touch of sweetness to keep it from being overly harsh, leaving just a hint of hop flavors lingering on the tongue. This was a lovely NEIPA that is perfect while relaxing on the deck after a long afternoon of fall yardwork and watching the steaks grill.

#142 - HAZELNUT CHOCOLATE STOUT

Shannon Brewing Co. Keller, TX | www.shannonbrewing.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 5.8% | IBUs: 31 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 7 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jim Koebel*

This beer's aroma is rich and chocolaty right off the bat. There are no detectable hops therein. As it warms, it becomes very nutty, and there is a trace of cocoa powder upon a deeper whiff. It pours a deep, dark brown color with a nice tan head that doesn't linger. The flavor is characterized by a roasty richness, with a not-overpowering chocolate taste. It is moderately bitter and finishes strongly roasty. This beer has a medium-full body and is carbonated slightly too highly. Overall, this beer is more complex than most other examples of the style, making it well worth a try.

#141 - EL CUATRO

The Ale Apothecary Bend, OR | www.thealeapothecary.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 10.9% | IBUs: 25 | Serve at: 55°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Jason Johnson

The flavor is mildly sweet with a bit of caramel. A low amount of toasty malt dries it out fairly quickly. The oak is also evident in the flavor, with a low oaky astringency from the tannins in the wood. The balance leans on the tart fruitiness. The bitterness is low, and it's mostly the tartness that prevents the beer from coming across sweet in the finish. The tartness and oaky astringency give the perception of a dry finish. The body is medium, carbonation is crisp and poppy, and while not creamy, the beer is refreshingly tart and puckering. Overall, I really enjoyed the dynamics of this beer and found it very interesting and fun to drink.

#140 - FLENSBURGER WINTERBOCK

Flensburger Brauerei Flensburger, Germany | www.flens.de

Style: Helles Bock | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 48 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Heniff

Winterbock pours golden in color with a small, fluffy, cream-colored head and excellent clarity. The aroma is moderately toasty and bready with a light graininess; light spicy hops add a little contrast. The flavor is of rich bready and toasty malt with just a hint of sweetness, but, again, a light graininess detracts. A light spicy hop flavor adds some contrast to the malt-driven flavor. The beer finishes with moderately light bitterness and a lingering bready malt and light spicy hops in a semi-dry finish. Winterbock has an excellent balance between the malt and hops for the helles bock style. The malt is appropriately rich for the style, but the light graininess detracts. Be sure to seek out this seasonal while it is available. Prost!

#139 - SEABEE GOSE

Big Boss Brewing Co. Raleigh, NC | www.bigbossbrewing.com

Style: Gose | ABV: 4.5% | Serve at: 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Jason Johnson

The flavor is very refreshing and tart. There is a low hop bitterness and very low floral hop flavor. The hop presence is very appealing and balances the wheaty and grainy malt nicely. The level of lactic tartness is quenching and leaves you wanting more. What I don't pick up much of is the coriander, which is supposed to be in here, but it's very minor. The beer is medium-light-bodied, with moderate carbonation and a pleasant mouthfeel, most likely from the wheat additions. In the end, I find myself wanting more of this beer, which is a very good sign. I could drink a lot of this. The salt is just barely noticeable, as it should be.

#138 - TIKI SUNSET SOUR

Coronado Brewing Co. Coronado, CA | www.coronadobrewing.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 7 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Randy Scorby

The flavor greets you with moderate nuttiness and sweet, canned pineapple. A hint of coconut and bready malt emerges mid-palate, and the moderate hop bitterness develops late and mingles with the moderate lactic sourness. The medium-sweet finish showcases the lactose, although the sweetness is a touch high and clashes a little with the refreshing lactic sourness. Overall, a well-brewed beer with a very nice balance between the added fruit and nut character. The coconut, pineapple and macadamia nuts are well represented, but none of them dominate. A touch more attenuation would help to allow the kettle sour character to shine, but don't let that stop you from trying this one.

#137 - BELGIAN-STYLE DARK ALE

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com
Style: Belgian Dark Strong Ale | ABV: 10.0% | IBUs: 38 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by David Sapsis*

The flavor profile starts with lush caramel/toffee, trailing to a quick and fairly prominent peppery front dominating over light sweetness countervailing the low bitterness. The late palate trails out to a nice long finish that is dry, spicy and almost herbal, with heat and amazingly, a resurgent dry bitterness with just a hint of sweetness. Body is full but more with alcohol than sweet viscosity, with a distinct astringent angle in the aftertaste. Overall the beer is strong, spicy, fruity, gassy and alcoholic. While the dark malt complexity doesn't quite match that of some classic examples, this is a very good beer that would pair well with either a rich dessert or an after-dinner cigar.

#136 - JUICY BRUT

Short's Brewing Co. Bellaire, MI | www.shortsbrewing.com
Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 4.2% | IBUs: 48 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 20 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The beer is a pale straw color with some haze, which is acceptable for the style. Nice creamy white head keeps a cap on the beer to the bottom of the glass. The flavor comes across like fresh-squeezed white grapefruit juice with a shot of pineapple, mixed into a glass of sparkling water. However, it is not tart or sour, nor is it sweet. There is a very low-level expression of grainy malt, which keeps it from being total hop juice. Low levels of bitterness are aided by the dryness and the bite of carbonation. The body is thin with high levels of carbonation featuring some not unpleasant carbonic bite.

#135 - RANCHO LAGER

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com
Style: German Helles Exportbier | ABV: 4.4% | IBUs: 27 | Serve at: 32 to 36°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Richard Wong*

The aroma of this beer revealed a wonderful malt sweetness and subtle hints of honey with negligible hop aroma (which is okay for the style). The pour revealed a straw-colored hue with very good clarity and a rocky head (carbonation). The carbonation provided good head retention throughout the tasting. The flavor of this beer was a balanced malt sweetness along with light hop bittering very much in the style of German helles. The beer had a light/medium body and mouthfeel. Very good carbonation throughout, which made the beer very crisp, dry and smooth. A very easy-drinking beer made in the true German helles style.

#134 - PACER IPA

Avery Brewing Co. Boulder, CO | www.averybrewing.com
Style: Session IPA | ABV: 4.5% | IBUs: 25 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 24 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 34 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Joseph Formanek*

The flavor has moderate dank hop character and bitterness. The malt backbone is very light, and a touch of minerality and metallic notes are evident. The body is quite thin, and the carbonation is moderate. The CO₂ is a predominant character in the finish, and with the hops somewhat subsiding and the lack of malt flavor, the finish is dry. The overall fermentation character is clean. Overall, this is a refreshing example of a sessionable IPA, with the hop notes present delivering enough character to make it interesting. This style is not meant to be a canvas to demonstrate malt complexity, and this example follows that rule quite well, though the best will have at least a little present.

#133 - HAZY RIVER INDIA PALE LAGER

Pontoon Brewing Sandy Springs, GA | www.pontoonbrewing.com

Style: Pale Kellerbier | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 37 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sal Mortillaro II*

The flavor consists of a medium bitterness with a medium-low floral and spicy note with a low black tea flavor. The malt flavor is ever-so-slightly grainy and quite neutral along with the clean fermentation profile with a low sweetness. Where the drinker would expect a flavor from the malt, the light grassiness from the dry hop flavor takes its place. This beer slowly comes to a dry finish with a lingering aftertaste of spicy noble hops and a very light dried orange peel. Overall, this is an extremely soft and drinkable India Pale Lager that was quite thirst-quenching and satisfying without leaving a heavy feeling that some more traditional IPAs tend to leave after being imbibed.

#132 - NIGHT SWELL

Heavy Seas Beer Baltimore, MD | www.hsbeer.com

Style: Black IPA | ABV: 7.5% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Susan Ruud*

This beer pours a deep dark brown color with a light tan head that is quite long-lasting and leaves beautiful lacing on the glass. The aroma is a huge citrusy hop aroma blended with a light chocolaty malt aroma and just a hint of clean alcohol. No other esters were noticed aside from those coming from the hops. The flavor is a huge burst of citrus and floral hops balanced with a clean low chocolaty roast flavor blended with clean alcohol notes and finishes with a long bitter finish that seems to last forever, topped off with a hint of roasted malt. I would envision drinking this beer in the fall with some great barbecue that might include burnt ends, a juicy crusted prime rib or even a spicy Cajun dish.

#131 - COSMIC OCEAN BRUT IPA

Coronado Brewing Co. Coronado, CA | www.coronadobrewing.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Richard Wong*

This beer poured a light-yellow hue and the carbonation was very effervescent. It also had a nice pillowy head that had a nice retention from beginning to end. The flavor of this beer was nicely balanced between malt and hops. Again, the hop flavors were very citrusy (grapefruit, oranges) balanced with moderate malt sweetness. The utilization of using just one hop in the formula works. It made the beer more recognizable and flavorful. Sometimes using less is more. The body and mouthfeel were medium, but the carbonation was very sparkly and bubbly in the mouth, quite champagne-like. There was a crisp and dry finish in the palate. A wonderfully made Brut IPA.

#130 - PIKE IPA

Pike Brewing Co. Seattle, WA | www.pikebrewing.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 45 | Serve at: 42°

RATED 90

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The aroma opens with moderately high levels of pine resin, and catty and dank hops are up front in the aroma. A touch of grapefruit rind and some sweet orange join in. There is a background note of grainy and rich caramel malt detected. The flavor presents more of a grapefruit and orange citrus than was found in the aroma. Other fruity esters are noted that seem reminiscent of berries. Decidedly balanced toward the hop flavor and bitterness, but the rich caramel and grainy malt is noticeable and provides some counterbalance, resulting in a semi-sweet finish. Lingering sweet orange character is in the aftertaste. Medium body with moderate carbonation with a touch of hop bite but not astringent. There is a slight mouth-coating creaminess.

#129 - TRUCK CHASER BOMB POP DOUBLE IPA

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.1% | IBUs: 49 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

Judge's Review *by Dan Preston*

This beer pours a deep orange color, approaching light amber due to being super hazy to the point of opaqueness. It also has a creamy off-white head that lasts and clings to the glass. The aroma is hop forward, with a unique blend of fruit – raspberry, white grape, lemon, lime, orange. The flavor is similar, and shockingly a lot like its namesake bomb pop with layers of lemon/lime, cherry and raspberry. The lemon/lime and citrus (orange/pineapple) last thru the mouthfeel, adding some tingly tartness on the palate, but still finishes semi-sweet from the cherry/raspberry fruit, lactose and low bitterness. This is an incredibly unique beer and it's amazing how close it comes to the bomb pop character.

#128 - WINTER'S NIGHT

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 35 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Arches Brewing Hapeville, GA | www.archesbrewing.com

Style: Munich Dunkel | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 18 | Serve at: 35 to 42°

Judge's Review *by Jim Koebel*

This beer has low, sweet and malty aromas. On the one hand, it is not particularly aromatic, but on the other, it is appropriately clean. It pours deep brown in color with ruby highlights. It has a medium, off-white head. The flavor is malty, bready, and toasty – all indications that a large portion of Munich malt was used. There is only enough bitterness to keep this beer from being too malty, and so it is also lightly sweet. This beer is well carbonated and had a medium-full body. It's as smooth-drinking as they come. Overall, Winter's Night is a no-frills but traditional example of a classic lager style.

#127 - TAIL & TOOTH

RATED 90

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Coronado Brewing Co. & Belching Beaver Brewery

Coronado, CA | www.coronadobrewing.com | San Diego, CA | www.belchingbeaver.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 7.5% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 45°

Judge's Review *by Randy Scorby*

The complex hop aroma features mixed tropical fruit hop character of grapefruit zest and resin, with the tropical fruit defining itself as pineapple and mango. As the beer warms and vents, a touch of bready malt emerges behind the hop aroma. No fermentation character is discernable behind the hops. The hop flavor favors mango, resin and ripe grapefruit that last into the aftertaste. Medium hop bitterness emerges mid-palate and grows into the dry finish, reaching a medium-high level. This one is at the drier end of the scale allowing the hops to pop. Light bready malt emerges late to provide balance to the overall hop profile.

#126 - FLOTATION DEVICE / TART CHERRY PINEAPPLE

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Pontoon Brewing Sandy Springs, GA | www.pontoonbrewing.com

Style: Fruit and Spice Beer | ABV: 5.1% | IBUs: 8 | Serve at: 40°

Judge's Review *by James Link*

A firm lactic aroma is first perceived and is then immediately joined by pineapple notes and other tart fruity aromatics. No hops evident as dictated by its Berliner weisse base. A golden-hued beer, quite clear with very little head retention, which is not unusual for style. The lactic sourness first manifested in the aroma is carried into the flavor profile and is married with notes of sour cherries and wheat malt. No hop flavor or bitterness interferes with the tart acidic character reflected here. The body is thin and prickly and finishes very dry yet not astringent. This is a champagne-like beer that is crisp and refreshing, brewed to be enjoyed outside on a warm summer day.

#125 - PRACTICE WHAT YOU PEACH

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 6.1% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Sean Coughlin

The beer packs a punch of acidity up front but gives way to some leather and funk as the palate acclimates. The fruit character is balanced within other aspects of the beer and the tangerine has a refreshing citrus quality to it that harmonizes well with the beer's tartness. Oak contributes more to the mouthfeel than the flavor. The beer is well balanced with fruit, acidity, and a touch of oak and funk. Complexity is king in this style and this beer receives high marks in that field. A bit more life from the fruit and the oak would give this beer the small push it needs to cross over the line from great to exceptional.

#124 - IMPERIAL OATMEAL BROWN ALE

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 21 | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 90

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Nelson Crowle

When initially poured, the flavor was an overpowering oatmeal note with moderate sweet chocolate and medium bourbon notes and a light pleasant coconut/vanilla oaky note. The overpowering oatmeal mellowed out nicely as the beer warmed up, and the chocolate and roasty character melded well – let this beer warm up to 50/60 degrees. Medium low earthy and floral hops are present and a medium-low hop bittering to balance the chocolate and hints of toffee and caramel. There's a lot going on in this beer - and the oatmeal is prominent, so pairing with food brings to mind a juicy medium-rare porterhouse steak - plain and without any butter - let the oatmeal provide the oily and slick mouthfeel.

#123 - COEDO SHIKKOKU

COEDO Brewery Saitama, Japan | www.coedobrewery.com

Style: International Dark Lager | ABV: 5.0% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 90

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Heniff

Shikkoku pours black in color, is almost opaque, and sports a small, fading, light brown head. The aroma is moderate roasted malt with a hint of smokiness; no hops or esters are present. The flavor is similarly roasty with light chocolate and a hint of caramel malts with just a slight sweetness. The beer finishes with a moderately light bitterness and a lingering light roasted malt. Shikkoku has more roasted malt character than typical international dark lagers (but as this is a catch-all category we do not see a need to penalize the beer for this feature). The flavor has a little depth to the maltiness but not so much that it becomes a thick and chewy beer. This is a well-brewed, easy-to-drink dark lager. Kanpai!

#122 - SEMI-DRY CIDRE

E.Z. Orchards Salem, OR | <https://www.ezorchards.com/>

Style: New World Cider | ABV: 5.9% | Serve at: 40°

RATED 90

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Rodney A. Tillinghast

Predominant aromas featured overripe apples, some caramel and a hint of pepper. Upon tasting, the mature apple character continued and was supported by a medium amount of tartness, some baker's yeast and a low amount of tannins. At 6.9 percent ABV, the alcohol was well hidden and enhanced the overall enjoyment of the cider. It finished medium-dry, with a fair amount of carbonation washing away the flavors from your palate in a quick manner. Its low amount of astringency makes it an excellent table cider, well suited for appetizers or even a main course.



EXCEPTIONAL

91-95

#121 - SOUR CONTINUUM WITH PINK GUAVA

Six Bridges Brewing Johns Creek, GA | www.sixbridgesbrewing.com
Style: Gose | ABV: 4.3% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by *Jim Koebel*

This beer is a milky orange color and very cloudy. It has a tall fluffy head that dissipates quickly but rouses easily. There is an initial burst of yeastiness in the aroma when poured, which quickly gives way to a pleasant tangy, sweet smell. There is a pronounced fruity aroma, which may be perceived as citrus- or raspberry-like if the drinker is unfamiliar with pink guava. This beer is similarly fruity in the flavor and carries a moderately light tartness. It is light on the tongue and highly carbonated, finishing dry and crisp. Although it's not necessary to use exotic fruits to punch up a Berliner weisse (domestic fruits and berries can work just as well), this example's balance and drinkability should have wide appeal.

#120 - TROPICAL SQUEEZE

Armadillo Ale Works Denton, TX | www.armadilloaleworks.com
Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 5.5% | Serve at: 45°

RATED 91

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by *Brad Darnell*

An aromatic mango, guava and passion fruit bouquet emerges from the glass with a fleshy fruit component. The beer pours a mostly opaque bright orange with a medium, tight-bubbled and creamy off-white head with medium-short retention. The initial flavor is of medium sweet mango, guava and passion fruit, light acidity and a supporting doughy malt backbone with a sweet finish. The fruity aroma later allows a light, doughy malt character, light sulfur and soft stone fruit esters. The flavor is balanced to the fruit with no hop character or bitterness. The fleshy fruit lingers into the finish, which features light carbonation, light citric sourness and soft mineral notes. This beer would pair nicely with a rich and creamy custard.

#119 - BUDWEISER HARVEST RESERVE

Anheuser-Busch InBev St. Louis, MO | www.ab-inbev.com
Style: American Lager | ABV: 5.4% | Serve at: 38 to 42°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by *Michael Heniff*

The aroma is prominently malty with a moderately light bready maltiness; no hops or esters are evident. The flavor is again prominently toasted and bready malt with just a hint of spicy hops. The bitterness is very low, and the finish lingers with a light bready malt flavor. The beer is medium-light-bodied, well-carbonated, clean and crisp. This is a well-brewed, crisp and clean lager. The color and malt intensity are a little high for the American lager style but are welcomed. The malt flavor is well-done: toasted and bready with a hint of bread crusts but lacking any sweetness. A little more hop intensity would be welcomed to balance this increased malt intensity but perhaps that would push the beer towards a different style.

#118 - OLD FASHIONED EXTRACTION

Sun King Brewing Indianapolis, IN | www.sunkingbrewing.com
Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 11.5% | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

The aroma is a rich, harmonious blend of bready and caramel malt with esters of cherry, plum and fig. Toasted oak and whiskey complement the malt and esters. The barrel character becomes more prominent in the flavor with notes of whiskey, toasted oak and vanilla taking on equal intensity with the bready malt and dark fruit esters. The alcohol strength is readily apparent with quite a bit of lingering warmth in the finish. Old Fashioned Extraction probably would not do well in a homebrew competition as mixed-style beers require harmony; it is quite a difficult task to harmonize a quadrupel, barrel, fruit and spice well together. Also, I would typically consider this example too boozy for a wood-aged beer but given the context (emulating a mixed drink), it is appropriate.

#117 - TIE 8 ON

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com
Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 13.4% | Serve at: 45 to 55°

RATED 91

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jim Koebel*

Tie 8 On by Monday Night Brewing is a Mixed-Style Beer (blend of barrel aged strong beers with vanilla beans), brewed by Monday Night Brewing and judged as BJCP Category 34B. This pitch-black brew has a complex aroma profile that features a combination of wood, vanilla and sweetness. These elements mask any esters and hops that might otherwise be present. Swirled, it appears viscous. The taste is quite sweet and rich, with more notes of vanilla and the barrel. It is full bodied, very warm and silky smooth. This is a particularly strong blend, but so dessert-like that it's hard to notice. An exceptional beer that would make for a delightful after-dinner tippie.

#116 - GIN BARREL GOSE

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com
Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 8.7% | IBUs: 7.8 | Serve at: 42 to 44°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

The gin comes through lightly in the aroma – providing a very complex and pleasant overall nose. The flavor mimics and delivers the promise of the inviting aroma. The juniper gin character is much more prominent in the flavor, providing a pleasant boozy character of fresh spruce. The underlying Gose comes through with a bready note and low minerality (no overt salt). No hop flavors, very low hop bittering, a hint of woody oak, medium carbonation, a medium body provided by the gin and alcohol character, with a short gin-lime fruity citrus finish. There is a fairly substantial alcohol note – this is an imperial gose – but it's a clean ethanol without fusel or higher alcohols. This is an interesting combination that (almost unexpectedly) works very well together.

#115 - LA MÛRE

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com
Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 6.5% | IBUs: 7 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

Huge tart jammy raspberry and blackberry notes introduce the aroma, with a bit of a funky farmhouse character – wet hay, a hint of leather, a slight cherry tobacco note. Initial flavor is a quite tart clean lactic sourness with a big tart (and not sweet) jammy raspberry/blackberry note. There is almost no malt or hop character in either the aroma or flavor, with a very low hop bittering – it's all about the sour fruit. Lots of interesting complexity brackets the sourness on one end of the spectrum versus the big jammy fruitiness on the other end. Pair this beer with a simple scoop of vanilla ice cream, or with a plain (low spice) chicken breast or mahi mahi with steamed white rice.

#114 - TROPICAL JAMMER

Southern Tier Brewing Co. Lakewood, NY | www.stbbeer.com

Style: Gose | ABV: 4.0% | Serve at: 38 to 45°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The mango makes its appearance more pronounced in the flavor and melds nicely with the pineapple and a lemony note that may be coming from the coriander. The tartness is offset by the impression of sweetness from the fruit. The salt assists in rounding off the sourness without leaving a mineral residue. The beer finished medium-dry with some residual pineapple and tartness. Light bodied and moderately high carbonation but not effervescent. There is a little tingle on the tongue when it's all said and done but not unpleasant. Very nice tropical version of Jammer Gose. Unlike the other fruit versions of Jammer this one allows the underlying Gose to come through while being accented by the pineapple and mango.

#113 - MAI TAI PA

Alvarado Street Brewery Salinas, CA | www.alvaradostreetbrewery.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.5% | Serve at: 38 to 40°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Susan Ruud*

When pouring this beer, you see a golden ale with a huge white head, and as the head drops, it leaves beautiful lacing on the glass. As you bring this beer up to your nose you receive a huge tropical hop aroma of mango and melon with a hint of citrus, which makes you excited to take a sip. The flavor follows through on those aromas and is blended with a light crackery malt and soft alcohol. There is a light crisp mouthfeel, very clean with the only esters clearly coming from the hops and a crisp bitter finish blended with tropical hop fruit flavors. This beer would pair extremely well with Mexican-style foods containing both coriander and some peppery spice flavors.

#112 - OATMEAL STOUT (NON-ALCOHOLIC)

Bravus Brewing Co. Newport Beach, CA | www.bravus.com

Style: Oatmeal Stout | ABV: 0.5% | IBUs: 8 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by David Sapsis*

The beverage shows a very pretty burgundy-brown color with nice clarity and a lovely creamy, tan-colored foam stand floats on top. The nose is rich, sweet and milky with strong fruit/nut characteristics above a dark caramel/creme foundation with a light coffee note. The flavor starts sweet/caramel but nicely transitions to a faint and enjoyable roasty and coffee-like middle with very low bitterness. The late palate comes back strong with a lactose note and more light malt tones and fig flavors. The finish is long, sweet and creamy, but still relatively light in body, cut by the acid of the roasted material. Overall, the beer is an interesting and creamy take, with a malty rich backbone, and some light nut-caramel-coffee complements.

#111 - ALPHA ABSTRACTION VOL. 7

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 46 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Dan Preston*

The aroma is very hop forward, but instead of the usual flavors, it is super red fruity with notes of cherry, raspberry and strawberry. This combines well with the low malt background of fresh dough and lightly fruity esters of red apple and apricot. These flavors continue to build in the flavor, again with lots of sweet red fruit (cherry, strawberry), but also with some citrusy brightness (orange, grapefruit) to cut in. The low bitterness combined with the fruity hops makes for a creamy, semi-sweet finish. This also lets more of the malt through, giving a grainy-doughy character with a mild honey note reminiscent of honey-wheat bread. This beer is incredibly unique and quite tasty, making a great substitution for an icy lemonade on a hot summer day.

#110 - STOUTS WITHOUT BORDERS

Peter B's Brewpub Monterey, CA | www.peterbsbrewpub.com
Style: Foreign Extra Stout | ABV: 5.7% | IBUs: 40 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Randy Scorby*

The aroma presents prominent bittersweet and darker milk chocolate with a light bready, nutty base malt character. As the beer warms, the flavor opens up even more, with bittersweet chocolate, light roast, light coffee and a hint of caramel. Medium hop bitterness emerges mid-palate with light, fresh mixed berry esters and herbal hops, lingering into the medium finish. Light alcohol warming and a medium body rounds out the palate. The beer pours an opaque black, with a monster rocky beige head that lasts forever. This is a well-balanced beer with the dark malt character presenting some complexity. The two types of chocolate in the aroma blend well with base malt, esters and hops. This would make a lovely dessert beer on its own, or with a thick, gooey chocolate brownie.

#109 - KRIEK

Area Two Experimental Brewing Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com/areatwo
Style: Fruit Lambic | ABV: 7.0% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by John C. Tull*

The cherry aroma is rich and full like pie cherries, not at all candy-like or artificial. The color is a deep rose, and there is no head and very little effervescence. The flavor is similar to the aroma: a blend of rich, deeply fruity cherry and a blend of lemon and grapefruit citrus. There are subtle hints of vanilla and woody pith, perhaps an artifact of the stone fruit or wood-aging. The cherry flavor holds its own and has a nice zing from the sourness and acidity. These balance well together and come across as quite refreshing and even a little zippy. Though the carbonation does not express well in the appearance, it is present in the mouthfeel. Overall, this is a very refreshing beer that is definitively sour and fruity.

#108 - HAZELNUT BROWN NECTAR

Rogue Ales & Spirits Newport, OR | www.rogue.com
Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 5.6% | IBUs: 33 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

This beer has enough hazelnut to make a statement but not enough to overwhelm. Big hazelnut aromas rise from the glass lightly scented with hints of chocolate and toast. It pours a brilliant deep brown color with ruby highlights under a half-inch tan cap with fair retention that reduces to a thin ring of foam around the rim. The beer has well-developed hazelnut flavors balanced by traces of chocolate, malt, a hint of root beer and a medium-low hop bitterness. The carbonation is medium, and the creaminess is medium-low. The beer loses a couple of points for head retention, but it is a flavorful beer you could easily imbibe all night.

#107 - BRUT IPA

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com
Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 5.9% | IBUs: 25 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Susan Ruud*

Upon first sip you get a big hop presence, which quickly ties in with a pleasant bready malt backbone. The finish was surprisingly dry and dropped off quite quickly leaving just a hint of hops on the tongue. Although the dry, less malty finish was unexpected, it really worked in this beer leaving a very refreshing finish that was clean and with almost no hop resins. The carbonation was quite high on this beer, which may also have contributed to the clean finish. This beer had a ton of flavor that didn't linger, leaving you wanting another sip very quickly. I could see enjoying this beer with a nice salad and grilled salmon, but it would also hold up well with a beautifully grilled steak.

#106 - DOUBLE ARCHIPELAGO

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 55 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sean Coughlin*

The flavor has an expressive tropical hop character that closely follows the aroma and the bitterness is very mild in the balance. However, restraint in bitterness aids in drinkability, which this beer offers in spades. This beer appropriately utilizes malt as a blank slate and gets out of the way, allowing the hops to be front and center. This beer straddles a thin line somewhere between American IPA and Double IPA – arguments could be made on either side. Rather than get caught up in the details of where it is best suited categorically, the important thing is this beer's exquisite hop character. There is a delicate tropical hop presence that features characteristics that IPA drinkers and brewers have been gushing over in recent years.

#105 - LOW VIZ

Arches Brewing Hapeville, GA | www.archesbrewing.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 52 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 91

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 7 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sean Coughlin*

The aroma features a cornucopia of tropical and citrus hops with notes of orange, lime, tangerine, mango and cantaloupe. While complex, the hops harmonize well with one another and avoid clashing profiles. Freshly grated lime zest increases its intensity as the beer warms. Any malt character is completely buried beneath the dense hop aroma with a seemingly clean fermentation profile. This beer is a medium gold with dense haze yet no particulate present. A medium-sized white head is densely packed with fine bubbles and sustains itself well. The bitterness seems a bit restrained overall for an IPA but is within an acceptable range for a New England variety. Medium-high hop flavor is mostly comprised of lime and orange but fades quickly from the palate.

#104 - HEXOTIC

Area Two Experimental Brewing Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com/areatwo

Style: Fruit Lambic | ABV: 8.0% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Scott Birdwell*

The aroma is reminiscent of SweetTARTS. One can immediately pick up on the sweet, enticing tropical fruit notes, but then the tangy, tart Brett character asserts itself. Other than the tropical aspect of this, it mirrors many Belgian lambics I have tasted. Very well done. Once you get to the tasting part the beer, it follows the same pattern: tangy sourness mixed with enticing sweet tropical notes in the finish. The fruit/sour balance is excellent! Hexotic is a little more full-bodied than you might expect from a lambic, but then you learn that this wild ale packs a wallop at 8 percent ABV, and you understand! It is surprisingly smooth despite its strength. Though it features poor head retention, the beer is well-carbonated. It finishes surprisingly smooth with little to no astringency.

#103 - LYRICAL POET

Sun King Brewing Indianapolis, IN | www.sunkingbrewing.com

Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 12.2% | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Scott Birdwell*

Surely, Lyrical Poet's flavor is quite boozy, but in a good way. The alcohol doesn't overpower the palate, but you have no doubt this packs a wallop! First, the bourbon barrel asserts itself, then the roasty stout character kicks in. This is all intermingled with notes of dark fruit, toffee, and, yes, some chocolate. The hopping is noticeable but restrained, since assertive hop bitterness would clash with the mocha and raspberry notes in the finish. The finish is surprisingly smooth for a beer of this strength. It rolls over your palate with a texture that can only be described as luxurious. The extensive aging lends that port/sherry vinous character that works well in this beer. It is smooth, but not syrupy in any way, even after the carbonation level has dissipated.

#102 - BLANCHE DE CHAMBLY

Unibroue Chambly, Quebec, Canada | www.unibroue.com
Style: Witbier | ABV: 5.0% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 41 to 43°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Bury*

The nose is a moderate mix of pear and apple with support from tart wheat and subtle honey. The flavor is an interesting amalgamation of tart wheat, yeasty bread and hints of dark honey with pomme fruit and restrained white pepper. Low herbal hops and medium-low bitterness allow the fermentation character and malt to shine forth. It finishes semi-dry with lingering wheat, fruit and coriander. A pleasant creaminess helps to support the moderate body, and high carbonation rounds out a lovely drinking experience. Despite the tart wheat and hints of pepper, this beer doesn't have any astringency either. Blanche de Chambly is a unique entry into the witbier category that one could drink either in the middle of the summer as a refreshing beverage or even in the dead of winter.

#101 - DEUCE COUPE DIPA

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.9% | IBUs: 100 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

The aroma on this beer is very pleasant. The hops are bright and inviting with a lot of juicy citrus, low resinous pine and a moderate amount of tropical mango. The malt profile is clean and bready with a hint of toast. It's happy to take a backseat to the hop aroma. The flavor pretty much mirrors the aroma. The hop flavor takes center stage and is citrusy with tropical mango; the resinous pine comes through in the finish. The malt again lays back from the hops, but it's enjoyable and toasty. Deuce Coupe is not overly bitter, but the hop bitterness is moderate. There must be a lot of late addition or dry hops in the process, which is welcome in this style. The beer finishes dry and is easily drinkable.

#100 - OG: CASCADE

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.1% | IBUs: 49 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sal Mortillaro II*

The finish is moderately dry and a sublime hop flavor interplays with the malt character and leaves an overall soft impression in the mouth with a lingering low spicy note. Overall, this is an easy-drinking beer that is much tamer than many of the "in-your-face" double IPAs currently on the market. The single hop usage does slightly detract from the hop complexity that the style is known for with the overall flavor profile being reminiscent somewhere between a session IPA and a standard IPA but with a notable alcohol presence. I believe this would be a great Double IPA to pair with a nice smoked brisket, as the strength of the beer will stand up to the smoke and the alcohol will help cut through the fat without overpowering the dish.

#99 - ALPHA ABSTRACTION VOL. 5

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 47 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 4 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael McGuire*

The aroma began, and continued, with plenty of citrus – orange and grapefruit specifically, and noticeable but pleasantly mild alcohol notes. The flavor profile was orange-forward with malt, hops and the other added ingredients playing a supporting but harmonious role. The mouthfeel was characterized by a medium to full multi-layered body, with some creaminess and only minor hop astringency. Indeed, this is not a beer for hopheads. Drinkability was high due to the hop flavor and alcohol warmth not being excessive as less skillfully brewed versions of this style often are. This is a very flavorful and well-crafted Double IPA that is on the lower end of the ABV range for the style, resulting in a pleasantly refreshing beer.

#98 - RED LAGER

East Brother Beer Co. Richmond, CA | www.eastbrotherbeer.com

Style: Vienna Lager | ABV: 4.6% | IBUs: 24 | Serve at: 38°

RATED 91

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brad Darnell*

Initial aroma is clean, rich moderate caramel malt with light spicy hops. My first quaff is medium hop bitterness with a medium-light caramel malt underneath. Clean fermentation allows the malt and hop characters to shine. This is a medium-bodied beer with medium carbonation. Secondary aromatics provide light toast and nutty malt character and soft, earthy hops while remaining clean without other aromatics. The flavor is well balanced between malt and hops; the hop character, combined with bright carbonation provides a pleasant spiciness that blends well with the lightly sweet malt. Light toast malt character provides malt depth and the beer finishes dry. This beer would pair well with caramelized vegetables and grilled red meat.

#97 - LA FIN DU MONDE

Unibroue Chambly, Quebec, Canada | www.unibroue.com

Style: Belgian Tripel | ABV: 9.0% | IBUs: 19 | Serve at: 54 to 57°

RATED 91

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by David Sapsis*

The aroma is dry with obvious pepper elements along with dry herbs of sagebrush, bay laurel and eucalyptus with a relatively subdued fruit/ester element of honey, apricot and dried peaches. The flavor starts rich and very fruity with a bready/biscuity malt backbone complemented by the aforementioned apricots and peaches with an additional dry apple note. A very solid bitterness and emergent dried herbs and pepper dominate the mid-palate with angles of light clove, black pepper and juniper sage with appreciable ethanol heat. The finish is long and quite dry with hints of malt sweetness largely swamped by lingering phenols of pepper and spice along with lasting bitterness. Gas content is high, and mouthfeel is full and thick, with a trace of astringency and fusels that contribute to the finish.

#96 - TYPICAL DAYDREAM

On Tour Brewing Co. Chicago, IL | www.ontourbrewing.com

Style: Saison | ABV: 5.7% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by James Link*

A golden-tinted hazy ale that supported a sizable white head that rose up then fell off quickly. The bouquet reflected a complexity of aromas that featured a spicy yeast character accompanied by fruity notes and just a trace of hop aromatics. As is often the case, the above described aroma was a voracious prognosticator of the flavor profile. Yeast phenols, spices, fruity esters and the firm presence of Pilsner malt married nicely to underline the style. The body was medium to thin, which is not unusual in that Saisons are often highly attenuated and express a dry finish. Alcohol was in the medium range and carbonation was well stated. A well-conceived beer that nicely exemplifies the saison style.

#95 - PIRAAT

Brouwerij Van Steenberge Evergem, Belgium | www.vansteenberge.com

Style: Belgian Golden Strong Ale | ABV: 10.5% | IBUs: 25 | Serve at: 48 to 50°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

The body is medium despite the strength, and the carbonation is moderately high – providing a pleasant palate cleansing along with a carbonic bite. A light warmth signals the alcoholic strength, but the drinkability remains high. The flavor is primarily a blend of peppery phenolics and bready malt, but a light citrusy ester and light spicy hops add to the complexity. The beer finishes with a moderate bitterness and moderate carbonic bite with a lingering bready malt and peppery phenolic. Piraat is a bit more malt-focused compared to many Belgian golden strong ales but remains deceptively strong and quite enjoyable. It is easy to see why Piraat remains as one of the commercial examples that defines this style. Always keep Piraat in mind when you want an excellent Belgian Golden Strong Ale.

#94 - URBAN LUMBERJACK

WestFax Brewing Co. Lakewood, CO | www.westfaxbrewingcompany.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 6.5% | IBUs: 67 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

New England IPAs are known for their juicy/tropical, fruit/citrusy hop forward character, hazy appearance and lighter than typical American IPA bitterness. Urban Lumberjack is brewed with 6 hop varieties (Citra, Azacca, Eldorado, Amarillo, Simcoe and Mandarina Bavaria). Urban Lumberjack pours extremely hazy with an orange color and a small, clingy, white head. Prominent juicy hops greet the aroma with tropical fruit, peach and mango notes. The flavor is similarly hop aggressive with flavors of tangerine, peach and mango, and a hint of malt provides backdrop. This beer finishes moderately bitter with a lingering tropical fruit and herbal hop flavor. Urban Lumberjack is definitely a beer for the hopheads among us; it is aggressively hopped and well brewed.

#93 - MATERFAMILIAS

Mother's Brewing Co. Springfield, MO | www.mothersbrewing.com

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 11.0% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

Materfamilias is aged in bourbon, rye, brandy and rum barrels and pours opaque, pitch black with a small brown head. The aroma is a strong harmonious blend of dark malts and esters with characters of roasted, chocolate, plum and prune that melds well with prominent spirit and barrel elements of bourbon, toasted oak, vanilla and red wine. The body is medium despite the strength; a pleasant, abundant alcohol warmth greets mid-flavor and lingers long into the finish. The flavor is a wonderful melding of dark malts, esters, chocolate, roasted malt, plums, prunes, vanilla, toasted oak, bourbon and dark rum. The finish is lightly bittered with a light sweetness lingering long with complex roasted and chocolate malt with wonderful barrel flavors of vanilla, toasted oak, bourbon, red wine and dark rum.

#92 - RALPH

The Ale Apothecary Bend, OR | www.thealeapothecary.com

Style: Mixed-Fermentation Sour Beer | ABV: 9.0% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 55°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

The beer is very refreshing for an oak-aged beer. The beer is low in bitterness but does have a noticeable pine-like quality that mildly reminds me of a hint of menthol, obviously from the fir tips. I do not detect any Brett character from the barrel-aging, and that's OK; it's not required or necessarily expected. It's just when some people are thinking barrel-aged sour beers, they may be looking for that funk, and you will not find it in here. In its place is a clean, tart, slightly malty and fruity ale. The beer is medium-bodied and moderately carbonated. There is a mild oaky astringency, but it's not off-putting. All in all, this is a very good barrel-aged beer. The fir needles are detectable and add great depth to this beer.

#91 - BEYOND RESIN

Upland Brewing Co. Bloomington, IN | www.uplandbeer.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 11 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 92

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 36 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

This beer pours mostly clear with a light haze. Deeply golden with a persistent white head that's very attractive. The aroma initially is intensely hop forward, showing guava and mango, followed by some durian and onion type notes. There's also a hint of oxidation here, showing as some honey-type notes. Cleanly fermented with a light fruity ester, trending towards berry. At tasting, the bitterness seems on the lower side for the style, coming across most similarly to modern NEIPAs. Hop flavor is also quite juicy and loaded with mango, guava and onion. Through the finish, pineapple esters pop out. Refreshing, though could use a bit more bitterness. Medium-bodied with matching carbonation and nice and smooth, no warming and some light creaminess, this is a really well-made beer that should appeal to hopheads.

#90 - DARK APPARITION

Jackie O's Brewery Athens, OH | www.jackieos.com

Style: Imperial Stout | ABV: 10.5% | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

This is an Imperial Stout with a moderate aroma – nothing big, no harsh or burnt smells and no harsh or hot alcohol. It offers dark dried fruit, mild alcohol, a hint of prune, light city roast coffee and a hint of caramel. It is pitch black under a ½” tan cap with fair retention and a trace of legs. The beer radiates smoothness flavored with mild alcohol, dark dried fruit, bittersweet chocolate and traces of medium roast coffee. As the beer warms the chocolate and coffee flavors get richer and more complex and more dark sugar flavors come forward. The beer is full-bodied, with lightly creamy carbonation that provides a gentle warmth. The beer offers nothing over the top – except that it is exceptionally well balanced, drinkable and well executed.

#89 - EXPORT LAGER

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com

Style: German Helles Exportbier | ABV: 5.7% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

White grape aromatics are first to meet you and remind me of many fine kölsch beers. Very clean fermentation is balanced ever so slightly toward the malt. The white grape note shows up in the flavor as well, joined by a refined toasty and subtly sweet malt. Moderate levels of spicy hops are accompanied by a touch of geranium. The bitterness provides a nearly even balance with the malt lingering slightly further into the finish. The aftertaste leaves a hint of spicy hops on the palate. Medium body with moderate carbonation and a smooth, soft and crisp mouthfeel. The beer could have been crisper, but the nearly even balance is a hallmark of the style. Very tasty, pleasing and super clean.

#88 - NOTORIOUS P.O.G. BERLINER WEISSE

Stone Brewing Co. Escondido, CA | www.stonebrewing.com

Style: Berliner Weisse | ABV: 4.7% | IBUs: 7 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 92

Aroma: 24 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Tracy Hensley*

The beer's aroma is a blend of moderately intense passion fruit, guava, freshly picked strawberries followed by mouthwatering lemon peel and creamy freshly milled white wheat flour. Notorious P.O.G.'s flavor is initially dominated by its mouthwatering dry crisp acidity. After a few tastes, flavors of passion fruit and white fluffy bread start to rise to the surface, though they are still pushed back down by a chalky finish. Overall, Notorious P.O.G. has a very fresh and tropical aroma. You have to adjust to this beer's acidity and chalkiness, after that it can come off quite refreshing and light. It craves rich food to cut through with its mouthwatering acidity and tropical flavors. Drinking this beer makes me crave a Hawaiian mixed plate with kalua pork and laulau.

#87 - À TOUT LE MONDE

Unibroue Chambly, Quebec, Canada | www.unibroue.com

Style: Saison | ABV: 4.5% | IBUs: 22 | Serve at: 39 to 43°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

À Tout le Monde pours golden with a big mousse-like white head and excellent clarity. The aroma is moderate perfume-like floral hops with light rose-like esters and light peppery phenolics. The body is medium with an appropriately moderately high carbonation. The flavor is moderate peppery phenolics with light herbal hops and a hint of toasty malt. The beer finishes with a moderately light bitterness, moderate peppery phenolics above a light toasty malt and a refreshing carbonic bite. À Tout le Monde is on the low end of the gravity range of the style fitting into the “table” sub-style at 4.5 percent ABV. Regardless, this Saison is very well made and hits all of the key elements of the style. À votre santé!

#86 - IRRATIONALLY EXUBERANT

Cape May Brewing Co. Cape May, NJ | www.capemaybrewery.com
Style: American Wild Ale | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 11 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael McGuire*

The aroma was dominated by profound sourness followed by slight funky notes. For the flavor profile, tartness and sourness abounded with fainter funk, after which still fainter traces of malt and hops could be detected. The aging of this beer in red wine barrels produced another layer of flavor. The mouthfeel featured medium body and carbonation, as well as moderate alcohol warmth and astringency. Overall this beer had a pleasing complexity attributable to what seemed to be multiple souring agents as well as the effects of barrel-aging. Drinkability, enhanced by restraining the ABV while maximizing the more unusual flavors and aromas noted above, should be high among those who appreciate well-crafted beers prepared and aged as this one was.

#85 - CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER MILK STOUT

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com
Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 7.1% | IBUs: 9 | Serve at: 38 to 42°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

Flavor follows the aroma with big sweet chocolate, medium vanilla, moderate peanut butter and some interesting woody and oak character with light whiskey notes (possibly from the vanilla/chocolate combination). There is a moderate creamy taste and smooth mouthfeel from lactose. No hops flavor or aroma, and a light bitterness, more like from some bitter chocolate than from hops. Give this beer time to warm up as you drink it. There's a lot more complexity with a bourbon-like character coming out as it warms (although the beer was not declared as barrel-aged). A full body with roasty chocolate, peanut butter and creaminess lingers into a long finish. This beer is just begging for scoops of vanilla ice cream or apple pie with whipped cream – definitely a dessert beer.

#84 - PIKE PILS

Pike Brewing Co. Seattle, WA | www.pikebrewing.com
Style: German Pils | ABV: 4.0% | IBUs: 25 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

Medium-light body with moderately high levels of carbonation and just a touch of prickling on the tongue. This is an Americanized German pilsner. It reads just like a classic example of a German pils with a big dose of new-world hops replacing the noble varieties. The malt base provides just the right counter to the firm bitterness. While the noble hop character is an essential aspect of a classic German pils, this one still seems to have a German soul. Perhaps some will protest the classification or my acceptance of the hop choices, but this beer truly has more in common with German beer styles than it does with American lagers. If you love a great German pils and can accept the Americanization of a classic, you will love Pike Pils.

#83 - TWO JUICY

Two Roads Brewing Co. Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com
Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 8.2% | Serve at: 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Scott Birdwell*

This beer looks like a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice with a head on it. The head sports a nice lacy texture, and the retention is excellent. The characteristics from the bouquet carries through into the taste. There is some hop bite, to be sure, but not a lot, especially considering the amount of hops you would need to balance the malt required to achieve the high ABV. The flavor is hoppy but not bitter, with some lingering hop goodness and just enough malt sweetness for balance. As one might expect for a beer of this strength, the body is medium-full to full. There is no noticeable alcoholic burn in the finish, which was a little surprising given its strength.

#82 - I NEED S'MORE BROWNIE BATTER BATCH #1

RATED 92

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Pontoon Brewing Sandy Springs, GA | www.pontoonbrewing.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 13.1% | IBUs: 55 | Serve at: 49 to 55°

Judge's Review *by James Link*

Wow. This one is a steak. Packed with dark chocolate aromatics and partnered with dried fruit and a firm warming of the nostrils that renders warning of the alcoholic strength to follow. Deep brown almost black in hue, opaque with low head retention. The intensity evidenced in the flavor profile is characterized by a bittersweet taste that mixes with caramel notes and fudge. Fruity esters reminiscent of plums and raisins are also evidenced as is often the case when higher alcoholic beers are fermented at warmer temperatures. The body is full and somewhat syrupy, and as a result of its high gravity, very warming over the tongue. A profusion of complexity is on display in both the aroma and flavor of this ale with a significant alcoholic punch that satisfies.

#81 - HAZY IPA

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 7.9% | IBUs: 35 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

The flavor echoes the aroma with big juicy tangerines and just enough bread dough malt to present the big hop flavors. The bitterness is substantial but well balanced. The finish is a long lingering citrus with a fairly bitter but balanced ending of orange peels. Medium body and fairly high carbonation both help to present this beer favorably, and the refreshing and crisp quality leaves you wanting another sip. There's a slight astringency that seems to be from citrus pith, but it adds nuances and complexity to the beer. Overall, this beer is complex and very well balanced – nothing dominates, and yet the juicy hop flavors and the bitterness make you pay attention. This beer would go really well with a bacon-wrapped big juicy medium rare sirloin steak.

#80 - BOURBON BARREL AGED CONCRETE SHIP

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Cape May Brewing Co. Cape May, NJ | www.capemaybrewery.com

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 10.1% | IBUs: 80 | Serve at: 55°

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

For this release, Cape May ages their Imperial Stout brewed with 8 different malts in 7-year aged Kentucky bourbon barrels. Bourbon Barrel-Aged Concrete Ship measures in at 10.1 percent ABV. Bourbon Barrel-Aged Concrete Ship pours an opaque, inky black color with a medium dark brown head. The aroma is strong roasted and chocolate malt with lighter caramel malt, bourbon and dark fruit of plums; alcohol is readily apparent. The body is full and rich with flavors of roasted malt, dark chocolate, caramel and barrel char with lighter bourbon and toasted oak over a light sweetness. The beer finishes with a moderately light bitterness and rich dark malts lingering with roasted, chocolate, coffee and caramel with a complementing bourbon and toasted oak.

#79 - TANGERINE DEUCE COUPE

RATED 92

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.9% | IBUs: 100 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

Tangerine is very present in the aroma, but not in an off-putting way. It's just bright and clearly unmistakable. The malt profile is breadly with a low toasty quality. The hop choice is nice as it seems to complement the tangerine. Taking a taste, I got a medium-high bitterness and hint of sweetness. The beer does finish dry and has a low alcoholic warmth. The flavors march hand in hand with the aroma, strong tangerine presence, breadly and toasty malt. As expected, I get a medium body, no hop astringency and smooth texture in the beer. If I'm being honest, this is one of the better fruited IPAs I've had but it seems lighter than a standard double IPA. The tangerine is refreshing and quite nice. I highly recommend this one.

#78 - SÉMILLON BARREL AGED ALANI

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 35 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Reformation Brewery Woodstock, GA | www.reformationbrewery.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 5.9% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

Judge's Review *by Michael Bury*

It pours hazy with a peach color with hues of pink. A small ivory head forms but doesn't linger. The grape-forward nose is reminiscent of a chardonnay grape with restrained lactic acid and oak. Light grainy malt is also present without additional complexity that esters or hops could bring. The flavor is a pleasant, moderate amalgamation of grapes, vanilla and lower levels of soft oak. Clean fermentation, no malt, no hops and low bitterness allow the barrel and grapes to shine. Semi-dry finish with a lingering lactic tang provides a thirst-quenching experience. Sémillon Barrel Aged Alani is a solid offering that has a solid amount of character at only 5.9 percent ABV. Its smooth flavor with barrel-forward and grape flavors would appease both beer and wine drinkers.

#77 - DARKER SUBJECT MATTER

RATED 92

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 13.5% | IBUs: 45 | Serve at: 45 to 55°

Judge's Review *by Jim Koebel*

Darker Subject Matter by Monday Night Brewing is an Imperial Stout aged in bourbon barrels judged as BJCP Category 33B, Specialty Wood-Aged Beer. This beer has a pleasant blend of fruit, vanilla and ethanol aromas. It pours black in color with no head (virtually no CO2 escaped when opening the bottle.) The taste is sweet, rich and smooth overall. It has a moderate bitterness that seems to be derived primarily from roasted malts, then a fruity flavor as it warms up. This finish is sweet with notes of vanilla, bourbon and wood. This strong example of the style is well done and surprisingly mellow. Not too sweet, this barrel-aged Imperial Stout is a filling dessert beer.

#76 - SYNOPSIS DARK SOUR CHERRY

RATED 92

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Two Roads Brewing Co. Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 6.4% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

Synopsis Dark Sour Cherry was brewed with wild and cultured yeast strains, Morello cherries and was aged in wood. This version of Synopsis pours a purple color with a slight haze and a big, fluffy pink head. The aroma is moderate and of rich cherry fruit with a moderate lactic sourness. The flavor is moderate cherry with just a hint of sweetness; prominent lactic sourness balances the slight sweetness and cherry fruit well. The beer finishes lightly bitter with moderate dark cherry fruit and a lingering clean, lactic sourness. The fruit aspect of this wild beer is very well done. The fruit is flavorful, rich and complex. The wild character is almost singularly lactic, but it's well done; prominent clean lactic sourness balances the rich, dark cherry fruit well.

#75 - RED FLAG

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Heavy Seas Beer Baltimore, MD | www.hsbeer.com

Style: Flanders Red Ale | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 50°

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The flavor opens with the tart cherries and sweet raisins. The beer is balanced toward sourness but is softened by a rich Munich malt toasty character. The dark fruits are more complex and pronounced in the flavor than the aroma and add some additional fig esters. A faint vanilla note comes in mid-palate to remind you of the barrel-aging. A low-level tannin blends with a slight acidic note to help keep the malt in check. The tart cherry and dark fruits persist into the finish accompanied by some caramel malt sweetness and a little alcohol warmth. The overall sourness is lower than usual but still in keeping with the style guidelines and enough to balance the malt. However, the esters and malt complexity are wonderful.

#74 - ALPHA ABSTRACTION VOL. 8

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.0% | IBUs: 46 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael McGuire*

In the glass it formed a medium white head atop a light orange beer with only a slight chill haze. Unlike many hop bomb double IPAs that assault the senses with piney bitterness, the aroma of this brew was notable for intense tropical fruit and citrus-imparting hoppiness followed by deep maltiness and alcohol notes, all consistent with style. The flavor profile also featured both fruity hop and robust malt contributions, resulting in a delicious, well-balanced beer. The mouthfeel was characterized by a medium body, some creaminess, modest but adequate carbonation and alcohol warmth as observed in the aroma. The overall impression is of a clean, tasty, highly quaffable and moderately strong IPA and an excellent version of this style.

#73 - SOUR ALANI

Reformation Brewery Woodstock, GA | www.reformationbrewery.com
Style: Mixed-Fermentation Sour Beer | ABV: 4.7% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Bury*

The nose indicates a clean lacto-fermentation without any of the yogurt-like signs of poorer fermentations. Malt and hops are largely absent with the sweet floral characteristics of hibiscus and merlot grapes shining through. The pleasantly tart, acidic flavor is a more complex version of the aroma. The hibiscus is still sweet and floral, but it also brings a tinge of tannic structure to the beer. The grapes are reminiscent of a sweet, white varietal that complements the hibiscus nicely. Malt and hops are absent but are not missed. The tart, drying finish aids in the drinkability of the beverage. This is a refreshing and slightly tart beer that would be great for either the summertime or possibly as an aperitif to open up a great meal.

#72 - COEDO SHIRO

COEDO Brewery Saitama, Japan | www.coedobrewery.com
Style: Hefeweizen/Weissbier | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

RATED 92

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 17 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

Shiro pours light golden with a slight haze and a small, fluffy white head. The aroma is moderately wheaty with moderate banana esters and a hint of clove phenolics. The flavor is similarly wheaty with the banana ester slightly more elevated over the light clove phenolic. The bitterness is appropriately low and the flavor finishes with light banana esters and clove phenolics in a crisp, refreshing finish. Shiro is a very pleasant, refreshing, well-brewed Weissbier. The banana esters are in check at an appropriate level, but the clove phenolics were a bit light. The beer is refreshing and crisp and does not bear too much residual sweetness, like many commercial hefeweizens do. Kanpai!

#71 - DON DE DIEU

Unibroue Chambly, Quebec, Canada | www.unibroue.com
Style: Belgian Tripel | ABV: 9.0% | IBUs: 10.5 | Serve at: 43 to 50°

RATED 92

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Bury*

Don de Dieu presents a rich, complex aroma of doughy bread, banana, pear, clove and allspice. Hints of herbal hops provide a bit of intrigue. As it warms, sweet alcohol and orange marmalade emerges. The flavor follows the aroma but with even more intensity. The pear esters and clove, allspice phenols dominate over the wheat, grainy, doughy malt. Despite the esters and moderate, sweet alcohol, the beer still finishes semi-dry with lingering fermentation character. Hops are largely absent with only a low level of bitterness to provide a bit of balancing action. Don de Dieu hits all the marks for style including a colorful Belgian fermentation character of esters, phenols and a clean finish that easily allows the drinker to go back for another sip.

#70 - THK - TRIPEL HONEY KRIEK

De Proef Brouwerij Lochristi, Belgium | www.proefbrouwerij.com
Style: Fruit Lambic | ABV: 9.3% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 92

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Rodney A. Tillinghast

From the snifter, notes of wildflower honey, toasted wood and an underlying ginger spice were detected. Flavors featured a sturdy honey component, backed by sourness and a heavy amount of caramel. As it warmed, the cherry flavoring blossomed, as did its alcohol firmness. The heaviness of the finish combined with the fruit component made this a beer to be sipped and savored slowly. It turned out to be sweeter in the finish than a traditional tripel, but overall was well balanced with a subtle sourness melded with a honey backbone. A little more bitterness would have been welcomed, but for a dessert beer this would be stellar.

#69 - TROOPER SUN AND STEEL

Robinsons Brewery Stockport, England | www.robinsonsbrewery.com
Style: German Pils | ABV: 4.8% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 92

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Heniff

TROOPER Sun and Steel is partially fermented with Japanese sake yeast. This beer pours light straw in color, is crystal clear and sports a medium, fluffy white head. The aroma is moderate herbal and spicy hops with a light crackery malt backdrop; the aroma is very clean with no esters detectable. The flavor similarly showcases herbal and spicy hops along with a background of toasty malt. The body is clean and crisp, and the beer finishes dry with a lingering herbal hop character. Sun and Steel is a solid German Pilsner across the board. Unfortunately, the character of the sake yeast fermentation does not stand out among the pilsner base. Regardless, this is a well-brewed beer that all lager lovers should thoroughly enjoy. Cheers and prost!

#68 - MAUI WAUI IPA

Altamont Beer Works Livermore, CA | www.altamontbeerworks.com
Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.5% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Joseph Formanek

The flavor is dominated by the dank hop character from start to finish. Again, Simcoe hops seem to dominate over the Citra character. The malt backbone is light to moderate, and, while it is overwhelmed by the hop flavors, it is still present. The middle and finish retain the same character. Hop bitterness is moderate. The body is a light medium, the carbonation is moderate, and the finish dries out nicely in preparation for the next sip. The overall fermentation character is very clean, allowing the malt and hop components to be well experienced in the flavor. This is a very quaffable IPA with proper balance and flavor to make it quite interesting. You will not be disappointed!

#67 - BLUEBERRY SPACESHIP BOX

Superstition Meadery Prescott, AZ | www.superstitionmeadery.com
Style: Cider with Other Fruit | ABV: 5.5% | Serve at: 40 to 55°

RATED 93

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Heniff

For this style, the cider and fruit should have harmony without either being too dominant. For this cider, Superstition Meadery pairs apple with blueberries. This cider pours an expected dark purple with a small rim of lavender-colored head with excellent clarity. Prominent blueberry dominates the aroma with a lighter, underlying tart apple. The flavor again promotes prominent blueberry with notes of plum, currant and grape. The apple adds depth to the fruit flavor and provides tartness to the sweet berries. The finish is a wonderfully balanced sweet/tart with a light prickly carbonation clearing the palate. The sweet/tart balance is fantastic and makes this cider endlessly enjoyable.

#66 - DOUBLE DUST

Pure Project Brewing San Diego, CA | www.purebrewing.org
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.8% | IBUs: 35 | Serve at: 42°

RATED 93

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by *Scott Birdwell*

My first impressions of the flavor were of lychee and stone fruit. Given the intense hop bouquet and flavor, I found the malt/hops balance surprisingly even. While I'm sure there is a healthy dose of hop IBUs, the base malt doesn't play second fiddle. There is an explosion of hop flavor mid-to-late on the palate. Given the amount of base malt required to support 8.8 percent alcohol, I get almost a doughy flavor in the finish. Body is medium-full to full. Carbonation is excellent and it helps deliver the hop bouquet. Yes, the beer is warming! Heck, it's pushing 9 percent ABV! Very low hop astringency in the finish, which is somewhat surprising given the intensity of the late hop additions. Overall, this is a very nice Double IPA.

#65 - MEDLOCK IPA

Six Bridges Brewing Johns Creek, GA | www.sixbridgesbrewing.com
Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.2% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by *Jim Koebel*

Medlock IPA by Six Bridges Brewing is a New England IPA, judged as BJCP Category 21B. This New England IPA has a traditional, but juicy, hop aroma of pine and resin. A moderate honey smell adds sweetness and appeal. It is a hazy gold color and has a tall, white head. This is a flavorful beer with a zesty, lightly spicy hop character. There are citrus, pine and resin overtones. Although it is quite bitter, it is clean and never too much. The high carbonation gives this IPA an uncommonly fluffy texture. This beer finishes nice and dry. Overall this is a fresh, very well-balanced IPA. It's one of the most straight-up enjoyable examples of a ubiquitous style this judge has had in quite some time.

#64 - GOOD BEHAVIOR

Odell Brewing Co. Fort Collins, CO | www.odellbrewing.com
Style: Session IPA | ABV: 4.0% | IBUs: 48 | Serve at: 30 to 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 24 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by *Jason Johnson*

I suspect this beer is very fresh based on how vivid the hops are in the aroma. The flavor matches the aroma pretty much step for step. The hop flavor is juicy and very enjoyable. I get more citrus in the flavor than I got in the aroma, but that tropical pineapple note carries into the finish. The bitterness is soft and just balances the lightly sweet malt. The carbonation and bitterness help the beer finish medium-dry. The carbonation is average and not overdone. The body of the beer is on the lighter side, in the medium-light range. There is a soft velvety feel to the beer. Though billed as a crushable, lower-ABV IPA, it's presenting more like a well-made, low-ABV white IPA to me.

#63 - BARREL AGED HELIOS

Pontoon Brewing Sandy Springs, GA | www.pontoonbrewing.com
Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 37 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by *Sal Mortillaro II*

In the flavor, the general malt sweetness noted in the aroma is low intensity and quickly gives way to the moderately low funk noted in the aroma. There is a very short-lived vinous white wine quality in the flavor though it is fleeting and provides a layer of complexity to this beer. This beer is a lovely showcase of the previous usage of the barrel and great execution of its current usage of the barrel. A low tannic quality from the barrel usage helps provide a bitterness to ground this beer out and provides balance with the malt sweetness, which seems to lightly linger after the sip. Overall, this is a very well-done farmhouse ale which has lovely yeast complexity aided by the use of the Syrrah barrel.

#62 - SANGIOVESE BARREL AGED ALANI

RATED 93

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Reformation Brewery Woodstock, GA | www.reformationbrewery.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 5.9% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

Judge's Review by Michael Bury

The nose of the beer is a complex mixture of plums, bananas, vanilla, oak and grape. Malt and hops are largely absent. The flavor is a pleasant surprise with further complexity as well as depth of what the nose indicated. All of the ingredients are present but are stronger with a rounded, well-matured aspect. The semi-dry finish allows for the barrel, grapes, and plums to linger with a touch of lactic acid providing the necessary zippiness that one would expect from a wild specialty. Overall, this beer is a well-fermented, deftly handled wild specialty. Most entries in this category are enamel-removing, acidic bombs that are tough to drink by the snifter. Not so with Sangiovese Barrel Aged Alani as everything is smooth and in balance with one another. Bartender, I'll have another.

#61 - FRUIT CUP VOL. 1

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Pontoon Brewing Sandy Springs, GA | www.pontoonbrewing.com

Style: Fruit and Spice Beer | ABV: 5.1% | IBUs: 8 | Serve at: 40°

Judge's Review by James Link

An aroma redolent of sour cherries is first perceived in the nose and is accompanied by a potpourri of other fruity aromas less notable. The appearance is alluring with its clear burgundy color and medium pink head. The flavor profile reflected a lactic quality that was far more pronounced here than in the aroma. A firm cherry pit-like character was dominant and helped offset the tartness provided by the lactic ferment. Faint notes of vanilla in the background contributed to the complexity. Although somewhat thin, the body suggested a higher gravity than the standard base Berliner weisse would exhibit. The ingredients come together nicely and create a soured fruity beer in which the sourness is not overstated – as is so often the case with this style.

#60 - CLOAKS & MIRRORS

RATED 93

Aroma: 19 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 40 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Monday Night Brewing San Diego, CA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 24 | Serve at: 40 to 50°

Judge's Review by Sean Coughlin

The acidity is fairly mild, and any hop bitterness is restrained in the overall balance. This is a delicious beer that has all the elements of great peach cobbler – the fruit and the crust. This beer may not quite fit the mold for a “sour IPA” for a base style due to the restrained bitterness but I think there's enough hop flavor present to make the argument. With as much as this beer has going on, it does a wonderful job of showcasing each ingredient in the flavor. While flavor of beer often closely follows that of its aroma, this beer is a good example of one that does not. Peach, cinnamon and vanilla were completely absent until the taste buds were engaged. Intriguing, well-balanced, delicious and surprising!

#59 - BUENAVEZA SALT & LIME LAGER

RATED 93

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Stone Brewing Co. Escondido, CA | www.stonebrewing.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 4.7% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

Judge's Review by Jason Johnson

The aroma is extremely clean as I would expect with a well-made lager. This is a summertime crusher for sure. Like the aroma I get a moderate tasty cracker-like malt and a slight hint of lime. There is some sodium, but it's very low. So low that I probably wouldn't even realize it if I wasn't told it was there. The hop bitterness is low, there is not really any hop flavor. Overall the beer's flavor is clean and crisp. The balance is to the malt, and I thoroughly enjoy that. For the mouthfeel, it's medium-light, and has a nice creamy texture. The carbonation is middle of the road, and not too poppy. This is a great, refreshing lager with a hint of salinity and lime flavor.

#58 - FISTFUL OF CAKE

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 9.0% | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael McGuire

In the glass it formed a thick tan long-lasting head atop an opaque black brew. The aroma began, and continued, with strong roasted coffee notes followed and supported by dark specialty malt (chocolate and carafa or roasted barley) with some alcohol as well. The flavor profile led off with heavy vanilla and coffee flavors followed by sweeter malt and perhaps lactose notes to balance the coffee bitterness and minimize lingering astringency on the palate in the aftertaste. Hops were apparently used for balance rather than flavor. The mouthfeel was characterized by a full body, moderate carbonation, mild coffee astringency and alcohol warmth. Overall this was a complex, multi-faceted stout best consumed with dessert or as a liquid dessert all by itself. In this role it would be delicious after a hearty dinner.

#57 - TRUCK CHASER CREAMSICLE IPA

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.1% | IBUs: 47 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael McGuire

In the glass it formed a sparse, shortly retained white head atop a cloudy pale orange brew. The aroma began with a pleasantly intense blast of fresh orange, which was followed by fainter notes of lactose, vanilla and floral hops, all of which were pleasant and complemented the dominant orange nose. Similarly, the flavor profile was orange-forward with malt, hops and the other added ingredients playing a supporting but harmonious role, leading to a sweet, tangy and creamsicle-like taste. The mouthfeel was characterized by a full and multi-layered body, with some creaminess from the lactose and a slight but noticeable alcohol warmth. This is a clean, surprisingly complex yet refreshing and drinkable beer. It outpunches its weight as a specialty IPA and rises above many other excellent IPAs in its class.

#56 - PRIZE INSIDE

Wild Leap Brew Co. LaGrange, GA | www.wildleap.com

Style: Imperial Stout | ABV: 8.5% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 55°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Sal Mortillaro II

The use of lactose is apparent and coupled with the grainy graham cracker notes and chocolate, it is very reminiscent of a bowl of chocolate cereal in milk. On the sip, fruity esters of plum and dark stone fruit are at the forefront. This is immediately followed by a medium-high lactose-like sweetness and notes of low chocolate and roast malt flavor with underlying graham cracker and caramel flavor. With a medium-low hop bitterness, the low earthy hop flavor is quickly lost to the predominant malt and ester notes. The beer finishes with dark fruit esters, chocolate and low alcohol, which brings balance to the sweetness and aids in the finishing dryness of the beer along with a manifested peanut-type nutty flavor.

#55 - PERVASIVE SPECIES

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Mixed-Fermentation Sour Beer | ABV: 4.5% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Dan Martich

Flavored with an unsweetened pineapple juice character with balanced acidity and some fruity esters that challenge the senses. Unripe berry fruit in the flavor, long drying finish with a moderately acidic aftertaste, low in the way of tartness. This beer is delicious and refreshing, the fruity flavors become more and more agreeable as you continue to sip. Medium light-bodied with high carbonation and little in the way of creaminess give this beer a pleasant mouthfeel. A little puckery due to the nature of the yeasts used but remains true stylistically. An exceptional beer with great flavor and balance. The green wood in the aroma can be an individual preference, and it may benefit from laying down a few bottles to see if it softens those edges.

#54 - BIG SOFTY

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: American Pale Ale | ABV: 5.2% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 93

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Dan Martich*

The flavor had an overwhelming amount of hop character upfront, and the grainy malt flavor was there in support of the fruity hops. Notes of pineapple, passion fruit and a little blueberry jam rounds it out. A moderate level of hop bitterness keeps this beer in check with the style, and the short dry finish completes it. The medium-light body is pleasant, while the moderately high carbonation brightens the hop character so that it sizzles on the palate. No astringency, creaminess, nor harsh alcohols were detected. An exceptional beer that is easily drinkable and very flavorful. The hop freshness with citrus and tropical fruit character adds to its delight. A low-ABV APA with enough character to be a fan favorite, so have a few at your next party or gathering.

#53 - MOSAIC DOUBLE IPA

Belching Beaver Brewery San Diego, CA | www.belchingbeaver.com

Style: Double IPA | ABV: 8.8% | IBUs: 60 | Serve at: 48°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Tracy Hensley*

The flavor begins as smooth light white bread, pine sap, and pineapple chunks and finishes with a low candied mango and lemon rind mixed-drink aftertaste. The second sip continues to be pine-balanced and finishes with predominantly pine hop bitterness wearing a coat of oatmeal creaminess. The dry, crisp finish is balanced with a medium creaminess and an undercurrent of alcoholic heat. The heat seems to be hotter than it is because of the high attenuation and clean finish. The heat starts out slowly and smoothly. As it warms the inside of my mouth, it becomes mildly hot over time. For style, hop aroma is slightly subdued. While absurdly high hop bitterness is permissible, thankfully for drinkability, this beer is on the low end of the high hop bitterness spectrum.

#52 - BREWERS' PALE ALE GALAXY HOP BLEND

Anchor Brewing Co. San Francisco, CA | www.anchorbrewing.com

Style: American Pale Ale | ABV: 5.3% | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The beer is moderately bitter but leans ever so slightly to the malt, which is grainy with a touch of honey in the finish. The hop flavors are dominant, fresh and pronounced without being overdone. The finish is moderately dry with some lingering hops left behind. A very nice modern take on a classic APA. Hits all the right marks in aroma, flavor and balance for an APA with increased hop complexity and interest relative to the old-school Cascade showcase varieties. While I don't typically think of pine associated to Galaxy hops, the fresh pine notes are welcomed and add another layer to the beer. The extra hazy aspect of the beer is the only thing out of style but who really cares about that when a beer is this enjoyable.

#51 - BELGIAN-STYLE TRIPEL

East Brother Beer Co. Richmond, CA | www.eastbrotherbeer.com

Style: Belgian Tripel | ABV: 8.6% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 38°

RATED 93

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brad Darnell*

A thick, rocky white head perches atop the golden liquid and persists, leaving characteristic Belgian lace on the glass. Fragrant bubblegum esters and Belgian candi sugar aromas arrive well before the glass gets to my nose. Medium sweet grainy malt aroma is present as I take my initial sniff. Medium-high alcohol flavor is surrounded by sweet grainy malt with doughy character. The body is full, carbonation medium-high with medium-light alcohol warmth. Further decomposition yields a pleasant, soft hop spiciness in the aroma and flavor, though the hop bitterness is faint underneath a rich maltiness. The balance favors the malt and the finish is dry with some lingering malt sweetness on the tongue. The bubblegum and apple/pear esters are light but present additional character.

#50 - BOHEMIAN RIOT

Arches Brewing Hapeville, GA | www.archesbrewing.com

Style: Czech Pilsner | ABV: 5.3% | IBUs: 38 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sean Coughlin*

The aroma is clean and malt forward with just a hint of bread crust and an underlying herbal hop presence that emerges as the beer warms. Once the olfactory senses have acclimated to this beer it can be difficult to perceive much aroma at all due to an exceptionally clean fermentation profile and subtle malt and hops. The beer is gorgeous – deep burnished gold with incredible clarity and a dense, slightly off-white head that has decent retention. The flavor is well balanced between malt without being sweet and a moderate bitterness that is present without being invasive. The hop flavor is subdued but appropriate to style with light floral and herbal characteristics. This medium-bodied beer is a wonderful domestic example of a style that is often overshadowed by its northern German interpretation.

#49 - RED IPA

East Brother Beer Co. Richmond, CA | www.eastbrotherbeer.com

Style: Red IPA | ABV: 6.5% | IBUs: 60 | Serve at: 38°

RATED 93

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brad Darnell*

A mostly clear dark amber beer supports a large, frothy, beige head that persists while leaving nice lacing along the glass. Moderate pine, resin and dank hops rise from the glass initially while a spicy toasted straw malt character enters next. Heavy hop bitterness alongside stone fruit hop flavor mostly dominates yet allows the rich caramel and earthy malt to show. The beer is medium-high-bodied with medium-high carbonation. Light caramel malt presents as a secondary aroma along with an overall earthiness and fresh pine hop character. There is a pleasant hop spiciness in the flavor and the stone fruit hop character adds flavor and complexity. The hop steals the balance but there is sufficient malt to show deep character. The beer finishes dry with lingering fresh pine hops and caramel, earthy malt.

#48 - PÊCHE

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com

Style: Fruit Lambic | ABV: 5.8% | IBUs: 6 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 93

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

pFriem's "lambic-inspired ales" are fermented with a blend of *Brettanomyces* and lactic acid bacteria cultures then aged in oak. Pêche pours straw in color with a slight haze and a fading rim of white head. The aroma is prominently wild with aromas of lactic, leather and light barnyard; a hint of peach appears in the background and increases as the beer warms. The flavor is moderate lactic acidity with light funky flavors of hay and earth. The beer finishes moderately lactic sour with a light peach flavor lingering in the background. This is a very well-done sour beer. The sourness is perfect – not too subtle and not overpowering. The wild character is funky but not off-putting. The peach flavors could be more prominent, but they still work with lactic acidity. Pucker up!

#47 - BRETT SAISON

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com

Style: Brett Beer | ABV: 6.7% | IBUs: 32 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

The aroma is a strong nose full of farmhouse – moderate fresh mowed hay, medium pineapple (typical of Brett Clausenii), moderately high lemon zest and low supporting bready malt. Aroma hops are medium-level earthy, floral, and a bit grassy (maybe the beer was dry-hopped?). The flavor amplifies all of the aromas, particularly the wet hay, pineapple, lemony and floral/grassy hop notes, adding a moderate herbal note too. Medium-low bittering balances to leave a quite dry and well attenuated finish that reflects the farmhouse notes and just a bit of funk. Balanced pretty evenly between hop bittering and malt, the Brett is the star here, adding layers of complexity to the already interesting Saison spicy notes. Overall a very complex and yet very balanced beer that's very enjoyable.

#46 - BIG BOSS LAGER

Big Boss Brewing Co. Raleigh, NC | www.bigbossbrewing.com
Style: Munich Helles | ABV: 5.0% | Serve at: 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 21 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by Rick Franckhauser

Pours a clear yellow gold with tiny bubbles rising to the creamy white persistent head. The aroma opens with low levels of grainy malt with hints of toast. The malt is followed by some spicy and floral hops. Very clean fermentation. The malt dominates the hops, but everything is subdued. The flavor provides a slightly sweet grainy malt with hints of toasted multi-grain bread. A light spice and floral hop joins in to provide some additional interest. Moderate levels of bitterness assist in balancing the malt. Medium-dry finish, clean, crisp and fresh. Remnants of the spicy hops linger faintly on the palate. Medium-bodied with moderate levels of carbonation and a very smooth and creamy impression but not mouth-coating. A wonderful beer!

#45 - DOUBLE BARRELED MAPLE STOUT

Avery Brewing Co. Boulder, CO | www.averybrewing.com
Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 15.3% | Serve at: 55°

RATED 93

Aroma: 24 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 36 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review by Joseph Formanek

Maple, coffee, chocolate and black malt characters are up front in the flavor, with a considerable amount of ethanol. The bourbon and wood notes are somewhat subtle in the flavor. Hop character is rather subtle with bitterness not asserting itself well against the high/moderate level of sweetness that comes through from the middle to the finish. The body is massive – as full as you can get. Very thick and chewy. This is not a quaffable beer in any way, shape or form, but rather one to enjoy in moderation. Double Barreled Maple Stout is simply a massive brew! There are exceptional levels of flavor with great complexity, but the sweetness in the finish tends to go in a cloying direction. This would be a fantastic dessert beer after a hearty meal.

#44 - TABLE TERROIR

Two Roads Brewing Co. Stratford, CT | www.tworoadsbrewing.com
Style: American Wild Ale | ABV: 3.7% | Serve at: 48 to 52°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Heniff

Table Terroir is brewed with all local ingredients and is fermented with yeast found in the brewery's hop yard. Table Terroir pours golden in color, hazy, with a very quickly fading white head. The aroma is moderately earthy with peppery phenolics and hints of peach and pear esters. The body is medium-light with a light toasty malt and delicate pear esters; a light tartness and hints of funky barnyard and hay complement the malt and esters. The beer finishes with a light lactic sourness, light barnyard flavors and a hint of pear. This is a very pleasant, easy-to-drink wild beer with a funkiness that is not overdone. Seek this one out even if you are not big on wild and funky beers!

#43 - ÉPHÉMÈRE POMME

Unibroue Chambly, Quebec, Canada | www.unibroue.com
Style: Fruit Beer | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 39 to 45°

RATED 93

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review by Michael Bury

The intense aroma reminds me of the caramel apples of the fall. As it warms, cinnamon, crystallized ginger and nutmeg emerge. Moderate grainy, wheat malt is present in the flavor and complements the cinnamon and clove-like spiciness well. A variety of caramel apples are still at the forefront but far more balanced than the aroma would've indicated. Medium-full body, moderate carbonation and a bit of creaminess hits the mark for mouthfeel. Éphémère Pomme showcases apples but elevates them beyond their humble beginnings. Although the base beer is slightly lost in relation to the fruit, this offering is nonetheless tasty and approachable. If you're looking for apple pie in a glass sans the whipped cream, then this should be on your drinking list.

#42 - TIMELY SURRENDER

Archetype Brewing Asheville, NC | www.archetypebrewing.com

Style: Saison | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sal Mortillaro II*

Overall, this beer has a very typical aroma found in traditional French Wallonia-produced saisons with a low earthy-funk, which is suggestive of Brettanomyces. There is a general grainy low malt sweetness and moderately low citrus esters and low notes of spice and wet hay. A medium-low bitter orange flavor is quickly followed by earthy, Brettanomyces funk with slight leather notes. There is a very low malt sweetness with a low and neutral grainy malt flavor. As the Brett character fades, a medium bitterness manifests itself and lingers into the finish. The finish is dry, and the aftertaste consists of bitter orange and leather. Overall, this is an excellent Saison that hits the hallmarks of the style. Though the malt character seems one-dimensional, the Brettanomyces adds a flavor complexity to keep it interesting.

#41 - TWAIN

Upland Brewing Co. Bloomington, IN | www.uplandbeer.com

Style: Mixed-Style Beer | ABV: 7.8% | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Richard Wong*

The aroma of this beer was of funky sourness with little to no hops present. The pour revealed a light-yellow hue that was both hazy and cloudy with a small, fine-bubbled head. This was made with both beer and cider fermented separately and blended together. The flavor was straight up sourness and tartness with hints of apples and pears. The bourbon barrel and oak got lost in the sourness and tartness. The beer had a medium body and mouthfeel with a sparkling component in the palate. Because of the sourness and tartness this beer was very mouth-puckering. The overall impression is that it is definitely a sour with nice fruit notes. The aftertaste was puckering and intense – signs of a truly wonderful sour!

#40 - LITTLE RED CAP

Grimm Brothers Brewhouse Co. Loveland, CO | www.grimmbrosbrewhouse.com

Style: Altbier | ABV: 5.4% | IBUs: 29 | Serve at: 46 to 48°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by David Sapsis*

The flavor starts with a hint of fresh toasty bread then gets quickly overpowered by very firm bitterness that is clean, dry, herbal and spicy. The dominant mid-palate flavors are light toasty and bready notes with a persistent strong herbal hop character that lasts right through the dry and bitter finish. Some mineral and drying notes are evident in the aftertaste, which is long, clean and bitter. The body is light in texture and assisted by heavy conditioning; astringency is moderate as this is a very hop bitter and flavor-forward beer. That said, a liberal and deft hand with classic Munich malt flavors provides an excellent counterpoint. Overall, the beer excels as a representative Altbier that highlights classic continental-style toasted malt with a deeply bitter and herbal hop angle.

#39 - JAMMER

Southern Tier Brewing Co. Lakewood, NY | www.stbbeer.com

Style: Gose | ABV: 4.0% | IBUs: 16 | Serve at: 38 to 42°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

The beer pours a light golden yellow with a slight haze. The flavor brings the tartness, which is rounded off by a light sweet bready wheat malt. The balance leans toward the tartness, but the malt serves to keep things in check. A subtle mineral note from the salt addition provides a little briny note. Additional lemon fruit mid-palate is joined by some fresh green apple. Herbal notes appear in the moderately dry finish. The lemony tartness lingers gently into the aftertaste. The body is light with moderate levels of carbonation, which could stand to be increased in keeping with the style. A slight tingle on the tongue is bright rather than stinging. The salt addition seems to leave your mouth watering for another drink. Very refreshingly tart summer thirst-quencher.

#38 - SWIPE LIGHT

Southern Tier Brewing Co. Lakewood, NY | www.stbbeer.com

Style: American Light Lager | ABV: 4.0% | Serve at: 38°

RATED 94

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

This beer pours straw in color with excellent clarity and sports a small, white, fading head. The aroma is an unexpected (but welcomed) moderately light citrusy hoppiness with a hint of malt and no esters. The mouthfeel sports a light body with a very clean and crisp character. The flavor again surprises with a light lemony and herbal hop flavor and a hint of malt. The beer finishes with just a hint of bitterness and a lingering light citrusy hop flavor. This is a light, refreshing beer with a gorgeously subtle hop aroma and flavor. However, don't confuse this example with a session IPA as this example has a lighter hop profile and much less bitterness than typical session IPAs.

#37 - SYRINGA PALE ALE

Boise Brewing Co. Boise, ID | www.boisebrewing.com

Style: American Pale Ale | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 55 | Serve at: 38 to 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Jason Johnson*

This beer is approachable and not overly heavy on the hops. The color is deep gold and very clear. The beer poured a very well-formed and long-lasting ivory white head. The flavor matches the aroma perfectly, with juicy and smooth citrus and mango hop flavors along with a hint of pine accentuated by the medium bitterness. The malt is crisp and mildly sweet with very light toast notes. Again, the flavor is clean and easily drinkable. The beer is medium-bodied, mildly creamy with no off-putting hop astringency. This is a very easy-drinking and well-hopped APA. I really enjoyed this sample and it represents the style very well. If I were to ask for a crushable yet sophisticated APA, this beer is exactly what I would picture in my mind.

#36 - TWO STALL

Ahnapee Brewery Algoma, WI | www.ahnapeebrewery.com

Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 18 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

As soon as you pop the cap, you can tell that this beer avoids the pitfall of many chocolate milk stouts that go gangbusters on the chocolate, masking the milk stout character. A mild, soft roasty malt aroma rises from the glass with nothing harsh or burnt. The chocolate is there but not overbearing and there is also a light, dark fruit aroma in the background. The malt flavors delight with a rich roast seasoned lightly by added chocolate. The added chocolate coats the mouth and grows slightly as you drink the beer. Sweetness is moderate, not cloying and balances with the roast malt flavors, chocolate and a medium hop bitterness. The texture is full bodied, creamy and mildly warming. This beer is a delight to drink and impresses with its balance.

#35 - FOUND

Upland Brewing Co. Bloomington, IN | www.uplandbeer.com

Style: American Wild Ale | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 18 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 94

Aroma: 24 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Joseph Formanek*

A tart and earthy aroma is quite evident as the beer is poured with some cereal notes, floral esters, citrus and lemon notes also present behind this. The clean tartness noted in the aroma comes through very well in the flavor with light citrus and cereal flavors in the background complementing the flavor from start to finish. This beer is not particularly complex, but it is very well balanced and quite refreshing. There is a light malt and additional cereal character that builds toward the finish, though the body remains on the thin side and maintains its quaffability. The aftertaste is dry and prepared the palate well for the next sip. This is simply a great summer thirst-quencher that I would highly recommend to search out if available in your area.

#34 - ENTWINED

Upland Brewing Co. Bloomington, IN | www.uplandbeer.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 7.3% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 39 to 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Joseph Formanek*

The beer has good clarity with a deep brown color with ruby highlights. A quite tart/metallic/quinine-like character greets you up front, with a solid background of a slightly sweet brown malt flavor that lingers and adds complexity through the middle, finish and aftertaste. The sour character comes off as that of a malt vinegar. There is a considerable amount of fruity character evident, with beery and fruit esters combining with grape, raisin and oxidized wine notes. The wood character is very subdued. The overall tartness is moderate, but in good balance with the flavor intensity of the brew. There is a moderate level of carbonation and a dry finish. This is a very rich and complex brew that is quite enjoyable and approachable.

#33 - LIFE HOPQUATIC

Melvin Brewing Alpine, WY | www.melvinbrewing.com

Style: Specialty IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 50 | Serve at: 40°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 37 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

New England IPAs are known for their juicy/tropical fruit/citrusy hop-forward character, hazy appearance and lighter-than-typical American IPA bitterness. This beer pours light golden in color with moderate haze and a huge, finely beaded white head. The aroma is moderate hops of resins and peaches with no malt aroma. The flavor is prominently hoppy with a more melded flavor of citrus and tropical fruits. The beer finishes lightly bittered with a "juicy fruit" hop flavor lingering. This beer hits all aspects of the New England IPA style: haze, tropical fruit hops, low bitterness. The blend of hops is pleasant and interesting, which leads to a beer that is ultimately quaffable. Hopheads rejoice!

#32 - POCKETS OF SUNLIGHT

Jackie O's Brewery Athens, OH | www.jackieos.com

Style: Saison | ABV: 6.5% | Serve at: 42 to 48°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 4 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

Prying off the cap releases an inviting aroma where honey, coriander and lemon verbena blend nicely with the mixed-fermentation aromas, light biscuit and faint hops. It fills the glass hazy gold under a creamy white cap with fair retention. A choir of flavors sing in harmony with the added flavors of honey, coriander and lemon verbena in sync with the beer's yeast, malt and hop character. The acidity is firm but enjoyable. The beer finishes dry with a spicy, mildly bitter moderately sour aftertaste. The body is medium-light, the alcohol moderate and the carbonation slightly above-average. The beer has a lot going on, but it has just the right amount of everything – making for an elegant, refreshing drink. If you are looking for a special beer to savor, this is it.

#31 - CHIMAY GRANDE RÉSERVE

Abbaye de Scourmont Chimay, Belgium | www.chimay.com

Style: Belgian Dark Strong Ale | ABV: 9.0% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 50 to 52°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

The aroma is of bready malt with hints of chocolate complemented by esters of dried fruit. The flavor is similarly a complex blend of bready malt, dark fruit esters and peppery phenolics in a medium body despite the strength (9 percent ABV) making this deceptively strong ale exceedingly drinkable. The finish is moderately bitter with a rich and complex maltiness (that is never sweet) and a light carbonic bite and hint of warmth. Chimay Grande Réserve is one of the standard bearers of the Belgian Dark Strong Ale style (also referred to as Belgian Quadrupel). If you have never had this beer, make it your next goal to try this classic example. If you have had it, you already know how good it is. Always seek this beer out!

#30 - OKTOBERFEST

Ahnapee Brewery Algoma, WI | www.ahnapeebrewery.com

Style: Märzen | ABV: 5.5% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 20 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 40 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

This beer pours a brilliant reddish copper under a moderate off-white foam cap as a range of bready, toasty dough aromas rise from the glass. The beer brushes your lips with a lightly sweet malty kiss that dries off by the finish with a balancing hop bitterness and a pleasant long-lasting maltiness. Lightly toasted malt flavors lead the show with a little bread crust and a range of Maillard flavors. Many U.S.-made märzens miss the boat by coming off too sweet with too much caramel malt flavor. This one does not. Its hop/malt balance hits the mark and it finishes crisp and clean. The beer loses a couple points on aroma – it's a little low – and on appearance and head retention. The brewer hits it out of the park on flavor.

#29 - BOURBON BARREL-AGED DOPPELBOCK

Seedstock Brewery Denver, CO | www.seedstockbrewery.com

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 10.0% | IBUs: 19 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

It pours as a very attractive deep red/brown, with a persistent creamy off-white head. The barrel character is relatively restrained, which is very welcome here. Light vanilla and bourbon notes peek out but are still behind a robust and rich malty character. Light raisin notes come through as well, likely from the positive oxidation. Upon tasting, the balance is striking. It really seems as though this is the second use of the barrel, as the booze and barrel are more subdued than I expected and in perfect harmony with the malt. No spicy heat here either. Well-attenuated and well-aged. Minimal oxidative stripping from the body, but overall, this is a banger. Easily drinkable, which isn't something one usually says about a BA doppelbock!

#28 - CURRANT EVENTS

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: Wild Specialty Beer | ABV: 4.5% | IBUs: 5 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 94

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Bury*

A moderate, clean funk nose of black currants and floral hibiscus greets you. It dominates over restrained grainy malt without additional complexity from hops. The subtle lactic acid tang is there but isn't overbearing nor yogurt-like, which is a treat. The flavor picks right up where the aroma left off but with more intense characteristics. The black currant really sings when paired with leather and lacto. There's also a strong hibiscus-like, floral, earthy flavor that blends with the other flavors. Despite all of this, the beer is well-balanced without too acidic of a finish. Currant Events is a delicious, sessionable sour that clocks in at only 4.5% ABV. Well balanced with tart fruit and funk, it should appeal to beer connoisseurs and newbies alike.

#27 - SALTY CREW BLONDE ALE

Coronado Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.coronadobrewing.com

Style: Blonde Ale | ABV: 4.5% | IBUs: 10 | Serve at: 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by John C. Tull*

The appearance is pale golden with excellent clarity, though very little, if any, head forms beyond a few pale bubbles along the edge of the glass. The malt flavor is wonderfully soft with a hint of sweetness. A touch of bready character comes through as well. A very subtle hop flavor with an earthy quality is present, and the bitterness is balanced as expected for a blonde ale, though it does lean to the high end of the style. The carbonation is firm, providing a slight carbonic edge that adds dimension. Yes, this is typically a style that serves as a gateway beer for breweries and brewpubs, but I would happily have this anytime when something less complicated, and more traditionally American, is warranted. I would enthusiastically encourage anyone to try this.

#26 - PISTON PUMP-KIN PORTER

Garage Brewing Co. Temecula, CA | www.garagebrewco.com
Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 6.7% | IBUs: 23 | Serve at: 42°

RATED 94

Aroma: 24 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Richard Wong*

The pour revealed a pitch-black hue and a nice creamy tan head. Carbonation for this beer was fantastic. From the very beginning, chocolate permeated this beer along with subtle roasted malts and spices (cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg). The flavor of this beer is very well balanced. I got the roasted and dark malt flavors that had hints of chocolate, slight coffee flavors along with spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, etc.). This beer's balance was peerless neither the roastiness nor the spiciness dominated but rather complemented each other equally. The body and mouthfeel of this beer is medium with a nice creaminess and richness. The finish was very smooth and rich. A nicely made beer for the upcoming fall and winter season.

#25 - WHITE RASCAL

Avery Brewing Co. Escondido, CA | www.averybrewing.com
Style: Witbier | ABV: 5.6% | IBUs: 20 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 24 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Judge's Review *by Joseph Formanek*

The aroma is comprised of cereal and coriander notes along with a touch of citrus and a bit of Belgian banana fermentation character. The brew has a hazy light golden color and a white, small-bubbled lacy head with very good retention. The flavor has an evident cereal and wheat bite along with coriander, citrus and banana flavors. These flavors are retained through the middle, finish and aftertaste. The body is medium, and the carbonation is moderate. The sourness is rather mild, which allows a bit too much sweetness from the grain to come through in the finish, making it slightly cloying. White Rascal is a very solid interpretation of a Witbier. It could be improved by having a touch more tartness, but this is still a very nice example of the style.

#24 - SPACE NEEDLE IPA

Pike Brewing Co. Seattle, WA | www.pikebrewing.com
Style: American IPA | ABV: 6.5% | IBUs: 58 | Serve at: 42°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 37 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Rick Franckhauser*

Big fresh lemon and resin hop nose is accompanied by moderate levels of woody hops. There is some underlying rich Munich malt character. The flavor follows the aroma with lots of lemony citrus and lower levels of pine resin, wood and sweet orange. In spite of the citrus presence, the beer is smooth and manages to finish quite dry. Though hoppy, this beer is an easy drinker. The malt is rich and complementary without getting in the way. Very well done. I suppose some may want the malt to take a lesser role in an American IPA, but I think that would lessen the drinkability. The malt presence really allows the hops to stand out without being harsh. Space Needle delivers the proper balance I want in an American IPA.

#23 - STONE FARKING WHEATON WOOTSTOUT 2019

Stone Brewing Co. Escondido, CA | www.stonebrewing.com
Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 11.5% | Serve at: 50 to 55°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Tracy Hensley*

Wootstout 2019 aromas open with warm boozy molasses aromas followed by sweet rye, banana bread covered with semisweet chocolate, graham cracker crumbs and warm candied vanilla cinnamon pecans. The appearance is an appropriately dark brown opaque beer. It is surprisingly drinkable for the intense flavor. Wootstout 2019's flavors are of a balanced creamy chocolate syrup, roast and pecans followed by a warming vanilla caramel finished by lingering wood tannins and an aftertaste of charred pecans.

#22 - LUNDI

Monday Night Brewing Atlanta, GA | www.mondaynightbrewing.com

Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.1% | IBUs: 55 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 94

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

The flavor is similar to the aroma with citrusy flavors of mango and tangerine melding with resinous and piney characters. The malt flavor is very low with a medium-light body. The bitterness is moderate (not as aggressive as some American IPAs) but the low body and drying finish provide similar sensations as do the more bitter IPAs. The finish has a strong, lingering hop flavor of tropical, citrusy fruits among a light, clean malt backbone. This is a very well-brewed American IPA with a well-blended hop profile over a neutral malt palate. Despite the low malt backbone, the bitterness and dryness do not become as overwhelming as some of the drier American IPAs can be. Hopheads, seek this IPA out.

#21 - ENTER NIGHT PILSNER

Stone Brewing Co. Escondido, CA | www.stonebrewing.com

Style: German Pils | ABV: 5.7% | Serve at: 40°

RATED 94

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Pat Mulloy*

Like hops but are getting tired of all the hazy, milkshake IPAs and looking for something clean and bitter? This is your beer. It looks and smells like a German pils, pouring brilliant yellow gold under a two-inch persistent creamy white foam cap. The aroma is clean lightly spiced noble hops and a low grainy malt presence. The flavor leads with dry and crisp low grainy malt, and then you notice a growing, assertive hop bitterness. It is big and nuanced but not harsh or sharp, and as it rolls over your tongue it announces: "this is why you are drinking this beer." In the malt and yeast the brewer has crafted the perfect delivery mechanism for the hop character, which achieves a balance of flavor and bitterness that's seldom achieved.

#20 - SAMUEL ADAMS UTOPIAS 2019

The Boston Beer Co. Boston, MA | www.samueladams.com

Style: Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 28.0% | Serve at: Room Temperature

RATED 94

Aroma: 21 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Judge's Review *by Michael Heniff*

The aromas are prominently rich caramel malt and dried plums, raisins and prunes. The body is medium-full, (purposefully) uncarbonated and moderate (but not unpleasant) alcohol warmth. The flavor is strong and complex with rich caramel malt, dried prune, toasted oak and maple syrup finishing with obviously strong alcohol. The complexity of the process to make Utopias is off-the-charts and the originality of this beer is unmatched. The beer is rich and complex but lacks a little harmony because of the extreme alcohol content; Utopias drinks more like a distilled spirit than a fermented beverage. Unfortunately, the individual characters of the various barrel spirits are lost among the blend. Regardless, this is an excellent, unique beverage that you must try – even if it is only for a few sips!

#19 - FLENSBURGER DUNKEL

Flensburger Brauerei Flensburger, Germany | www.flens.de

Style: Munich Dunkel | ABV: 4.8% | IBUs: 28 | Serve at: 48 to 50°

RATED 95

Aroma: 24 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 8 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Brian Eichhorn*

The nose is richly malty and melanoidin-heavy, making it delightfully bready. No caramel character, just a hint of cocoa. There is a faint herbal hopping to round it out. Super fresh and clean, a nearly perfect aroma. At taste, light and spry on the palate. It is a touch on the sweet side, and a hint more bitterness up front would be great, but it's still super well attenuated and drinkable. Rich and bready while maintaining its lean character. As I continue to drink it, the bitterness grows slightly and brings it into balance. Overall, this is lean, light-bodied and crisp, with a good level of carbonation. This is nearly as good as anything I've had overseas, and it makes sense that it is a German brewer making this. Fantastic.

#18 - BOCKNESS MONSTER

Upland Brewing Co. Bloomington, IN | www.uplandbeer.com
Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer | ABV: 9.8% | Serve at: 50°

RATED 95

Aroma: 24 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 8 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Richard Wong*

The flavor of this beer just exploded on the palate, and I was inundated with flavors of bourbon and oak, dried fruit (raisins, plums), a hint of vanilla and molasses and slight roasted malts that had a nice biscuit quality. The hop bitterness was buried in the background making it very subtle but still integral to the overall flavors of this beer. A very nice carbonation contributed to a sterling body and mouthfeel. The beer was very smooth and had a very nice subtle burn in the palate due to the alcohol strength. In between the excellent balance, I also found wonderful flavors of the bourbon barrel and the oak, dried fruit, malt sweetness and subtle hints of vanilla and molasses. An exceptionally complex and tasty brew!

#17 - PIG PORTER

Right Brain Brewery Traverse City, MI | www.rightbrainbrewery.com
Style: Specialty Smoked Beer | ABV: 6.8% | IBUs: 28 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 95

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Sal Mortillaro II*

The initial sip hits the drinker with a low malt sweetness quickly replaced by a complex salinity with medium-low smoked bacon and smoked bitter chocolate, all of which carries into the finish. As the finish begins to dissipate, the drinker is left with a savory umami character that lingers, no doubt due to the pork additions. This beer has a medium bitterness perpetuated by the roastiness, though hop flavor is blended in with the evocative earthy character of the smoke and salinity. Overall, this is a fun and interesting take on a smoked porter. The enjoyable, savory note that persists in this beer really makes this one shine. Gimmick beers are in no short supply, but this is not one of them. This is a nearly world-class beer that utilizes creative thinking.

#16 - JUICE ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Altamont Beer Works Livermore, CA | www.altamontbeerworks.com
Style: Double IPA | ABV: 9.0% | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 95

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Joseph Formanek*

The flavor is a huge smack of Mosaic hops from start to finish. The malt backbone is light to moderate. The middle and finish retain the same character. The body is medium, the carbonation is moderate, and the slightly sweet finish does dry out well enough in the finish before the next sip. The overall fermentation character is very clean, which allows the hop character as well as the malt that is present to be able to be well experienced in the flavor. Juice Above the Clouds is a very well-crafted and designed Double IPA that is very approachable and enjoyable! From my experience, this is quite unusual for this style. This is not just a hop bomb – the malt and hop bill deliver a very nice balance for the style.

#15 - MIRROR UNIVERSE

Fair State Brewing Cooperative Minneapolis, MN | www.fairstate.coop
Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.0% | IBUs: 33 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 95

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Nelson Crowle*

A very inviting nose with lots of tropical fruit greets the drinker – guava, papaya, kiwi, some honeydew melon, a bit of orange peel and just a hint of freshly baked bread. Tasting the beer follows the aroma with a whole boatload of tropical character – the same guava and papaya, a bit more bread dough to hold up all the hops, a slight honey sweetness, moderate citrusy tangerine notes; it's a whole fruit bowl in a beer! Big flavor and aroma hops, medium-low hop bittering, and there's a hint of oatmeal. A moderate body with a fairly dry, very fruity lingering finish and just a hint of lime at the end. Overall, a well-done example of the style and very enjoyable! Pair this with Chinese honey chicken and rice chips.

#14 - BELGIAN-STYLE BLONDE ALE

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com
Style: Belgian Blond Ale | ABV: 7.5% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 45 to 50°

RATED 95

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 10 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Susan Ruud*

This beer was beautiful at presentation with a bright golden color and a huge white head with a very slight haze. The aroma coming off of the beer was of wonderful spicy hops blended with slight spicy phenolics, a soft grainy malt presence and light citrus esters. The flavor had a very similar profile adding in a clean, light alcohol presence to tie all of the flavors together and a very smooth finish leaving just a hint of spiciness and soft low hop bitterness lingering lightly. This beer was a very refreshing example, and although alcohol was present, it was so smooth that you almost didn't notice it. This is a great beer for drinking when you are done working in the yard on a cool fall day.

#13 - STICKY ICKY ICKY

Short's Brewing Co. Bellaire, MI | www.shortsbrewing.com
Style: American IPA | ABV: 7.1% | IBUs: 68 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 95

Aroma: 22 / 24
Appearance: 5 / 6
Flavor: 40 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by Dan Martich*

Moderately malty with a grainy, biscuit and light caramel flavor, the bitterness is high but not offensive. Leaves the palate coated with hop flavors that mirror the aroma of pine, citrus grapefruit peel, and a woody backend rounds out the whole experience quite beautifully. These bold flavors make it hard to put the glass down. The hops are in harmony with the malt flavors. Medium body, medium carbonation and a pleasant mouthfeel. Does not overwhelm the senses with alcoholic notes. An exceptional beer that showcases the freshness of the hops and brewing technique of the brewmaster. This beer was well received and enjoyable to drink and evaluate on its merits. A classic American IPA that is sure to stand out in a sea of similar styles.

#12 - GOLDEN COFFEE PALE

pFriem Family Brewers Hood River, OR | www.pfriembeer.com
Style: Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer | ABV: 6.0% | IBUs: 30 | Serve at: 40 to 45°

RATED 95

Aroma: 23 / 24
Appearance: 6 / 6
Flavor: 38 / 40
Mouthfeel: 9 / 10
Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Judge's Review *by David Sapsis*

Overall, this is a spectacular beer. It has a delicious golden ale base, with a wide, light and fresh malt structure and hop crispness infused by an amazing coffee-berry tea. The sweet malt and hop/coffee flavor space is revelatory. Now, I will acknowledge that I love coffee. As far as street cred, I grew up in Berkeley, and frequented Peet's stores Nos. 1 and 3 as a punk teenager. This beer has an amazingly pleasant coffee flavor. I have had light-colored coffee ales before, and they all had overbearing bitterness/harshness and chemical caffeine notes. There is none of that here – just a sublime marriage of two of my favorite things. If you like those two things, I cannot recommend this beer enough.



#11

Juicy Harvest

Upland Brewing Co.

Indiana | United States

Brewer's Description

For this batch of Harvest Ale, a team of Upland brewers drove up to Indy High Bines in Indianapolis to help harvest their hops. These hops are fresh off the bine and completely unprocessed for maximum aroma and flavor impact. They are literally harvested and unloaded directly into our hopback within 24 hours for an incredibly fresh and fragrant once-a-year brew.

Statistics

Style: American IPA

Style Family: IPA

Availability: Seasonal

ABV: 6.0%

Served at: 45 to 50°

Contact

Upland Brewing Co.
4060 Profile Parkway
Bloomington, IN

Tel: (812) 336-2337
www.uplandbeer.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Richard Wong

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

*Juicy Harvest has been evaluated
as an American IPA.
(2015 BJCP Category 21A)*

The aroma of this beer was very subtle considering that this is an American IPA, which are expected to be very hoppy beers both in aroma and flavor. I got a light hint of pineapples in the nose, which made it very tropical. The appearance of this beer was very hazy and cloudy with a nice carbonation level. The color was a light yellow and it was very milky; a truly beautiful pour. The flavor of this beer was well balanced between the malt and hops. Again, the flavor had a tropical component that revealed subtle pineapple notes. The hop bitterness was very smooth and well balanced. In some IPAs, the hop bitterness can be a little assertive, but this was not the case with Juicy Harvest. The hop bitterness came off as subtle and smooth, while still retaining the criteria of being an IPA. This beer's claim to fame was being wet hopped. Most hops are dried in a kiln and then shipped off to breweries. This beer is made with fresh hops that were not dried, but rather picked very fresh. Being close to the hop farm is essential as time is a factor in making this beer. Once the hops are picked from the vines, they are shipped fresh to the breweries to ensure that the hop flavors are retained for brewing. The mouthfeel and body of this beer were both medium. It had a very nice creaminess due to the right level of carbonation. The overall impression of this beer is that it is very well-balanced with hints of tropical fruit (pineapple) and smooth bitterness. Because of all these factors, this beer can be imbibed in large quantities. But of course: the fresher the better!

PETE BATULE

Talks: *Juicy Harvest*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

We have been making an annual wet-hopped Harvest Ale for many years at Upland. While in previous years it was a traditional American-style Pale Ale, this year Patrick Lynch, our lead brewer, decided to adjust the recipe to achieve a hazy/juicy-style IPA.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

There are few examples of this style that use locally sourced wet hops to make a juicy/hazy-style IPA. Our team heads up to the south side of Indianapolis to help harvest the whole cone hops, and then we immediately drive the hops down to Bloomington to use at the brewery. The nuanced flavors we find from wet hops are very difficult to achieve with traditional pelletized hops.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

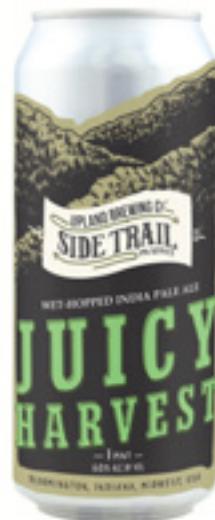
Well-balanced hop aroma, bitterness and malt character. The creaminess and carbonation level are also dialed in to give it the perfect finish.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

The tropical aroma along with the creaminess are my two favorite elements of the beer. It is also very rewarding to work directly with local hop farmers. We can tour the fields throughout the growing season and help partake in the actual harvest itself.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

Our Harvest Ale is a recipe we've been making for many years and everyone looks forward to how the beer will evolve over time. Each year we experiment with new hops or processes to deliver a remarkable drinking experience.



Judge's Second Opinion

Upland Brewing Company's Juicy Harvest IPA is a wonderful beer made via the wet hop process. The hops used in this beer are from the Indiana area, which is somewhat surprising, considering it is not known for its hop production. Harvesting of hops takes place from late August all the way to September. It is equivalent to the harvesting of grapes during wine production.

Most hops are processed as dry (hops that are dried in the kiln and presented in pellets and/or whole form). Fresh hops (wet hops) were used in the brewing process of this beer instead of dry hops. Wet hops are highly perishable and must be used within twenty-four hours of harvesting, because they expire extremely quickly. It is further challenging to use fresh hops because they are less concentrated, and so it takes more of them to achieve the same flavors as their dry counterpart. Also, fresh hops impart a grassy or green flavor rather than the heavy bitterness that dry hops provide – a flavor more typically associated with modern IPAs.

Clearly, this hop farm was in close proximity to Upland Brewing Co., and the beer that was produced via that fascinating brewing process was a delightfully hazy and fresh wet hop IPA. It poured a beautiful light yellow, milky hue and featured a nice grassy aroma and well-balanced flavors of malt sweetness and bitterness. I got hints of tropical fruit (pineapple), and it's easy to see why it is labeled as "juicy." The bitterness was not harsh like it is with many IPAs; instead it was rather smooth from start to finish, which is likely due to the wet-hopping process in which bitterness is muted somewhat. This is a deceptively drinkable beer, as well as a world-class IPA with some of the freshest hops around. – Richard Wong



BREWER Q&A

#10

Sonoma Tart

Bear Republic Brewing Co.

California | United States

Brewer's Description

A pleasantly sour golden ale kissed with guava and passion fruit. Delicious fruit flavors with a sweet and tart finish. Sonoma Tart is a sour ale crafted by a love of the harvest, celebrating Sonoma County's rich agrarian history along with its newer "Wine Country" identity. For wine drinkers Sonoma Tart is a gateway craft beer, and, for the enthusiast, it's a complement to any meal. To get the most out of Sonoma Tart, enjoy the ale with warm laughter, an eclectic group of friends and possibly a hipster beard. Initiate your next trek with a walk through the latest discovery in sour ales.

Statistics

Style: Wild Specialty Beer

Style Family: American Wild Ale

Availability: Year-Round

ABV: 5.2%

IBUs: 17

Malts: Two-Row, White wheat, Carapils

Serve at: 45 to 50°

Contact

Bear Republic Brewing Co.

110 Sandholm Lane

Cloverdale, CA 95425

Tel: (707) 894-2722

www.bearrepublic.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Randy Scorby

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

*Sonoma Tart has been evaluated as a
Wild Specialty Beer.
(2015 BJCP Category 28C)*

Sonoma Tart pours a deep, hazy yellow with a white head that lingers. The aroma starts with prominent mixed passion fruit that eventually gives way to an identifiable guava character. A light tartness in the nose, light candied orange and bready malt notes emerge as it warms. Although the passion fruit is prominent, the overall aroma is fairly complex. The flavor follows with pronounced guava, mango, light pineapple and candied orange. A moderate and clean lactic sourness balances the light residual sweetness that emerges mid-palate, along with a very light hop bitterness and bready malt. The lactic sourness and passion fruit linger into the aftertaste creating a balanced, fruity and refreshing beer.

Sonoma Tart is a very well balanced and enjoyable sour fruit beer. All too often this style can end up as a fruit drink, but the fruit is very well integrated into the base beer. The lactic sourness is complementary and does not dominate. Very refreshing, this beer would be a good one to seek out in the warmer months.



ROGER HERPST

Talks: *Sonoma Tart*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

I developed this recipe in collaboration with a team of brewers who brewed pilot batches in our nano and pub brew-houses. It was an awesome example of teamwork in the brewery—our excellent Lab Analyst Natasha Sana ran bench trials on different strains of lacto and brewed the initial nano batches, while our brewpub team knocked out a successful 15-bbl batch, followed by an amazing collaboration between our maintenance team and Head Brewer Rob Kent ensuring that the dedicated equipment was in place to sour 50-bbl batches of wort for full-scale production. It was super fun to work closely with the whole team on a new process, new bugs, and new equipment. All in the service of a delicious beer.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

This is a hard beer to nail down stylistically, but the quality shines through. Passion fruit and guava certainly were not traditional Gose ingredients, and we were not adding table salt or coriander to this brew. We've taken to describing Sonoma Tart as a contemporary Gose, where its bright acidity, gentle malt bill and subtle fruity character give this ale a flavor profile similar to a Sauvignon Blanc.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

The consistent, excellent flavor profile of Sonoma Tart is the direct result of carefully planned brewing procedures, the use of high-quality ingredients, and a team of dedicated brewers, cellar people and packaging operators. Each step of the brewing process is critical to ensuring quality, from the selection of a flavorful lactobacillus strain that sours wort in a dedicated anaerobic fermenter, to blending sweet and sour wort in the kettle. Additions of the right amount of fruit at the right time during fermentation as well as meticulously controlling transfer and packaging operations are also critical. I couldn't be more proud of the Bear Republic team.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

Bear Republic is known as a premier brewer of India Pale Ale, so it has been very gratifying to see Sonoma Tart introduce our brews to drinkers who wouldn't necessarily order an IPA or hoppy pale. Even more satisfying is seeing the hardcore hop heads at our pub who normally drink Racer 5 or Thru the Haze IPA embrace this crisp sour beer. Sonoma Tart has become a mainstay in our year-round lineup, and I'm looking forward to brewing even more in 2020.



Judge's Second Opinion

Whenever I mention or talk about sour beer styles to my “not quite as beer nerdy as me” friends, their reactions range from comical to horrified. “You like that stuff?” “Sour beer, are you kidding me?” “Why would you ever want to drink anything like that?”

Those are all fair questions, I suppose, until you become a sour beer geek like me. Sour beer styles, although rightfully rapidly gaining popularity, are not what most people typically reach for or visit their local brewpub to find. But when you are lucky enough to find excellent examples of them, they can be some of the most satisfying, complex and enjoyable beers on the market. The best examples display a light to prominent hit of clean, lactic sourness (and maybe, depending on the style, a touch of acetic sourness) that is balanced with the malt or any adjuncts that may be present. Regardless, the sourness must be in balance and harmony with the beer itself.

Most fruit typically lends itself well to sourness, which is where Sonoma Tart excels as a sour beer. The passion fruit and guava are fresh and bright in the aroma and they are complemented by a light, clean tartness with a wave of candied orange and light bready malt to round it out. The deep, hazy yellow appearance and lingering white head draws you in even more, beckoning the drinker to taste it. The flavor is a journey of its own, taking the drinker on a roller coaster ride of guava, candied orange, pineapple and mango. The tart and fruity finish makes this a very refreshing beer no matter what the season is, but admittedly it would really hit the spot during the warm summer months.

What makes Sonoma Tart so special is the complexity that is provided by combining the fruit, base malt and lactic sourness. Although the fruit takes center stage, the sourness and malt character offer a supporting cast that truly sets this beer apart and pushes it into being a world-class example.

For those of you out there who love sour beer, Sonoma Tart is an absolute must to have on your beer wish list. For those of you out there who have thumbed your nose at sour beer in the past, this one just may be the gateway beer to introduce you to a lifetime exploration of sour beer styles. Regardless of which side of the fence you stand on, Bear Republic hit a home run with Sonoma Tart, and it deserves your undivided attention. — *Randy Scorby*



Roger

BEAR REPUBLIC ALES

BREWER Q&A

#9

Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale

Moody Tongue Brewing Co.
Illinois | United States

Brewer's Description

Good things come to those who wait. Traditional Flanders Red Ales often showcase blends of two worlds (young and mature), and the difficulty lies in finding the right balance. Our Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale showcases our blend of a young Flanders Red Ale with one that was aged for 24 months in American oak barrels resulting in a ruby red beer that greets the drinker with aromatics of Sangiovese grapes and American oak alongside flavors of tart cherry and rhubarb. Enjoy this traditional Flemish beer with dishes like beef bourguignon or braised rabbit with prunes, or simply pour this into a few glasses to share with friends and family.

Statistics

Style: Flanders Red Ale

Style Family: European Sour Ale

Availability: Limited Release

ABV: 6.7%

Hops: Saaz

Malts: Vienna, Caramel, Red Wheat

Serve at: 50 to 55°

Contact

Moody Tongue Brewing Co.
2515 S Wabash Ave
Chicago, IL 60616

Tel: (312) 600-5111
www.moodytongue.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by John C. Tull

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale has been evaluated as a Flanders Red Ale. (2015 BJCP Category 23B)

Notes of acetic acid linger on a bed of cherry fruit with hints of wood and leather. The acidity is restrained but unmistakable. The color is a dark copper-garnet, very clear with just a faint head on the glass's edge that is off-white. The flavor is acidic and fruity, expressing both good development of the wild yeast character and a rich pie-cherry fruit. The malt is not overworked, and a good malt sweetness balances the acidity nicely. I would characterize the malt and acidity as being very much complementary. The body is medium with acidity and carbonation adding a bite in the finish that makes the overall mouthfeel sharp as it passes over the palate. There is a touch of warmth from alcohol in the finish as well. Overall, this is an exceptional Flanders Red Ale that manages to be sour but not overly sour, malty enough to lend balance and sweetness to the tartness of the ferment, and fruity enough, with just a touch of wood character, to lend complexity and nuance to this wonderful beer. I would highly recommend finding a bottle, as this beer expresses the tradition of the Flanders Red as well as any I have had in Belgium or elsewhere.



JARED ROUBEN

Talks: *Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

Head Brewer J.T. Rea and I.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

I believe our culinary brewing philosophy helped us discern which fruit flavors and aromatics to showcase during the creation of this beer. Much of the complexity in the production of this style lies in the actual blending process of the aged beer with the younger Flanders Red Ale and tasting all of the barrels prior to building the final profile is instrumental in achieving balance. J.T. and I tasted each barrel multiple times before finalizing the blend so that we could ensure we would be bringing notes such as strawberry, cherry and rhubarb to life.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

To create an exceptional beer, it is important to pay homage to the history of the particular style. J.T. and I not only spent time researching and reading about traditional Flanders Red Ales, but later also traveled to Flanders to taste examples of the style prior to creating our own blend.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

I love this beer because it fills a void on beverage menus from a pairing standpoint. Flanders Red Ales are essentially the Burgundy of beer – much like a Pinot Noir, this style can pair just as easily with poultry (think dishes like roast chicken and Peking duck) as it can with heartier proteins (like a ribeye steak or ossobuco). While difficult and time-consuming to create, this style adds a new dimension to the pairing experience when thinking of how best to bring beer and food together.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

The Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale is quickly becoming one of the most popular specialty beers in our selection. We are excited to showcase this beer in particular, however, on our forthcoming pairing menu at the fine dining restaurant we are shortly opening at our brewery, The Dining Room. This beer will make for an outstanding pairing with dishes by our Executive Chef, Jared Wentworth, and will remain a showcase on draft and in bottles (as long as we've got the beer in inventory!) in our casual restaurant, The Bar.



Judge's Second Opinion

When I first got serious about understanding world beer styles, my fascination with Belgian beers, particularly Belgian sours, really drove my passion. When a friend shared a bottle of Rodenbach Grand Crû, which was rare at the time, I instantly fell in love with the Flanders Red ale beer style. I even made the Flanders region a required stopping point on a trip I took with my wife to Europe, but I was dismayed to learn that traditional Flanders Red production was disappearing, being replaced with soda pop ales with short turnaround instead of the more time-consuming and expensive traditional sour beers.

Luckily, things turned around with the commercial proliferation of wild yeast strains and the craft brewing tradition of tackling brewing challenges. The sour beer movement in the U.S. ignited, and the traditional sour brewing regions of the world were thankfully reinvigorated.

Today there are lots of breweries producing sour ales, but few with the capacity and patience to do what Moody Tongue has done with their Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale. They visited Belgium and studied the style, then took the time needed to blend this beer in order to make it the best Flanders Red Ale possible. And they did an exceptional job in constructing it!

All of the hallmark characteristics are present in this Flanders: umami, tart fruit, subtle wood character and a touch of acetic acid. The fruit expression is rich, reminiscent of pie cherries. The malt character has not been over-consumed by the wild bugs during the ferment; instead, sufficient malt comes through, providing a wonderful balance to the acetic tartness.

I find great pleasure in being able to discover an example of this style that reminds me of my first sip of a Flanders Red Ale. Moody Tongue's Oak Barrel Aged Flanders Red Ale is one such example – *John C. Tull*

PRESIDENT &
BREWMASTER



BREWER Q&A

#8

The Sage

Archetype Brewing

North Carolina | United States

Brewer's Description

Historically, the Sage archetype is one of wisdom, knowledge and power. It represents the innate spiritual aspect of our personality in the unconscious. The Sage is a seeker of truth, and this archetype operates from a fundamental principle that 'the truth will set you free.' Throughout literature and film, the sage often takes the form of a mentor, someone (or something) who guides the hero on their journey, while at the same time letting the hero choose their own path towards destiny such as Yoda, Gandalf or Dumbledore... just to name a few. The Belgian Strong Ale is a beer very close to our hearts. A big berry bouquet of cranberry, tart cherry and blueberry mixes with notes of figs, raisins, caramelized sugars and Belgian candi syrup. Classic Belgian flavor combined with a medium body and dry finish make this a deceptively drinkable strong ale.

Statistics

Style: Belgian Dark Strong Ale

Style Family: Strong Belgian Ale

Availability: Seasonal

ABV: 11.7%

IBUs: 35

Hops: Chinook

Malts: Two-Row, Flaked Oats, Extra Special Roast, Munich, D-180 (Candi Syrup), D-240 (Candi Syrup)

Served at: 50 to 55°

Contact

Archetype Brewing
265 Haywood Rd
Asheville, NC 28806

Tel: (828) 505-4177

www.archetypebrewing.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by *Sal Mortillaro II*

RATING: 96

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

*The Sage has been evaluated as a
Belgian Dark Strong Ale.
(2015 BJCP Category 26D)*

This beer pours a deep amber color, bordering on mahogany, with clear clarity and a slight ruby hue when held up to the light. A sudsy, tan-colored head is persistent as the beer is consumed. The overall aroma is fairly subdued with a low malt sweetness apparent along with subtle bready and raisin notes. Light wisps of ethyl alcohol and CO₂ are noted in the background. There are no hop or ester notes in the aroma. The intensity of flavors in this beer is much higher than the aroma suggests. The malt sweetness is medium-high with a medium malt flavor of toasted bread crust and medium-low raisin and prune with low dark cherry and slight caramel. There is a medium bitterness and low spiciness that appear to be derived from the alcohol character. There is no hop or ester flavor in this beer. This eventually finishes off-dry with lingering alcohol and dark fruit character. This beer has a medium-light body with high carbonation. A well-tempered note of alcohol warmth fills the mouth but is not hot or solventy. There is a lovely smooth creaminess in this beer. Overall, this is an extremely well executed Belgian Dark Strong. A lovely marriage of alcohol and malt complexity add depth and character to this beer. Though the aroma was much more subdued than I expected of the style, the flavor and quality of execution make up for the lacking aroma. I recommend this beer if you are a fan of Belgian Dark Strong. Enjoy!

96 - WORLD CLASS



STEVEN ANAN

Talks: *The Sage*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

This was my own recipe that I started thinking about years before the first batch was brewed. The recipe was heavily inspired by Westvleteren 12. Years back, I had the pleasure of drinking Westy 12 while surrounded by good friends and family and the experience, as well as the quality, of that beer crystalized this style for me – maybe eternally.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

This beer showcases the potential of every ingredient used in this recipe. Every malt comes through, the yeast expression is obvious, and the candi syrup doesn't dominate. It's balanced, yet complex, and evolves as you drink it. All of this said, it has a certain synergy that I have a hard time taking credit for, aside from just being patient.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

I feel like the majority of brewers would agree with this statement: When inspiration drives the creation of a beer (or anything really), the difference is noticeable. It's an experience I was trying to recreate for myself and share with other people. It wasn't made to just fill a gap in our beer portfolio. It was made with patience and care in every step of the process (Thanks to brewers Erin Jordan and Tyler Foley, you are the truest ballers). Sometimes less is more, and I think this beer embodies that philosophy.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

The drinkability coupled with the flavor, for sure. Every aspect of the beer evolves throughout the drinking experience.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

It's both a staff favorite and a local favorite. We brew one batch a year and this one saw a small bottle run. The cases didn't stick around for long! It's nice to see both craft beer lovers and the uninitiated enjoying this beer.



Judge's Second Opinion

Sage is defined as "one (such as a profound philosopher) distinguished for wisdom." Us beer connoisseurs, both readers and judges, all know the sage words of Benjamin Franklin: "beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy."

It is of little coincidence the Belgian Dark Strong Ale style was introduced to the world by sage men who knew God – Trappist monks. As a result, it is also of little coincidence one of the finest beers of all time is also a Belgian Dark Strong, the venerated Westvleteren 12.

This beer style, when executed correctly, marries elements of decadent richness with sublime complexity. Archetype Brewing's *The Sage* has achieved this same combination. The brute initial rush of dark candi sugar and malt richness quickly transforms into a sublime ether of well-tempered dark cherry, raisin, dried fig and pleasant alcohol warmth.

Being one of my favorite styles, I had the opportunity to judge many beers of this style at a well-known beer competition. So many of them were lackluster and missed the ethereal component that sets the world-class examples apart; I believe Archetype has hit that ephemeral quality.

The deep richness found in this beer, though stylistically accurate, is not easy to create. Recipe formulation, patience, technique, nurturing and (perhaps) a bit of divine intervention are integral to this style. There is an axiom that "brewers make wort and yeast make beer" and truly and patiently loving your yeast in this style yields the fine line of ethyl complexities of warmth, slightly sweet and slightly bitter.

The Sage is the type of beer that turns beer drinkers into beer connoisseurs. There seems to be a rather unfortunate trend in the United States where brewers eschew traditional styles at the expense of the trend of the moment. Beers like *The Sage* remind us that traditional, hallmark beers are still relevant and a bridge between brewing past and brewing present.

As the colder months come upon us, this beer is good for warming the body and the soul and helping guide beer neophytes down the long, rocky road (as the bottle label suggests) towards beer nirvana. – *Sal Mortillaro II*

CO-OWNER &
HEAD BREWER



BREWER Q&A

#7

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary

pFriem Family Brewers

Oregon | United States

Brewer's Description

pFriem Brouwer's 14th Anniversary is a collaboration between two old friends that began with one idea: huckleberries. With notes of candied melon, acai and pomegranate, the end result is a uniquely northwest ale – a true Cascadian partnership.

Statistics

Style: Fruit Lambic

Style Family: European Sour Ale

Availability: Collaboration

ABV: 7.1%

IBUs: 10

Hops: Aged Czech Saaz

Malts: Gambrinus Canadian Pilsner, Weyermann Wheat, Rahr Raw White Wheat

Served at: 45 to 50°

Contact

pFriem Family Brewers
707 Portway Avenue
Suite 101
Hood River, OR 97031

Tel: (541) 321-0490
www.pfriembeer.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Michael Heniff

RATING: 96

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary has been evaluated as a Fruit Lambic. (2015 BJCP Category 23F)

Lambics are known for their sourness and wild characters that are naturally (or “spontaneously”) imparted by airborne yeast and bacteria. Fruit Lambics impart an additional dimension to the beer with the fruit flavors (the fruit sugars can be either fermented out or the beer can be back-sweetened). pFriem’s “lambic inspired ales” are fermented with a blend of *Brettanomyces* and lactic acid bacteria cultures and are aged in oak. In Brouwer’s 14th Anniversary, huckleberries foraged from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest are added to the barrels at a rate of one pound per gallon.

Brouwer’s 14th Anniversary pours golden in color with a slight haze and a fading rim of white head. The aroma is moderately funky with aromas of hay, barnyard and a hint of horse blanket along with a hint of cherry-like dark fruit. The flavor is moderately light lactic sourness with a light sweetness and black cherry-like dark fruit. The funky characters take a background in the flavor but there is still a trace of leather and hay. The complexity in the flavor is tremendous with a melding of the lactic sourness, wild flavors, dark fruit and subtle sweetness over a light oakiness. The finish has moderate lactic acidity over a slightly sweet dark fruit with a light oaky flavor.

This is a fantastic sour beer. It is sour and funky but not over-done; the huckleberries provide a sweetness to balance the tartness and the fruit flavors provide complexity to the wild flavors. Enjoy!

96 - WORLD CLASS



GAVIN LORD

Talks: *Brouwer's* 14th Anniversary

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

The fruit! Huckleberries have yet to be successfully cultivated anywhere in the world. As a result, although the fruit is often referenced in pop culture pertaining to the west (think Doc Holliday), few are actually familiar with its flavor and aroma. I love the idea that this might be someone's introduction. The base beer has delightfully preserved the attributes of the fresh berries.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

Balance. I love the interaction between base beer, barrel and fruit. We value balance very highly in all of our beers, and the fruited mixed-culture offerings are certainly no exception. At times it can be a tightrope walk to find equilibrium between all of the many elements at play. As if that wasn't enough, in this case we introduced some new variables. We'd never worked with huckleberries, and we'd never fruited directly into a barrel. I was delighted that despite presenting these new elements into our process, the beer found that elusive balance.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

This beer belongs to a larger family of beers to which I tend to gravitate. The aroma is very fruit driven, with notes of oak, acid and a touch of funk. The initial "attack" is again very fruit forward, fooling the sipper into expecting either the overly sweet or the overly acidic. Instead, the finish is dry and complex, with each sip revealing a little more of what this sly little beer has to offer. I'm a sucker for beers that are complex yet quaffable.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

We enjoy four very distinct seasons here in the Pacific Northwest. We released the beer in March to coincide with the Brouwer's Anniversary, and it was almost as though you could taste that summer was on its way. It's a reassuring feeling after a long winter. That feeling, coupled with our brewers' reputations as stalwarts of the craft community, contributed to the great enthusiasm and excitement that surrounded this beer.



Judge's Second Opinion

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary was a fruited "lambic inspired ale" fermented with a blend of *Brettanomyces* and lactic acid bacteria cultures and aged in oak with huckleberries. The resulting beer was a fantastic marriage of fruit and funkiness without having too much of either of those elements. The key aspect that made this beer fantastic was balance; there are plenty of very sour funky beers available as well as plenty of overly sweet, singularly flavored fruit beers. But what is hard to do, and what should be celebrated when it is done well, is balance.

A topic that is frequently discussed with regards to beer and food pairings are complementing flavors (such as stout and chocolate) and contrasting flavors (such as stout and oysters). These same philosophies apply to ingredients in a beer recipe and resulting flavors in beer. A very typical complementing balance in American IPAs is to blend hops that impart slightly different flavors such as Citra, Mosaic and Cascade. When this is done well, you can make a lengthy list of adjectives to describe the hop flavors; when this is done poorly, one hop outshines the rest and the beer is still singularly focused – despite having a number of different hop varieties.

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary has both elements of complement and contrast. For complementing elements, the lactic sourness works well with the *Brettanomyces* funkiness and the slight sourness of the huckleberry fruit. For contrasting elements, the slight sweetness of the malt and huckleberries contrasts with the sourness imparted by the *Lactobacillus* blend. When all of these elements are brought together in perfect proportions, you have balance! And pFriem Family Brewers was able to balance all of these different elements perfectly. Well done! (And one may also give extra credit for the high degree of difficulty in the brewing process, which featured oak aging, multiple wild cultures, unusual foraged fruit, fermenting fruit in the barrels, etc.)

This beer helped to drive home the idea that balance is always worth thinking about when you are drinking or brewing your favorite beers. Every beer does not have to be a "hop bomb" or have a single over-the-top flavor. Look for both complementing and contrasting flavors. Seek out balance and enjoy the interplay between flavors that is inherent with balance. Cheers! – Michael Heniff



#6

Festbier

East Brother Beer Co.

California | United States

Brewer's Description

A smooth, clean, pale German lager with a moderately strong malty flavor and a light hop character. Part of East Brother's Seasonal Lager series. This celebratory Bavarian-style lager balances malt complexity with a light noble hop character.

Statistics

Style: Festbier

Style Family: Pale Malt European Lager

Availability: Seasonal

ABV: 5.8%

IBUs: 24

Hops: Hallertau Mittlefrueh

Malts: Admiral Maltings Admiral Pilsner, Briess Bonlander Munich 10L, Brises Vienna, Weyermann Caramunich I

Served at: 38°

Contact

East Brother Beer Co.
1001 Canal Blvd.
Richmond, CA 94804

Tel: (510) 230-4081
www.eastbrotherbeer.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Nelson Crowle

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

*Festbier has been evaluated as a Festbier.
(2015 BJCP Category 4B)*

This beer pours a brilliant deep gold with a medium-sized head of tiny white bubbles that fades fairly quickly but returns when swirled. With such a brilliant clarity, the beer shows a beautiful upward cascade of rising bubbles that's very visually appealing. The aroma is of freshly baked bread and moderate bread crusts with just a hint of floral hops. The flavor extends with doughy notes and a lightly toasty character, echoing the moderate bread crusts of the aroma. The hops in the flavor come across as floral, with just a hint of black pepper, and they are all very well balanced. The malt character has a hint of sweetness – not quite dry, but still well attenuated. Hop bittering is medium-low – with the balance towards the malt. Medium body and a smooth and creamy yet crisp finish with a slight honey note lingering. This beer is barely within the style guidelines as a Festbier; it's at the high end of the malt, in particular, but it works very well as everything is really nicely balanced, producing a world-class example of this style. This is a perfect beer to go with a family grilling session – especially one that includes bratwursts.



PAUL LISZEWSKI

Talks: *Festbier*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

Co-Founder Chris Coomber and I spend a lot of time evaluating other commercially available examples of the style. After we find one or two that we really like, we dissect why we like each beer and where the flavors come from. What is it about the malt backbone we like? The hop flavor and bitterness? The appearance? Finally, we review our tasting notes from the previous release and sample from our beer library to decide what tweaks we want to make. We were happy with last year's results, but we still found areas for improvement.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

Most importantly, balance in flavor sets this apart from others within the style. A clean finish coupled with clear and crisp layers of flavor beckon your palate to indulge the next sip. True to style with the freshest locally available ingredients highlight what your local craft brewery can produce. This easy-to-drink beer allows you to celebrate the harvest of local ingredients and encourages you to focus on creating that special moment with your friends.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

You said it, not us! We brewed this beer last year and were quite happy with it, but there is always room for improvement. Rather than pushing the style guidelines for a particular style, we focused on improving our process and ingredient selection. We revised last year's recipe and the most notable change was in the base malt, for which we used our local maltster, Admiral Maltings. The result was additional layers of flavor due to the incredible freshness of the malt, elevating this beer from good to great. Close your eyes, take a sip and you will swear that you are wearing lederhosen, sitting under a walnut tree and listening to an oompah band in Germany.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

We first released this beer last year and, admittedly, we were late for the Oktoberfest season. However, we were overwhelmed by the positive responses we received from many people, who told us that this was the best of the season. We were on time this year and managed to sell out before the beer was even packaged. This year, we moved to Admiral Maltings for the bulk of the malt bill and found that using fresh malt raised the bar for this brew.



Judge's Second Opinion

Festbier. It sounds like one of those beers that has been around for hundreds of years, very German, and steeped in tradition and history. However, it's actually a relatively new style of beer – from the 1970s.

Way back in 1810, Crown Prince Ludwig I of Bavaria wanted to marry the Saxon Princess Therese – and of course, there needed to be a huge party in the Wiese (meadow) to celebrate. That's where Oktoberfest started – but they didn't drink Festbier at the time. They probably were drinking a somewhat darker beer. Along came Gabriel Sedlmayr in 1872, and he upset the apple cart completely by introducing a deep, amber, malty, complex beer that we call Märzen or Oktoberfest. That went great for a hundred years, then Paulaner decided that a lighter (in color and body) beer was more appropriate for the millions of visitors attending the annual Oktoberfest in Munich each year. They created Festbier, and all six breweries that pour beer at Oktoberfest have served the lighter Festbier style ever since.

East Brother Beer Co. from Richmond, California, has done an exemplary job of faithfully recreating the Festbier style. The beer pours brilliantly clear deep gold, with a nice poofy head of fine white foam, and the bubbles keep rising from the bottom; a very pretty and very appealing brew. The aroma and flavor both greet you with interesting and complex malt characters including bread crusts, freshly baked bread dough, a light toasty note, a hint of honey (but not sweet) and some nice background floral and black pepper hop notes – with just enough bitterness to give a dry finish that invites another sip (and another and another...).

Typical Oktoberfest Festbier is about 6 percent ABV – East Brother's version is a solid 5.8 percent. At Oktoberfest you might drink a couple of liters – but the 16oz can is only about half a liter, so you're good for a few if you're looking to celebrate.

While you're enjoying a couple of East Brother Festbiers, why not go all German and do some bratwurst on the grill? I was able to sample a can of Festbier with bratwurst and the beer does a great job of cutting through the fatty/oily sausage, resetting your palate and getting you ready for more food. A match made in heaven!

East Brother also makes several other true-to-style beers, and they seem to be genuinely interested in producing the best example of each of these styles. With their Festbier, they certainly have done a great job! – *Nelson Crowle*



BREWER Q&A

#5

Oude Kriek

pFriem Family Brewers

Oregon | United States

Brewer's Description

pFriem's Oude Kriek is made by adding lush, juicy cherries grown right up the road to our year-old lambic ale and letting them get to know each other for another ten months. Judging from the aromas of fruit, nuts and bright flavors of cherry pie and berries with a dry, tangy finish, they make for a perfect match.

Statistics

Style: Fruit Lambic

Style Family: European Sour Ale

Availability: Limited Release

ABV: 5.6%

IBUs: 6

Hops: Aged Czech Saaz

Malts: Gambrinus Canadian Pilsner, Rahr Unmalted

Wheat, Mecca Grade Wikiup Red Wheat

Served at: 45 to 50°

Contact

pFriem Family Brewers

707 Portway Avenue

Suite 101

Hood River, OR 97031

Tel: (541) 321-0490

www.pfriembeer.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Rick Franckhauser

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 5 / 6

Flavor: 39 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

*Oude Kriek has been evaluated
as a Fruit Lambic.*

(2015 BJCP Category 23F)

Aromatics of stewed cherries abound along with a bright clean acidity. A little underlying lactic acid note provides the impression of the sourness that awaits your palate. Some earthy tones and a subtle funk of the barnyard variety are also noted. Additional esters make their way through, which are reminiscent of purple plums. As the beer warms up, I pick up some subtle nut character that makes me think of Brazil nuts. The tart cherries remain in the mix of aromatics throughout. The beer pours a lovely cranberry, raspberry color with an underlying amber tone to it. Rather hazy with a slight pink, tightly beaded head that drops off a little too quickly. The tart cherries show up in the flavor as well. Very fresh and natural tasting cherries, not the cough syrup, artificial flavor you will sometimes find. Balanced toward the tartness with some tannin qualities providing additional balance in the absence of bitterness and a cranberry impression. Moderately dry with some funky Brett and lactic acid to round things out, providing layers of sourness that keep it interesting. There is a little underlying malt sweetness, a little nuttiness and a woody note that works to keep the tartness from being overly assertive.

I do love a good Kriek. Especially one that tastes like huge quantities of fresh cherries were employed yet don't actually completely dominate the beer. When you find a good Kriek that combines the fresh tart cherries with elegant funky tartness that keeps revealing little secrets as you imbibe, that is a beer to behold and savor. That is beer history in a glass. pFriem Oude Kriek is one of those beers. Seek it out and savor it. This is what world-class tastes like.

96 - WORLD CLASS



GAVIN LORD

Talks: *Oude Kriek*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

Our beers live in a state of constant evolution. Recipe, process, raw ingredients, concept – all are subject to change in the name of quality. Our production team seeks to constantly improve our offerings one minor tweak at a time, and in this way, we're all responsible for each recipe. In this case, our team is expanded to include Brian McCormick, our cherry grower, who is an extraordinary winemaker and a great friend of the brewery. His insight has been invaluable over the years in helping us select fruit, refine our process, blend varieties and understand how a cherry's aroma and flavor will develop and change over time.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

Kriek was among the first four fruited Lambic-inspired beers we ever produced and has been consistently well received. We now produce about a dozen beers in this family annually, and Kriek tends to lead the charge in terms of volume and sales. I think it's a familiar combination of exciting yet comforting flavors that sets it apart from the others and makes it so great for special occasions.

Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Light, dry, tart, berry. Cherry pie and rose petals.

Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

We make sure that our production team gets out to the orchard every year to pick at least some portion of our cherries. Brewers and packagers don picking buckets and climb orchard ladders into the canopy of 100-year-old Bing, Van and Royal Anne trees, chasing next year's Kriek. Brian's property, named for his winery, Idiot's Grace, is just five miles east of the brewery. Cherries typically ripen in June in the Gorge, which puts them at risk of late spring rains, and last year was no exception. The forecasted storm inspired a sense of urgency, and we got the last of our fruit off just before the first lightning struck a nearby ridge. The relief of avoiding electrocution blended with the gratification of the day's work and the anticipation of this year's release all combined to produce a giddy atmosphere in the brewery as we racked barrels onto fruit.

What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Aged cheeses and charcuterie, duck, venison and chocolate volcano cake.



Judge's Second Opinion

I concluded my review of Oude Kriek by making the claim that this is what world-class beer tastes like. I feel confident that others who appreciate the complexities of the style will agree. The balancing act of combining all those peculiar aromatics and flavors into one harmonious beer is what sets Oude Kriek apart. Admittedly, Lambic is not everyone's cup of tea (or beer). The addition of fruits, like the cherries for a Kriek, may move the beer slightly to the more approachable range for some drinkers, others just can't make the trip. I get that, it's a strange brew. However, its oddities may be the key source of my appreciation. I love diversity, and as with life, beer without diversity would just be boring.

Upon sampling my first Lambic, I was blown away by the complexity and variety of aromas and flavors I was experiencing in that one bottle. Later, I discovered the Kriek style, and found cherries to be the perfect accompaniment to the funky sourness. The great examples of the style exhibit multiple funky notes along with a blend of citric and lactic acid elements, perhaps a touch of acetic acid, not overly high vinegar levels and even a little malic acid from the cherries or raspberries in the fruited variants, all coalescing for a complex balance that seems to transform with each sample.

While I prefer authentic Belgian examples of this style, there are a few fine U.S. versions and pFriem's Oude Kriek is certainly one of the best I've ever experienced. The cherries are prominent without being dominant and they come across as fermented fresh cherries, nothing artificial or overly sweet. The funky aspects are present without being over-the-top or off-putting. The blend of acidity is complex, not the one-dimensional citric or lactic versions that are more common. Some of the wheat malt character comes through helping to balance the sourness. A nice dry finish promotes another sip. Everything is there interacting in a complex and complementary manner. Each whiff and each sip provides a new experience and another level of the beer is revealed.

I love it when a beer captures my attention and takes me on a little trip where the scenery is familiar yet new, causing me to focus on the beer and providing pleasant little surprises along the way. Oude Kriek checks off all the boxes for meeting the style, but, more importantly, it takes your senses for a nice ride too. – Rick Franckhauser



BREWER Q&A

#4

Irish Coffee Barrel-Aged Legion

Community Beer Co.

Texas | United States

Brewer's Description

Irish Coffee Barrel-Aged Legion is the collaborative result of Caskmates a partnership with Jameson Distillers. Hand-selected Irish Whiskey barrels are filled with Legion, a decadent Russian Imperial Stout, and blended with additions of cold-steeped whole bean coffee. This delicate balance of barrel and brew creates a delicious brewer's rendition of the traditional Irish Coffee cocktail. Slainte!

Statistics

Style: Specialty Wood-Aged Beer

Style Family: Wood Beer

Availability: Limited Release

ABV: 12.5%

IBUs: 70

Served at: 52°

Contact

Community Beer Co.

1530 Inspiration Dr.

Dallas, TX 75207

Tel: (214) 751-7921

www.communitybeer.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Brad Darnell

RATING: 96

Aroma: 24 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 9 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Irish Coffee Barrel-Aged Legion has been evaluated as a Specialty Wood-Aged Beer. (2015 BJCP Category 33B)

For this style of beer, expect the base beer to remain present while the barrel-aged character provides additional elements to the aroma, flavor and body.

I am presented with an opaque, light-absorbing, jet-black ale with a large, 4" frothy brown head perched atop it. The aroma fills my nose with heavy and rich sweet milk chocolate and light coffee notes. The flavor is a mouth-coating heavy and lightly bitter and rich dark malt, reminiscent of dark chocolate truffles, a light hop bitterness, light spicy hops and a malt-dominant, dry finish. This beer is full bodied with a medium alcohol warmth and medium carbonation.

Further analysis and contemplation yield plump dark fruit aromas, cocoa powder and light oak. The head persists throughout and leaves a short-lived lace line. The beer is clean with only malt-derived fruit character of dark fruits to be specific. Dark chocolate lingers into the finish and a dry alcoholic character cuts the sweetness. Some oak character is present as is a spicy rye whiskey.

This bold, assertive Imperial Stout would stand up to the richest of chocolate cakes or the most pungent of blue cheeses.



JAMIE FULTON

Talks: *Irish Coffee Barrel-Aged Legion*

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

The intricate balance among the ingredients really sets this beer apart from others. The bold malt profile, oak and spirit elements from the Jameson barrels and locally sourced coffee each shine in their own way, but when together, they really bring a sense of harmony to the beer.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

The key is balance. The rich, roasty malt, the delicate barrel/spirit character and the coffee finding its way into the mix without dominating. The result is a bold, flavorful stout with a silky-smooth finish, hiding the high ABV quite well.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

The aroma of the barrel/spirit mingling with cocoa/coffee notes really is divine!

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

This year was the first time we produced the Irish Coffee variant of Barrel-Aged Legion, and it was well received! It sold out in the market far faster than we expected, and we wish we had brewed more! We will definitely be brewing it again in the future.

Where does this beer's name come from?

The name for the beer was actually crowd-sourced through a fun contest with our fans! Legion struck a chord with us as it conveys a powerful force to be reckoned with. It's a perfect fit for a badass, big and bold stout.

Is this your "desert island beer?"

I'd probably have to go with our Texas Lager for a desert island libation, but you'd definitely get some decent calories out of this beer!

Do you know a story - or have a personal story - that revolves around this beer?

This year when we poured this beer at GABF we knew we were onto something special. Word spread around the festival and the line at our booth started getting longer and longer, filled with folks wanting to try this beer. It was a very humbling experience and it's always very validating to receive compliments from fans and colleagues in the industry!



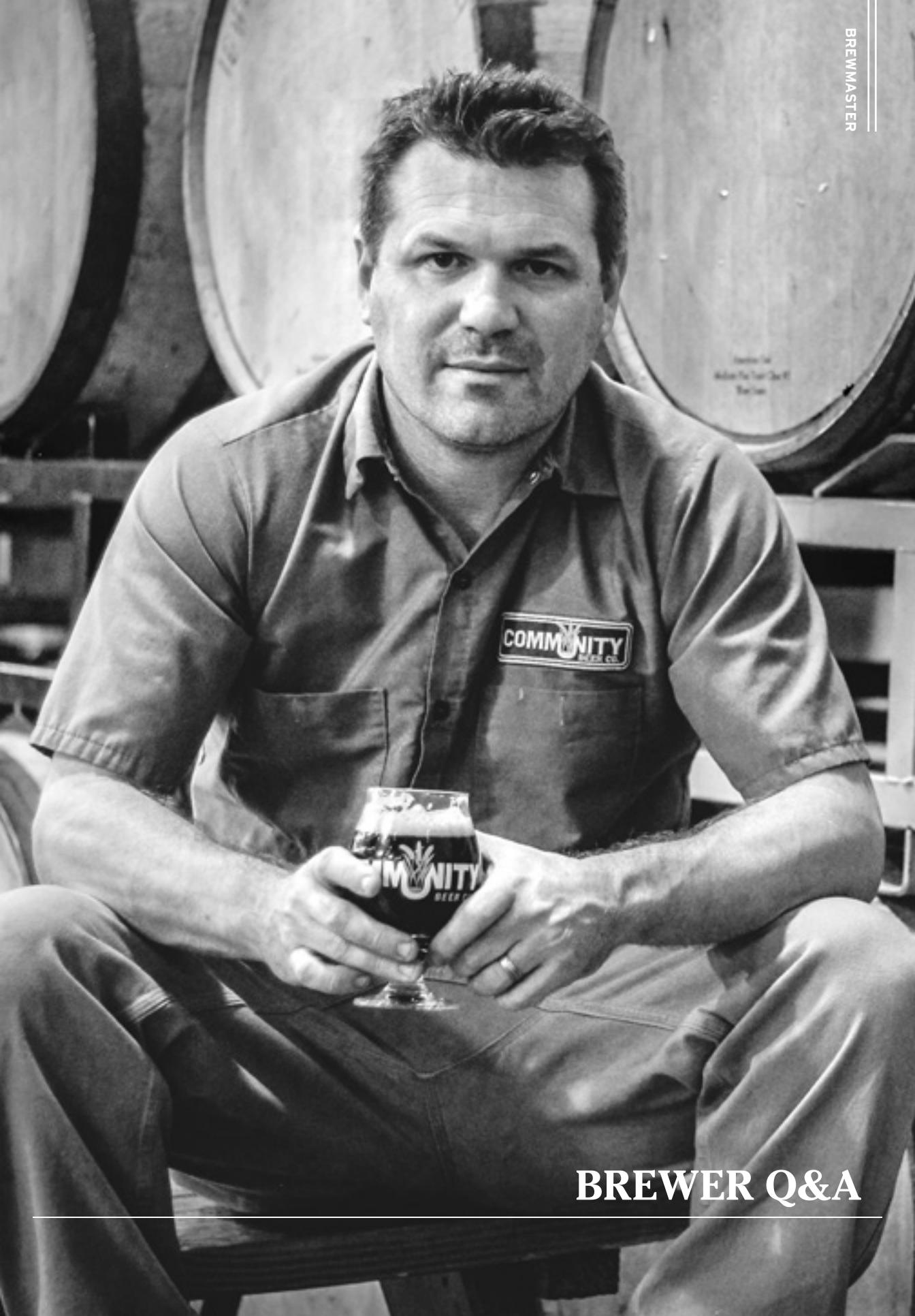
Judge's Second Opinion

This opaque, perfectly jet-black beer really struck me as well-made when I originally evaluated the sample. It starts as a beautiful beer that I eagerly raise ever closer to experience that first whiff, which does not disappoint. The aroma fills my nose with heavy and rich sweet milk chocolate and light coffee notes, though the chocolate is most dominant. The flavor is a mouth-coating heavy and lightly bitter rich dark malt, reminiscent of dark chocolate truffles, a light hop bitterness, light spicy hops and a malt-dominant, dry finish. The beer is complex and invites further contemplation. Despite the rich chocolate-dominant character, I know there is far more to this fine ale.

After further analysis and extended contemplation, I uncover plump dark fruit aromas, cocoa powder and light oak notes. The head persists throughout and leaves a short-lived lace line. The beer is clean with only malt-derived dark fruit character. This rich dark malt character, along with the lack of bitterness, intrigued me since the beer maintains a balanced malt sweetness without any harsh dark malt bitterness, a character all too typical in many similar beers. Dark chocolate lingers into the finish and a dry alcoholic character cuts the sweetness. Some oak character is present as is a spicy rye whiskey note.

Barrel-aging is a technique that brewers use to add character and/or complexity to their beers, and this particular beer certainly benefited from that. The Jameson cask imparts some additional notes of oak and whiskey without providing any harshness. I found this particular aspect extremely well executed.

I would love having this beer in my cellar and sampling it over time to evaluate how it changes with time. For now though I am glad to have tried this and recommend others enjoy it as a contemplative beer by itself or alongside other strong flavors, such as rich and creamy blue cheese or grilled lamb chops. —Brad Darnell



BREWER Q&A

#3

Stranger Danger

Monday Night Brewing

Georgia | United States

Brewer's Description

This is a candy lover's dream. This decadent double mash imperial milk stout has been aged in bourbon barrels (supplied by our friends and neighbors at ASW Distillery). We then conditioned it on a mountain of chocolate and peanut butter with Ugandan vanilla beans rounding out the flavor.

Statistics

Style: Experimental Beer

Style Family: Specialty Beer

Availability: Limited Release

ABV: 13%

Served at: 40 to 50°

Contact

Monday Night Brewing

670 Trabert Ave NW

Atlanta, GA 30318

Tel: (404) 352-7703

www.mondaynightbrewing.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by Michael Bury

RATING: 96

Aroma: 22 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Stranger Danger has been evaluated as an Experimental Beer. (2015 BJCP Category 34C)

This beer's base style is imperial milk stout, and it also contains peanut butter powder, vanilla, chocolate and is aged in a bourbon barrel.

It pours viscous and black with garnet highlights when held up to light. Eventually, a small, finely textured brown head forms and lingers for a while around the edge of the glass. The intense aroma is quite complex and features moderately high roasted peanuts, dark chocolate and earthy coffee with support from lower levels of bourbon, vanilla, oak and toasted and caramel malt. A light cherry ester forms in the background as it warms. No hops were present.

The flavor is similar to the aroma with dominating chocolate and toasted peanuts. A low level of bitterness is all that's needed to support this malt-focused beer since the excellent attenuation allows it to finish medium-sweet. Lingering far into the aftertaste is additional fruity dark chocolate, earthy coffee, bourbon, oak tannins and nuts. The medium-low sweet alcohol is noticeable but drinks like an 8 percent ABV beer and not the 13 percent that was listed on the label.

Stranger Danger is best enjoyed during cooler weather as a post-dinner treat. The unctuous, medium-full bodied beer is exquisitely complex and really highlights both peanuts and the complexities that a well-crafted imperial milk stout can bring. It's definitely a must-have for the beer shelf.

96 - WORLD CLASS



STRANGER DANGER

PEANUT BUTTER
IMPERIAL MILK STOUT

STOUT BREWED WITH PEANUT BUTTER
POWDER, VANILLA AND CHOCOLATE
BLEND NO. 1

DEWITY

PETER KILEY

Talks: *Stranger Danger*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

This one was my idea. We made a really big stout a while back and released it without adjuncts. Crazy, right? We saved some of it to age in barrels. Both of those were really well-received. So, when we were thinking about beers we were going to brew in the fall months, that big stout came back to me. We were planning to release it in October, so I thought we should do some sort of Halloween-themed beer. Since everyone's favorite candy is peanut butter cups (there's no debating), we went with it.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

There are a lot of crazy good "pastry stouts" out there, so I'm honored this beer scored so high. But if I had to say, it's probably because we put a wildly irresponsible amount of peanut butter cups into this beer. So many, in fact, that we were getting dirty looks at the store when we bought them. I'm proud to say that during brewing, we only ate two bags of them. Well, maybe it was more like five!

What makes this beer truly world-class?

I'm extremely proud of the entire team on this one. I got the crazy idea to do this beer, but it's their job to make that idea a reality. We do a lot of research and development and tweaking before we start brewing, and then the crew works tirelessly to create the best beer we can put out. Plus, this one had a little something extra and fun built into it.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

This has been one of those beers that brings people joy when they try it. When it was on at our taproom, it was the one beer everyone's eyes were immediately drawn to. It was fun to develop and fun to make, but the most fun is seeing the smiles on people's faces after they try it. It's such an experiential liquid.

What's a good food pairing for this beer?

This one works well on its own. Send the kids out trick-or-treating and stay at home with this beer. It pairs well with a cold night, a warm fire, good company and a sweet tooth.



Judge's Second Opinion

Is it a beer? Or a favorite treat from the circus? Maybe a decadent pie? If you answered yes to all three of those questions, then we're talking about Monday Night Brewing's Stranger Danger. It's an imperial milk stout that stops short of being overly sweet like a pastry stout while containing peanut butter, cocoa and vanilla beans that have all married together within the confines of a bourbon barrel. And at 13 percent ABV, this beer is best served in a snifter and enjoyed as a post-meal treat. An even better situation would be a weekend evening with a roaring fire going in the fireplace and snow falling outside.

One of the many reasons this beer received top marks stems from the brewer's creativity and skill in transforming the base ingredients into a culinary adventure. During my career judging over 10,000 different beers, I've sampled dozens upon dozens of peanut-based beers. Yet I've never had a beer that highlights peanut butter so well without any of the rancid flavors that can arise from such a heavy dose. It literally is reminiscent of a peanut butter pie with a chocolate graham cracker crust. That's the skill of the brewer shining through. Additionally, the lactose used (it's an imperial milk stout after all) and the bourbon barrel-aging could have easily tilted the balance of the beer into the extremely sweet realm. But with a proper fermentation, it's well attenuated and without any fusel alcohol. Furthermore, the savory aspects of the peanut butter help to offset the sweetness.

All the praise being said about the beer there is one drawback: it's intense. It doesn't shy away from what it is and makes some of the boldest imperial stouts blush. The peanut butter, which comes off more as roasted peanuts, dominates in both the aroma and flavor. But all the flavors are potent and up-front so if you struggle picking up nuances of lighter styles, then give Stranger Danger a chance. Just remember to bring a friend for backup. — Michael Bury



BREWER Q&A

#2

Cruise Control

Two Roads Brewing Co.

Connecticut | United States

Brewer's Description

An effortlessly refreshing golden lager built for kicking back and taking it easy down the road less traveled. Hit cruise control and enjoy the ride!

Statistics

Style: Munich Helles

Style Family: Pale Malt European Lager

Availability: Year-Round

ABV: 4.8%

Serve at: 40 to 45°

Contact

Two Roads Brewing Co.

1700 Stratford Ave.

Stratford, CT 06615

Tel: (203) 335-2010

www.tworoadsbrewing.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by John C. Tull

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

*Cruise Control has been evaluated
as a Munich Helles.
(2015 BJCP Category 1D)*

Bready malt dominates the aroma profile with a mild malt sweetness in the background. The color is a pale gold with exceptional clarity. An off-white head lingers on the surface of the beer and remains on the edges of the glass. The flavor bears the hallmarks of this style with a grainy malt sweetness that is not overbearing and well balanced with modest hop bitterness. The water even has a mineral quality suggestive of classic Munich brewing water. Modest herbal and earthy hop flavors add an additional quality to the flavor. The carbonation lends a subtle carbonic bite to the medium-low body of this Helles. There is really nothing to complain about as this is a world-class representation of the Munich Helles style from start to finish. I am finding myself recalling fond memories of a liter of Helles in a Munich Biergarten. Grab one of these and allow yourself to be transported to München as well!

96 - WORLD CLASS



PHIL MARKOWSKI

Talks: *Cruise Control*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

It was a group effort. We took a while to develop Cruise Control and did it in a measured and controlled way. We'd brew a pilot batch and then sample it across a spectrum of tasters across all departments of the company. I would then take the feedback, translate that into changes to the formulation and brew another batch. It was repeat, repeat, repeat until we got it exactly where we wanted it.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

German-style Helles is a beer that has a relatively narrow bandwidth. Differences between examples of the style can be downright hair-splitting. I wouldn't say that our Cruise Control greatly stands out from other examples in that we target the hallmarks of that style: a refined character, the use of old-world malt and hops and achieving a balance between the malt and hops that makes you want to take another sip – before you've even finished the last one!

What makes this beer truly world-class?

Balance!

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

What I like best about Cruise Control is the balance. It is alternately malty and hoppy. What I think the old-world brewers do best is create this fine balance that weaves in and out of malt-dominant/hop-dominant character as the beer plays out across the palate. This is what we were striving for with Cruise Control and I think we've hit it!

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

Cruise Control is popular with a wide range of consumers, but if I had to generalize, I would say Cruise Control is most popular with the more mature drinker. I use the word mature carefully and with two meanings. In the first I'm referring to age, in that this drinker is someone who grew up in the pre-craft era and has an affinity for import-style lagers as opposed to highly hopped IPAs. Secondly, I use the term to describe someone who has been around craft beer for years and has come to appreciate not just hazy IPAs but the breadth of beers available, including (and perhaps increasingly) an affinity toward lagers. I don't know a highly experienced brewer who doesn't appreciate a well-made lager.



Judge's Second Opinion

Sometimes all you want is a beer. Beer is a beverage that humans have enjoyed for literally thousands of years in various formats and guises. Fortunately for us, beer has evolved in parallel as we have progressed as a species in our scientific knowledge. Believe it or not, it wasn't until the late 1800s before we understood the very basics of microbiology and the importance of sanitation in the brewing process to begin making and enjoying beer that was able to focus on the most basic ingredients: malt and hops.

Two Roads Cruise Control is one of these imminently quaffable yet simple beers. This Munich Helles beer keeps its focus on the restrained and balanced use of malt and hops. It hits all of the hallmarks of this style with an emphasis on clean, pilsner malt and European origin noble hops. Munich-produced beers are also characterized by the relatively high mineral content of the waters that emphasize the hops and tend to have a mineral quality that one can taste, particularly in the lighter lagers like Munich Helles. Two Roads Cruise Control either benefits from a similar water profile in the local brewing water, or the brewers took the time to adjust their water to better mimic the style. Either way, it's an impressively authentic and clean-tasting brew.

Like you, I honestly love beer and all of the incredible variety that we can produce, even when we remain focused on only malt and hops. But there are often times when the most refreshing example of a wonderful beer is a throwback that is restrained and delivers something that is not weighed down by distractions. Sometimes all you want is a beer. Two Roads Cruise Control is a beer for those times. – *John C. Tull*



CO-FOUNDER &
BREWMASTER

MICHAEL PENNEY PHOTOGRAPHY

BREWER Q&A

#1

Terrible

Unibroue

Quebec | Canada

Brewer's Description

Don't miss out on this 14-time gold medal winner from the World Beer Championships, World Beer Awards and Australian International Beer Awards. This beer has subtle fruit flavors that are complemented by rich Madeira wine notes. A deep well-balanced flavor profile surprises and combines with a lingering palate, reminding enthusiasts of the product's strength. Truly, a beer of great elegance.

Statistics

Style: Belgian Dark Strong Ale

Style Family: Strong Belgian Ale

Availability: Year-Round

ABV: 10.5%

IBUs: 15

Served at: 50 to 55°

Contact

Unibroue

80, rue des Carrières

Chambly, Quebec J3L 2H6

Canada

Tel: (450) 658-7658

www.unibroue.com

JUDGE'S REVIEW

by David Sapsis

RATING: 96

Aroma: 23 / 24

Appearance: 6 / 6

Flavor: 38 / 40

Mouthfeel: 10 / 10

Overall Impression: 19 / 20

*Terrible has been evaluated as a
Belgian Dark Strong Ale.
(2015 BJCP Category 26D)*

The beer is presented in a tulip glass after a big full and splashy pour at 44°F. The beer casts a dark brown color with some obvious haze but not opaque; the foam is creamy and fine but lasts only about two minutes.

The nose is redolent of dark caramel and light cocoa with dark-dried fruit and nuts and a side of dried herbs and molasses. Ethanol is evident in spades. Absolutely full, rich, alcoholic and sweetly dark in the nose, it is immensely alluring.

The flavor starts with a dark caramel malt and trails off quickly to a low-but-still-there bitterness with mid-palate flavors of dark fruit (dates, black cherries), modest spice, some faint chocolate and dark Brazil nut and a hit of molasses at the end. Carbonic level is high. The late palate is surprisingly short and off-dry with black cherries and an almost cola-like character that lingers sweet and herbal in the finish. The alcohol is obvious in the beer, but it's not hot. Overall, the beer is elegant and absolutely delicious but not overly complex. The subdued phenols and excellent malt structure top to bottom really make this beer shine.

If you like rich, sweetish and strong dark ales with malt, alcohol and herbs dancing, seek this beer out – it is simply outstanding and clearly world-class. For food complements, I am thinking a creme brûlée would be a dynamite paring to finish a meal.

96 - WORLD CLASS



JERRY VEITZ

Talks: *Terrible*

Who was responsible for this beer's recipe?

This recipe was created back in 2002 by Paul Arnott who was brewmaster for Unibroue between 2000 and 2007.

What sets this beer apart from other examples within the style?

The fruity flavors are much more subtle in *Terrible* than they are in most Belgian Quadrupels. Caramel malt and spices are much more prominent. These flavors are complemented by rich Madeira wine notes. *Terrible* presents a silky body with a deep, well-balanced flavor profile that will surprise you by lingering on the palate, reminding the enthusiast of the product's alcohol strength.

What makes this beer truly world-class?

This beer, which has won 21 international medals, represents the union of many different cultures. It was created by a brewer born in the United Kingdom, who learned the skills of the brewing trade with Belgian Trappists. Wouldn't you agree that this combination features two of the best brewing traditions in the world? Moreover, it was brewed in a young, dynamic North American brewery for a new generation of drinkers with different expectations. While it follows the best European breweries' traditions and know-how, it still offers a modern *je ne sais quoi*.

What is your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, mouthfeel, etc.)?

Its great drinkability and accessibility versus the terrifying image it projects. In French, the word *terrible* is used as two completely different adjectives: it can mean awful or dreadful (just as in English); but it also means awesome (terrific, fantastic, impressive). Because of its dark chestnut color and 10.5 percent ABV, people tend to think it's inaccessible while in reality, it's quite the opposite.

How popular is this beer among your faithful fans?

While *Terrible* is a year-round offering in the United States, it is only available as a seasonal product in Canada. It only becomes available every two or three years, for a limited time only. Given these conditions and its notoriety, Unibroue aficionados always welcome the return of *Terrible*. Since its properties make it the perfect beer for aging, many fans buy a few bottles at a time to age them in their cellars.



Judge's Second Opinion

The nose presents a forward unsweetened cocoa and light roast coffee front with dark spicy angles: some hints of bitter orange, light pepper and raisin/madeira over that lovely lightly roasty backdrop. As it is swirled, the alcohol lifts the dark fruit and dried herbal spiciness into a superbly balanced presentation where the malt ferment and alcohol foundation form a truly intriguing elixir. The sweetness is so subtle that it allows these other normally more reserved components to shine without being obtrusive. It is simple, yet very inviting for its depth. Possibly this is what is so interesting and puzzling – its complexity wrapped in simplicity. It's not oxymoronic, I don't think, just a bit of a mystery. It's downright beguiling.

The flavor starts with a deeply rich and dark caramel note, a bit molasses-like, with an angle of prune-like dark fruit, a bit of black cherry and a lovely pepper spice that is not overtly phenolic but rather more like licorice root in sweet spiciness. There is a trace of bitterness, and a fairly big shot of acid in the mid-palate, adding balance to the residual malt sweetness. As the profile trails out, the finish is surprisingly dry (and true to the nose), with a nice lingering nutty-roast-coffee and sherry-like character complementing the spice. It's actually pretty hot in the finish, but that just makes that licorice/sweet spice that much more part of the picture and seems to tone the body down and lighten the overall character.

The flavor profile hits some of the same paradox found in the nose – big and rich, but not overtly sweet at all; the countervailing components of dark malt, dark fruit and sublime spicy character are all mixed into a very straightforward package. In this regard it is both simpler and more overtly herbal-spicy (without being phenolic) than typical Belgian strong dark ales, which are often quite sweet. All of which is to say, it's exceedingly drinkable for a big beer of impressive strength and character.

Beguiling – to charm by diversion or deception – is one of the coolest words I know. As applied to a beer, it hints at attraction, puzzlement and wonder, which are all words that perfectly describe Unibroue's *Terrible*. – *David Sapsis*



BREWER Q&A



BEST BEERS BY STYLE CATEGORY

Craft beer in 2019 was defined by extraordinary variety on shelves, in taprooms and in refrigerators across the nation. Our judges in the *Official Review* sampled a wide swath of them, and each year, we acknowledge the highest-rated beers of the year in some of the most well-represented style categories.

In this list, you'll find a treasure trove of scintillating beer styles, including some of the finest american IPAs, double IPAs, wild specialty beers, fruit lambics, saisons and american wild ales that our judges imbibed over the course of 2019.

Belgian beers made a resurgence among our judges and were some of the highest-scoring beers in 2019. Specialty wood-aged beers, which are aged in bourbon, rum, whiskey or other barrels, also featured heavily. Further well represented are fruit beers and spice, herb or vegetable beers, which feature all manner of those delicious adjuncts that make the craft beer industry the enjoyable, ever-evolving environment that keeps fans engaged and interested year-round.

Mixed-style beers, which blend two or more styles of beer in a single concoction, and strong belgian ales, such as dubbels, tripels, golden strong ales and dark strong ales, were also quite popular with our judges in 2019 and are well represented on this list.

Our breweries of the year make multiple appearances on this list, as it makes sense for our best breweries to also produce some of the best beers in various distinct style categories in 2019.

We hope this list piques your interest with its varied styles featured, and each of these beers deserves a special place in your beer fridge due to being some of the best examples of their respective styles.

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TOP 10 IPAs (all styles)

#1 | **RATED 96** | JUICY HARVEST | UPLAND BREWING CO. (IN)

Review by Richard Wong | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

The aroma of this beer was very subtle considering that this is an American IPA, which are expected to be very hoppy beers both in aroma and flavor. I got a light hint of pineapples in the nose, which made it very tropical. The appearance of this beer was very hazy and cloudy with a nice carbonation level. The color was a light yellow and very milky in color; a truly beautiful pour. The flavor of this beer was well balanced between the malt and hops. Again, the flavor had a tropical component that revealed subtle pineapple notes. The hop bitterness was very smooth and well balanced.

#2 | **RATED 95** | STICKY ICKY ICKY | SHORT'S BREWING CO. (MI)

Review by Dan Martich | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 40 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Moderately malty with a grainy, biscuit and light caramel flavor, the bitterness is high but not offensive. Leaves the palate coated with hop flavors that mirror the aroma of pine, citrus grapefruit peel, and a woody backend rounds out the whole experience quite beautifully. These bold flavors make it hard to put the glass down. The hops are in harmony with the malt flavors. Medium body, medium carbonation and a pleasant mouthfeel. Does not overwhelm the senses with alcoholic notes. An exceptional beer that showcases the freshness of the hops and brewing technique of the brewmaster. This beer was well received and enjoyable to drink and evaluate on its merits.

#3 | **RATED 95** | JUICE ABOVE THE CLOUDS | ALTAMONT BEER WORKS (CA)

Review by Joseph Formanek | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The flavor is a huge smack of Mosaic hops from start to finish. The malt backbone is light to moderate. The middle and finish retain the same character. The body is medium, the carbonation is moderate, and the slightly sweet finish does dry out well enough in the finish before the next sip. The overall fermentation character is very clean, which allows the hop character as well as the malt that is present to be able to be well experienced in the flavor. Juice Above the Clouds is a very well-crafted and designed Double IPA that is very approachable and enjoyable! From my experience, this is quite unusual for this style.

#4 | **RATED 95** | MIRROR UNIVERSE | FAIR STATE BREWING COOPERATIVE (MN)

Review by Nelson Crowle | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

A very inviting nose with lots of tropical fruit greets the drinker - guava, papaya, kiwi, some honeydew melon, a bit of orange peel and just a hint of freshly baked bread. Tasting the beer follows the aroma with a whole boatload of tropical character - the same guava and papaya, a bit more bread dough to hold up all the hops, a slight honey sweetness, moderate citrusy tangerine notes; it's a whole fruit bowl in a beer! Big flavor and aroma hops, medium-low hop bittering, and there's a hint of oatmeal. A moderate body with a fairly dry, very fruity lingering finish and just a hint of lime at the end.

#5 | **RATED 94** | LIFE HOPQUATIC | MELVIN BREWING (WY)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

New England IPAs are known for their juicy/tropical fruit/citrusy hop forward character, hazy appearance and lighter-than-typical American IPA bitterness. This beer pours light golden in color with moderate haze and a huge, finely beaded white head. The aroma is moderate hops of resins and peaches with no malt aroma. The flavor is prominently hoppy with a more melded flavor of citrus and tropical fruits. The beer finishes lightly bittered with a "juicy fruit" hop flavor lingering. This beer hits all aspects of the New England IPA style: haze, tropical fruit hops, low bitterness. The blend of hops is pleasant and interesting, which leads to a beer that is ultimately quaffable.

#6 | **RATED 94** | LUNDI | MONDAY NIGHT BREWING (GA)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The flavor is similar to the aroma with citrusy flavors of mango and tangerine melding with resinous and piney characters. The malt flavor is very low with a medium-light body. The bitterness is moderate (not as aggressive as some American IPAs) but the low body and drying finish provide similar sensations as do the more bitter IPAs. The finish has a strong, lingering hop flavor of tropical, citrusy fruits among a light, clean malt backbone. This is a very well-brewed American IPA with a well-blended hop profile over a neutral malt palate. Despite the low malt backbone, the bitterness and dryness do not become as overwhelming as some of the drier American IPAs can be.

#7 | **RATED 94** | SPACE NEEDLE IPA | PIKE BREWING CO. (WA)

Review by Rick Franckhauser | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

A huge creamy, light-tan head leaves a nice Belgian lace with great retention and tons of tiny bubbles cascading upward. The flavor follows the aroma with lots of lemony citrus and lower levels of pine resin and wood. There is some additional sweet orange citrus making its way in mid-palate. Firm rounded hop bitterness is very nicely offset by the rich malty backbone. Balanced toward the hops. In spite of the big citrus presence the beer is smooth and manages to finish quite dry. There is a lingering citrus presence, which is joined by a slight toasty malt in the aftertaste. Medium-bodied with a moderate carbonation level. A slight hop and carbonation bite on the palate ends the taste.

#8 | **RATED 93** | TRUCK CHASER CREAMSICLE IPA | WILD LEAP BREW CO. (GA)

Review by Michael McGuire | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

In the glass it formed a sparse, shortly retained white head atop a cloudy pale orange brew. The aroma began with a pleasantly intense blast of fresh orange, which was followed by fainter notes of lactose, vanilla and floral hops, all of which were pleasant and complemented the dominant orange nose. Similarly, the flavor profile was orange-forward with malt, hops and the other added ingredients playing a supporting but harmonious role, leading to a sweet, tangy and creamsicle-like taste. The mouthfeel was characterized by a full and multi-layered body, with some creaminess from the lactose and a slight but noticeable alcohol warmth. This is a clean, surprisingly complex yet refreshing and drinkable beer.

#9 | **RATED 93** | DOUBLE DUST | PURE PROJECT BREWING (CA)

Review by Scott Birdwell | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

My first impressions of the flavor were of lychee and stone fruit. Given the intense hop bouquet and flavor, I found the malt/hops balance surprisingly even. While I'm sure there is a healthy dose of hop IBUs, the base malt doesn't play second fiddle. There is an explosion of hop flavor mid-to-late on the palate. Given the amount of base malt required to support 8.7 percent alcohol, I get almost a doughy flavor in the finish. Body is medium-full to full. Carbonation is excellent and it helps deliver the hop bouquet. Very low hop astringency in the finish, which is somewhat surprising given the intensity of the late hop additions.

#10 | **RATED 93** | GOOD BEHAVIOR | ODELL BREWING CO. (CO)

Review by Jason Johnson | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

I suspect this beer is very fresh based on how vivid the hops are in the aroma. The flavor matches the aroma pretty much step for step. The hop flavor is juicy and very enjoyable. I get more citrus in the flavor than I got in the aroma, but that tropical pineapple note carries into the finish. The bitterness is soft and just balances the lightly sweet malt. The carbonation and bitterness help the beer finish medium-dry. The carbonation is average and not overdone. The body of the beer is on the lighter side, in the medium-light range. There is a soft velvety feel to the beer. Though billed as a crushable IPA, it's presenting more like a low-ABV White IPA.

TOP 5 DOUBLE IPAs

#1 | **RATED 95** | JUICE ABOVE THE CLOUDS | ALTAMONT BEER WORKS (CA)

Review by Joseph Formanek | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The flavor is a huge smack of Mosaic hops from start to finish. The malt backbone is light to moderate. The middle and finish retain the same character. The body is medium, the carbonation is moderate, and the slightly sweet finish does dry out well enough in the finish before the next sip. The overall fermentation character is very clean, which allows the hop character as well as the malt that is present to be able to be well experienced in the flavor. Juice Above the Clouds is a very well-crafted and designed Double IPA that is very approachable and enjoyable! From my experience, this is quite unusual for this style.

#2 | **RATED 93** | DOUBLE DUST | PURE PROJECT BREWING (CA)

Review by Scott Birdwell | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

My first impressions of the flavor were of lychee and stone fruit. Given the intense hop bouquet and flavor, I found the malt/hops balance surprisingly even. While I'm sure there is a healthy dose of hop IBUs, the base malt doesn't play second fiddle. There is an explosion of hop flavor mid-to-late on the palate. Given the amount of base malt required to support 8.7 percent alcohol, I get almost a doughy flavor in the finish. Body is medium-full to full. Carbonation is excellent and it helps deliver the hop bouquet. Very low hop astringency in the finish, which is somewhat surprising given the intensity of the late hop additions.

#3 | **RATED 93** | TRUCK CHASER CREAMSICLE IPA | WILD LEAP BREW CO. (GA)

Review by Michael McGuire | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

In the glass it formed a sparse, shortly retained white head atop a cloudy pale orange brew. The aroma began with a pleasantly intense blast of fresh orange, which was followed by fainter notes of lactose, vanilla and floral hops, all of which were pleasant and complemented the dominant orange nose. Similarly, the flavor profile was orange-forward with malt, hops and the other added ingredients playing a supporting but harmonious role, leading to a sweet, tangy and creamsicle-like taste. The mouthfeel was characterized by a full and multi-layered body, with some creaminess from the lactose and a slight but noticeable alcohol warmth. This is a clean, surprisingly complex yet refreshing and drinkable beer.

#4 | **RATED 93** | MOSAIC DOUBLE IPA | BELCHING BEAVER BREWERY (CA)

Review by Tracy Hensley | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 39 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The flavor begins as smooth light white bread, pine sap, and pineapple chunks and finishes with a low candied mango and lemon rind mixed-drink aftertaste. The second sip continues to be pine balanced and finishes with predominantly pine hop bitterness wearing a coat of oatmeal creaminess. The dry, crisp finish is balanced with a medium creaminess and an undercurrent of alcoholic heat. The heat seems to be hotter than it is because of the high attenuation and clean finish. The heat starts out slowly and smoothly. As it warms the inside of my mouth, it becomes mildly hot over time. For style, hop aroma is slightly subdued. This beer is on the low end of the high hop bitterness spectrum.

#5 | RATED 92 | ALPHA ABSTRACTION VOL. 8 | WILD LEAP BREW CO. (GA)

Review by *Michael McGuire* | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The flavor backs up the aroma providing a nice grapefruit, a little pith and some pine resin joining the party all at moderately high levels. High level bitterness dominates the balance as one should expect in an American IPA but is never harsh or abrasive. You know more malt is present rounding off the bitterness but makes itself known more in the mouthfeel than any sweetness. Smooth with a little mouth-coating sticky hops, this is a solid example of an American IPA – this beer is all about those hops. Predominantly citrus-focused with enough resin, mango and pineapple to keep it interesting. Really nice job providing some serious hop bitterness without the harsh edge.

TOP 5 HAZY IPAs

#1 | RATED 96 | JUICY HARVEST | UPLAND BREWING CO. (IN)

Review by *Richard Wong* | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

The aroma of this beer was very subtle considering that this is an American IPA, which are expected to be very hoppy beers both in aroma and flavor. I got a light hint of pineapples in the nose, which made it very tropical. The appearance of this beer was very hazy and cloudy with a nice carbonation level. The color was a light yellow and very milky in color; a truly beautiful pour. The flavor of this beer was well balanced between the malt and hops. Again, the flavor had a tropical component that revealed subtle pineapple notes. The hop bitterness was very smooth and well balanced.

#2 | RATED 94 | LIFE HOPQUATIC | MELVIN BREWING (WY)

Review by *Michael Heniff* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

New England IPAs are known for their juicy/tropical fruit/citrusy hop forward character, hazy appearance and lighter-than-typical American IPA bitterness. This beer pours light golden in color with moderate haze and a huge, finely beaded white head. The aroma is moderate hops of resins and peaches with no malt aroma. The flavor is prominently hoppy with a more melded flavor of citrus and tropical fruits. The beer finishes lightly bittered with a “juicy fruit” hop flavor lingering. This beer hits all aspects of the New England IPA style: haze, tropical fruit hops, low bitterness. The blend of hops is pleasant and interesting, which leads to a beer that is ultimately quaffable.

#3 | RATED 93 | MEDLOCK IPA | SIX BRIDGES BREWING (GA)

Review by *Jim Koebel* | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Medlock IPA by Six Bridges Brewing is a New England IPA, judged as BJCP Category 21B. This New England IPA has a traditional, but juicy, hop aroma of pine and resin. A moderate honey smell adds sweetness and appeal. It is a hazy gold color and has a tall, white head. This is a flavorful beer with a zesty, lightly spicy hop character. There are citrus, pine and resin overtones. Although it is quite bitter, it is clean and never too much. The high carbonation gives this IPA an uncommonly fluffy texture. This beer finishes nice and dry. Overall this is a fresh, very well-balanced IPA. It's one of the most straight-up enjoyable examples of a ubiquitous style.

#4 | RATED 92 | HAZY IPA | PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS (OR)

Review by *Nelson Crowle* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The flavor echoes the aroma with big juicy tangerines and just enough bread dough malt to present the big hop flavors. The bitterness is substantial but well balanced. The finish is a long lingering citrus with a fairly bitter but balanced ending of orange peels. Medium body and fairly high carbonation both help to present this beer favorably, and the refreshing and crisp quality leaves you wanting another sip. There's a slight astringency that seems to be from citrus pith, but it adds nuances and complexity to the beer. Overall, this beer is complex and very well balanced - nothing dominates, and yet the juicy hop flavors and the bitterness make you pay attention.

#5 | RATED 92 | TWO JUICY | TWO ROADS BREWING CO. (CT)

Review by *Scott Birdwell* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

This beer looks like a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice with a head on it. The head sports a nice lacy texture, and the retention is excellent. The characteristics from the bouquet carries through into the taste. There is some hop bite, to be sure, but not a lot, especially considering the amount of hops you would need to balance the malt required to achieve the high ABV. The flavor is “hoppy” but not bitter, with some lingering hop goodness and just enough malt sweetness for balance. As one might expect for a beer of this strength, the body is medium-full to full. There is no noticeable alcoholic burn in the finish.

TOP 3 SPECIALTY IPAs

#1 | RATED 93 | RED IPA | EAST BROTHER BEER CO. (CA)

Review by Brad Darnell | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Once the thick head breaks somewhat the moderate piney and citrus (orange, tangerine) hops show up, supported by medium-sweet bready malt. Pours hazy harvest orange with a huge, thick and creamy off-white head that lasts quite a while. Medium-light smooth alcohol greets the palate and paves the way for medium-high piney and juicy citrus (tangerine) hops. The hop bitterness is medium-high and leaves a dry finish with a slightly pithy aftertaste. Medium-full body, medium carbonation and alcohol warmth. Upon further consideration I find some fruity, hop-derived esters (pear, cherry) on the nose and even fainter esters in the flavor.

#2 | RATED 93 | GOOD BEHAVIOR | ODELL BREWING CO. (CO)

Review by Jason Johnson | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

I suspect this beer is very fresh based on how vivid the hops are in the aroma. The flavor matches the aroma pretty much step for step. The hop flavor is juicy and very enjoyable. I get more citrus in the flavor than I got in the aroma, but that tropical pineapple note carries into the finish. The bitterness is soft and just balances the lightly sweet malt. The carbonation and bitterness help the beer finish medium-dry. The carbonation is average and not overdone. The body of the beer is on the lighter side, in the medium-light range. There is a soft velvety feel to the beer. Though billed as a crushable IPA, it's presenting more like a low-ABV White IPA.

#3 | RATED 91 | BRUT IPA | PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS (OR)

Review by Susan Ruud | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Upon first sip you get a big hop presence, which quickly ties in with a pleasant bready malt backbone. The finish was surprisingly dry and dropped off quite quickly leaving just a hint of hops on the tongue. Although the dry, less malty finish was unexpected, it really worked in this beer leaving a very refreshing finish that was clean and with almost no hop resins. The carbonation was quite high on this beer, which may also have contributed to the clean finish. This beer had a ton of flavor that didn't linger, leaving you wanting another sip very quickly. I could see enjoying this beer with a nice salad and grilled salmon.

TOP 5 FRUIT LAMBICS

#1 | RATED 96 | OUDE KRIEK | PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS (OR)

Review by Rick Franckhauser | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

The beer pours a lovely cranberry color with an underlying amber tone. hazy with a slight pink, tightly beaded head that drops off a little too quickly. The tart cherries show up in the flavor as well. Very fresh and natural tasting cherries, not the cough syrup, artificial flavor you will sometimes find. Balanced toward the tartness with some tannin qualities providing additional balance in the absence of bitterness and a cranberry impression. Moderately dry with some funky Brett and lactic acid to round things out, providing layers of sourness that keep it interesting. There is a little underlying malt sweetness, a little nuttiness and a woody note that works to keep the tartness from being overly assertive.

#2 | RATED 96 | BROUWER'S 14TH ANNIVERSARY | PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS (OR)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

14th Anniversary pours golden in color with a slight haze and a fading rim of white head. The aroma is moderately funky with aromas of hay, barnyard and a hint of horse blanket along with a hint of cherry-like dark fruit. The flavor is moderately light lactic sourness with a light sweetness and black cherry-like dark fruit. The funky characters take a background in the flavor but there is still a trace of leather and hay. The complexity in the flavor is tremendous with a melding of the lactic sourness, wild flavors, dark fruit and subtle sweetness over a light oakiness. The finish has moderate lactic acidity over a slightly sweet dark fruit with a light oak flavor.

#3 | RATED 93 | PÊCHE | PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS (OR)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

pFriem's "lambic-inspired ales" are fermented with a blend of Brettanomyces and lactic acid bacteria cultures then aged in oak. Pêche pours straw in color with a slight haze and a fading rim of white head. The aroma is prominently wild with aromas of lactic, leather and light barnyard; a hint of peach appears in the background and increases as the beer warms. The flavor is moderate lactic acidity with light funky flavors of hay and earth. The beer finishes moderately lactic sour with a light peach flavor lingering in the background. This is a very well-done sour beer. The sourness is perfect - not too subtle and not overpowering. The wild character is funky but not off-putting.

#4 | RATED 92 | THK - TRIPEL HONEY KRIEK | DE PROEF BROUWERIJ (BELGIUM)

Review by Rodney A. Tillinghast | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

From the snifter, notes of wildflower honey, toasted wood and an underlying ginger spice were detected. Flavors featured a sturdy honey component, backed by sourness and a heavy amount of caramel. As it warmed, the cherry flavoring blossomed, as did its alcohol firmness. The heaviness of the finish combined with the fruit component made this a beer to be sipped and savored slowly. It turned out to be sweeter in the finish than a traditional tripel, but overall was well balanced with a subtle sourness melded with a honey backbone. A little more bitterness would have been welcomed, but for a dessert beer this would be stellar.

#5 | **RATED 91** | HEXOTIC | AREA TWO EXPERIMENTAL BREWING (CT)

Review by *Scott Birdwell* | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The aroma is reminiscent of SweetTARTS. One can immediately pick up on the sweet, enticing tropical fruit notes, but then the tangy, tart Brett character asserts itself. Other than the tropical aspect of this, it mirrors many Belgian lambics I have tasted. Very well done. Once you get to the tasting part the beer, it follows the same pattern: tangy sourness mixed with enticing sweet tropical notes in the finish. The fruit/sour balance is excellent! Hexotic is a little more full-bodied than you might expect from a lambic, but then you learn that this wild ale packs a wallop at 8 percent ABV, and you understand! It is surprisingly smooth despite its strength.

TOP 3 EUROPEAN SOUR ALES

#1 | **RATED 96** | OAK BARREL AGED FLANDERS RED ALE | MOODY TONGUE BREWING CO. (IL)

Review by *John C. Tull* | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The body is medium with acidity and carbonation adding a bite in the finish that makes the overall mouthfeel sharp as it passes over the palate. There is a touch of warmth from alcohol in the finish as well. Overall, this is an exceptional Flanders Red Ale that manages to be sour but not overly sour, malty enough to lend balance and sweetness to the tartness of the ferment, and fruity enough, with just a touch of wood character, to lend complexity and nuance to this wonderful beer. I would highly recommend finding a bottle, as this beer expresses the tradition of the Flanders Red as well as any I have had in Belgium or elsewhere.

#2 | **RATED 92** | NOTORIOUS P.O.G. BERLINER WEISSE | STONE BREWING CO. (CA)

Review by *Tracy Hensley* | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The beer's aroma is a blend of moderately intense passion fruit, guava, freshly picked strawberries followed by mouthwatering lemon peel and creamy freshly milled white wheat flour. Notorious P.O.G.'s flavor is initially dominated by its mouthwatering dry crisp acidity. After a few tastes, flavors of passion fruit and white fluffy bread start to rise to the surface, though they are still pushed back down by a chalky finish. Overall, Notorious P.O.G. has a very fresh and tropical aroma. You have to adjust to this beer's acidity and chalkiness, after that it can come off quite refreshing and light. It craves rich food to cut through with its mouthwatering acidity and tropical flavors.

#3 | **RATED 92** | RED FLAG | HEAVY SEAS BEER (MD)

Review by *Rick Franckhauser* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The flavor opens with the tart cherries and sweet raisins. The beer is balanced toward sourness but is softened by a rich Munich malt toasty character. The dark fruits are more complex and pronounced in the flavor than the aroma and add some additional fig esters. A faint vanilla note comes in mid-palate to remind you of the barrel-aging. A low-level tannin blends with a slight acidic note to help keep the malt in check. The tart cherry and dark fruits persist into the finish accompanied by some caramel malt sweetness and a little alcohol warmth. The overall sourness is lower than usual but still in keeping with the style guidelines and enough to balance the malt.

TOP 3 FRUIT BEERS

#1 | **RATED 93** | ÉPHÉMÈRE POMME | UNIBROUE (CANADA)

Review by *Michael Bury* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The intense aroma reminds me of the caramel apples of the fall. As it warms, cinnamon, crystallized ginger and nutmeg emerge. Moderate grainy, wheat malt is present in the flavor and complements the cinnamon and clove-like spiciness well. A variety of caramel apples are still at the forefront but far more balanced than the aroma would've indicated. Medium-full body, moderate carbonation and a bit of creaminess hits the mark for mouthfeel. Éphémère Pomme showcases apples but elevates them beyond their humble beginnings. Although the base beer is slightly lost in relation to the fruit, this offering is nonetheless tasty and approachable. This one is like apple pie in a glass.

#2 | **RATED 93** | FRUIT CUP VOL. 1 | PONTOON BREWING (GA)

Review by *James Link* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

An aroma redolent of sour cherries is first perceived in the nose and is accompanied by a potpourri of other fruity aromas less notable. The appearance is alluring with its clear burgundy color and medium pink head. The flavor profile reflected a lactic quality that was far more pronounced here than in the aroma. A firm cherry pit-like character was dominant and helped offset the tartness provided by the lactic ferment. Faint notes of vanilla in the background contributed to the complexity. Although somewhat thin, the body suggested a higher gravity than the standard base Berliner weisse would exhibit. The ingredients come together nicely to create a terrific sour beer.

#3 | **RATED 92** | TANGERINE DEUCE COUPE | GARAGE BREWING CO. (CA)

Review by Jason Johnson | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Tangerine is very present in the aroma, but not in an off-putting way. It's just bright and clearly unmistakable. The malt profile is bready with a low toasty quality. The hop choice is nice as it seems to complement the tangerine. Taking a taste, I got a medium-high bitterness and hint of sweetness. The beer does finish dry and has a low alcoholic warmth. The flavors march hand in hand with the aroma, strong tangerine presence, bready and toasty malt. As expected, I get a medium body, no hop astringency and smooth texture in the beer. If I'm being honest, this is one of the better fruited IPAs I've had but it seems lighter than a standard double IPA.

TOP 5 WILD SPECIALTY BEERS

#1 | **RATED 96** | SONOMA TART | BEAR REPUBLIC BREWING CO. (CA)

Review by Randy Scorby | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 39 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Sonoma Tart pours a deep, hazy yellow with a white head that lingers. The aroma starts with prominent mixed passion fruit that eventually gives way to an identifiable guava character. A light tartness in the nose, light candied orange and bready malt notes emerge as it warms. Although the passion fruit is prominent, the overall aroma is fairly complex. The flavor follows with pronounced guava, mango, light pineapple and candied orange. A moderate and clean lactic sourness balances the light residual sweetness that emerges mid-palate, along with a very light hop bitterness and bready malt. The lactic sourness and passion fruit linger into the aftertaste creating a balanced, fruity and refreshing beer.

#2 | **RATED 94** | CURRANT EVENTS | MONDAY NIGHT BREWING (GA)

Review by Michael Bury | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

A moderate, clean funk nose of black currants and floral hibiscus greets you. It dominates over restrained grainy malt without additional complexity from hops. The subtle lactic acid tang is there but isn't overbearing nor yogurt-like, which is a treat. The flavor picks right up where the aroma left off but with more intense characteristics. The black currant really sings when paired with leather and lacto. There's also a strong hibiscus-like, floral, earthy flavor that blends with the other flavors. Despite all of this, the beer is well-balanced without too acidic of a finish. Currant Events is a delicious, sessionable sour that clocks in at only 4.5% ABV. Well balanced with tart fruit and funk.

#3 | **RATED 94** | ENTWINED | UPLAND BREWING CO. (IN)

Review by Joseph Formanek | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The beer has good clarity with a deep brown color with ruby highlights. A quite tart/metallic/quinine-like character greets you up front, with a solid background of a slightly sweet brown malt flavor that lingers and adds complexity through the middle, finish and aftertaste. The sour character comes off as that of a malt vinegar. There is a considerable amount of fruity character evident, with beery and fruit esters combining with grape, raisin and oxidized wine notes. The wood character is very subdued. The overall tartness is moderate, but in good balance with the flavor intensity of the brew. There is a moderate level of carbonation and a dry finish. This is a very rich and complex brew.

#4 | **RATED 93** | SANGIOVESE BARREL AGED ALANI | REFORMATION BREWERY (GA)

Review by Michael Bury | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

The nose of the beer is a complex mixture of plums, bananas, vanilla, oak and grape. Malt and hops are largely absent. The flavor is a pleasant surprise with further complexity as well as depth of what the nose indicated. All of the ingredients are present but are stronger with a rounded, well-matured aspect. The semi-dry finish allows for the barrel, grapes, and plums to linger with a touch of lactic acid providing the necessary zippiness that one would expect from a Wild Specialty. Overall, this beer is a well-fermented, deftly handled wild specialty. Most entries in this category are enamel-removing, acidic bombs that are tough to drink by the snifter.

#5 | **RATED 93** | BARREL AGED HELIOS | PONTOON BREWING (GA)

Review by Sal Mortillaro II | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

In the flavor, the general malt sweetness noted in the aroma is low intensity and quickly gives way to the moderately low funk noted in the aroma. There is a very short-lived vinous white wine quality in the flavor though it is fleeting and provides a layer of complexity to this beer. This beer is a lovely showcase of the previous usage of the barrel and great execution of its current usage of the barrel. A low tannic quality from the barrel usage helps provide a bitterness to ground this beer out and provides balance with the malt sweetness, which seems to lightly linger after the sip. Overall, this is a very well-done Farmhouse Ale.

TOP 5 AMERICAN WILD ALES

#1 | **RATED 94** | **FOUND** | **UPLAND BREWING CO. (IN)**

Review by Joseph Formanek | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Lightly flavored with the same malt qualities mentioned in the aroma, grainy, fruity of very ripe pineapple and citrus lime peel finish. The finish is very dry without much hop character in the flavor or bitterness. The bitterness detected comes from the sour, lightly tart flavor. Balanced toward the sourness helps keep this beer light and flowing. The added apricots may be the cause for all the fruitiness perceived. I was expecting a bigger body and mouthfeel from the added lactose. No alcoholic warmth here presuming this beer has a low ABV, and the puckering aspect is kept low while still enhancing the dryness in the finish. The lightness in flavor and body make this a pleasure to drink.

#2 | **RATED 93** | **TABLE TERROIR** | **TWO ROADS BREWING CO. (CT)**

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 36 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Table Terroir is brewed with all local ingredients and is fermented with yeast found in the brewery's hop yard. Table Terroir pours golden in color, hazy, with a very quickly fading white head. The aroma is moderately earthy with peppery phenolics and hints of peach and pear esters. The body is medium-light with a light toasty malt and delicate pear esters; a light tartness and hints of funky barnyard and hay complement the malt and esters. The beer finishes with a light lactic sourness, light barnyard flavors and a hint of pear. This is a very pleasant, easy-to-drink wild beer with a funkiness that is not overdone. Seek this one out!

#3 | **RATED 93** | **PERVASIVE SPECIES** | **MONDAY NIGHT BREWING (GA)**

Review by Dan Martich | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Flavored with an unsweetened pineapple juice character with balanced acidity and some fruity esters that challenge the senses. Unripe berry fruit in the flavor, long drying finish with a moderately acidic aftertaste, low in the way of tartness. This beer is delicious and refreshing, the fruity flavors become more and more agreeable as you continue to sip. Medium light bodied with high carbonation and little in the way of creaminess give this beer a pleasant mouthfeel. A little puckery due to the nature of the yeasts used but remains true stylistically. An exceptional beer with great flavor and balance. The green wood in the aroma can be an individual preference, and it may benefit from aging.

#4 | **RATED 93** | **CLOAKS & MIRRORS** | **MONDAY NIGHT BREWING (GA)**

Review by Sean Coughlin | Aroma: 19 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 40 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The acidity is fairly mild, and any hop bitterness is restrained in the overall balance. This is a delicious beer that has all the elements of great peach cobbler – the fruit and the crust. This beer may not quite fit the mold for a “sour IPA” for a base style due to the restrained bitterness but I think there's enough hop flavor present to make the argument. With as much as this beer has going on, it does a wonderful job of showcasing each ingredient in the flavor. While flavor of beer often closely follows that of its aroma, this beer is a good example of one that does not as peach, cinnamon and vanilla were completely absent until tasting.

#5 | **RATED 93** | **BRETT SAISON** | **PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS (OR)**

Review by Nelson Crowle | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The aroma is a strong nose full of farmhouse - moderate fresh mowed hay, medium pineapple (typical of Brett Claussenii), moderately high lemon zest and low supporting bready malt. Aroma hops are medium-level earthy, floral, and a bit grassy (maybe the beer was dry-hopped?). The flavor amplifies all of the aromas, particularly the wet hay, pineapple, lemony and floral/grassy hop notes, adding a moderate herbal note too. Medium low bittering balances to leave a quite dry and well attenuated finish that reflects the farmhouse notes and just a bit of funk. Balanced pretty evenly between hop bittering and malt, the Brett is the star here, adding layers of complexity to the already interesting Saison spicy notes.

TOP 3 SAISONS

#1 | **RATED 94** | **TIMELY SURRENDER** | **ARCHETYPE BREWING CO. (NC)**

Review by Sal Mortillaro II | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Overall, this beer has a very typical aroma found in traditional French Wallonia-produced Saisons with a low earthy-funk, which is suggestive of Brettanomyces. There is a general grainy low malt sweetness and moderate-low citrus esters and low notes of spice and wet hay. A medium-low bitter orange flavor is quickly followed by earthy, Brettanomyces funk with slight leather notes. There is a very low malt sweetness with a low and neutral grainy malt flavor. As the Brett character fades, a medium bitterness manifests itself and lingers into the finish. The finish is dry, and the aftertaste consists of bitter orange and leather. Overall, this is an excellent Saison that hits the hallmarks of the style.

#2 | **RATED 94** | **POCKETS OF SUNLIGHT** | **JACKIE O'S BREWERY (OH)**

Review by Pat Mulloy | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 4 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Prying off the cap releases an inviting aroma where honey, coriander and lemon verbena blend nicely with the mixed-fermentation aromas, light biscuit and faint hops. It fills the glass hazy gold under a creamy white cap with fair retention. A choir of flavors sing in harmony with the added flavors of honey, coriander and lemon verbena in sync with the beer's yeast, malt and hop character. The acidity is firm but enjoyable. The beer finishes dry with a spicy, mildly bitter moderately sour aftertaste. The body is medium-light, the alcohol moderate and the carbonation slightly above-average. The beer has a lot going on, but it has just the right amount of everything – making for an elegant, refreshing drink.

#3 | RATED 92 | À TOUT LE MONDE | UNIBROUÉ (CANADA)

Review by *Michael Heniff* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

À Tout le Monde pours golden with a big mousse-like white head and excellent clarity. The aroma is moderate perfume-like floral hops with light rose-like esters and light peppery phenolics. The body is medium with an appropriately moderately high carbonation. The flavor is moderate peppery phenolics with light herbal hops and a hint of toasty malt. The beer finishes with a moderately light bitterness, moderate peppery phenolics above a light toasty malt and a refreshing carbonic bite. À Tout le Monde is on the low end of the gravity range of the style fitting into the “table” sub-style at 4.5 percent ABV. Regardless, this Saison is very well made and hits all of the key elements of the style.

TOP 5 SPICE, HERB OR VEGETABLE BEERS

#1 | RATED 94 | PISTON PUMP-KIN PORTER | GARAGE BREWING CO. (CA)

Review by *Richard Wong* | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The pour revealed a pitch-black hue and a nice creamy tan head. Carbonation for this beer was fantastic. From the very beginning, chocolate permeated this beer along with subtle roasted malts and spices (cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg). The flavor of this beer is very well balanced. I got the roasted and dark malt flavors that had hints of chocolate, slight coffee flavors along with spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, etc.). Surprisingly, again this is very balanced with neither the roastiness nor the spiciness dominating, but rather complementing one another equally. The body and mouthfeel of this beer is medium with a nice creaminess and richness. The finish was very smooth and rich.

#2 | RATED 94 | TWO STALL | AHNAPÉE BREWERY (WI)

Review by *Pat Mulloy* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 39 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

As soon as you pop the cap, you can tell that this beer avoids the pitfall of many chocolate milk stouts that go gangbusters on the chocolate, masking the milk stout character. A mild, soft roasty malt aroma rises from the glass with nothing harsh or burnt. The chocolate is there but not overbearing and there is also a light, dark fruit aroma in the background. The malt flavors delight with a rich roast seasoned lightly by added chocolate. The added chocolate coats the mouth and grows slightly as you drink the beer. Sweetness is moderate, not cloying and balances with the roast malt flavors, chocolate and a medium hop bitterness.

#3 | RATED 93 | FISTFUL OF CAKE | MONDAY NIGHT BREWING (GA)

Review by *Michael McGuire* | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

Pouring light golden, this beer has a slight haze and a small, quickly fading white head. The aroma is moderate sourness with funky lactic, leather and lighter barnyard and hay; a light peach fruit and hint of vanilla complement the funkiness. The flavor is moderately sour with a moderate-light peach fruit but with just a hint of funkiness. Peach was an excellent choice of fruit for this fermentation blend as the light stone fruit complements the funkiness well. While the beer is most funky in the aroma, the flavor is primarily fruit with a clean lactic sourness. Regardless, this is a very enjoyable sour fruit beer. Seek this one out and be sure to share with your funky friends

#4 | RATED 93 | BUENAVEZA SALT & LIME LAGER | STONE BREWING CO. (CA)

Review by *Jason Johnson* | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The aroma is extremely clean as I would expect with a well-made lager. This is a summertime crusher for sure. Like the aroma I get a moderate tasty cracker-like malt and a slight hint of lime. There is some sodium, but it's very low. So low that I probably wouldn't even realize it if I wasn't told it was there. The hop bitterness is low, there is not really any hop flavor. Overall the beer's flavor is clean and crisp. The balance is to the malt, and I thoroughly enjoy that. For the mouthfeel, it's medium-light, and has a nice creamy texture. The carbonation is middle of the road, and not too poppy.

#5 | RATED 92 | I NEED S'MORE BROWNIE BATTER BATCH #1 | PONTOON BREWING (GA)

Review by *James Link* | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Packed with dark chocolate aromatics and partnered with dried fruit and a firm warming of the nostrils that renders warning of the alcoholic strength to follow. Deep brown almost black in hue, opaque with low head retention. The intensity evidenced in the flavor profile is characterized by a bittersweet taste that mixes with caramel notes and fudge. Fruity esters reminiscent of plums and raisins are also evidenced as is often the case when higher alcoholic beers are fermented at warmer temperatures. The body is full and somewhat syrupy, and as a result of its high gravity, very warming over the tongue. A profusion of complexity is on display in both the aroma and flavor of this ale.

TOP 4 MIXED-STYLE BEERS

#1 | RATED 94 | TWAIN | UPLAND BREWING CO. (IN)

Review by Richard Wong | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The aroma of this beer featured funky sourness and little to no hop aroma. The pour revealed a light-yellow hue that was both hazy and cloudy with a small, fine-bubbled head. This was made with both beer and cider fermented separately and blended together. The flavor was straight up sourness and tartness with hints of apples and pears. The bourbon barrel and oak got lost in the sourness and tartness. The beer had a medium body and mouthfeel with a sparkling component in the palate. Because of the sourness and tartness this beer was very mouth-puckering. The overall impression is that it is overtly sour with nice fruit notes. The aftertaste was puckering and intense.

#2 | RATED 93 | DOUBLE BARRELED MAPLE STOUT | AVERY BREWING CO. (CO)

Review by Joseph Formanek | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 36 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The aroma is quite astounding and complex. A big maple and bourbon nose blasts through upon the pour with a solid background of roasted coffee, black malt and a lot of ethanol. This deep black-colored opaque brew has a tannish-brown lacy head with quite good retention considering the strength of the brew. Maple, coffee, chocolate and black malt characters are up front in the flavor, with a considerable amount of ethanol. The bourbon and wood notes are somewhat subtle in the flavor. Hop character is rather subtle with bitterness not asserting itself well against the moderate level of sweetness that comes through from the middle to the finish.

#3 | RATED 91 | TIE 8 ON | MONDAY NIGHT BREWING (GA)

Review by Jim Koebel | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

Tie 8 On by Monday Night Brewing is a Mixed Style Beer (blend of barrel aged strong beers with vanilla beans), brewed by Monday Night Brewing and judged as BJCP Category 34B. This pitch-black brew has a complex aroma profile that features a combination of wood, vanilla and sweetness. These elements mask any esters and hops that might otherwise be present. Swirled, it appears viscous. The taste is quite sweet and rich, with more notes of vanilla and the barrel. It is full bodied, very warm and silky smooth. This is a particularly strong blend, but so dessert-like that it's hard to notice. An exceptional beer that would make for a delightful after-dinner tipple.

#4 | RATED 91 | OLD FASHIONED EXTRACTION | SUN KING BREWING (IN)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 8 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The aroma is a harmonious blend of bready malt, toasted oak and whiskey complementing fruity esters. The barrel character becomes more prominent in the flavor with notes of whiskey, toasted oak and vanilla taking on equal intensity with the bready malt and dark fruit esters. The alcohol strength is readily apparent with quite a bit of lingering warmth in the finish. Old Fashioned Extraction probably would not do well in a homebrew competition as mixed-style beers require harmony; it is quite a difficult task to harmonize a Quadrupel, barrel, fruit and spice well together. Also, I would typically consider this example too boozy for a wood-aged beer but given the context (emulating a mixed drink), it is appropriate.

TOP 5 STRONG BELGIAN ALES

#1 | RATED 96 | TERRIBLE | UNIBROU (CANADA)

Review by David Sapsis | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The flavor starts with a dark caramel malt and trails off quickly to a low-but-still-there bitterness with mid-palate flavors of dark fruit (dates, black cherries), modest spice, some faint chocolate and dark Brazil nut and a hit of molasses at the end. Carbonic level is high. The late palate is surprisingly short and off-dry with black cherries and an almost cola-like character that lingers sweet and herbal in the finish. The alcohol is obvious in the beer, but it's not hot. Overall, the beer is elegant and absolutely delicious but not overly complex. The subdued phenols and excellent malt structure top to bottom really make this beer shine.

#2 | RATED 96 | THE SAGE | ARCHETYPE BREWING CO. (NC)

Review by Mortillaro II | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 39 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

There is no hop or ester flavor in this beer. This eventually finishes off-dry with lingering alcohol and dark fruit character. This beer has a medium-light body with high carbonation. A well-tempered note of alcohol warmth fills the mouth but is not hot or solventy. There is a lovely smooth creaminess in this beer. Overall, this is an extremely well executed Belgian Dark Strong. A lovely marriage of alcohol and malt complexity add depth and character to this beer. Though the aroma was much more subdued than I expected of the style, the flavor and quality of execution make up for the lacking aroma. I recommend this beer if you are a fan of Belgian Dark Strong.

#3 | RATED 94 | CHIMAY GRANDE RÉSERVE | ABBAYE DE SCOURMONT (BELGIUM)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

The aroma is of bready malt with hints of chocolate complemented by esters of dried fruit. The flavor is similarly a complex blend of bready malt, dark fruit esters and peppery phenolics in a medium body despite the strength (9 percent ABV) making this deceptively strong ale exceedingly drinkable. The finish is moderately bitter with a rich and complex maltiness (that is never sweet) and a light carbonic bite and hint of warmth. Chimay Grande Réserve is one of the standard bearers of the Belgian Dark Strong Ale style (also referred to as Belgian Quadrupel). If you have never had this beer, make it your next goal to try this classic example.

#4 | **RATED 93** | BELGIAN-STYLE TRIPEL | EAST BROTHER BEER CO. (CA)

Review by Brad Darnell | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

A thick, rocky white head perches atop the golden liquid and persists a while, leaving characteristic Belgian lace on the glass. Fragrant bubblegum esters and Belgian candi sugar aromas arrive well before the glass gets to my nose. Medium, sweet grainy malt aroma is present as I take my initial deep sniff. Medium-high alcohol flavor is surrounded by a medium-high sweet grainy malt with doughy character. The body is full, carbonation medium-high with medium-light alcohol warmth. Further decomposition yields a pleasant, soft hop spiciness in the aroma and flavor, though the hop bitterness is faint underneath a rich maltiness. The balance favors the malt, and the finish is dry.

#5 | **RATED 92** | DON DE DIEU | UNIBROUE (CANADA)

Review by Michael Bury | Aroma: 21 / 24 | Appearance: 5 / 6 | Flavor: 37 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 20 / 20

Don de Dieu presents a complex aroma of doughy bread, banana, pear, clove and allspice. Hints of herbal hops provides a bit of intrigue. As it warms, sweet alcohol and orange marmalade emerges. The flavor follows the aroma but with even more intensity. The pear esters and clove, allspice phenols dominate over the wheat, grainy, doughy malt. Despite the esters and moderate, sweet alcohol, the beer still finishes semi-dry with lingering fermentation character. Hops are largely absent with only a low level of bitterness to provide a bit of balancing action. Don de Dieu hits all the marks for style including a colorful Belgian fermentation character of esters, phenols and a clean finish that warrants another sip.

TOP 5 SPECIALTY WOOD-AGED BEERS

#1 | **RATED 96** | IRISH COFFEE BARREL-AGED LEGION | COMMUNITY BEER CO. (TX)

Review by Brad Darnell | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The aroma fills my nose with sweet milk chocolate and light coffee notes. The flavor is a mouth-coating heavy and lightly bitter and rich dark malt, reminiscent of dark chocolate truffles, a light hop bitterness, light spicy hops and a malt-dominant, dry finish. This beer is full bodied with a medium alcohol warmth and medium carbonation. Further analysis and contemplation yield plump dark fruit aromas, cocoa powder and light oak. The head persists throughout and leaves a short-lived lace line. The beer is clean with only malt-derived fruit character of dark fruits to be specific. Dark chocolate lingers into the finish and a dry alcoholic character cuts the sweetness. Some oak character is present.

#2 | **RATED 95** | BOCKNESS MONSTER | UPLAND BREWING CO. (IN)

Review by Richard Wong | Aroma: 24 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

The flavor of this beer just exploded on the palate, and I was inundated with flavors of bourbon and oak, dried fruit (raisins, plums), a hint of vanilla and molasses and slightly roasted malts that had a nice biscuit quality. The hop bitterness was buried in the background making it very subtle but still integral to the overall flavors of this beer. A very nice carbonation contributed to a sterling body and mouthfeel. The beer was very smooth and had a very nice subtle burn in the palate due to the alcohol strength. In between the excellent balance, I also found wonderful flavors of the bourbon barrel and the oak, dried fruit, malt sweetness and hints of vanilla and molasses.

#3 | **RATED 94** | BOURBON BARREL-AGED DOPPELBOCK | SEEDSTOCK BREWERY (CO)

Review by Bian Eichhorn | Aroma: 23 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

It pours as a very attractive deep red/brown, with a persistent creamy off-white head. The barrel character is relatively restrained, which is very welcome here. Light vanilla and bourbon notes peek out but are still behind a robust and rich malty character. Light raisin notes come through as well, likely from the positive oxidation. Upon tasting, the balance is striking. It really seems as though this is the second use of the barrel, as the booze and barrel are more subdued than I expected and in perfect harmony with the malt. No spicy heat here either. Well-attenuated and well-aged. Minimal oxidative stripping from the body, but overall, this is a banger. An easily drinkable Doppelbock!

#4 | **RATED 94** | STONE FARKING WHEATON WOOTSTOUT 2019 | STONE BREWING CO. (CA)

Review by Tracy Hensley | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 38 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 9 / 10 | Overall Impression: 19 / 20

W00tstout 2019 aromas open with warm boozy molasses aromas followed by sweet rye, banana bread covered with semisweet chocolate, graham cracker crumbs and warm candied vanilla cinnamon pecans. The appearance is an appropriately light brown head with fine carbonation that persists on a dark brown opaque beer. It is surprisingly drinkable for the intense amount of flavor. W00tstout 2019's flavors are of a balanced creamy chocolate syrup, roast and pecans followed by a warming vanilla caramel finished by lingering wood tannins and an aftertaste of charred pecans. It showcases an appropriately full body and a thick and creamy texture.

#5 | **RATED 92** | BOURBON BARREL AGED CONCRETE SHIP | CAPE MAY BREWING CO. (NJ)

Review by Michael Heniff | Aroma: 22 / 24 | Appearance: 6 / 6 | Flavor: 36 / 40 | Mouthfeel: 10 / 10 | Overall Impression: 18 / 20

For this release, Cap May ages their Imperial Stout brewed with 8 different malts in 7-year aged Kentucky bourbon barrels. Bourbon Barrel-Aged Concrete Ship measures in at 10.1 percent ABV. Bourbon Barrel-Aged Concrete Ship pours an opaque, inky black color with a medium dark brown head. The aroma is strong roasted and chocolate malt with lighter caramel malt, bourbon and dark fruit of plums; alcohol is readily apparent. The body is full and rich with flavors of roasted malt, dark chocolate, caramel and barrel char with lighter bourbon and toasted oak over a light sweetness. The beer finishes with a moderately light bitterness and rich dark malts.

Each year, we award the breweries that collectively produce the highest-rated beer of the year as evaluated in our *Official Review*. In 2019, breweries worldwide demonstrated impressive brewing expertise in a myriad of styles. With the rise of fascinating new trends, such as a return to the limelight for lagers, the continued popularity of sours and the firm establishment of the hazy IPA style, our breweries of the year represent the cutting edge of craft beer.

How We Award

We look at the **top three highest-scoring beers** (as rated by our judging panel) for each brewery in the calendar year.

We then consider **how many of the three** place into the **100 to 96: World Class** category and the **95 to 91: Exceptional** category. For example, a brewery with two world-class beers and one exceptional would rate higher than a brewery with a single higher-scoring world-class beer and two exceptional beers.

The brewery with the **most world-class beers** followed by the **most exceptional beers** is awarded the Brewery of the Year.

If two or more breweries have the same number of world-class and exceptional beers, then the brewery with the **highest point total** wins.

In the event of a tie, a **fourth reviewed beer** is counted as a tiebreaker.

If a fourth beer was not reviewed, we look at the highest score total among the brewery's **two top-scoring beers**.

Read on and raise a glass to this year's winners!

THE BEST BREWERIES OF 2019





MONDAY NIGHT BREWING

1 World Class Beer

2 Exceptional Beers

Total Score: 284

Highest-scoring beers:

Stanger Danger – Rated 96

Lundi – Rated 94

Currant Events – Rated 94



Monday Night Brewing in Atlanta, Georgia is 2019's second runner-up for Brewery of the Year.

The brewery's top-scoring beer in our *Official Review* was **Stranger Danger**, an amusingly named beer that featured an astonishing ingredient: chocolate and peanut butter. Any discerning chocolate fan knows that peanut butter and chocolate is one of the finest flavor combinations in the history of food, so a beer that channels this truth was sure to be a hit. The fact that the beer isn't overly sweet or heavy goes a long way in showing just how skillful the brewers at Monday Night truly are.

Following that, the brewery actually had three beers that received a rating of 94, including **Lundi**, a smooth and elegant hazy IPA. Brewed with a delectable combination of Simcoe, Mosaic and El Dorado hops, this citrusy and pleasant brew expertly fits the bill for its style.

Rounding out Monday Night's world-class and exceptional selections is **Currant Events**, a Wild Specialty Beer brewed with the rarely used adjuncts of black currants and boysenberries. Clocking in at 4.5 percent ABV, this sour tittle is a truly thirst-quenching fruited brew.



96

Experimental Beer

This beer is a candy lover's dream: a decadent Imperial Stout aged in bourbon barrels with chocolate and peanut butter.



94

American IPA

This elegant, lush IPA offers up abundant citrus notes in aroma and flavor topped off by a soft, pleasant mouthfeel.



94

Wild Specialty Beer

The addition of black currants and boysenberries provides a tantalizing fruit backbone for this easy-drinking tart ale.

96



American IPA

Hops fresh off the bine were used within 24 hours of picking to create the stunningly fresh hop character in this hazy IPA.

95



Specialty Wood-Aged Beer

A boozy, oaky and delectable bourbon barrel-aged Doppelbock replete with complex malt aromas and flavors and molasses notes.

94



Mixed-Style Beer

This hazy, quaffable brew is a thrilling combination of two different sours, one of which aged in brandy barrels, and apple cider.

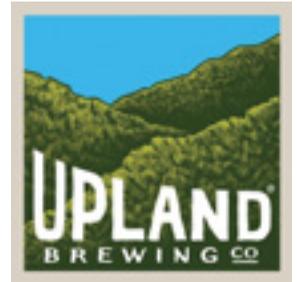


UPLAND BREWING CO.

- 1 World Class Beer
- 2 Exceptional Beers
- Total Score: 285 points

Highest-scoring beers:

- Juicy Harvest – Rated 96
- Bockness Monster – Rated 95
- Twain – Rated 94



Upland Brewing Co. of Bloomington, Indiana had a terrific year in this year's *Official Review*.

Upland's slate of world-class and exceptional beers was headlined by **Juicy Harvest**, a wet-hopped hazy IPA that scored a world-class rating of 96. This beer is part of the brewery's Side Trail series, which reflects the brewery's "constant pursuit of the craft," according to Upland. "Each beer in the series is an innovative result of brewers experimenting with unusual recipes and flavors."

Just missing a chance at the top spot on our list, Upland's cleverly named **Bockness Monster** is sure to surprise imbibers with its powerhouse alcohol content (9.8 percent ABV) and wealth of malt aromas and flavors. Featuring label artwork inspired by its inspiration, the Loch Ness Monster, this behemoth will provide wave upon wave of sultry flavor thanks to its 13 months spent in bourbon barrels.

Well-known for its sour beer program, Upland produced three sours that scored a 94 in our *Official Review*. The one featured here is **Twain**, a fantastically unique combination of barrel-aged and non-barrel-aged sours mixed together with cider for a decidedly spritzzy drinking experience.



pFriem Family Brewers

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Congratulations to pFriem Family Brewers of Hood River, Oregon for being named *The Beer Connoisseur's* 2019 Brewery of the Year!

P Friem Family Brewers is our Brewery of the Year for the **third time in four years**, an absolutely stunning accomplishment that's perfectly representative of the brewery's devotion to producing incredible liquid achievements on a regular basis. Just as they did in 2018, pFriem submitted two beers that earned a score of at least 96, giving the brewery a whopping six beers in its history that have been named world-class in the pages of *The Beer Connoisseur*.

Beyond the two world-class brews, pFriem submitted eight other beers that scored 91 or above, good for yet another incredible year of beer as the best brewery of 2019.

pFriem is making this accolade something of a habit for them, which merits the question: **IS pFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS THE BEST BREWERY IN THE WORLD?** The beers they create are not particularly flashy, nor does the brewery itself chase trends when they are planning their next brew. Instead, they simply focus on classic German- and Belgian-inspired styles

2019'S WORLD CLASS & EXCEPTIONAL REVIEWS

Oude Kriek – 96 Rating

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary – 96 Rating

Golden Coffee Pale – 95 Rating

Belgian-Style Blonde Ale – 95 Rating

Brett Saison – 93 Rating

Pêche – 93 Rating

Export Lager – 92 Rating

Hazy IPA – 92 Rating

La Mûre – 91 Rating

Brut IPA – 91 Rating

delivered with high-quality local ingredients. Though elegant in their minimalism, pFriem's bottle and label designs feature few bells and whistles, and the brewery's beer names simply describe the beer's style – nothing more.

While that low-key style might go against the brash and bold na-

ture of craft beer itself, in the end, quality of product is always going to win out when it comes to beer, and, as has been the case for three of the past four years, pFriem produced the best beers our judges reviewed in 2019.

Josh Pfriem, Brewmaster and Co-Founder, was inspired by a bike trip through Belgium, in which he met some of Europe's greatest brewers, to open pFriem Family Brewers in the summer of 2012. His "ambition to meld European and Pacific Northwest brewing traditions to create his own signature brand" shines through in each and every one of his brewery's fantastic beers.

With incredible consistency and a sparkling stable of terrific beers brewed with minute attention to detail, pFriem Family Brewers once again earns the right to be called BC's Brewery of the Year. Just as we wrote last year, pFriem is truly a beer connoisseur's paradise and we encourage you, the reader, to visit the brewery and experience world-class for yourself.



pFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS

2 World Class Beers & 1 Exceptional Beer

Total Score: 287

Highest-scoring beers

Oude Kriek – Rated 96

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary – Rated 96

Golden Coffee Pale – Rated 95



96

Fruit Lambic

Lush, juicy, locally grown cherries are added to this year-old Lambic, leading to a dry, tangy and delightfully fruity brew.



96

Fruit Lambic

Brewed with the rarely used huckleberry, this fascinating Lambic offers up notes of candied melon, acai and pomegranate.



95

Spice, Herb or Vegetable Beer

Rich, nutty flavors combine with citrus and stone fruit for a bright, quaffable treat. Coffee and beer lovers rejoice!

pFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS submitted an impressive eight beers in the 2019 *Official Review* that scored in the exceptional category. The brewery's two top-scoring world-class beers were both Fruit Lambics: **Oude Kriek** and **Brouwer's 14th Anniversary**.

The brewery's take on the famous kriek style (or lambic with cherries) was a zesty, tangy affair that was beautifully brewed. This hazy, funky and puckeringly tart brew is a near-perfect example of the kriek style, fully showcasing the pFriem brewers' mastery of their craft.

Brouwer's 14th Anniversary is another Fruit Lambic brewed with a far rarer ingredient: huckleberries! While the tartness and tangy, crisp mouthfeel remain, the sweetness of the unusual adjunct helps to cut into that sour element perfectly, leading to a world-class example of the style.

pFriem's **Golden Coffee Pale** impressed our judge with its wide, light malt structure, hop crispness and scrumptious coffee character – all in perfect harmony with one another.



Emerging Beer Styles

by John Holl

LOW-CAL, LOW-CARB

Examples: [Slightly Mighty](#) by Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, [26.2 Brew](#) by The Boston Beer Co., [Pacer IPA](#) by Avery Brewing Co., [Da Shootz](#) by Deschutes Brewery, [DayTime](#) by Lagunitas Brewing Co.



The start of a new decade is sure to have beer fans searching for what comes next – both in terms of flavor and innovation. Drinking in 2020 will likely see a few styles and trends emerge that will play to the brewing industry’s strengths while still honoring its history.

Of course, beer styles that have been on the rise in recent years are only poised to become stronger. New England-style IPA, in all its variations – from the hazy and juicy double dry hopped versions to the lactose-heavy, milkshake-style ones – will continue to surprise and delight. The same is true in the pastry stout category, where big, bold, black, boozy, sugary concoctions will become even more dessert-like. Munich helles and Vienna lagers will also likely continue to grow in craft, with many brewers seeing the benefit of offering a style that appeals to a wider swath of beer drinkers.

While it is not beer, it’s hard to ignore the popularity of hard seltzer. Many breweries are jumping into the fizzy alcoholic water game. Look for a skew towards local flavors specific to a region, be it fruits or herbs that convey a sense of place. Smaller brewers won’t be able to make a big dent in the profits or popularity of the national brands but can make an



impact on their local market.

Also, be on the lookout next year for more kveik, the Norwegian farmhouse ale. Homebrewers are still hot on this style, and while it was taking off professionally last year, expect it to hit a longer stride in 2020.

What else might you see on tap or on shelves this year? Through interviews, observations and a little bit of hope, we offer you these beer trends for the new year.

Low-Cal and Low-Carb

As beer became a lifestyle over the last decade, it also became parts of other lifestyles. Even though big boozy IPAs and imperial stouts are still popular, there was a rise, especially over the last two years, in low-calorie, low-carb options for beer. Larger players like Michelob Ultra gained ground by talking to the fitness crowd and smaller breweries followed suit. Samuel Adams rebranded a gose they had originally made for the Boston Marathon as 26.2 Brew, offering it as a post-race refreshment.

Other breweries like Deschutes began to offer 99-calorie lagers. Avery got into the action with Pacer IPA, a hop-forward and full-flavored Hazy IPA with 100 calories and 3.5 carbs.

“Pacer IPA’s big flavor profile joins a growing lineup of lower-calorie, lower-carb options from Avery Brewing, like the recently released Rocky Mountain Rosé,” the brewery said when announcing the beer. “Pacer IPA brings a hazy and flavorful IPA to this functional category the brewery has named the Avery 100s. Adam Avery hopes to expand this exciting portfolio in the future.”

Walk into a brewery today and you’ll see yoga classes happening in the morning, cycling clubs showing up after a ride in the afternoon, sign-up sheets for hikes or athletic events and more. Whereas beer was once considered the beverage of choice for dudes with guts, they have been replaced by a new generation of drinkers who focus on moderation and health.

As these drinkers consumed less or went looking for fewer calories, brewers began changing their packaging. Firestone Walker Brewing Co. started releasing their big, barrel-aged beers in 12-ounce bottles, down from 22-ouncers that had been the standard. Some brewers are even offering 8-ounce cans for high-alcohol beers, or for folks who want just a half-pint of something.

Examples: [Slightly Mighty](#) by Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, [26.2 Brew](#) by The Boston Beer Co., [Pacer IPA](#) by Avery Brewing Co., [Da Shootz](#) by Deschutes Brewery, [DayTime](#) by Lagunitas Brewing Co.

Locally Grown Beers

There’s been a rise in local hop farms and artisanal malt houses over the last few years, and as a result, brewers are increasingly looking to use all local ingredients in their beers. This can mean a locally sourced wet hopped IPA or beers that use local honey as fermentable sugars in lambic-style ales.

There are even certain states that offer a Farm Brewery license, provided that a brewery meets certain qualifications. In New York, for example, under the law, in order to receive a Farm Brewery license the beer must be made primarily from locally grown farm products. It has been on an increasing scale since it went into effect in 2013 and the next increase comes in four years when no less than 90% of the hops and 90% of all other ingredients must be grown in New York State.

There’s a sense of place in locally sourced beers. Brewers can point customers to farms down the road for more information, and the agriculture industry is getting a needed boost by supplying breweries with crops.

Using local ingredients also helps tell a good story. In the case of Tröegs, the founding brothers and brewers decided to brew a beer for the holidays with cherries and honey in 2002. They contacted a local beekeeper and

LOCALLY GROWN

Examples: [Barn Beer](#) by Plan Bee Farm Brewery, [Mad Elf](#) by Tröegs Brewing Co., [Berliner Messe](#) by The Referend Bier Blendery, [Strawberry Rhubarb](#) by Scratch Brewing Co., [Persimmon Ale](#) by Bloomington Brewing Co.



wound up sourcing 300 pounds of honey for that first batch.

As the brewery has grown, so has the need for honey when it comes time to brew the brewery's popular *Mad Elf* each year for the holidays. Still working with the same local supplier, the amount of the sticky sweet stuff needed ballooned to 25,000 pounds in 2019.

When local businesses rely on each other it leads to good things for all involved, especially the drinker.

Examples: Barn Beer by Plan Bee Farm Brewery, Mad Elf by Tröegs Brewing Co., Berliner Messe by The Referend Bier Blendery, Strawberry Rhubarb by Scratch Brewing Co., Persimmon Ale by Bloomington Brewing Co.

Schwarzbier

The rise in popularity of craft lagers has led brewers to dip into styles that have long lived on the fringes. Take the schwarzbier for example. This darker-colored lager is often cited as a brewer favorite but can be a tough sell for customers who are looking for something light in color. That's the genius of this beer. While it might appear dark, it's actually very light on the palate.

Well-done versions go light on the darker malts to impart color but not necessarily a roasty taste. It should be crisp and easy-drinking, and nowhere near the heaviness or roastiness of a porter – or even a brown ale. To help drinkers better understand what they are drinking or to help them order,

many are simply calling it a “black lager” on menus and chalkboards.

Examples: Kill the Lights by Three Weavers Brewing Co., Pfungstädter Schwarzbier by Pfungstädter Brauerei, Baba Black Lager by Uinta Brewing, Blackwing Lager by Union Craft Brewing, The Duck-Rabbit Schwarzbier by Duck-Rabbit Craft Brewery

Emerging IPA

At the 2019 Great American Beer Festival (GABF) competition, the organizers created a new judging category: Emerging IPA. It was designed as a place where brewers could send samples of hop-forward beers that might not fit into the other existing categories.

For clarification, the guidelines say the style is an IPA that is “any of White, Red, Brown, Black, Brut or many other IPA types or combinations thereof currently in production, and fruited or spiced versions of these; or fruited or spiced versions of classic American, Juicy Hazy, and Imperial IPA categories.”

Now, how do you know you’re drinking an emerging IPA? The Brewers Association (BA) itself admits that “classifying these beers can be complex.” It’s best to think of them as IPAs that include multiple additions, adjuncts or treatments in one.

Potential combinations could include “Brut IPA w/enzyme and lactose,” “Red IPA with Munich malt,” “American IPA with cinnamon,” or “Juicy Hazy IPA with mango,” according to the BA.

Examples: Pure Tropics by Parish Brewing Co., Holocene by Hudson Valley Brewery, Dudley Direct by Tired Hands Brewing Co., Vladimir Brutin by Cannonball Creek Brewing Co., Orange Whipped Dream by Cellarmaker Brewing Co.

Non-Adjuncted Beers

If the last decade was one of excess and experimentation, there are some brewers that are hoping this year will bring drinkers back to the classic styles. The unadorned pale ales, the simple stouts and English milds, a Berliner weisse without adjuncts – or just beers without any adjuncts.

There’s an uphill battle for beer ahead thanks to the onslaught of hard seltzer as well as the fact that newer generations of drinkers, namely millennials and generation Z, are no longer category specific. While pushing the envelope is going to be important, there are some brewers who are hoping that an education in “Beer Style 101” will help consumers appreciate not only where beer is now, but also where it came from.

Brewers from Avery in Colorado and Three Chiefs in California have both said over the last few months that they would like to return to basics for

their wood-aged beers. That means letting strong stouts sit in wood and just wood, without adjuncts like banana, vanilla or even bourbon. Appreciating the complex simplicity of some styles is where the brewers seem to be headed, and if their push for small-batch lagers is any indication, consumers will likely follow suit.

Examples: Kicking & Screaming and Vliet by Threes Brewing, Inside Our DNA by Carton Brewing Co., Sierra Nevada Pale Ale by Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Marlene by Schneeule Brauerei, Mooey by Bonn Place Brewing Co.

India Pale Lager

This has been around for quite some time and there are some breweries that have done remarkable things with a generous amount of hops and crisp lager yeast. However, as lagers in general become more popular, it’s a good bet to see this style grow.

Not only was it added to the GABF style guidelines last year for the first time, but it’s also showing up more and more on menus as brewers try to bridge the gap between hoppy and crisp. The key is having both hallmarks of the style.

Drinkers should expect a vibrant, snappy hop punch similar to west coast IPAs or American pale ales but with a crisp and slightly sweet note from the lager yeast. This means giving the beer the time it needs in the lagering tank to let the yeast develop the beer. Hop haze is OK, but chill haze shouldn’t be present.

This is a great hybrid beer to pick when you’re caught deciding between an IPA or a lager.

Examples: Double IPL by von Trapp Brewing, Citras Maximus by Gate City Brewing Co., Yeah Bouy by Logboat Brewing Co., Hazy River India Pale Lager by Pontoon Brewing, Calyptra by Jack’s Abby Craft Lagers

Non-Alcoholic Beers

This last decade also saw a shift to craft producers releasing non-alcoholic beers. In step with the low-calorie and low-carb options, non-alcoholic beer makers are refining the process that had existed for years (and often turned out beers few wanted to drink willingly) and creating IPAs, stouts and even gose with little alcohol to be found.

Sales in the United States are still virtually non-existent against the rest of the category, but if we look to Europe where it’s currently 2 percent of the marketplace, there’s clearly demand and room to grow.

Examples: Special Effects by Brooklyn Brewery, Upside Dawn by Athletic Brewing Co., Blonde by Partake Brewing, Oatmeal Stout by Bravus Brewing Co., Nanny State by BrewDog



Non-Adjuncted



Schwarzbier



Emerging IPA



India Pale Lager

SEEING THE FUTURE

While we believe these trends to be a fairly good predictor of what will be popular in 2020, there will surely be some styles that come out of left field to shock the beer world with their uniqueness and flavor. Even with that being the case, craft beer is all about variety, so let's welcome whatever new styles come our way in the new decade. As old favorites fade away (wherefore art thou Amber Ales), new styles swoop in and take their place, but it's all a matter of choice. Enjoy your beer exploration in 2020!



Non-Alcoholic

TRENDING HOPS

by **JIM DYKSTRA**

Hops are a defining factor in any beer, and also often dictate what styles of beer and modes of brewing will be popular in the future. When there are shortages, brewers band together to weather the storm and share wisdom on innovative ways to cram more hop aroma and flavor into a 12-ounce can.

This cycle of experimentation and discovery often means that hops that have fallen under the radar for decades suddenly rise to worldwide acclaim. Other times, genetic modifications lead to brand new varieties, which immediately take the brewing world by storm. Let's take a look at how 2019 played out on the hop frontier.

First, the big picture: According to the USDA's forecasted hop harvest for 2019, Citra was the hop grown more than any other in Washington, Idaho and Oregon – America's top hop growers.

Among the other top contenders were the classics – Cascade and Centennial along with Mosaic and Simcoe and... Pahto? More on that in a minute.

Most would categorize the 2019 hop harvest as a solid year for hops, with decent returns on hop oils and alpha acids, the potency of which varies seasonally. Early spring, especially in the Yakima region, was tough for baby hop crops, resulting in somewhat lackluster yields. Oregon hop growers also saw some of the worst flooding in recent memory in April, further contributing to lower yields than

were expected. However, what did grow performed quite well, especially breeds like Chinook, El Dorado and Cashmere, which was featured in last year's hop report.

Below is a list of rising star hops – some of which were made to suit the public's taste and some of which the public's palate has evolved to crave. Some you may be familiar with, having recently caught a wave of interest among the public, while others might be brand new.

Each of these hops represent the culmination of years, if not decades, of research and testing. They have been found ideal not only in flavor, but in growth rate, yield capacity, cone size, disease and weather resistance, ease of harvest and storage life. Now they're ready for their time in the brewer's spotlight, each vying for the chance to change the tastes of the beer-drinking public. Success would allow these hops to sit securely alongside the most influential hops of all time by pushing the boundaries of what craft beer can be.

In an age where breeders can play God with hops by imbuing them with all sorts of fanciful flavors, you can expect them to pay very close attention to what sort of beer styles and characteristics are trending, and then to breed accordingly. The hops on this list reflect what's hot in the market currently and also a sign of where things are headed.



According to the USDA's forecasted hop harvest for 2019, top varieties in demand included Cascade, Centennial, Citra, Mosaic and Simcoe.



Zappa - Origin: United States

To be frank, this is an oddball hop. A member of the Neomexicanus hop variety, its flavor has been described as everything from tropical fruit surrounded by notes of peppery mint, savory character and Fruity Pebbles to simply: “the color purple.”

North America’s Neomexicanus hops are ripe for future exploration by breeders, as their properties differ significantly from European hops, so you might consider Zappa ahead of its time. Fitting, considering it’s named after the famously esoteric musician. If you were wondering, the Zappa estate has signed off on the naming rights.

Pahto - Origin: United States

Originally known as HBC 682, Pahto was renamed for the native name of Mt. Adams, Washington’s second-highest peak after Mt. Rainier. This hop is a high-yield, disease-resistant variety that is super high in alpha acid content – reaching up to 20 percent, making

it great as a bittering hop. It is noted for its herbal, earthy and floral notes and smooth, clean bitterness. These characteristics make Pahto perfect for craft drinkers’ ongoing obsession with powerfully hopped brews with distinct flavors. As previously noted, this varietal was one of the most-cultivated in 2019.

CTZ - Origin: United States

Along with Pahto, CTZ was another heavily planted but less-mentioned varietal this year. The “CTZ” stands for Columbus, Tomahawk and Zeus (also heavily grown in 2019), because these hops are pretty much interchangeable. The acronym is a result of copyright and patent issues surrounding the nearly identical characteristics of these hops, which have been gaining popularity since their development in the 1980s. Its origins are not fully known, but it’s generally believed to be partially derived from the English varietal Brewer’s Gold, which is known for its high alpha acid content.





ALLAGASH BREWING CO.

A beer without hops is like a king without a crown, a peanut butter sandwich with no jelly or a WWE wrestler without spandex. At best, it might be a gruit or similar hop-less style of brew. At worst, it's hardly a beer at all.

Similar to the hops it was named for, CTZ is a great multi-purpose breed, with clean, neutral bitterness, intense aromas of citrus, wood and spice and high alpha acids ranging up to 16 percent. It doesn't take a ton of this hop to bitter up a brew, making it a classic choice for West Coast IPAs. CTZ and its genetic brethren have been used forever, but its utility in the kettle has brought it newfound popularity. You can find it in all sorts of beers, but among its greatest hits are Russian River's Pliny the Elder and Firestone Walker's Parabola.

Riwaka - Origin: New Zealand

An "it-girl" of New Zealand's rising hop scene, Riwaka boasts an oil content nearly two times that of its parent hop, Saaz. It is further distinguished by a nearly even ratio of alpha and beta acids around 5 percent, culminating in full, ripe citrus notes well-suited for today's juicy IPA climate.

Milder notes of grapefruit and kumquat round out its flavor profile, which can also serve as a standalone, single hop show or liven up a brewer's approach to a pilsner or pale ale.

The hop was originally introduced to the market in 1997, simply titled "D Saaz," by HortResearch as part of its New Zealand Hops "with a difference" program. Judging by its rising popularity, its differences are what make it such a hot ticket item. Most notably, it has been used in the award-winning Hill Farmstead Brewery's Susan.

Sabro - Origin: United States

The popularity of cocktail-themed beers has proven to be fertile ground for brewers and hop growers alike, and Sabro is a perfect example with its pina colada-type character surrounded by tropical, citrus notes. Short for the Spanish "sabroso," meaning "delicious," it first hit the scene in 2018, earning favor for its ability to impart coconut flavor to hop-forward beers, helping push the hop-head psyche further from pine and closer to fruit. Nearly 700 acres were devoted to growing Sabro in Washington alone – a sizable amount for a newcomer. Try it in Sixpoint's Dabble, a Double IPA.

Idaho 7 - Origin: United States

Considering it doesn't yet have a name reminiscent of mythological creatures or sacred native artifacts, it's safe to say Idaho 7 has flown under the radar. It's a good late-addition aromatic hop but is alpha-acidic enough to have some skin in the bittering game.

Some have likened it to Citra, with heavy, juicy notes of tropical and stone fruits woven into a background of marmalade, resinous pine and earthy black tea. Others have noted that its aroma is very reminiscent of marijuana, making it possible to label this a "dank" hop. It has been used to great effect in Night Shift Brewing's One Hop This Time.

Strata - Origin: United States

This list of trendy hops wouldn't be complete without a breed geared towards dankness. Often described as a mix of passion fruit and marijuana, Strata is ideal for the surge of interest in beers that smell and taste something like your hippy neighbor's shed. But people are every bit as excited about this hop's powerful fruity flavor, with shades of mango, passion fruit, melon, fresh strawberry and grapefruit as they are about the above-average level of terpenes, which impart

that delicious "weedy" quality. Best of all, it's versatile, working just as well in a stout as it does in a saison. You can find this hop in Bear Republic's Strata Rebellion and Southern Lights Brewing's Erik Estrata IPA.

The trendy IPA of 2020 is a multi-faceted blend of fruity and juicy qualities with a thick, vinous mouthfeel balanced by a hefty amount of bitterness. Each of those characteristics had their day as a featured, standalone element in years past. Now they're a unified whole, ready to be built upon in new ways, the same way citrus hop notes led to the idea for "creamsicle" beers, which has given birth to a hop that incorporates all those qualities from the get-go. In a way, the ability to impart such a powerful array of flavor has revived the American zeal for "bigger and bolder," which seemed to be on the decline in favor of more tempered, subtle approaches.

That's not to take anything away from the brewers, however. These are complex beers brewed with incredible attention to details that most weren't even aware of a few years ago. With hops such as Lotus, with its creamsicle qualities, or Riwaka's uber-high yet balanced alpha and beta acids, brewers gain an even deeper level of control over their product, and, in turn, what's old to the craft beer drinker becomes new again.

For brewers hoping to home in on a yet-untapped vein of flavor, take a look at what has already been done with fruit in food, and you may well happen upon something special that will ultimately inform the next generation of hop breeds. Take, for example, the key lime pie, which isn't too far from becoming a style of beer unto itself. The best iterations of key lime pie-inspired beers currently have incorporated tropical hops, lactose and vanilla notes to better represent the mélange and consistency of the dessert treat. It is now advantageous to hop growers to double down on lime and vanilla qualities in hops.

From a broader perspective, consider what is popular outside of the beer realm and see if there's a way you might be able to approximate its flavor and texture within a beer, a la Rosé wine and cannabis.

Though brewing will always be an art, the science behind today's hop breeds are largely responsible for the epic variety of flavors at the drinker's disposal, as well as the brewer's ability to produce them.

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Beer's new dynamic duo discuss the future of beer and their big brands.

When The Boston Beer Co. and Dogfish Head Craft Brewery announced their merger in the summer of 2019, it came as seismic news in the craft brewing community. While mergers are common occurrences in a craft landscape pockmarked with acquisitions, the two names involved were heavy hitters: Jim Koch of Boston Beer and Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head.

With 2020 upon us, we sat down with Koch and Calagione to discuss the pending trends for the new year as well as to reflect on what the year 2019 meant for the industry. The brewing giants provided plenty of insight on what proved to be an interesting year for the industry.

Though their companies merger was a major topic of discussion, the two legendary brewers also delved into the overall industry picture while providing some ideas about future collaboration and innovation in their own companies – and within the industry at large.

“Not only are Dogfish Head and Boston Beer two original American breweries, but Jim Koch and I worked hard with other leading craft brewery founders and the Brewers Association to develop and champion what defines independent American brewers. This merger better positions



While mergers and acquisitions are not out of the ordinary for the craft beer landscape, the sheer magnitude of The Boston Beer Co. merger with Dogfish Head Craft Brewery made it one of the biggest stories in 2019.

Dogfish Head and our co-workers to continue growing within this definition for many years to come,” Calagione said in a release after the announcement of the merger.

Both figureheads were happy to discuss the striking similarities between their two companies as well as what 2020 will bring for them.



2020 Industry Trends

WHAT ARE 2-5 OF THE BIGGEST BEER TRENDS CONSUMERS CAN EXPECT IN 2020?

Sam Calagione: *The biggest trend consumers will experience in 2020 is lower-calorie, lower-carb craft beers that still feature interesting flavors. This movement is something that really caught fire in 2019, and I think we're going to see even more options next year. With millennial drinkers so focused on maintaining active, balanced lifestyles that include both exercising and enjoying flavorful, well-differentiated craft beers, the lower-calorie, lower-carb area is*

simply one that brewers cannot overlook.

Beyond that, Hazy IPAs are not going away and sour, wild beers will continue to rise in popularity in 2020. On a percentage basis, sours are growing faster than IPAs, and Dogfish Head SeaQuench Ale is now the best-selling sour beer in America.

Jim Koch: *I think we'll also see brewers push the boundaries of beer to challenge drinkers' expectations and stand out on the crowded shelves. Whether through ingredients or brewing methods, these unique ways of attracting consumers can entice*

THE BOSTON BEER COMPANY



“There is an abundance of choice for consumers, which can be both good and bad. It’s good because folks can go out and explore all kinds of beery goodness! It’s bad because consumers often cannot tell where their beers are coming from or who is making them.”

people to experiment with an unknown small brand or reappraise legacy brands.

ARE THERE TOO MANY BEERS IN THE MARKET TODAY? IS BEER SELECTION SATURATED? IS THIS GOOD OR BAD FOR THE CONSUMER?

Jim: *As a brewer and a beer drinker, I’ve always said: there can – and never will be – enough beer. We are at a point where we’re back to pre-Prohibition numbers of breweries, but only so many have the bandwidth for distribution beyond taprooms. This is contributing to the loyalty dilemma but helping to keep craft beer alive among discerning drinkers.*

Sam: *There is an abundance of choice for consumers, which can be both good and bad. It’s good because folks can go out and explore all kinds of beery goodness! It’s bad because consumers often cannot tell where their beers are coming from or who is making them. Many international conglomerates have blurred the lines between the various brands they market as craft beers, putting the identity and integrity of the independent craft beer community and our products at risk.*

HOW HAS THE SUCCESS OF HARD SELTZERS AND CANNABIS IMPACTED THE BEER INDUSTRY, AND HOW IS IT IMPACTING BEER COMPANIES’ BUSINESS DECISIONS IN 2020?

Sam: *I do think both have an impact on overall beer sales. I think strong craft beer brands can grow in this challenging environment with the right focus on innovation, being well-differentiated and being militant about quality and consistency.*

Jim: *Who would have thought a few years ago that The Boston Beer Company would play in hard seltzer? Truly was an innovation we explored as an alternative for drinkers – and we’re happy we took the chance on it when we did as one of the first to market. We know hard seltzer isn’t the only alcoholic beverage drinkers choose, but more and more, drinkers are looking for great-tasting and refreshing options that aren’t high in calories, sugar or carbs, which is exactly where Truly fits.*

We’ll continue to innovate within this lifestyle space with beers like SeaQuench and Slightly Mighty, but in the past two years, the hard seltzer category has grown more than 830 percent and more than 220 percent in 2019 alone. Hard seltzer sales have now surpassed all IPA sales, one of craft beer’s most

popular styles, demonstrating the shift in drinker preference, which Truly is capitalizing on.

CONSIDERING THE POPULARITY OF CRAFT BEER, MOST CONSUMERS DON'T REALIZE THAT WINE CONTINUES TO OUTPERFORM BEER IN TERMS OF GROSS SALES. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING AND HOW CAN THE BEER INDUSTRY OVERCOME THIS TREND?

Sam: *At Dogfish, we have always been focused on making beers that are as complex and food-friendly as the world's finest wines. Also, there is far more diversity in flavor, styles and ingredients in the beer world than there is in the wine world. As a community of breweries, we collectively need to do a better job promoting these facts and benefits to consumers.*

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT BBC'S DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONTROVERSIAL BEER GROWTH INITIATIVE'S #BEERSTOTHAT CAMPAIGN IN 2020? MILLERCOORS AND HEINEKEN ELECTED TO NOT PARTICIPATE. WHAT ARE THE COMPELLING REASONS FOR BBC TO SUPPORT IT?

Jim: *I had a glimmer of hope when I started Samuel Adams that I was onto something great when it came to charting the course for other American craft brewers. Since then, we have allocated significant resources to supporting the beer industry and breweries of all sizes because when it comes to growing our category, we can only help ourselves. BBC has strong and longstanding relationships with industry associations like the National Beer Wholesalers Association, the Brewers Association and the Beer Institute and when we join forces with competitors to fuel campaigns like #BEERSTOTHAT we're illustrating our shared purpose in elevating and celebrating beer to fuel the category.*

Dogfish Head Merger

HOW IS THE DOGFISH MERGER STRENGTHENING THE BOSTON BEER COMPANY'S POSITION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY?

Sam: *Together, Dogfish Head and The Boston Beer Company have a wide-stretching portfolio of*

craft beers and beyond that are sure to better position our collective company to compete with craft beverage makers everywhere, including those large, international conglomerates that are nearly fifty times our size. While our newly merged collective may be the largest independent craft brewer in the country, we are still less than three percent of the U.S. beer market share. So, we are still a David fighting the same dominant, international Goliaths that control more than 80 percent of our country's beer market. Our individual portfolios pre-merger were great, but when put together, we've really got an unstoppable force of unique, well-differentiated (yet totally complementary) high-end beverages. With our Dogfish Head brand, we tend to focus on IPAs and sours, incorporating culinary ingredients just as we did when we opened as the smallest commercial brewery in America 24 years ago. We also have a fun little growth engine in our distillery.

Jim: *Samuel Adams focuses more on lagers and traditional beer styles while expanding into "beyond-beer" categories with Twisted Tea hard iced tea, Angry Orchard hard cider, Truly spiked seltzer and other innovation brands including Tura hard kombucha and Wild Leaf hard tea. To Sam's point, our various offerings are perfectly complementary and not competitive within the portfolio. In fact, the diversity of products and the strength of our combined team allows us to continue to innovate, learn from, adapt to and anticipate drinker habits. We are growing double digits in a flat market and are poised to grow double digits again next year as a singular entity.*

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN MERGING THE TWO COMPANIES?

Jim: *The merging of Dogfish Head and The Boston Beer Company has been very smooth. We announced our plans in May, officially closed in July and shared our first combined financial results in October. We look forward to closing out 2019 strong and entering 2020 as a singular, powerful entity.*

Sam: *It has been amazing to see just how similar our companies are; our cultures, our co-workers, our wacky and off-centered traditions. We think alike, we work alike, and we have the same core values. Honestly, the most challenging thing has been (and continues to be) getting all of our systems aligned including IT, distribution, inventory, sales programs, etc.*



KOCH & CALAGIONE TALK 2020 TRENDS

WHAT INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE SAMUEL ADAMS AND DOGFISH HEAD BRANDS IN 2020?

Jim: *The sky is the limit, and innovation is always a priority for our team. A great idea can come from anyone and anywhere. With the addition of our Dogfish Head co-workers, we have even more brainpower to foster collaboration and great ideas across our network. I'm excited about what's to come from this talented group in the new year.*

Sam: *There's the release of Dogfish Head's classic World Wide Stout aged in used Utopias barrels from Sam Adams. We officially announced this collaboration a couple of weeks ago at the Great American Beer Festival, and I could not be more excited for the beer to debut in March! Other than that, there are no specific collaborations in the works, but we are really looking forward to continuing business as a singular entity in 2020. It will be awesome having the opportunity to continuously collaborate, innovate and bounce ideas off one another to create top-notch craft beers and beyond.*

IF JIM WERE TO FULLY RETIRE FROM BBC, IS SAM THE BEST CANDIDATE TO FILL JIM'S SHOES? IF SO, WHAT QUALITIES DOES SAM POSSESS THAT MAKE HIM IDEAL TO BECOME THE FACE OF BBC'S BEER PORTFOLIO?

Jim: *While I'm sure Sam would look great in my black leather shoes, I'm not going anywhere anytime soon. We have a tremendous executive leadership team including Dave Burwick, who was appointed CEO in 2018. As Dave focuses a bit more of his time on operations, finance, HR and legal, Sam and I can focus on brewing, culture and sales to live up to our respective titles of founders and brewers.*

Sam: *I am proud to have the same title as Jim – we are founders and brewers with our brands – and love the work we get to do every day. I am looking forward to working with all of my fellow BBC co-workers to grow all of our brands, and I believe my role and title will stay what it is today for many years to come.*

JIM, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DOGFISH HEAD BEER? SAM, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SAMUEL ADAMS BEER? WHAT DIFFERENTIATES THAT BEER TO YOU?

Jim: *I'd have to say 60 Minute IPA because it's a unique and very creative take on a beer that has become a standard for craft brewers. The continuous hopping method is a differentiated brewing philosophy that I can appreciate – much like my own lager-brewing technique.*

Sam: *My favorite Sam Adams Beer is Boston Lager. It was one of the first beers I snuck out of my dad's fridge in high school and for 24 years, whenever I travel to faraway places and am stuck in airports that don't serve Dogfish, I can usually find Boston Lager and it is always fresh, consistent and delicious.*

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