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44 Beer Reviews

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OUTSIDE THE BOX

9. PUMPKIN W/ SPARKY PORTER
10. PUMPKIN W/ 1 PART IPA
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12. WARLOCK W/ 1 PART IPA
13. WARLOCK - 1 PART PMX
14. 2X STOUT W/ 1 PART IPA
15. WARLOCK W/ 1 PART PUMPKIN
16. PUMPKIN W/ CRÈME DE VIOLETTE
17. PUMPKIN W/ CHOCOLAT
18. WARLOCK W/ HARVEST
19. 2 PARTS OLD MAN W/ 1 PT COMPASS
20. CHOCOLAT W/ CRÈME DE VIOLETTE
21. IPA 1/2 W/ 1/2 2X STOUT
22. 2 PARTS OLD MAN W/ 2X STOUT
23. HOP SUN W/ LEMONADE
24. 2X IPA W/ PUMPKIN
25. ANY BLACK WATER SERIES
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The Summer of Saison

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The Summer of Saison

Traditionally brewed at the start of colder months and conditioned over winter for warm-weather consumption, saisons and farmhouse ales have become a year-round staple for many brewers who enjoy the flavor that the distinct Belgian yeast strains provide. Whether it's crisp and clean summer refreshers or funky *Brettanomyces* bombs, brewers across America are shaping up to make this the summer of saison.

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| CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE |



Stan Hieronymus has been writing about beer for more than twenty years, including three books popular with homebrewers—*For the Love of Hops*, *Brew Like a Monk*, and *Brewing With Wheat*.



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Tom Wilmes is a beer drinker with a writing habit. He lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he's the craft-beer columnist for the *Daily Camera* newspaper and contributes articles for numerous publications. His beer fridge is usually stocked with a wide variety of local craft brews.



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Summer is upon us! The warmer months are not only a great time to enjoy beer, but a great time to brew as well—we trade the cold mornings in the garage for sunny afternoons on the driveway or in the backyard, and we trade those solo brew days in 20 degree temps for larger social brew sessions with friends, neighbors, and family.

Summer is also ideal for enjoying and brewing lighter, brighter styles, and in this issue we've pulled together a focus on the new official craft beer style of summer . . . the saison. There's no question that the style has been on a meteoric rise over the past several years—major brewers have been adding saisons to their commercial lineups in droves, and it's no longer a style just for niche brewers. The breadth of the style makes it open to a wide variety of creative interpretations, and we've talked to the best saison and farmhouse-ale brewers in the business to get their takes on the style and how they use it to realize their own visions. Whether your goal is to brew your own saison or to learn more about the style to inform your enjoyment of saisons, we've got you covered.

But summer isn't just about saisons, as lighter, slightly sour styles like Gose and Berliner Weisse have also been on a rapid ascent. Our review panel tackles a selection of them, and we include a couple great recipes for you to try making these tart and refreshing brews at home.

It's prime time for outdoor cooking, and we offer everything from quick-pickled veggies using sour beer to rib and shrimp barbecue options that are perfect for grilling with friends on those long brew-day afternoons.

Whether you're a professional brewer, a homebrewer, and/or you love and appreciate great craft beer, you'll find a tremendous amount of valuable content in the following pages.

We hope you enjoy this issue. We made it for you.

Steve, Jamie & John
Co-Founders, *Craft Beer & Brewing Magazine*™

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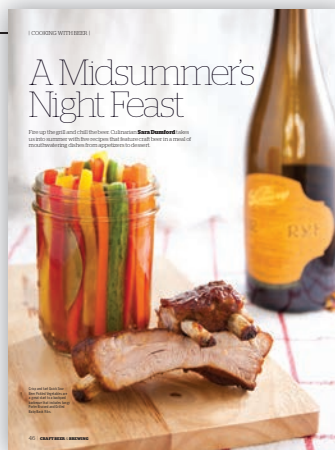
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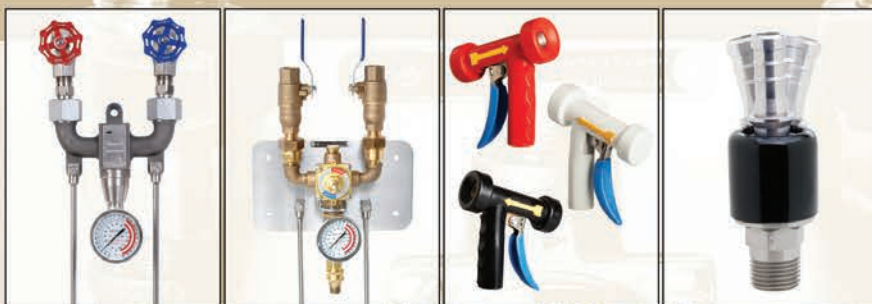
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EDITORS' PICKS

Session IPAs

At Craft Beer & Brewing, we're huge fans of big beers, but we have an equal appreciation for beers that pack big flavor into refreshingly drinkable packages. The session beer trend is one that we wholeheartedly support, and we're looking forward to a summer spent outside with these tasty sessions beers.

Easy Jack Summer Session IPA

Firestone Walker Brewing Co., Paso Robles, California

"A globe-trotting hop-forward session IPA"

Easy Jack takes you on a hop adventure with hops from New Zealand, Europe, and North America that deliver a breadth of citrus, piney, and grassy aromas. With this light-bodied and balanced ale, Firestone Walker delivers again on a great IPA that we hope becomes more than a seasonal release.

Daytime Fractional IPA

Lagunitas Brewing Co., Petaluma, California

"A fractional IPA that really doesn't suck."

Intense hop aroma gives way to a subtle, light malty sweetness in this session release from Lagunitas. It has a surprising amount of body for a session beer, and an almost creamy mouthfeel, while still offering up the potent hops mix that Lagunitas is known for, making it just as good after hours as it is during the day.

Go To IPA

Stone Brewing Co., Escondido, California

"A vibrant hop-burst session IPA"

The first thing you notice when you open a Go To IPA is the olfactory assault from the late-addition hops. It's stunning, unexpected, and delivers a hefty dose of tropical hop goodness. Is it a bit unbalanced? Sure. But hopheads shouldn't think twice about trying this one.

Pop-Up Session IPA

Boulevard Brewing Co., Kansas City, Missouri

"American Indian Pale Ale built for frequent excursions"

Pop-Up has everything going for it—great malt balance with a low ABV (4.3%), along with plenty of hops that have you scratching your head and wondering whether this is really a "session" IPA. Boulevard has a hit on their hands, here, and we'll be stocking up for hot summer months.

Farmer's Tan Session IPA

Southern Tier Brewing Co., Lakewood, New York

"Brewed with two varieties of hops and two types of malts"

Southern Tier delivers a nice, subtle malt balance while still presenting expected bitterness. The golden color looks like an IPA, and it tastes like an IPA, but at 4.6% ABV you can enjoy more of them on a warm summer afternoon. This one's seasonal, so grab some while you can.



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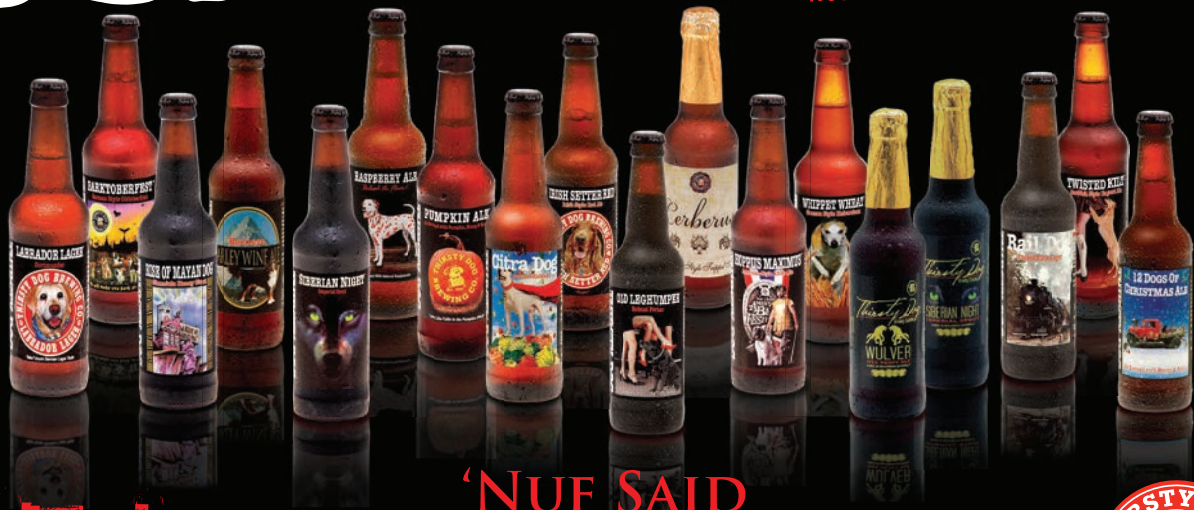
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Language for Beer Geeks

Beer jargon thrown around on social media and forums can leave even the most passionate craft beer fans scratching their heads. In our premiere issue, we shared a few terms and definitions to help clear up any confusion. Here are a few more.

>> Drain Pour

[dreyn-pohr] noun

Perhaps the saddest of beer slang, the drain pour is also the most expensive. Imagine opening that bottle of rare beer that you've been cellaring for ages only to find out it's turned to vinegar and is so vile that it has to be poured down the drain. Brewers and drinkers alike universally hate drain pours. "Steve watched his tears fall into the sink and mix with the lacto-infected drain pour."

>> Barrel-aged

[bar-uhl-eyjd] adjective

In simplest terms, "barrel-aged" means aged in a barrel. Barrel-aged beers have seen a dramatic increase in popularity in recent years with both homebrewers and professional brewers. Recently, "barrel-aged" has also come to mean that something is better than average, great, or downright fantastic. "The new album by Blitzen Trapper is so barrel-aged."

>> Beer Mail

[beer-meyl] noun

Beer mail is actually not mail at all since it's illegal to ship alcohol via USPS (and craft beer lovers always obey the laws). It is, however, a shipment of beer sent from one craft beer lover to another. When one receives beer mail, it is often an event eliciting social media status updates such as "Unexpected beer mail arrived today from @phacebook... taking the afternoon off to gawk at my new haul of whales. #whalezbro #craftbeer #beermail."

>> Collab

[kuh-lab] noun

Short for collaboration, a collab brings two or more breweries together to brew a beer that is mightier than its individual breweries alone. "Have you had the Perennial/Prairie collab, yet? It's totally barrel-aged."

Whalez, Bro. by Ansis Purins



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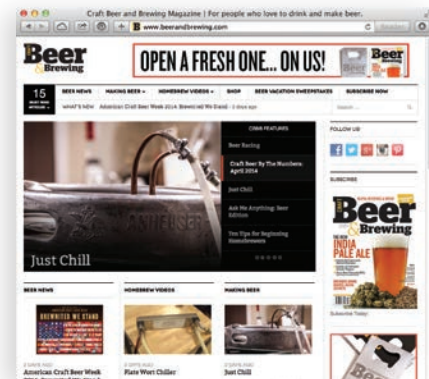


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Top Stories

In Praise of the Variety Pack

The variety pack has been gaining momentum over the years but takes a giant leap forward this year thanks to Sierra Nevada. Find out why on our website.

Stone Releases First Helium Beer

Months after we mentioned this April Fool's release from Stone Brewing Company on our site, we continue to find curious beer lovers wanting more info, proving that homebrewers' creative curiosity knows no bounds.

Homebrewing Techniques

Top 10 Tips for Homebrewers

Take advantage of advice from experienced homebrewers who can tell you what to do and what NOT to do when you are getting started.

Fermentation: Glass or Plastic?

We lay out the pros and cons of using glass carboys and plastic carboys or buckets for fermentation.

Practically Bursting with Hops

Learn about the technique of hop bursting to maximize the hop flavors in your beers.

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Is It Fresh?

WHILE THE RAPID GROWTH of craft beer has created a dynamic and constantly evolving marketplace with beers rotating faster than ever on store shelves, in some retail shops beers still have a tendency to sit on shelves past their prime. Freshness should be forefront in the mind of any craft beer consumer buying hop-forward beers, since that's the way the brewer intends for you to taste it.

To help ensure a consistent experience for all consumers within their distribution footprint, some breweries use date codes. But, because there are no standards or requirements for indicating beer age, each brewery employs its own method for dating its beers. (Regrettably, a large number of breweries do not offer any date stamps

whatsoever, leaving you in the dark about the freshness of their products.)

Finding the Date Code

One of the most difficult tasks in checking beer freshness is locating the date code. First, check the label. Breweries such as Sierra Nevada, Great Divide, and Odell clearly print the date code on a specific section of the label, which is often the same for all product lines. If you can't find the code on the label, check the bottle or can. For bottles, date codes are often printed on the neck or shoulder (the section just above the label). These codes are easiest to identify when they are printed in yellow or white ink on the bottle, but black or dark ink is not uncommon, so

hold the bottle up to a light source to help you find the code.

On cans, most date codes are printed on the bottom—and in the case of Oskar Blues, there's even a special phrase or witty message. If you can't find a code printed on the label or anywhere else on the bottle/can, the last resort is to check the carrier or case packaging. Some breweries elect to print their date codes on the four-pack or six-pack carriers or on the case carton. If you're still unable to find any freshness information after checking the label, bottle/can, carrier, and case carton, it is likely that there is no date code, so you'll have to take your chances and hope that you are purchasing fresh beer. You can increase your odds by purchasing



How to Read Bottle Date Codes

BREWERY	CODE TYPE	CODE LOCATION	SECRET DECODER RING	EXAMPLE
Sierra Nevada Brewing Company (Chico, California)	Bottling date	Above the UPC on the label	1st number = last digit of the year, next 3 numbers = Julian day of the year	4099 X XXXX = Bottled on April 9, 2014
New Belgium Brewing Company (Fort Collins, Colorado)	Best Before and Bottling date	Bottom right of the bottle label or bottom of the can	Bottling date is in format YYMMDDXXX	140409XXXX = Bottled on April 9, 2014
Lagunitas Brewing Company (Petaluma, California)	Bottling date	Printed in black on the neck of the bottle	First 3 numbers = Julian day of the year, next number = last digit of the year	0994XXXX = Bottled on April 9
Stone Brewing Co. (Escondido, California)	Enjoy By date	Printed in yellow on the shoulder of the bottle	Enjoy By code length varies based on product (35-120 days)	Enjoy By 07/08/14 = Bottled on April 9, 2014
Firestone Walker Brewing Co. (Paso Robles, California)	Bottling date	Bottom left of the label	None needed	
Oskar Blues Brewery (Lyons, Colorado)	Canned date	Bottom of the can	None needed	
Odell Brewing Company (Fort Collins, Colorado)	Best By date	Bottom left of the label	Best By date is 4 months after bottling	Best By 08/09/14 = Bottled on April 9, 2014

from stores that you know make an effort to stock fresh beer and stores that go through product reasonably fast.

Reading the Date Code

Often, deciphering the date code can prove more difficult than locating it. The two most common types of date codes are packaging dates and shelf-life dates.

Packaging dates indicate when the beer was bottled or canned and can be identified by the terms “bottled on,” “canned on,” “packaged on,” or “filled on.” Packaging codes that are more discretely stamped without those identifiers can be somewhat difficult to read because they often take the form of Julian dates (a number between 001 and 366) embedded in a longer date code. These complex codes can vary greatly from brewery to brewery and may include the year, date, time, and sometimes even the tank or batch number. To determine which part of the code refers to the date, your best bet is to check a resource such as Fresh Beer Only (freshbeeronly.com). Patrick St-Amand, the creator of Fresh Beer Only, has compiled an extensive list of the date stamping practices of U.S., Canadian, and international breweries that should be a bookmark on every beer shopper’s smartphone.

Shelf-life dates indicate the date by which you should consume a beer, as determined by the brewery. These dates can be identified by several different terms, including “best before/by,” “enjoy by,” “consume by,” “drink by,” or “sell by.” For most beers, this date is 60–120 days after packaging and can vary based on the style. These dates can also be referred to as pull dates because many breweries request that distributors and retailers pull beers from shelves and inventory if they are past the printed shelf-life date. Some breweries, including Firestone Walker and Stone, even have forms on their website for reporting expired beer.

Although the process of checking beer freshness can seem daunting at first, it will soon become a habitual, almost instinctive, practice when you shop for beer after you realize the impact it can have on your experience. Craft brewers go to painstaking lengths to create a product for you to enjoy, and you owe it to them—and to yourself—to ensure that you experience it the way they intended. —Neil Fisher



ONTAP

Big Moves in the Top 50 U.S. Craft Breweries

In March, the **Brewers Association** released its annual Top 50 list, ranking the top craft breweries by sales volume for 2013. Last year saw several new additions to this premier league of breweries as well as a few surprising jumps for growing breweries. Here’s a short list of the biggest movers and how many places on the list they moved...

Bubbling Up

- +17 **Ballast Point Brewing Company** (29th overall)
- +6 **Southern Tier Brewing Company** (31st overall)
- +5 **Sweetwater Brewing Company** (19th overall)
- +5 **Left Hand Brewing Company** (38th overall)
- +4 **Firestone Walker Brewing Company** (16th overall)
- +4 **Founders Brewing Co.** (26th overall)

Settling Down

- 7 **Craftworks Restaurants & Breweries, Inc.** (39th overall)
- 6 **Blue Point Brewing Company** (42nd overall)
- 5 **Rogue Ales** (27th overall)
- 4 **Long Trail Brewing Co.** (22nd overall)
- 4 **Cold Spring Brewing Co.** (32nd overall)
- 4 **Flying Dog Brewery** (33rd overall)
- 4 **BJ’s Chicago Pizza & Brewery, Inc.** (44th overall)

Debuts

- + **Duvel Moortgat USA** (8th overall, Boulevard was 13th in 2012)
- + **Sixpoint Brewery** (43rd overall)
- + **Gordon Biersch Brewing Company** (49th overall)
- + **21st Amendment Brewery** (50th overall)

Note: change in position on this list is only a measure of a brewery’s sales volume relative to other craft breweries, and in some cases breweries have dropped in position only because other breweries have grown faster.



Vices & Versa

Montreal, Quebec

An oasis of creative beer in Montreal's Little Italy, where the locals hang and visitors can try the best of Quebec's breweries.

WHAT IT IS: Frequented by a mix of beer lovers, university students and professors, artists, and regulars, Vices & Versa hits that note of laid-back neighborhood bar and beer geek haunt. Since opening in 2004, it has become a Montreal beer destination, featuring thirty-two draft beers from great Quebec brewers such as Hopfenstark, Dieu du Ciel, and Brasserie Dunham, plus at least one or two casks tapped weekly.

WHY IT'S GREAT: The extensive and interesting selection of beers is an obvious draw, but it's also the informed and friendly staff; the unfussy, casual vibe; the luscious back patio; and live music nights that make Vices the kind of bar you wish was your local. I've spent weekday afternoons reading and sipping imperial pints of single malt and single hop IPA from Le Trou du Diable in their spacious, sunlit rooms and cozy Friday nights bellied up at the bar, trying tasters and half-pints (or verres as they are called *en Français*). The emphasis is on fresh and local, as they also offer wines and ciders made in the province—and yes, they have poutine as well as a solid menu of pub favorites and creative rotating daily specials.

—Heather Vandenbergel

DETAILS

Hours: 3 p.m.–3 a.m. Monday–Wednesday (changes to noon–3 a.m. on June 1), noon–3 a.m. Thursday–Sunday.
Address: 6631 Saint-Laurent Blvd., Montréal, QC
Web: vicesetversa.com



Blairally Vintage Arcade

Eugene, Oregon

Vintage pinball arcade meets great craft beer tap list. What more could you ask?

WHAT IT IS: Formerly the home of Ninkasi Brewing Company's studio for the Top Secret Records label, Blairally Vintage Arcade is a hidden gem of a beer bar tucked behind the brewery on Blair Boulevard in Eugene, Oregon. This spacious barcade, which is devoted to preserving, restoring, and sharing vintage gaming with the community, boasts one of the town's best tap lists, with selections from Oakshire Brewing, Hop Valley Brewing, and of course, Ninkasi, among many others.

WHY IT'S GREAT: Blairally offers craft beer without any fluff. Practically a dive bar, these darkened digs are a gamer's heaven with some seriously rare machines, such as Space Mission 1976, Strikes and Spares 1977, and Flash Gordon 1980. If, like me, you're more into the brews than the scores, you are bound to find a fellow craft beer lover posted up by the taps. —Emily Hutto

DETAILS

Hours: 4 p.m.–2 a.m. Monday–Friday, 2 p.m.–2 a.m. Saturday–Sunday.
Address: 245 Blair Blvd., Eugene, OR
Web: blairally.com; facebook.com/blairallyarcade



Max's Taphouse

Baltimore, Maryland

In salty, pub-heavy Fell's Point, this taphouse was prolific before prolific was cool.

WHAT IT IS: The Fell's Point waterfront area of Baltimore has a long history of catering to thirsty seafaring types, including the odd pirate. Today, it caters more to tourists, another thirsty type, still offering more pubs per block than anywhere else in the city. I wager it also has more taps per block, propelled mainly by Max's Taphouse, an internationally known institution. These days it seems like every city has a place with fifty-plus fonts. Max's was pouring from seventy of them a decade ago and currently has 140 plus five cask handpulls standing at attention down the long bar like shiny Marines. When those get boring (they won't), there are said to be 1,200 bottles in the cellar.

WHY IT'S GREAT: Putting 140 beers on tap is easy compared to keeping them interesting. Max's succeeds on that count, with a strong mix of unusual, international craft beers in with the locals and regionals. Its cellar is driven partly by hosting two of the country's most undersung beer events: Max's Belgian Beer Fest in February and its Italian Beer Fest in July. Judging solely by quality, breadth, and rarity of the beers offered, the Belgian event is arguably better than any festival in Belgium. —Joe Stange

DETAILS

Hours: 11 a.m.–2 a.m. daily.
Address: 737 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD
Web: maxs.com



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Opposite» clockwise from top left: Co-owner and Head Brewer Murray Seaman pulls a pint at Infinity Brewing Company; tanks and barrels at Burlington Beer Co.; Citizen Cider fermentors and glasses; the taps at Queen City Brewery; a local focus on display at The Farmhouse Tap & Grill.

The New Burlington Beer Scene

Beer and travel writer **Heather Vandenengel** spent a few days in **Chittenden County, Vermont**, to learn what the new craft beer scene is brewing...

THE STORY OF VERMONT BEER

post-Prohibition can be traced to Burlington—more specifically, to the corner of College and St. Paul Streets, where homebrewer Greg Noonan and his then wife Nancy opened the *Vermont Pub and Brewery* in November 1988.

Nearly twenty-six years later, the pub still brews and sells pints of Noonan's original Burly Irish Ale and Bombay Grab IPA while a culture of craft beer has sprouted around it. In Burlington, breweries like *Magic Hat*, *Switchback*, and *Zero Gravity* have established the city as a beer destination, while another generation of brewers continues to write the story of Vermont beer.

Vermont Inspired

"We take so much passion and pride in making things with our hands up here," says Joe Lemnah, founder of *Burlington Beer Company*. "It's that New England spirit of, 'We can make it through any cold winter; it snows in April, no big deal, nothing to complain about; just scrape off the car, go into work, and make the best beer possible.'"

On a snowy day in April, Lemnah gave me a tour of his nearly open brewery and tasting room in a warehouse space in Williston, Vermont. Lemnah, born in Burlington and raised in nearby Essex, brewed professionally at Olde Saratoga Brewing Co., Dogfish Head, and Evolution Craft Brewing Co., while continuing to homebrew after hours and tweak recipes. He returned here to open his own brewery with his wife Beth Boyd Lemnah and partner Jake Durell.

His farmers' market, seasonally inspired beers such as Strawberry Cream Ale and Bumbleberry Saison, fermented with strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries, complement the lower-alcohol classic flagship offerings: a rich English-inspired brown ale, a rustic French-style farmhouse ale, a bright pale ale, and an easy drinking golden ale.

The 4,700-square-foot brewery, which houses a 15-barrel brewhouse, a small bar and taproom space, eight wooden barrels, and a ping-pong table, also offers plenty of room to grow: more tanks, more barrels, and more beer.

In South Burlington, *Infinity Brewing Company*, a new 7-barrel brewery founded by Murray Seaman and Glenn Cummings, also plans to take local and seasonal inspiration. When I stop by, I sample the Scotch Ale, Dubbel, red ale, and a saison while Cummings and his wife Ronalyn show me around the compact brewery and talk about future plans—like Cummings's hope to start a hop farm on ten acres of his land and to brew beer with Vermont-grown malt.

A New Kind of Industry

On Pine Street in Burlington's South End, a beer, cider, and chocolate and food hub is forming. First, a stop at a former U-Haul storage facility where *Citizen Cider*, founded in 2011 by Kris Nelson, Justin Heilenbach, and Bryan Holmes, opened a spacious new tasting room and production facility in April.

Nelson pours me eight samples of their ciders, which range from the refreshing flagship, Unified Press, made from a blend of about ten different varieties of Vermont-grown apples, to the Wit's Up, fermented with a Belgian yeast strain, to the Full Nelson, dry-hopped with Nelson Sauvin hops.

"Cider is in its infancy, and we're trying to grow with the direction that cider

PHOTOS BY TONY ACCURSO





Above» Founder and Head Brewer Joe Lemnah in the taproom of his brewery, Burlington Beer Company, in Williston.

is going,” says Nelson, referring to the relatively new market of American cider drinkers and makers.

Just a few minutes’ drive down the street from Citizen, Burlington’s beloved *Lake Champlain Chocolates* established *South End Kitchen*, a multi-use space including an education kitchen, a café, a bean-to-bar chocolate company called Blue Bandana, and the future space of a second brewery and tasting room for *Zero Gravity Craft Brewery*, which has been open inside the *American Flatbread* restaurant in downtown Burlington since 2004.

And in an industrial park across the street from South End Kitchen, *Queen City Brewery* will be pouring traditional beers such as an English-style porter and an Antwerp-style blonde ale when it opens in May, if all goes as planned. The brewery has an old-school vibe that harkens to the industrial past of Burlington and Pine Street, says Head Brew-

er Paul Hale, who founded Queen City with longtime homebrewing friends Paul Held, Phil Kaszuba, and Maarten van Ryckevorsel.

“There is this heritage. It may not be real pretty, but it is the heritage of Burlington. We’re just not an upscale craft beer place. There really is more of a gritty, underlying history here and we want to honor that.”

A 1963 photo of Burlington’s main drag of Church Street hangs on the wall in the tasting room, and resting high on top of the cold storage room is a 1951 Ford International truck named Ethyl. It certainly does feel industrial, with traditional beers to match.

Burlington’s Brooklyn

Across the Winooski River from Burlington, the 1.5-square-mile city of Winooski is, as locals will half-seriously tell you, the Brooklyn to Burlington’s Manhattan. A traffic circle plays town common, with a lineup of cozy and hip, yet unpretentious



A Little Farther Afield

With the second-most breweries per-capita in the country (62 breweries per 100,000 21-plus adults), Vermont is rich with craft beer destinations and breweries to tour. Here are five outside of Burlington to put on your road trip agenda.

Fiddlehead Brewing Co. Shelburne

Take a short and scenic drive from Burlington down Route 7 to fill up on Fiddlehead’s flagship IPA, then take your growler next door to pair with a wood-fired Neapolitan-style pizza from Folino’s.

Lost Nation Brewing Morrisville

The brewery and taproom in Morrisville serves flights, full-pours, and growlers to-go (the 4.5 percent ABV Gose is a local favorite, but it’s hard to go wrong with any) and offers a small but hearty menu of cheese and charcuterie, sandwiches, and soup.

Hill Farmstead Brewery Greensboro Bend

Hill Farmstead’s farmhouse ales, IPAs, and barrel-aged stouts have drawn recognition worldwide, and a visit to the tranquil brewery on the hill has become a pilgrimage for beer lovers. The lines to buy and taste beer may be long, but as many will profess, they are worth the wait.

Prohibition Pig/The Alchemist Waterbury

The town of Waterbury, home of Heady Topper, is its own beer destination. While The Alchemist brewery is not currently open to the public, you can find its beers and many other Vermont beers at superb beer bars such as the Prohibition Pig, the Blackback Pub & Flyshop, and The Reservoir.

Trapp Lager Brewery Stowe

Located on the Trapp Family Lodge mountain resort, the Trapp Lager Brewery is the perfect place to relax on the deck with a view of Mount Mansfield and a mug of Golden Helles or Dunkel Lager in hand.





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Top» Behind the bar at Citizen Cider in Burlington.
Above» Hill Farmstead Brewery's Edward on draft at The Farmhouse Tap & Grill.

restaurants and bars, such as *Misery Loves Company*, *The Monkey House*, and *Mulebar*, located around the perimeter.

Opened by the owners of Three Penny Taproom and The Mad Taco in Montpelier, Mulebar offers sixteen draft lines, which always include a cider, a non-alcoholic ginger soda, a house cocktail, a witbier, and a gose. Beyond that it's fair game, says bartender Paul Landry, with the frequently rotating drafts ranging from Allagash to Alesmith along with a small and expertly curated bottle selection and far above-average bar food.

The city now also has its own brewery—*Four Quarters Brewing*, which opened in March next to a motorcycle shop on the more residential West Canal Street. Brewer Brian Eckert will focus on American and Belgian-inspired ales such as a rustic farmhouse ale brewed with Vermont-grown white wine grapes and chamomile and a traditional Belgian abbey Patersbier fermented with wild yeast.

Vermont visitors can also make a beeline to *Winooski's Beverage Warehouse*, where a banner out front boasts of the largest beer

and wine selection in Vermont and helpful employees make recommendations and field phone calls about Heady Topper, delivered every Tuesday and Thursday.

Back to the Roots

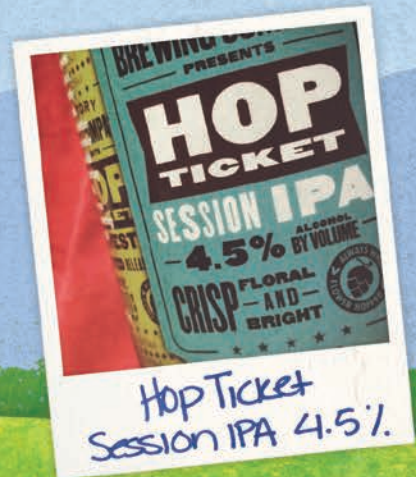
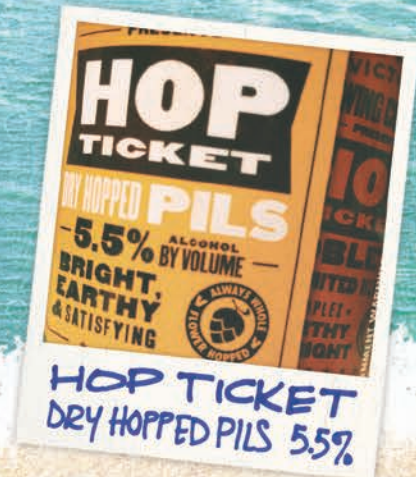
Finally, a beer trip to Burlington is not complete without a stop at *The Farmhouse Tap and Grill*. While open for only three years, the farm-to-table gastropub and beer bar feels like a downtown institution. “We try to be a showcase for the best of the best in Vermont and present those beers in conversation with the best beers from around the world,” says bar manager Jeff Baker.

They dedicate one third of their twenty-four draft lines to Vermont beers, says Baker, which has been easy to do with world-class selections from Morrisville's Lost Nation Brewing, Hill Farmstead, Zero Gravity, and beyond.

“It's been really incredible to see people who are willing to drive across the country to consume our beer; it's just wild,” says Baker of Vermont beer's allure. “Here, we consider it food: it's consumable, it's a handmade product from agricultural ingredients.”



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The Collaborator

On stage or over a brew kettle, professional musician and brewer **Kyle Hollingsworth** enjoys the spontaneity afforded by creative collaboration.

By Tom Wilmes

KYLE HOLLINGSWORTH IS WELL VERSED in the art of the sit in. The jazz-and-funk-centric keyboard player is known for his improvisational chops and often welcomes special guests to the stage with his bands, The String Cheese Incident and the Kyle Hollingsworth Band. He hosts an all-star funk jam with friend George Porter, Jr., a founding member of The Meters, each winter in Boulder, Colorado, where Kyle lives with his wife and young daughter and pops up regularly at local shows to sit in with friends.

He's also a multi-year veteran of Jam Cruise, a floating festival at sea, where he has established himself as something of an artist-at-large—jamming with everyone from folksy Nikki

Bluhm and the Gramblers to fusion-saxophonist Karl Denson and Nigerian musician Femi Kuti.

"Although our styles might be very different, we all speak the same language of music," Kyle says of how he approaches collaborating with fellow musicians. "We might hang out for a bit and find a few touch points that we have in common, then the important thing is to start with solid base and riff and explore on top of that foundation."

"It's all about balance, while allowing the freedom to be creative and not hesitating to take a risk," he says. "You have to leave the door open for the magic to come in."

Kyle takes the same approach with his brewing. Whether he's brewing in his backyard with buddy Bruce Payne and neighbor John Hernandez on their Ruby Street Brewing homebrew rig—a recent collective purchase—or "sitting in" with professional brewers to make a one-off batch or develop a new production beer, as he increasingly does, Kyle enjoys seeking out collaborative experiences that stoke his creativity and expand his brewing chops.

Most recently Kyle put his head together with hard-rock guitarist Kerri Kelli and the team at Stone Brewing Co. to create Kyle Hollingsworth/Keri Kelli/Stone Collective Distortion IPA. The beer, a Double IPA spiced with coriander and elderberry, is set for national release this spring as part of Stone's limited edition Collaboration Beers (see sidebar, page 31).

"It's not necessarily a beer that we would come up with on our own, but having three people involved in coming up with the concept and recipe really lends itself to a creative, collaborative effort that's truly a blend of brewing philosophies," says Stone Brewing's Brewmaster Mitch Steele. "It's also a neat way to bring in ingredients and procedures that we normally wouldn't use."

Two years ago, Kyle partnered with Boulder Beer Company to create Hoopla, a voluminous dry-hopped yet sessionable pale ale. He's also working with Ska Brewing Co. to create a collaborative beer

Collaboration Beers

As is inherent with most creative projects—and especially when collaborating with other brewers on a new recipe—there's an exciting element of the unknown that adds spice to an otherwise straightforward process. Collaboration breeds creativity.

This is the gestalt behind Stone Brewing Co.'s acclaimed series of Collaboration Beers, which pairs two guest brewers with the Stone Brewing's brew team to see what kind of magic they can make. Past examples include Aleman/Two Brothers/Stone DayMan Coffee IPA; Robert Masterson & Ryan Reschan/Rip Current/Stone R&R Coconut IPA; 10 Barrel/Blue-jacket/Stone Suede Imperial Porter; and—set for release this spring—Kyle Hollingsworth/Keri Kelli/Stone Collective Distortion IPA, brewed in collaboration with keyboardist and homebrewer Kyle Hollingsworth, hard-rock guitarist Keri Kelli, and Stone Brewing's Brewmaster Mitch Steele.

"We look at our [Collaboration Beers series] as an opportunity to give some exposure to smaller breweries and brewers that we think are doing great things," Mitch says. "We let the collaborators drive the recipe formulation and encourage them to bounce around any ideas that come to mind.

"It ends up being a really fun process that also helps us to keep our innovation and creativity flowing, especially when we're cranking out 40,000 barrels of Stone IPA every year."

The collaboration among Kyle, Keri, and Mitch began with a chain of emails. They landed on the IPA style pretty quickly, and Keri—best known for playing in Alice Cooper's band and as the owner of Aces & Ales beer bar in Las Vegas—insisted that "it has to be a double; it has to go to 11% ABV!," Kyle says.

With the base beer set, the two musicians thought about ways to add a signature riff. They decided to experiment with herb additions, and Mitch prepared a flight of Stone IPAs spiced with coriander, bugwort, rosemary, elderberry, chamomile, and other compounds commonly used in European beers before hops became the spice of choice.

They settled on additions of elderberry, which has an earthy quality, and coriander, which adds a bright citrus element.

"We weren't expecting to like it, but it was just wonderful," Mitch says.

In typical Stone Brewing style, they used one bittering hop—in this case, Nugget—with a massive flavoring that



Above:
A flight of Stone IPAs dosed with various spices.

Below:
Hollingsworth and co-collaborator Keri Kelli admire their work.

included Calypso and Comet, along with the spice additions. They decided to dry-hop the beer with Vic's Secret, a relatively new hop strain from Australia.

Munich malt and Simpsons Golden Naked Oats provided the fermentables along with a biscuit, oatmeal-type character that helps to smooth out the beer, says Mitch.

The finished brew is balanced by a strong malt complexity, he says, "but really the highlight is the blend of coriander and elderberry with Vic's Secret hops. Overall, there's a spicy, citrusy, herbal thing going on that's really pleasant and well blended."

In true rock 'n' roll fashion, the trio held a jam session in the brewery with other Stone brewers and staff after they finished up their brew session.



MAKE IT

Kyle's Birthday Brew

ALL-GRAIN

I am going for a Farmhouse style here á la Boulevard Tank 7. The hops profile is a work in progress. I've never tried corn before so I'm kind of excited to see what that brings.

OG: 1.071
FG: 1.010
IBUs: 38
ABV: 8%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

0.66 pounds Wheat, Flaked
10.5 pounds Pale Malt (2-Row)
4.5 pounds Wheat Malt
0.66 pounds Corn, Flaked

HOP SCHEDULE

0.66 ounces Falconer's Flight
(Magnum alt) at 60 minutes
0.66 ounces Falconer's Flight
(Simcoe alt) at 20 minutes
0.5 ounces Centennial (Amarillo alt)
at 15 minutes
1 ounce Amarillo at dry hop (14 days)

DIRECTIONS

Mash for 75 minutes at 150°F (65°C).
Boil for 60 minutes.

YEAST

American Farmhouse Blend (Platinum Series) (White Lab #670) Yeast-Ale

NOTES ON KYLE'S RECIPE FROM STEVEN PAUWELS (BOULEVARD BREWMASTER / CREATOR OF TANK 7)

A recipe by Kyle Hollingsworth? Now you've got me all star struck! I haven't tried this yeast blend, but I like saisons with a bit of Brett funk. Saison with a good portion of Amarillo dry hop and Brett sounds great to me.

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless otherwise noted.





Clockwise from left:

Hollingsworth on keys for a jam session held after brew day at Stone Brewing Co.

Stone Brewmaster Mitch Steele and Kelli, riffing.

An audience of Stone Brewing Co. staff enjoys the impromptu tunes.



to help commemorate a run of shows in southwestern Colorado and his new solo album, which is slated for a fall release.

"I love learning from the masters and being part of the creative process with these guys and seeing how their minds work," Kyle says. "I've definitely taken some of their tricks to my homebrew setup."

Taking a cue from his experience with Stone Brewing, Kyle has started using less bittering hops in the boil in favor of a massive hop addition in the whirlpool for an added flavor boost with lots of aroma. Most recently, he brewed a Belgian-style Trippel with his homebrewing buddies in honor of his birthday and spiced it with

additions of coriander and orange peel. Not all of his recipes are as successful as others, but each teaches him something new about the brewing process and, most often, there's a payoff for taking a risk.

"I'm very happy with the beers I make, but I enjoy the process more—particularly the creativity and experimentation," Kyle says.

"Sometimes I'll crack open one of my homebrews with a buddy and they'll say, 'That's awesome, Dude, but you should really stick to playing music.' That's why I'm glad to work with the pros."



GRAB LIFE BY THE BOULDER

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The Exhibitors

Brandon Skall and **Jeff Hancock**, former DJs, opened DC Brau Brewing Company, Washington, DC's first packaging brewery in almost sixty years and have seen exponential growth in their production.

By Emily Hutto
Photos by Joshua Scott

"MUSIC IS AN INTEGRAL part of everything we do here," says Brandon Skall, a co-owner at DC Brau Brewing Company in Washington, D.C. "The first step of the day is plugging the iPod into the sound system—it unfolds from there."

Brandon Skall and Jeff Hancock, both drum and bass DJs in their former lives, met when Skall was DJing at a house party. "I had intentions to open a brewery; Jeff had been a brewer for eight years, most recently at Flying Dog Brewery [in Frederick, Maryland]. It made sense."

The duo opened DC Brau in 2011, making it the District of Columbia's first packaging brewery since 1956. They have since crafted about sixty different beers. "We brew a lot because we get bored a lot," Skall jokes. The brewing process can get mundane, he says, "a lot like writing music. You copy and paste a lot . . . but it's part of the creative process, part of the greater goal."

DC Brau has five flagship beers and usually two or three seasonals at any given time. To alleviate the "boredom," about twice a month they create a "crazy one-off beer" like the 100 IBU Alpha Domina Mellis that was brewed with thirty pounds of local wildflower honey from Burnside Farms in Haymarket, Virginia, in each 15-barrel batch.

"We use local honey whenever we can," Skall says. The brewery would also use more local hops if they could. However, there isn't

a lot of local hop product available. "Hops are divided already among brewers. There are enough for maybe one brew a year."

On top of limited hop availability, another challenge of DC Brau's location is the lack of political decision-making power that the District of Columbia's residents have. "We exist in a territory where we pay more taxes than most states, but don't have much say on how [government money] is spent. We don't vote politicians into office. It's annoying and discrediting that we

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Liner Notes

DC Brau brews + the tunes that inspired them

The Corruption + "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" (The Animals)

The Corruption IPA is DC Brau's take on a Pacific Northwest IPA, brewed with Pale 2-row, C-10, Honey, and Victory malts and hopped with Columbus hops. This "nearly double" IPA has a prominent malt base with an assertive hop presence and a dank, resinous bitterness that's a lot like the bluesy, gritty sound of this rock song circa 1965.

El Hefe Speaks! + "El Jefe Speaks" (Clutch)

El Hefe Speaks! was crafted in collaboration with John Solomon and Chris Frashier, who brewed together at Old Dominion Brewing Company in Ashburn, Virginia, in the mid-nineties. The song "El Jefe Speaks" and the brewery both got the spotlight around the same time. This traditionally brewed German-style Hefeweizen can cool down the intensity of this grunge metal jam.

On the Wings of Armageddon + "Lament for the Aurochs" (The Sword)

Big hops meet heavy metal. This imperial IPA hits the palate subtly with citrus and biscuit notes and then builds in hop intensity, much like the deceptively smooth, heady sound of "Lament for the Aurochs."

Everyday Junglist + "Mutant Revisted" (DJ Trace)

Here's an American pale ale hopped with Chinook and Mosaic hops, resulting in exotic flavors of grapefruit and clementine. "Mutant Revisted," a pioneer of drum and bass music, is a lot like the beer—bright and effervescent.

The Rider + "I Know You Rider" (various artists)

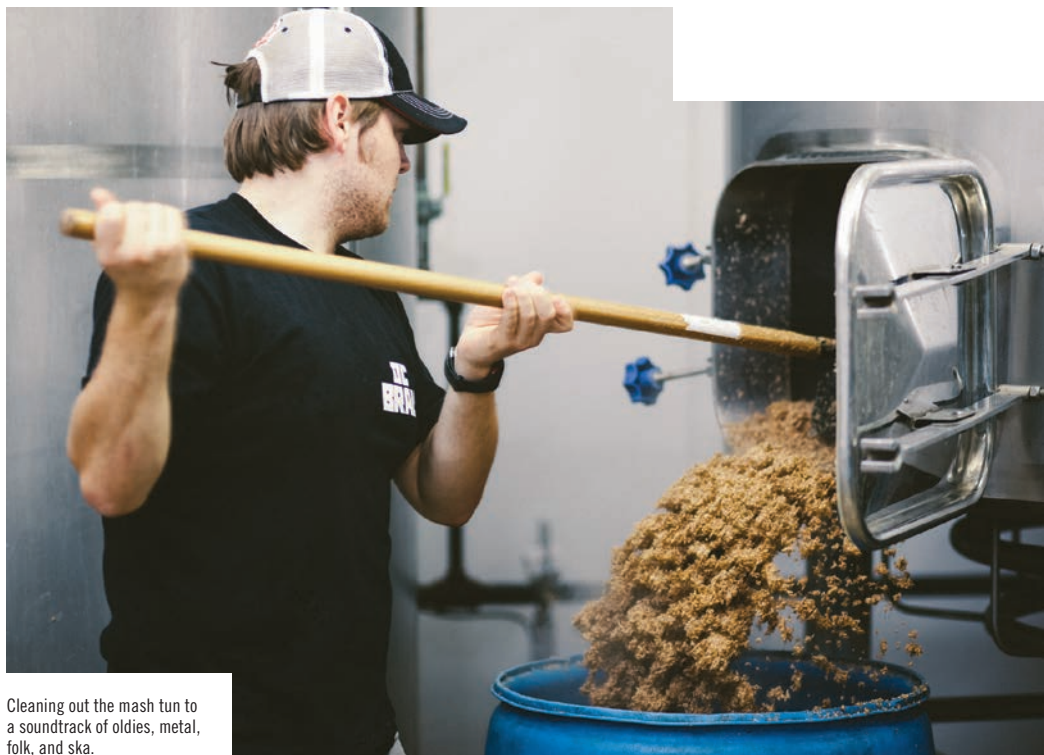
The original 1930s folk song "I Know You Rider" has been adapted by Bob Coltman, Janis Joplin, James Taylor, and The Grateful Dead, among many others. DC Brau's website describes this pairing best: "Just like this relic of American folklore, The Rider has done its share of wandering. This West Coast red has been around the world. It represents the nomadic combination of our house Belgian yeast strain mixed with the West Coast giant Simcoe hop and an anonymous experimental variety that will forever remain nameless, as do the men who rode those rails so long ago."

Availability

Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Virginia

On the Web

dcbrau.com



Cleaning out the mash tun to a soundtrack of oldies, metal, folk, and ska.

don't have the same sort of rights as a business five miles down the road."

But despite geographic challenges, Skall and Hancock can't imagine DC Brau located anywhere else. "This is where we grew up," Skall says. "We saw a gap in the market that became an entry point for our brand."

That brand is rooted in a sense of place. "It took us about two seconds to decide on the name DC Brau. *Brau* or *brauen* is the traditional German verb for *to brew*," Skall says. "DC Brau sounded sort of comic, localized, and communicative of our local mission."

In large part, that local mission is fueled by the community of Skall's and Hancock's artist friends who have congregated at the brewery. Perhaps one of the most aesthetically pleasing breweries around, DC Brau's walls are adorned with murals and paintings. It all started with their friends at ArtWhino gallery who were hosting Pixel Pancho, a graffiti artist from Italy who was looking for a wall to paint.

"We've really got some large spaces, so we offered up a wall for him to paint and then started inviting artists to come fill our walls. [Our brewery] has become a space for our friends who are artists to come and express themselves."

Skall's favorite art installation at DC Brau is a painting by James Walker of "two ferocious wolves that are really just domesticated border collies playing with tennis balls in his backyard." His dog Pig Rabbit, a French bulldog–Boston-terrier mix, is also hidden among the images on the brewery's walls.

Since its opening, DC Brau has made a production jump from 1,600 to 16,000 barrels of beer each year. Surrounded by the work of friends, with eclectic playlists booming in the background, this company is cranking out the beer, exponentially. There's no telling what music might be playing—on any given day, it could be anything from sixties soul to aggressive metal—and there's no telling what they're going to brew next.





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The Producers

Ninkasi Brewing Company's **Jamie Floyd, Nikos Ridge, and James Book** are brewing award-winning beers and cultivating a music scene in support of culture, community, and the uniqueness of each individual and his/her passions—while evoking as much enjoyment as possible along the way ...

By Emily Hutto

JAMES BOOK OFTEN SAYS that he moved to Eugene, Oregon, to start a family and start brewing beer. Twenty years a touring musician out of Southern California, Book played bass and cowrote songs for The Flys, an alterna-rock, retro-sounding nineties band known for its top-five hit "Got You (Where I Want You)." Book joined the team at Ninkasi Brewing Company in 2009, bringing his record label Top Secret Records with him.

When Book joined Cofounders Nikos Ridge and Jamie Floyd, Ninkasi—named after the Sumerian goddess of fermentation—had been making beer since 2006. The brewery got started on a 15-barrel system in a leased space inside of a German restaurant in the nearby town of Springfield.

Left
From left to right:
Cofounders Jamie Floyd
and Nikos Ridge and VP of
Marketing James Book

Below
Washington's Old Bear
Mountain plays on the
Ninkasi patio during the
2013 String Off event.



It moved to its current location in Eugene's funky Whiteaker neighborhood in 2007.

In its first few years, Ninkasi built its reputation with hops, presenting the market with a robust lineup of ales, including the 60 IBU Believer Double Red ale, brewed with Centennial and Summit hops, and the 100 IBU Tricerahops Double IPA, brewed with Chinook, Cascade, Summit, Centennial, and Palisade hops. The brewery's flagship Total Domination IPA abounds with citrusy, floral hops.

Although the Ninkasi beer lineup is characteristically bold and hoppy, the brewery has demonstrated its versatility with beers like Spring Reign, an English-style session beer, and the Pravda Bohemian Pils, a spicy, medium-bodied pilsner. True to Ninkasi's signature brewing style, both beers showcase the bright hops varieties with which they are brewed—Spring Reign with Santiam, Simcoe, and Ahtanum hops and Pravda with noble Saaz hops.

Beer + Music

Ninkasi is known both for crafting a vibrant profile of beers and for cultivating a music community with its many partner artists. Book and crew built a music studio at the Blairally Vintage Arcade behind the brewery. It was at this location that Top Secret Records produced the album *Oregonisms* by Volifonix, the *Sleep/Attack* vinyl album by Rare Monk, and both of the Ninkasi *Better Living Compilations*, among many others. Ninkasi sponsors several of Top Secret Records' artists, sending them on tour with beer and swag to share.

In 2008, Ninkasi launched the elimination-style Last Band Standing competition for Northwest musicians in which the winning band scored studio time with



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Liner Notes

Ninkasi brews + the bands that pair well with them

Total Domination IPA + Strange Vine

The floral, citrusy hops found in Ninkasi's Total Domination IPA are similar to this earthy, energetic band—bold and born in the Northwest. Strange Vine, a band from California's Sierra Nevada Mountains, fuses blues, psychedelic, and traditional American rock that's complex yet balanced, just like Total Domination.

Maiden In The Shade + Shook Twins

The summer seasonal Maiden In The Shade, a sessionable IPA for just about any occasion, is easy and breezy like the Portland, Oregon-dwelling identical twin duo Shook Twins, known for a quirky folk sound.

Oatis Oatmeal Stout + Vokab Kompany

A lot like the flavors in the Oatis Oatmeal Stout, the sound of San Diego's Vokab Kompany is multi-layered and robust, yet creamy soft. The group consists of two MC/singers backed by their four-piece band, including bass, drums, and a violin that combine to make smooth, sometimes dreamy, songs.

Believer Double Red Ale + Rare Monk

Liken the solid malt backbone of a beer to a band's bass and a plentiful presence of hops to a band's instruments and vocals, and you've got the Believer Double Red Ale and Rare Monk, a Portland, Oregon-based experimental indie rock band.

Tricerahops Double IPA + Volifonix

Ninkasi describes Tricerahops as "fiercely flavorful and guaranteed to satisfy." The same could be said about Volinix, the psychedelic funk-rock band out of Eugene, Oregon.

Availability

Alaska, British Columbia, California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington

On the Web

ninkasibrewing.com

Above left

Ninkasi's cofounders and VP of Marketing toast to great beer and great music.

Above right

Ninkasi's new "2.0" brewhouse will be home to nine combination brightening/fermentation tanks that are set and ready to help produce more lagers.

Top Secret Records. What started as a shindig for neighborly competition has become one of the brewery's largest events, with different shows in six more cities—Bellingham, Spokane, Boise, Missoula, Bend, and Ashland.

Another capstone Ninkasi event that exponentially grew from small beginnings is The Whiteaker Block Party, an annual beer and music festival that keeps taking up more and more of Van Buren and surrounding streets. This year's block party, scheduled for August 2 and expected to draw a crowd of about 7,500, will have twelve stages and more than fifty live performances by Top Secrets Record artists and friends of the brewery.

Last year, Top Secret Records recorded and pressed a vinyl album for Black Beast Revival, a "dark, sexy rock and roll" band out of Bellingham, Washington; sponsored vinyl pressing for Portland bands Rare Monk and Shook Twins; and sponsored the north Portland artist Marv Ellis. All of these bands played Ninkasi-sponsored music showcases at SXSW.

For Book and the rest of the Ninkasi crew, the question was never why develop a recording studio alongside a brewery, it was *Why not?* The musical footprint that Ninkasi has created has been a natural by-product of the owners' passions, Book says. "A brand is just its people . . . and for our people, [music] is just what we're into."

More Brewing Ahead

This year, that brand footprint is expanding across the street to a second brewing facility, attached to the original building via a beer bridge that crosses over Blair Boulevard. Ninkasi 2.0 will include a new administration building, a pilot brewing system for recipe development and experimental batches, a rock-climbing wall, and a new music studio with a vintage console, to create "old school sound, in music speak."

The pilot system, Book says, will yield a much more immersive beer and music experience. "When bands come in, we give them the brewery tour and sample beers. To be able to bring them into the brewing process for even one batch is next-level for engaging them. It gives them a sense of ownership on the beers, and there's a lot of time to socialize while you're waiting for the beers to boil."

And boil they will. The new brewery will be home to nine combination brightening/fermentation tanks that are set and ready to help produce more beer, specifically lagers. The brewery launched a lager program a few years back, won a gold medal at the Great American Beer Festival for its Bohemian Pilsner in 2013, and recently announced that it will now make lagers year-round.

Also in store for Ninkasi is a redefinition of the idiom "the sky is the limit." This year they plan to launch yeast into orbit. "We are literally making space beer," Book jokes. "We are all about taking a sideways approach to our craft and seeing where those roads can lead."



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Handpicked

Boulevard Brewing Co.'s Brewmaster **Steven Pauwels** is responsible for one of the most popular saisons in the United States. Here, he handpicks his dream six-pack of world-class beers.

STEVEN PAUWELS OF BOULEVARD

Brewing Co. in Kansas City, Missouri, began a presentation about saisons at this year's Big Beers, Belgians, and Barleywines festival saying, "I grew up in Belgium. You think, *okay this guy from Belgium knows everything about saisons*. Well, actually there's a bit of a language barrier. . . . The saison beers are brewed in the French region [of Belgium], and my parents don't even speak French."

The transplanted brewmaster has degrees in biochemical engineering from KaHo Sint-Lieven and experience brewing at Brouwerij Krugar, Domus brewpub, and Brouwerij Riva. "It was only when I came back to the United States that saisons [appeared on] my radar screen," he says.

Now Pauwels is responsible for one of the most popular saisons in the United States, Boulevard's Tank 7 Farmhouse Ale. Dry-hopped with a healthy dose of Amarillo hops and fermented with a Belgian

yeast strain, Tank 7 satisfies America's cravings both for hops and for funky farmhouse ale—as would this dream six-pack, handpicked by Pauwels himself.

Orval Trappist Ale

Too many times have I found myself sitting at a bar with another brewer ordering a last beer, and it's always an Orval Trappist Ale. Why? Because Orval is like Kinder Chocolate: it looks delicious, the toy inside is always different, and it never disappoints. Orval is the Holy Grail that every brewer would like to make. And I am just jealous that they only have to brew one beer and can give it all their attention.

Duvel

Duvel is another world-class beer that other brewers often try to copy but never succeed. It's elegant and complex, flavorful yet very drinkable. Drinking a Duvel takes me back to Belgium.

BILLY DAVIS

Anyway, we were going out to, uh, the, uh, you know, thing, and all, and when we got there, well, uh, the dude was like-“whoa man! I mean, and we were all, uh, you know- whoa! And stuff, and when I said to him, like you know, hey man and all, they, I mean he, was all “what?” and stuff- and I just told him what you said and all, and they were all man- “not cool dude?”, but whatever- so uh, we split and went back to my lair and just hung out and whatever, but the whole thing was, like, just Such a bummer and all but you know, it was cool and stuff, but you just gotta, you know, about the dude, like, it’s cool and you know, but what’s up with than “blah blah blah”? Whatzit got to do with beer and all? I mean, really, it’s never... There I was, sweaty and strung out, holed up for the third day in a cheap hotel with a genuine Juanita on my mind. The lamb was more than a way of life. It had a smell, and it stunk like hops. Juanita shrieked something about a toba gran on queso en mota para la película...”, but I wasn’t listening. For now I was focused on the Undercover Ale, and how it would taste later while she cooled out in the soon to be locked shed out back of Paradise where the turkey farmers still run. Ale is thicker than even blood. I already knew this and I also knew that the birds were not far behind and that ever at their distance they could smell everything and would never let up on me. Flip the switch, here come the bastards... Here they come... “And you’re full of ragwater bitters and blue ruin and you’re spilling out on the edge to cry, you know I’ll listen.” These are the words of our favorite Sonoma songsmith. They describe a cocktail of romantic despair wrapped in flock wall paper and marinated in a soulful yearning. On the rocks. With a twist. We’ve all been there. The beer in the bottle, however, is none of that. So maybe it’s a crappy name for the beer but we liked it, and so whatever. It’s always better to be happy than right. Mostly, anyways. Whatever. Forget it. Never mind... It was December 18th. The brewmaster looked down at his calendar and on a going forward basis, things looked kind’a bleak. Five shopping days left, then the nightmare of shutting down production after the 25th with a chain store ad coming up in January. There’d be the in-laws for the holidays followed by inventory on the 30th and the inevitable hangover on the 1st. There’ll be the calls from creditors while business is slow in January followed by the horrors of the year-end financials. There would, of course be Christmas, the Super Bowl and Fathers Day, all followed up by the tyranny of tax time. “so”, he thought, “what to do...?” Make a BIG beer recipe...? The room was quiet filled with the sound of the mash tun and as he scratched out the detailed of the malt bill and hopping he felt a joy and hope in the act of creation now engaged. Beer is hope, if you comprehend it’s living soul. Beer is joy in it’s apprehension and becoming... The original derivation of the word 'Oktoberfest' was actually the phrase, 'Ach!, Tuber Fest!' This antiquious expression refers back to the Dark Ages reign of Sir Loin of Boef, during which there existed a brisk European trade in captured Irish slaves. The prevailing Germanic lords imported Irishmen to work in their central European potato plantations. These Irish slaves were notorious for their endurance in drinking festivals under the new moon and during the potato harvest. They would brew up huge batches of a unique fermented alcoholic Potato beer. The Irishmen eventually introduced their German masters to this unusual beer-like beverage. The earliest parties centered around this brew, hence the term 'Tuber-fest'. The slaves were finally freed during the potato wars of 1252 and 1257. Years later malted barley was substituted for the spuds and old and, well, the rest is history. Honest... Those among you who have visited a brewery already know. Those who have not can not imagine. It is said that it takes a lot of beer to make great wine. What then does it take a lot of to make great beer? Answer: Human flesh, and lots of it. Not in the beer, of course, but on the blisteringly hot sides of the whirlpool tank, or on the spinning shaft of a pump head. If you should see one of our club footed, three-fingered, cycloptic albino brewers on the street, you might be inclined to give them a quarter. But don't! These individuals are highly paid professionals. Masters of their craft, and committed to their trade with little or no regard for their own personal safety or physical appearance. Beer is a cruel master. Masters are cruel, and beer is no exception. Just don't picture their twisted forms as you enjoy their fine ales... Leaning back on the restored Scrollarian vendta tera, she looked on the other guest the prevarian eye. She spoke now only in pernicious circularity. Roundly, he gave her the eye right back and she replied it perspirally. “Eat it!” he barked. Eying the eye, she allowed a rivulet of spittle to fall languid from her lip. “Why?” he asked again, this time repeatedly. “Why, why do you mock me? Have I not been the idiom to which I am suited? Have I not swerved faithfully?” A pall fell over them and then it fell over them again. “Again, why?”, he asked again. “Again.” she repeated with a touch of riparian ennui. “Give me the eye, now!” “Now?” “Now?” “When?” “What?” “Huh?”... On and on and on it went. What does it all have to do with beer? Huh!? Who?... Having downed his fourth Imperial Stout of the day, the wild eyed chortan from Oldostogniaky belched and hollered for the Czarina to enter his chamber and bend herself to his will. The economy was a wreck and revolt was just around the corner. Nicky the Czar dude was off playing soldier like any pale nobleman with a hemorrhagic skin condition would. Such were the final days of the old empire. Reactionary, decadent, sputnik, stroganoff, weird, and drunk. But even as the proletariat countryside labored under inhuman conditions and the threat of being sent to a futile war in the east they wisely took the time to slam back an Imperial Stout or two. After all, life can be a real “suka”, as they said in the old country. Big, black, bourgeois, bolshoy, belligerent, buxom, and scary, this is our version of the chaotic end of an era in a bottle... Well, we all sat there a while and stared at the eyeball on the bar and argued about what it meant. The eyeball, for its part was phlegmatic and offered nothing. An-other round was ordered and we agreed that sometimes an eyeball is just an eyeball. But now there was the matter of the hairball. Matted and moist, almost dripping, it looked back at us from the far side of the eyeball. The hairball ordered a hi-ball and the drunks at the other end of the bar got up and left. A woman dressed in a flimsy bernouie appeared at the dorr to the bar and told us that she had a pizza for ‘Harry’. Fuzzily she looked at the eyeball. The eyeball said some-thing softly to the hairball and blinked lovingly. The hairball swooned. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. What we knew that this truly was the Eye of the Hairball... And maybe it really was the eye, the one true love, the ‘soive de la amour:con supe un vie’ of the hairball, but no one would ever know for sure because as we all sat there staring in horror, one of the drunks at the end of the bar had returned and in his stupor mistook the Eyeball for a martini onion popping it into his mouth and chomping down squirted the vitreous humor onto the bar through his missing front teeth. We gasped and looked down at the unimaginable grief of the Hairball expecting the worst but instead the Hairball lathered moistly down the bar towards the drunk who picked it up and placed it over a thin spot on the crown of his head and together they beamed and we realized that love will find a way, that the heart wants what it wants and that vitreous humor is thicker than vermouth. Go figure... We at the Lagunitas Brewing Co. hope you enjoy this genuinely handmade ale. A lot hard work and enthusiasm go into every aspect of brewing this Mondo Ultra Mega Super Premium Ale. From building the brewery itself to putting the cap on each and every bottle, virtually every step was done by hand. Thanks for your trust, and as always: Think Globally, Drink Locally!...Well, well, well. The head brewer stood opposite the massive brewing vessels that were his to command. His mind raced through the possibilities. What is the temperature of the malt in the grist case overhead? Was the hot liquor tank up to temp? Would the ambient temperature affect the final mash temperature? Should he compensate for the delta temp by running a little higher mash-in temperature? A single degree in either direction would have a life changing effect on both the brewer and the brewee. The beer could be too sweet if a degree high, or too mild and dry if a niggling degree too low. The character of the future beer that this batch would be hung in the balance. The brewer drew a bead on the temp-probe, the mash tun waited, and the world held its breath...



Birificio del Ducato La Luna Rossa

I am very impressed with the quality of beers that are being brewed in Italy. I wanted to add an Italian beer to the list, and it was a very difficult decision. I met Giovanni Campari, the brewmaster of Birificio del Ducato a couple of years ago. He is very passionate just as you'd expect an Italian brewer to be, and La Luna Rossa is a very well thought out, complex sour beer with subtle nuances.

Ca l'Arenys Guineu Riner

Dann Paquette from Pretty Things put a Guineu Riner in my hand years ago after an event in Boston. I was blown away that a 2.5 percent ABV beer could be so flavorful. This beer started the search to make flavorful lower alcohol beers.

Sierra Nevada Pale Ale

Another staple from a brewery that I admire, Sierra Nevada Pale Ale is incredibly consistent and is one of my go-to beers when I travel. A lot of brewers make pale ale, but nobody has put in so much energy to continuously improve their beer.

Blind Tiger Brewery Maibock

A lager beer has to be part of the list, and Blind Tiger's Maibock is the one. Blind Tiger Brewery is a brewpub in Topeka, Kansas, that makes a killer Maibock each year. It's very malty, full-bodied, and has more hops than the rest of their brews. John Dean, the brewmaster, is a very talented guy who brews great beers, and his Maibock is definitely his masterpiece.



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Fire up the grill and chill the beer. Culinarian **Sara Dumford** takes us into summer with five recipes that feature craft beer in a meal of mouthwatering dishes from appetizers to dessert.



Crisp and tart Quick Sour Beer Pickled Vegetables are a great start to a backyard barbeque that includes tangy Porter Braised and Grilled Baby Back Ribs.



Pair Rustic Wheat Grain Salad with shrimp grilled with Peach Pale Ale Barbeque Sauce for a light yet hearty go-to summer meal.



Quick Sour Beer Pickled Vegetables

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Total time: 2½ hours
Serves: 6–8 as a snack with beer

Vegetables

2 medium carrots, cut into 4" sticks, ¼" wide
 8 ounces pickling cucumbers, cut into 6 wedges lengthwise
 1 red pepper, cut into 4" strips, ¼" wide
 1 yellow pepper, cut into 4" strips, ¼" wide

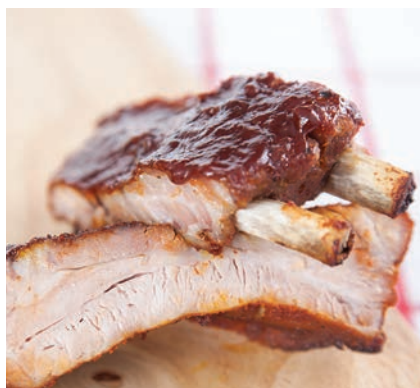
Pickling liquid

2 cups sour beer
 ½ cup white wine vinegar
 3 tablespoons sugar
 1 tablespoon salt (Pickling salt is best, but kosher salt will work.*)
 2 tablespoons mustard seed (a mix of black and yellow is nice)
 2 teaspoons coriander seeds
 1 teaspoon black peppercorn
 2 whole bay leaves
 4 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
 Pinch of crushed red pepper

Place the cut vegetables into a heat-proof bowl. Separately, combine the pickling liquid ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring the liquid to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Simmer for 5 minutes to dissolve the sugar and salt. Pour the hot liquid over the vegetables and stir. Chill the vegetables for at least 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve. Store leftovers in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

**Kosher or iodized salt may turn the brining liquid cloudy.*

Beer suggestions: The Bruery (Placencia, California) Sour in the Rye



Porter Braised and Grilled Baby Back Ribs

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Total time: 2 hours
Serves: 4

Rib rub

1 tablespoon chili powder
 2 teaspoons garlic powder
 1 teaspoon ground mustard
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1 teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon pepper
 ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
 1 tablespoon brown sugar

1 full rack baby back ribs (about 4 pounds), silver skin removed
 12 ounces porter beer
 Barbeque sauce

Combine the rub ingredients in a small bowl. Rub the ribs thoroughly with the mixture (you may not need all the rub for this recipe). Wrap the ribs in plastic and place them in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours and up to one day.

Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Remove the ribs from the plastic and place them in a roasting pan, bone-side down.

In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the porter to a simmer being careful not to let it boil over. Pour the beer around the ribs. Seal the roasting pan tightly with foil. Braise the ribs in the beer for 1 hour and 45 minutes, or until tender. Remove the ribs to a platter and pour the beer and accumulated pan juices into a saucepan. Simmer over low heat to reduce the sauce. Add ¼ cup of your favorite barbeque sauce to the mixture and stir to combine.

Heat your grill or broiler to medium-high. Brush the ribs with the reduced sauce and grill or broil the ribs until the sauce

is brown and bubbly, about 3 minutes per side. Remove the ribs from the grill or broiler and brush them with additional sauce. Cut into individual ribs and serve.

Beer suggestions: Deschutes Brewery (Bend, Oregon) Black Butte Porter, Odell Brewing Company (Fort Collins, Colorado) 90 Shilling, Kona Brewing Company (Kailua-Kona, Hawaii) Pipeline Porter

Peach Pale Ale Barbeque Sauce

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Total time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 cups

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 ½ medium sweet onion, finely chopped
 1 teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon black pepper
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 pound peaches, peeled, pitted, and cut into 1" pieces
 2 tablespoons peach preserves
 ½ teaspoon ground ginger
 12 ounces pale ale
 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 ½ cup ketchup
 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
 ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
 ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
 1 teaspoon paprika

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, salt, and pepper and stir, cooking for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Add the peaches, peach preserves, and ginger and stir to combine. Pour the pale ale over the peaches. Add all the remaining ingredients and stir vigorously to mix together. Simmer, uncovered, over medium heat for 45 minutes until peaches are tender and flavors are well combined.

Remove from the heat and let cool. Puree the sauce in a blender. Strain through a sieve, pressing on the solids to release as much liquid as possible. Store in a tightly covered container for up to 7 days. This sauce is delicious with grilled shrimp, salmon, or chicken.

Beer suggestions: Great Lakes Brewing Company (Cleveland, Ohio) Burning River Pale Ale, Ska Brewing (Durango, Colorado) Euphoria Pale Ale, Anchor (San Francisco, California) Liberty Ale

Rustic Wheat Grain (Farro) Salad

Farro is an ancient grain with a nutty flavor and hints of cinnamon that stands up well to beer dishes.

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Total time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Serves: 4–6 as a side dish with grilled chicken; serves 2–3 as a main dish

1 cup farro
2½ cups wheat beer
2 bay leaves
1 clove garlic, peeled and smashed
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Vinaigrette

1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons fresh parsley, chopped
2 teaspoons honey
¼ cup olive oil
Pinch of salt
Pepper

3–4 radishes, ends trimmed, sliced thinly
1 cup mixed color cherry tomatoes, sliced in half lengthwise
2 tablespoons chives, minced
¼ cup pepitas, toasted and lightly salted

Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Combine the farro, wheat beer, bay leaves, garlic, and salt in a deep ovenproof baking dish or Dutch oven. Cover tightly with foil. Place in the center of the oven. Bake until the beer is absorbed and the grains are tender, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Remove from the oven, discard the bay leaves and garlic, and cool to room temperature.

For the vinaigrette, combine the lemon juice, parsley, and honey in a small mixing bowl. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil whisking continuously to make a light vinaigrette. Season with salt and pepper.

Pour the vinaigrette over the cooked and cooled farro and stir to combine. Add the radishes, cherry tomatoes, and chives, and gently combine. Place the salad on a serving platter and sprinkle the pepitas on top.

Beer suggestions: Goose Island Brewery (Chicago, Illinois) 312, Ithaca Beer Company (Ithaca, New York) White Gold, 3 Floyds Brewing Company (Munster, Indiana) Gumballhead



Bourbon-Barrel-Aged Stout Fruit Crumble

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Total time: 65 minutes

Serves: 6

Fruit filling

4 cups mixed summer berries (raspberries, blueberries, quartered strawberries, blackberries)
1 tablespoon cornstarch
2 tablespoons bourbon-barrel-aged stout
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
Pinch of salt

Heat oven to 375°F (190°C). Wash the fruit and place it in a mixing bowl. Add the cornstarch, beer, sugar, spices, and salt,

and stir to coat. Pour the fruit filling into an 8" x 8" baking dish.

Crumble

½ cup flour
1 cup rolled oats (not quick cooking)
½ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces
½ cup chopped pecans (optional)

Combine the flour, oats, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a mixing bowl. Add the butter chunks and knead butter into dry ingredients until it comes together in clumps. Fold the nuts into the mixture.

Crumble the topping over the fruit, evenly distributing it across the dish. Bake for 45–50 minutes until nicely browned and bubbly. Cool slightly.

Sauce

12 ounces bourbon-barrel-aged stout
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon butter

Pour the beer into a medium saucepan. Add the sugar and stir to combine. Over medium heat, bring to a simmer and cook, stirring to reduce the liquid by half. Remove from the heat, add the butter, stirring until it melts. Cool slightly. Serve the crumble warm with ice cream and sauce.

Beer suggestions: Anderson Valley Brewery (Boonville, California) Bourbon Barrel Aged Stout, Elevation Beer Co. (Poncha Springs, Colorado) Oil Man Bourbon Barrel-aged Stout, Great Divide Brewing Co. (Denver, Colorado) Yeti 



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Cellaring Dos and Don'ts

When it comes to aging vintage beer, **Patrick Dawson** has literally written the book. As author of *Vintage Beer, A Taster's Guide To Brews That Improve Over Time*, he's dug deep into a style-by-style guide on what to age, why, and for how long. **Emily Hutto** gets the scoop on his do's and don'ts, which, naturally, are rules that were made to be broken...

DESPITE EXPERT PREDICTIONS, beers always seem to surprise us with what they can do in their old age. That's the beauty, and the mystery, of fermentation science. Here are some of those surprises and exceptions.

Do cellar beer with high amounts of residual malt sugar...

After a beer's primary fermentation, the more sugar left behind, the better that beer will age. Dawson calls those residual sugars "oxygen sponges" because they absorb oxygen in beer, which delays inevitable oxidation and therefore, off-flavors. Oxidation by-products adhere to malt protein and cause them to drop out of the beer, thinning its body over time. "Residual sugars help by supplanting the thinning malt profile as well as by providing a base for the new, developing sherry flavors to stand on."

...Don't exclude drier styles of beer.

Relatively high residual sugar confers an advantage when aging beers, Garrett Oliver says in *The Oxford Companion to Beer*, "but some dry styles can fare well. Strong dark Belgian Trappist and abbey ales, for example, tend to age well, despite their relative lack of residual sugar."

The Trappist beers age well because they have a high-phenolic character with a large amount of melanoidins, Dawson says, which produce rich flavors that make up for lack of residual sugar in the beers. The other exception, he says, is "crisp, lambic-style beers, whose wild yeasts act as an

antioxidant and whose flavor profile is not malt-centric or hurt by a fading malt body."

Do add imperial stouts to your cellar...

Commonly brewed with dark, roasted malts, imperial stouts yield dark chocolate, dried fruit, and even berry flavors over time.

...Don't leave them there too long.

The roasted malts that make these beers so flavorful also shorten their cellaring time. High acidity makes them more susceptible to autolysis, which creates meaty flavors like ink and soy sauce. Almost all imperial stouts can benefit from a year of aging, Dawson recommends, and beyond that another two or three years at most.

Do drink wheat beers quickly, rather than aging them...

Due to oxidation, the wheat proteins in beer tend to drop out of suspension after six months or so, leaving a clearer, thinner beer. For beers whose profile is designed to be wheat-forward, this is a bad thing, Dawson says. "Because of a tendency to lose a critical component of their overall makeup, wheat beers... don't make good candidates for cellaring," he explains, adding that wheat beers are high in lipids, which tend to create stale flavors in the cellar.

...Don't rush wheat-based styles fermented with *Brettanomyces*.

"Lambic and gueuze [and sometimes saisons] are wheat beers and, in my opinion, are some of the best vintage beers

of all time," Dawson says. There are also plenty of Brett saisons [fermented with *Brettanomyces*] brewed with wheat that can benefit from some time in the cellar. [Because] the beers have Brett in them, and [because] Brett has such a voracious appetite, given enough time, it will eat most anything. So having those difficult-to-ferment sugars in there will keep the beers from becoming watery and thin. In a way, brewing these beers with wheat is like a runner carbo-loading before a marathon."

In his book, Dawson cites another carbo-loading example: the traditional German beer style Berliner Weisse. The beer is traditionally brewed with *Lactobacillus*; "however there is usually some Brett integrated in the fermentation process, allowing the style to develop in the cellar."

Do enjoy hoppy beers while fresh...

Hops lose their intensity on the shelf, and thus IPAs and other hop-forward styles aren't brewed with cellaring in mind. The high levels of alpha acids in American hops, such as Amarillo and Cascade hops, are easily oxidized, which can make for stale, papery off-flavors.

...Don't underestimate the flavors that are left as certain hoppy beers age.

High in beta acids, however, English hops like Kent Goldings tend to maintain bitterness over time and can even bring new fruit flavors, such as cherry or pineapple, to a beer as they age.

Do give barleywines some time...

Make that *English-style* barleywines. Dawson calls them the granddaddy of all vintage beers in his book, designated so because they are "beers built to age." Their robust malt character, coupled with



low attenuating yeast strains, let them thrive in the cellar.

... Don't give American barleywines as much time.

American barleywines hit the palate dry, hoppy, and hot, coming across more as double IPAs. Aged a year, says Dawson, these beers will maintain a good amount of hoppiness but lose enough to taste more like a traditional barleywine, with dried fruit and sherry flavors.

Do give oak-aged beers time to mature...

"As the malt, yeast, and hop flavors go on a roller-coaster ride," Dawson says in *Vintage Beer*, the oak flavors remain comparatively stable. More often than not, those oak flavors will complement the newly derived flavors in aged beer.

... Don't expect the same stability for other flavors on top of the oak.

Studies show that oak nuances such as vanilla, coconut, and clove flavors are "somewhat susceptible" to oxygen, Dawson reports. They eventually tighten with age, vanilla flavors softening first.

Do age "Imperial" beers...

It's certainly advantageous to cellar beers that are more than 8 percent ABV. Alcohol acts as a preservative, so higher ABV beers have more time to develop complexities.

... Don't ignore sour and smoke beers since those act as preservatives that prolong aging, too.

"I always say for a beer to age, it needs to have one of the three S's; strong, sour, or smoked," Dawson says. "A strong beer, above 8 percent ABV, ages great, but the acidity in a sour beer, or smoke phenols in a *rauchbier*, can replace the high alcohol to make a beer cellar-worthy." Great sour examples would be lambic or gueuze, usually less than 5 percent ABV, like Cantillon [Brasserie Cantillon Brouwerij, Belgium] or Drie Fontienen [Brouwerij Drie Fontienen, Belgium]. On the smoked side of things are the German *rauchbiers* or smoked porters usually less than 6 percent ABV, like Aecht Schlenkerla or Alaskan Brewing's Smoked Porter.

Like all rules, those of beer cellaring are often made to be broken. To learn them takes time, patience, and a lot of trial and error. "After a few years of mostly painful results, I began researching some of the science behind aging to be able to better choose which beers to age," Dawson says. "This research then led me to write *Vintage Beer* to help others avoid the same mistakes I made."



To Cellar or Not to Cellar, That Is the Question

Cellar

Ten Fidy

Oskar Blues (Longmont, Colorado)

Over time, this imperial stout gains viscosity, rich chocolate aroma, and heat.

Cellar

120 Minute IPA

Dogfish Head (Milton, Delaware)

This mammoth of a beer comes in between 15 and 20 percent ABV with 120 IBUs. "Dogfish Head 120 Minute IPA only gets better with age," says the brewery's website. "A year or two on this 'holy grail for hopheads' bring out deliciously sweet sherry and marmalade notes."

Cellar (but only one year)

Bigfoot Barleywine

Sierra Nevada (Chico, California)

"Bigfoot is prized by beer collectors for its supreme cellarability," says the Sierra Nevada website. "Under the proper conditions, it can age like a fine wine, developing new flavors and character as it matures in the bottle." Dawson recommends keeping this in the cellar for only a year to mellow out the beer's aggressive Northwest hops.

Cellar

La Folie

New Belgium (Fort Collins, Colorado)

"This is a 2008 La Folie from the archives," New Belgium wood-aged beer specialist Eric Salazar says as he untwists its cork. "And now it's open." After taking a sip he comments, "It hasn't deteriorated or oxidized. This is crisp and sharp. I think it's held up well." More recent vintages of La Folie are capped rather than corked, and aging these will round off some of those sharply sour edges, but don't let them go too long (more than three years) or you'll miss out on the intense flavors the brewers intended.

Don't Cellar

Bigshot Espresso Stout

Twisted Pine (Boulder, Colorado)

There is a shot of Unseen Bean Organic Peruvian espresso in every sixteen ounces of this espresso stout. Instead of cellaring, savor the fresh coffee flavor.

Don't Cellar

60 Minute IPA

Dogfish Head (Milton, Delaware)

This beer is continuously hopped with more than sixty hop additions over a 60-minute boil. Soak in these hops as soon as possible.

Don't Cellar

Hog Heaven Barleywine

Avery Brewing Co. (Boulder, Colorado)

"This beer is probably more appropriately recognized as an imperial red or a double red," says Matt Thrall, the head brewer at Avery Brewing Co., who recommends drinking it right away to appreciate its hops. Columbus Hops are added to this beer for bittering and flavoring during the boil, as well as for aroma via dry-hopping.

Don't Cellar

La Folie

New Belgium (Fort Collins, Colorado)

"When we put out a beer, it's ready to go. It's what we intended," Eric Salazar says in a *Focus On The Beer* video. New Belgium sours are pasteurized and will not grow more sour in the bottle, since souring bacteria and any remaining *Brettanomyces* are killed in the pasteurizing process. If your goal is to enjoy La Folie at its peak of sour, drink it fresh.



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Breeding new hops varieties is a time-consuming process, and a typical year might see a few varieties (at most) reach commercial markets. But 2014 has been a bumper year for the bitter flower, with no fewer than thirteen new hops varieties making their debut at the 2014 Craft Brewers Conference. **Stan Hieronymus** talks to hops growers as well as brewers such as **Chad Jacobson** of Crooked Stave Artisan Beer Project to get the story behind the hops and the exciting applications that modern brewers are finding for these new flavors.

New Hops

Chad Jacobson of Denver's Crooked Stave Artisan Beer Project doesn't brew IPAs, but he's fanatical about new hops varieties and the character they can add to his saisons and sours.

GENE PROBASCO, WHO STARTED the first private hop-breeding program in the United States at John I. Haas in Washington's Yakima Valley, learned something long ago that speaks to the challenge brewers face today when evaluating a widening range of hops varieties: It is not enough simply to rub and sniff hops flowers to learn what they will smell and taste like in beer. As part of a project for a brewery client that began in 1990, Probasco created about 150 potential cultivars, and the client produced single-hopped beers with each of them. He tasted more than 100. "It was a real eye opener. Some of the beers were just bad," says Probasco, who is in charge of farm and agronomic services as well as breeding at Haas. "Some of them were very, very good. Some varieties had a nice smell, but they made bad-tasting beer. There weren't many that smelled bad, but some of those made good beer."

When private and public breeding programs combined to release one or two new varieties a year, it was relatively easy for brewers to get to know them. "You actually have to brew with hops to figure them out," says Vinnie Cilurzo at Santa Rosa, California's Russian River Brewing Company. Making batches of beer with a single hop "rarely yields a beer that could be an actual ongoing recipe, but it does teach you which components of the hop work and which do not work."

Crystal Ball Gazing

However, in just the past year, more than a dozen distinctly different newcomers have emerged. In April, vendors at the Craft Brewers Conference in Denver, Colorado, poured beers showcasing many of the varieties to give brewers an idea of what they taste like in beer. An alternative is to find beers brewed by early adopters, sampling them while thinking about what flavors might be a result of those hops and what other beers they could work in.

Until the past decade, when brewers talked about desirable aroma they used adjectives such as "mild" and "noble."

Favored hops usually had relatively low amounts of essential oils. Now brewers clamor for hops rich in oil and varieties that smell of melon, pineapple, coconut, white pepper, peaches, peppermint, lychee, gooseberries. . . .

Hops breeding, never simple, has become more complicated. "Each brewer has his own specific idea. He wants to test it in his own brewery, to use his own water," says Anton Lutz, who is in charge of breeding at the German Hop Research Center in Hüll. "You have to have a lot of aroma types ready, but you must wait for brewers to come to you with their ideas. Then you can tell them, 'I have it.'"

Breeders must be thinking years ahead. To cross-pollinate two plants, they collect pollen from a male hop and add it to the female's pollen sleeve. Males are useless except in breeding and are kept out of production fields because only female hops bear cones brewers find useful. In the fall, breeders collect the seeds and the following spring plant seedlings in the greenhouse. They must evaluate hundreds of thousands of prospects to find one that will be released to farmers, usually after it has proved itself during eight years or more of testing.

Lining Up for New Releases

In 2012, the Society for Hop Research in Germany began licensing the rights to grow four new varieties that Lutz developed: Mandarin Bavaria, Huell (Hüll) Melon, Hallertau Blanc, and Polaris. They are bolder and more like New World varieties than anything previously available in Germany. Although they were developed primarily for German farmers to produce hops to sell to German brewers and supplies so far are limited, American brewers were the first to line up to try them.

Paso Robles, California's Firestone Walker Brewing Company Brewmaster Matt Brynildson used both Mandarin Bavaria and Huell (Hüll) Melon in Easy

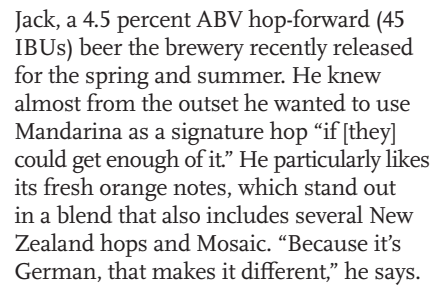
Chad Jacobson (Crooked Stave) on Saison

"Vielle was our first saison, and we originally just called it 'saison,' because it set out to be a saison in the way that old-world saisons are. Surette means 'tart,' and is a reference to provision saisons in a certain region of Wallonia. Always saison was brewed in fall, always fermented in oak until spring. A lot of the time, the ingredients were raw materials not too far from Seine, such as raw barley. They used fresh hops from either France or Belgium, and they used a lot of hops. That doesn't mean hoppy in the way we think of IPAs, but hoppy as in a lot of hops—a pound and a half or two pounds per barrel—because just as with IPA, they knew that the more hops, the more they could keep bacteria from happening. They also needed six months [in the barrel] because saison wasn't refreshing right off the bat—it wasn't this clean beer. So those six months really helped round that out.

"Saison is a style that should not be spicy. There should only be bitter and hop citrus or fruity notes. A lot of saisons tend to be sweet, high-alcohol, and high in phenolics. And for my palate, that's not very drinkable. For saisons, I like the tradition, I like the flavors, I like the dryness, and how that pairs with food.

"I don't just brew for the sake of brewing, I do it for experimentation, I do it for flavor, I do it to think about historically what was going on and how to get those flavors they would have gotten in the old world."

Now brewers clamor for hops rich in oil and varieties that smell of melon, pineapple, coconut, white pepper, peaches, peppermint, lychee, gooseberries. . . .



Toft, a Wyoming native, writes the recipes for the beers the Hop Growers of Germany have served each of the past eight years at the Craft Brewers Conference, always showcasing new German varieties. They are made at Pennsylvania's Victory Brewing Company and Colorado's Odell Brewing Company. Toft brews both very traditional beers, two of which won medals in the

recent World Beer Cup, and others new to the south of Germany, such as an IPA hopped with American varieties. It took him only minutes to assemble a saison recipe for *Craft Beer & Brewing Magazine*™ (see “German Hop Saison,” at right).

Likewise, Chad Yakobson of Denver’s Crooked Stave Brewery, needed little time to decide how he’d use Equinox, the newest release from the Hop Breeding Company (HBC) (see “366 Extra Brett Pale Ale,” at right). HBC was created in 2002 when Haas and Select Botanicals merged their breeding programs. Its previous releases include Citra (HBC 394) and Mosaic (HBC 369). Yakobson was one of several brewers to experiment with HBC 366 before the company named it Equinox in April. He first used it in Wild Wild Brett Violet, then in an early batch of Hop Savant.

Equinox is a daughter of Warrior, a hop born in 1988. Jason Perrault, who grows hops at Perrault Farms and breeds them for Select Botanicals and the HBC, was in high school when he helped Chuck Zimmerman cross-pollinate several males and females “of interest.” Simcoe and Warrior both came out of those crosses. Simcoe is a mother to Mosaic, and the compounds in those two hops epitomize the bold aromas and flavors currently in vogue. Equinox is equally audacious.

Not everybody likes their hops so assertive, but Perrault points out that what some drinkers perceive as a negative others consider a positive. For example, when Chico, California’s Sierra Nevada Brewing Company brewed test batches of beers with Citra hops several years ago, female members of a tasting panel described “catty” aromas and males described tropical fruits. Equinox is particularly versatile because it is rich in essential oils—some of the 2013 crop measured as high as 4.5 percent, compared to usually one-third that in Cascade—allowing brewers to target a pungent finish or back off for something more mellow but still complex.

Perrault and Probasco have enough experimental cultivars far enough along in the breeding process that they could release multiple varieties a year, but they won’t. “It has to have special qualities,” Perrault says. Those might include exotic aromas brewers want, but breeders must start by eliminating plants that don’t grow well. He and Lutz talked about both agronomics and aroma late one evening during the Craft Brewers Conference. The event was particularly educational for Lutz, who last visited the United States in 2003.

He was struck by the enthusiasm for beers hopped with new varieties like Equinox and by some of the beers in which Mandarin Bavaria is prominent. “Next crossing season,” he says, smiling, “I will look for more extreme [aromas].” 

MAKE IT

366 Extra Brett Pale Ale

From Chad Yakobson, founder-brewmaster, Crooked Stave Brewing, Denver, Colorado.

OG: 1.050
FG: 1.004
IBUs: 35
ABV: 6%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

9 pounds 2-row
.75 pounds Munich II
.25 pounds Carahell

HOP SCHEDULE

.3 ounces Equinox at 60 minutes
.6 ounces Equinox at 20 minutes
2.5 ounces Equinox in whirlpool
2.5 ounces Equinox dry hop

DIRECTIONS

Mash in at 150–152°F (65–67°C); rest for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until conversion is complete. Sparge at 169°F (76°C). It is important to not over extract polyphenols from malt husks for *Brettanomyces* to metabolize.

YEAST

Clean fermenting *Brettanomyces* *Bruxellensis* such as WLP644 Trois or BSI Drie. Crooked Stave dregs also work.

BREWERS NOTES

This beer will take roughly six weeks from brew to finish with the *Brettanomyces* yeast. Plan accordingly for dry-hopping because too long on dry hops will add grassy green notes. Wait to dry hop until the gravity is about 1.006. Yakobson is acutely aware of the symbiotic relationship between *Brettanomyces* yeast and some hop compounds. The bright aromas typical of Equinox—citrus, tropical fruit, and pine—will be prominent when 366 Extra Brett Pale Ale is young. “As the beer ages, the aromas will be protected by *Brettanomyces* from excessive oxidation and new aromas and flavors come out,” he says. “This is where floral lavender and citrus zest-like qualities are played up by the *Brettanomyces* and secondary metabolites, which are produced with further aging.”

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless otherwise noted.

MAKE IT

German Hop Saison

From Eric Toft, brewmaster, Private Landbrauerei Schönram, Petting/Schönram, Germany.

OG: 1.065
FG: 1.006
IBUs: 44
ABV: 7.8%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

11 pounds Pilsner Malt
1.25 pounds Munich 10L
.25 pounds acidulated malt

HOP SCHEDULE

4 ounces Polaris at 60 minutes
.15 ounces Polaris at 10 minutes
4 ounces Hallertau Blanc at 10 minutes
.5 ounces Hallertau Blanc at knockout

DIRECTIONS

Add calcium chloride as needed for 70 ppm. Use four parts water to grist. Mash in at 140°F (60°C), rest for 10 to 15 minutes; raise temperature to 149°F (65°C) for 30 minutes; raise temperature to 154°F (68°C) for 20 minutes; raise temperature to 162°F (72°C) for 10 minutes; mash out at 170°F (77°C). Or do a single infusion mash at 154°F (68°C).

YEAST

Saison yeast of your choice

BREWERS NOTES

The recipes Toft wrote to showcase German varieties at the Craft Brewers Conference included Hollerdauer Tripel, which was brewed at Pennsylvania’s Victory Brewing Company. The 9.1 percent ABV beer was complexly fruity (bananas, pears, citrus), spicy, and left a unique vinous impression, zesty yet delicate.

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless otherwise noted.



Art of the Blend

While blending beer has always played a role in certain regional styles, brewers are increasingly using this tool to add deeper flavors to a wide variety of beers as they think beyond the batch. Firestone Walker Brewmaster

Matt Brynildson is at the forefront of the commercial side of this trend, blending everything from the signature limited-release anniversary bottles to their widely released six-pack beer DBA. Boulder beer writer **Tom Wilmes** gets the scoop on Brynildson's process, and the surprising range of styles that he works into his big blends...

Photos by Cana Family





Right
Teams of prominent winemakers gather at Firestone Walker Brewing Co. to create the perfect blend for their limited-release 17th Anniversary beer.

In late summer,

just before the fall harvest season, a panel of winemakers from California's Central Coast region convenes at Firestone Walker Brewing Co. in Paso Robles for an epic blending session. It's a coveted gig that brings together some of the most educated palates in the business to help sort through dozens of barrel-aged beers from Firestone Walker's cellar and settle on an ideal blend for its annual anniversary release.

The dozen winemakers are split into teams of two, given pencil and paper, tasting glasses, and 100-milliliter graduated cylinders, then set loose with samples of a multitude of barrel-aged, high-gravity beers that span a gamut of styles—from all manner of stouts and barleywines to brown ales, pale ales, India Pale Ales, and anything else that the brewery has stashed away in its cellar. Before long, the tasting tables are littered with plastic cups as the winemakers pour, swirl, and sip their way through the beers—isolating elements in each and blending toward a finished flavor profile that, ideally, is synergistically greater than the sum of its parts.

Once each team lands on its ideal blend, Firestone Walker's brewers mix together larger batches of each and set out flights for a blind tasting. The panelists taste each beer, vote on their favorites, and the winning blend is scaled up—a process that often involves at least seven different beers and hundreds of barrels—packaged and released as that year's anniversary ale.

The resulting over-the-top, ultra-complex brew is an extreme example of how brewers can blend beers to craft a flavor profile that can't be replicated in any single batch.

Production Beers, Too

Firestone Walker also employs blending in many of its production beers, including its flagship Double Barrel Ale. The wort begins fermentation in stainless steel and then the batch is split into two strands—one that ferments out in stainless steel and one that ferments in oak barrels—that are then blended back together.



"I think sometimes we get blinders on as brewers and we're really batch-oriented, but winemakers think quite differently," says Firestone Walker Brewmaster Matt Brynildson. "Winemakers look at their entire toolbox, which is all of their barrels, and taste through them to cull the very best components that, when blended together, result in flavors and a complexity that can't necessarily be created in a single lot."



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“It’s looking at finished beers as raw materials in themselves and then taking it another step to blend those materials together to create a more complete whole.”

“The longer you brew and the more comfortable you get with your materials and your brewing process, the more you realize that there’s so much variation in raw materials, and there can be a fair amount of variation from fermentation to fermentation with yeast performance, so blending is a tool not only to enhance flavors but also to create consistency in your program,” he continues.

“It’s more of a philosophy of thinking about beer as a finished flavor profile and not getting too married to a single raw material or a single recipe. It’s looking at finished beers as raw materials in themselves and then taking it another step to blend those materials together to create a more complete whole.”

Brewers have long employed blending in making beer. Lambic and gueuze are two historic styles made by blending together batches of older, barrel-aged beer with new beer. Popular beer lore holds that the porter style is derived from a “three-threads” mix blended at the point of sale by a London barkeep. According to *The Oxford Companion to Beer*, Eugene Rodenbach studied porter-making in England and returned to his family’s brewery in West Flanders, Belgium, with ideas about wood-aging and blending. Rodenbach Grand Cru, a Flanders Red Ale made from blending a soured, barrel-aged beer with new beer, is a classic example of the alchemy that can be achieved by blending.

When to Blend

Blending is an important tool for homebrewers to have in their arsenal. It's a useful method to fix a problem in a beer or to bring it closer to established style guidelines, as well as to bring an older brew back to life by blending in fresh beer, to dial in a recipe quickly, to achieve consistency between batches, to create layers of complexity in a beer, or even to invent a new style.

Duncan Bryant, a homebrewer and Web coordinator at the American Homebrewers Association, shares some thoughts on when and why homebrewers might consider blending.

To fix a beer or bring it within style parameters

Pick out the flaw in your beer and envision what you can do to reduce its presence. This method isn't intended to create an outstanding beer, but to make a crummy one a bit more drinkable—and to save it from the drain.

To freshen up older beer

Older beer can be brought back to life by blending it with a new batch. This has been common throughout brewing history as a means of using every last drop of brew.

To dial in a recipe

Say you're looking for the perfect bitterness level in a pilsner. Make one batch super bitter and one standard and then blend them together until you arrive at your ideal level.

For consistency

Particularly in commercial brewing, portions of previous batches will be combined with newer batches to create consistency. If you're after repeatable results, you absolutely want to keep careful measurements of ratios used in the blend. It can get trickier if you are working with more than two base beers, but it is worth the effort to keep track of all your mixtures so when you do find that magical combination you can re-create it.

For complexity

Through blending, you can create unique complexity that otherwise you can't achieve with unblended beer. You can blend a five-year-old version and a one-year-old version of the same recipe for a unique final product, for example; or blend beers made with the same recipe but fermented with two different yeast strains; or blend two or more completely different styles. The sky is the limit.

Collaborate with other brewers to fill a barrel

Many homebrew clubs collaborate to fill a barrel. They decide on a recipe and everyone brews a portion of it at home, then the different batches are combined in a barrel. It is a manageable way to age lots of beer without needing commercial brewing equipment. Some clubs take it a step further and tell everyone to choose their own yeast or hops, which makes for an even more unique brew once blended.

To add oak, spice, or an adjunct to one strand of the beer and blend it

On the flip side, if you've over spiced a beer, you can choose a beer, maybe the same base recipe, to blend in and help tone down the spiciness.

To make the most of a high-gravity beer

In regards to ABV, some commercial breweries simply blend water with a batch to get more beer in a fermenter without brewing larger quantities. Just brew your beer stronger than usual and add water or a low-ABV beer to it in the fermenter to bring it down to the target ABV and create more volume.





Left
Sample cups and notes litter
the table at the Firestone
Walker 17th Anniversary
blending session.

One of Brynildson's favorite examples of this synergistic effect is blending just a bit of a roasty beer, such as a stout, into a malt-forward beer, such as an English-style barleywine. "There's this perfect point where you pick up a really pleasant cherry pit, almond characteristic that isn't apparent in either of the parent beers," he says. "That's the magic moment when I'm making a blend—if I can find that note, that's the place to stop."

Taste is subjective, of course, and trying to create an exact science around blending beer is a futile exercise. It all comes down

to individuality, experimentation, and what works in the moment. No special equipment is required, except for your taste buds and some way to measure the beer and keep track of what you did, and the results can be a pleasing one-off project or something that you try to replicate again and again.

"Blending is a relatively simple process that gets the creative juices flowing and lets you play around with beer," Brynildson says. "There are no hard and fast rules—it's a free-form art that all comes down to taste." 

Create a Blending Cellar

Matt Brynildson, brewmaster at Firestone Walker Brewing Co., was a "hard-core homebrewer" in the mid-nineties, he says, before attending the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago and starting his professional brewing career.

Brynildson gave a presentation on "Creating Flavors Through Blending" at the 2007 National Homebrewers Conference in Denver where he provided suggestions for beer styles to brew or reserve portions of for blending sessions. Here is his list:

- » English-style barleywine
- » Stout
- » Malty brown ale
- » "Leaner" high-gravity beers
- » Sour ales
- » Oak-aged beers
- » Double IPAs or other hop-accented brews
- » Low-gravity beers
- » Light ales
- » Malty ambers
- » Traditional milds

To Thee I Wed: Best Practices for Arriving at a Winning Blend

Ted Hausotter is an award-winning homebrewer from Baker City, Oregon, and a BJCP-certified beer judge. He's been homebrewing beer since the "brown-hop days," he says, and still brews about 200 gallons of beer annually. He took second place in Best of Show at the National Homebrew Competition about ten years ago with a blended beer and regularly uses blending as a tool to adjust and enhance his beers.

"What I've found with blending is that the beer tends to come out better than either of the parent beers in terms of complexity and drinkability," Hausotter says. "In a sense, you're a marriage maker. You're trying to bring two things together into perfect harmony."

Blending is an effective means to improve a beer that's out-of-balance in

terms of bitterness, sourness, tannins, or alcohol; or is otherwise "flabby" or one-dimensional.

Begin by identifying the missing element and what you think might help improve the beer and then pour equal amounts of the base beer into several tasting glasses.

Pick one or more beers that you intend to blend with and that contain the missing element you're looking for and use a graduated cylinder to measure and pour proportional amounts into the base beer. You might start with a 50/50 blend and then blend in either direction until you find the sweet spot. "Then you just have fun tasting beer," Hausotter says. Just don't forget to take notes. Whether you intend to replicate your blend in a single batch or blend together larger portions, knowing the proportions of each beer

should let you scale up the recipe using straight math.

As with brewing, blending together kegs requires the right environment to avoid oxidation or infecting your beer. Begin by sanitizing and purging all your kegs and lines with CO₂ to create an oxygen-free environment for transferring the beer. "I don't do it once; I do it ten times," Hausotter says. "That way the beer is coming out of the bottom of one keg and into the bottom of the other keg, and everything is under a CO₂ blanket at about 10 to 20 psi pressure."

Connect a jumper hose from the out tube on your master keg to the keg you're blending into, which should be sitting on a zeroed-out scale. Add in proportions of each beer by weight, gently rock the filled keg back and forth, and you've got your blend.



Traditionally brewed at the start of colder months and conditioned over winter for warm-weather consumption, saisons and farmhouse ales have become a year-round staple for many brewers who enjoy the flavor provided by distinct Belgian yeast strains. Whether it's crisp and clean summer refreshers or funky *Brettanomyces* bombs, brewers across America are shaping up to make this...

The Summer of Saison





A Guide to Saison “Style”

Color Outside the Lines

THE FIRST RULE OF SAISON is that there are no rules.

Okay, *maybe* that’s an oversimplification. But if we think of modern beer style guides as canonical coloring books for grownups, then saison is the devil on our shoulders inviting us to venture outside the lines and use all the crayons in the box. Nobody has to know.

Perhaps more than any other beer style, saison embraces brewing that is at once primal, playful, and pernicious. Once widespread in Belgium, saison overcame an uncertain future on the Continent when American craft brewers rediscovered and revived it with characteristic gusto.

The story of saison is really the story of beer itself.

Stylistic Origins

Until very recently, brewing was almost exclusively a local activity. Long before hipsters rolled in on fixie bikes and made locally sourced ingredients trendy and expensive, *beer* more or less implied home-

brew made from whatever was available nearby. Beer styles developed regionally—micro-regionally, even—and expressed diverse cultures, climates, and topographies through their own unique *goûtes de terroir*.

Saison originated on farms in Belgium’s French-speaking Wallonia region, most notably in the province of Hainaut. The style’s name is simply the French word for “season,” which alone tells us a great deal. Wallonian farmer-brewers made beer during winter in preparation for the summer arrival of *les saisonniers*, seasonal workers whose tilling and toiling must have induced a powerful thirst.

Nobody knows exactly how the prototypical saison of Hainaut would have tasted. Historical records and folklore offer clues, but it’s impossible to be certain. Variations in crops and hops meant farmers would have brewed with whatever they had, making each year’s vintage unique. Fermentation would almost certainly have featured a blend of house yeast, wild yeast, and bacteria. And since saison was

consumed on premises as sustenance, consistency from one batch to another was probably afforded as much thought as your grandmother’s lasagne recipe that calls for a pinch of this and a smidge of that.

A further difficulty in pinning down the style is that we very nearly lost it. The late beer writer Michael Jackson sincerely believed saison was in danger of extinction in 1991 when he wrote, “Perhaps the most endangered [Belgian beer style] is the Saison. . . . [It] needs all the help it can get.”

At Jackson’s urging, American beer importer Don Feinberg convinced Brasserie Dupont to begin exporting Saison Vieille Provision (now simply called Saison Dupont) from Belgium to the United States in the late 1980s. Dupont’s subsequent state-side success had the effect of making it the involuntary standard bearer for the style—not just because it’s a fantastic beer, but also because it happened to be first. To this day, a perfectly adequate answer to the question “What is saison?” remains “Something like Saison Dupont.”

What Is Saison?

To better define the undefinable, I sat down with Gordon Schuck, who, along with business partner Brad Lincoln, founded Funkwerks, Inc., a saison-

It's this difficult-to-describe but easily recognizable combination of fruitiness and spiciness that jumps out and yells, "I am saison!"

focused brewery in Fort Collins, Colorado. Gordon offers the best definition of saison I've encountered.

"If there is one common characteristic to the style, it is the attenuation. Saisons have attenuations exceeding 90 percent. This lends a dry finish to a flavorful beer. And what is the flavor? That depends on the beer. Saison Dupont is a very bitter yet fruity example. [La Brasserie à Vapeur's] Saison Pipaix is drier with a mineral edge. [La Brasserie Fantôme's] Fantôme is less fruity but has more of a lactic acid edge. Essentially, a saison is a dry beer with a character unique to the brewery where it is made."

Attenuation (the percentage of available sugar that actually gets fermented), it seems, is what makes a saison a saison. It's not uncommon for a well-made saison's final gravity to approach 1.005 or less. Achieving such low gravities calls for a special kind of yeast, and therein lies the true heart of the style.

If there is one rule that we must associate with saison brewing, it is this: Yeast is *everything*. Saison derives its unique flavors and dry finish from aggressive strains of yeast that, given enough time, could probably ferment a Volvo.

And the yeast strains are famously temperamental. Brasserie Dupont's strain prefers temperatures as high as 95°F (35°C), a full thirty degrees higher than most British yeasts. Gordon and Brad experimented with a blend of ale strains and red wine yeast before settling on a strain that is said to have originated from Brasserie Theillier in France, available to homebrewers as Wyeast 3711 French Saison. (For more about yeast, see "Fermentation Fascination," page 79.)

Some brewers include spices in their saisons, but such seasoning must be done with care. Saison yeasts produce enough spicy notes that augmenting with actual botanicals can easily overwhelm the palate.

More Info

BJCP Style Guidelines for Beer, Mead, and Cider. http://www.bjcp.org/docs/2008_style_book.pdf.

Farmhouse Ales: Culture and Craftsmanship in the Belgian Tradition, by Phil Markowski. (Brewers Publications, 2004).

The Oxford Companion to Beer, by Tom Colicchio. (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Left to right:
Funkwerks Saison, Boulevard Tank 7, Ommegang Hennepin, Brasserie Dupont Saison Dupont





The Summer of Saison

Sensory Profile

So how do such textbook attributes translate to what you and I actually taste? To find out, I walked down to my local craft beer bar and sampled a flight of four popular saisons:

- *Saison*, Funkwerks, Inc., Fort Collins, Colorado
- *Tank 7*, Boulevard Brewing Co., Kansas City, Missouri
- *Hennepin*, Brewery Ommegang, Cooperstown, New York
- *Saison Dupont*, Brasserie Dupont, Tourpes, Leuze-en-Hainaut, Belgium

With the exception of the Funkwerks's flagship beer, which is distributed in only a handful of states, these examples are widely available from coast to coast.

The four samples exhibit real, but minor, differences in appearance, with clarity ranging from virtually transparent (Tank 7) to hazy (Funkwerks Saison) and color spanning the brief spectrum between brilliant blonde and pale copper.

Aromas vary from peach and passion fruit to lychee and orange, but all exhibit a characteristic spiciness that comes through in the flavor as well. Black pepper, ginger, coriander, and vanilla notes are commonly evident, even in samples that contain no actual spices. It is this difficult-to-describe but easily recognizable combination of fruitiness and spiciness that jumps out and yells, "I am saison!"

The driest examples, Funkwerks and Dupont, offer pleasant finishes that border on tart, while Tank 7 and Hennepin's higher terminal gravities (2.5° and 2.6° Plato, respectively) are accompanied by sufficient hop bitterness to avoid cloying sweetness.

Experience Saison in Style

The difference between reading about saison and intuitively recognizing it is the same as the difference between memorizing a few vocabulary words and actually speaking French. To truly understand what saison is, you must taste some saisons.

More than any other style, saison really can be whatever you want it to be. I can't tell you precisely what that is, but to paraphrase former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, you'll know it when you taste it. —Dave Carpenter





| COMMERCIAL BREWER PERSPECTIVES |

Saison Philosophy

What makes a saison a saison? **Emily Hutto** set out on a quest to find out how craft beer brewers across the country defined the term. Here's what she found...

POLLING CRAFT BEER ARTISANS about what makes a saison a saison, I received diverse responses, to say the least. Dann Paquette of Pretty Things Beer and Ale Project talked about sessionable English ales; Ryan Greenhagen of Mystic Brewing discussed local ingredients; Jason Yester of Trinity Brewing showed me paintings by impressionist artists; Gordon Schuck of Funkwerks elaborated on the aromatic possibilities of Opal hops; Ron Extract of Jester King Brewery quoted Yvan De Baets; and Chase Healey of Prairie Artisan Ales talked about the weather. In their varied approaches to saison, these brewers demonstrate just how versatile the style is. They've led me to the conclusion that a saison is whatever you make it be. Here's how each of them has made the style his own.

Rustic, Low Alcohol

For Boston's Pretty Things Beer and Ale Project Co-owner Dann Paquette, saison is a rustic, low alcohol style of beer. "I have spent a lot of time brewing English beers, and I think there's some sort of English equivalent for saison—from people working in fields, that sort of thing," he says. "I guarantee there's a lager version or German version of this sort of beer as well."

Jack D'Or, Pretty Things's baseline beer, is "a dry beer, a bitter beer, a beer that has yeast complexities, a beer that pairs with most foods, a beer that the

most cynical expert beer drinker could drink as well as someone who just had Sam Adams for the first time last night," says Paquette. "Our goal going in was to make a beer that would not only be a creative outlet for us, but also a beer that everyone could share and enjoy together."

Indigenous Ingredients

One of the more recent seasonals from Mystic Brewing (Chelsea, Massachusetts) was brewed with native yeast cultured from blueberries grown in Maine. For Mystic's Bryan Greenhagen, saison is about indigenous ingredients and going back in time. "Basically, it's the realization that people had to use local yeast and propagate their own."

Saison is a product of its environment, says Greenhagen. The beer style causes brewers to "think about where they're from to create beer to reflect that in an original way. The overall mission for us is to try to recapture and revive the spirit of developing styles rather than just making styles. And a big influence is local ingredients."

Light Body, Dry Finish

The fifty plus saisons that Trinity Brewing Company (Colorado Springs, Colorado) has brewed in its six years represent a huge range of ingredients, flavors, and aromas; but they all have a few things in common: they're light in body, they're dry in finish, and they're harvest-driven. "Saison brings the momentum behind every harvest—supporting local growers and challenging your creativity," says Trinity Owner Jason Yester. "One of the really fun things about saisons is that you are limited to what that harvest is. If a certain berry didn't grow well that year, you're



The Summer of Saison

Unique Takes

Saisons are as individual as the brewers who brew them. These six takes from award-winning brewers showcase the range and personality possible in the style.



JACK D'OR

Pretty Things Beer
And Ale Project
(Boston, Massachusetts)
ABV 6.5%
IBUs 57

Jack D'Or is one of the more hop-forward saisons around, inspired by Belgium's Brewery De Ranke's XX Bitter and De Dolle Brouwers' Arabier, and by Smuttynose IPA (Portsmouth, New Hampshire). It's brewed with North American pilsner, Vienna, wheat, malted oats, and rye and is hopped with a combination of Nugget, Styrian Goldings, Columbus, and Palisade hops. "Bitterness runs through the beer from beginning to end. I think that you need bitterness for refreshment," says Pretty Things Co-owner Dann Paquette.

Jack D'Or is fermented with a blend of four yeast strains that create its dry finish, another element that Paquette believes is critical for refreshment. This dry, bitter, and sessionable beer is meant to be a simple table beer—extremely quaffable and easily paired with many different foods.

SAISON RENAUD

Mystic Brewing
(Chelsea, Massachusetts)
ABV 7%
IBUs 28

The Saison Renaud is an unfiltered, single malt, single hop beer brewed with pilsner malt and Saaz hops. "This is your World War II-era farmhouse ale, where I think [brewers] were probably

starting to steal the yeast from the pilsner makers," says Mystic's Bryan Greenhagen. In essence, this beer comes from a pilsner recipe. "We've made this recipe with lager yeast and it makes a pilsner. But then when you put in the Belgian yeast culture, you can taste the spices it brings, the herbs. I think [this beer] really shows what the yeast is doing."

LE CAPITAIN

Trinity Brewing Company
(Colorado Springs, Colorado)
ABV 10.4%
IBUs 0

Le Capitaine is a Chardonnay barrel-aged golden saison brewed with "an absurd amount of pumpkin" and fermented with saison yeast and various strains of *Brettanomyces*, one of which was originally cultivated by Peter Bouckaert, the brewmaster at New Belgium Brewery (Fort Collins, Colorado). This beer—also brewed with candied endive, cacao nibs, and Buddha's Hand—is Trinity Owner Jason Yester's tribute to this renowned Belgian brewer.

FUNKWERKS SAISON

Funkwerks, Inc.
(Fort Collins, Colorado)
ABV 6.8%
IBUs 25

The flagship Funkwerks Saison, which won a silver medal in 2011 and a gold medal in 2012 at the Great American Beer Festival, is modeled after Saison Dupont, with some modifications. "I'm playing with the

hops," Co-owner and Brewmaster Gordon Schuck says. "I like to use a hop called Opal; it's a little bit citrusy for a German hop, but I think it blends well with the yeast. [It's] a little spicy, almost a gingery kind of spiciness. It's an aroma that you're not sure is coming from the yeast or the dry-hopping."

NOBLE KING

Jester King Brewery
(Austin, Texas)
ABV 5.9%
IBUs 44

The Noble King is a pure expression of Jester King's yeast and fermentation process, says Ron Extract. It uses light grains (pilsner, 2-row, and wheat) and noble hops. "It's a simple, straightforward recipe that lets the yeast—a blend of *Saccharomyces*, *Brettanomyces*, and local wild strains—do its thing."

PRAIRIE ALE

Prairie Artisan Ales
(Tulsa, Oklahoma)
ABV 8.2%
IBUs 25

Prairie Ale, the first beer produced by Tulsa, Oklahoma's Prairie Artisan Ales, became the baseline for the rest of Prairie's lineup. This classic saison is brewed with pilsner malt, wheat malt, flaked wheat, and cane sugar. The spiciness of the beer comes exclusively from the addition of Saaz hops. "Prairie Ale is our most elegant beer," says Chase Healey. "It shows where we come from."

going to have to change your recipe, and you're going to have to be very creative with it."

The pumpkin included in Trinity Brewing's Le Capitaine, says Yester, revs up the body of the beer while still keeping its finish light and dry, nuances he believes are integral to any saison. He says saisons should fall between 1° and 2° Plato, some even lower, inching toward zero. "Pale ale is a good association of how the body should feel on a saison," he says. "It should be very, very light."

Very Simple Recipe

"If there is one benchmark for the saison style, it's Saison Dupont (Brasserie Dupont, Tourpes, Belgium)," says Gordon Schuck, the co-owner and brewmaster at Fort Collins, Colorado's Funkwerks, Inc. "We're talking a kind of golden orange-hued beer, a very simple recipe—usually with pilsner malt."

Funkwerks's flagship saison is structurally similar to Saison Dupont, says Schuck. "In the aroma we're shooting for the esters, so you get a bit of fruitiness

and almost a gingery kind of spiciness. In flavor, again, we want spicy and fruity. We want 90 percent attenuation, so it is very dry on the finish."

The Funkwerks saison is not spiced, but instead spicy from the use of Orval hops. Its carbonation, says Schuck, is on the high side to impart this saison's refreshing quality. "We basically want to pare down saison to just the bare, essential ingredients. That beer has three malts, one hop, and one yeast."



Let the Yeast Do the Work

The guiding brewing principle for Austin, Texas's Jester King is let the yeast do the work and create the right circumstances so that it can. "We're of the Yvan influence," says Ron Extract, referring to Yvan De Baets's historical essay on saisons that appears in the book *Farmhouse Ales: Culture and Craftsmanship in the Belgian Tradition* (Brewers Publications, 2004). In his essay, De Baets cites the writing of Marc H. Van Laer who advocated the use of multiple yeast strains as early as 1920.

Historically, saisons were brewed at the beginning of winter in a farmhouse brewery to quench the thirst of the farmhands who would work in the fields the following summer, the essay says. "In the winter most of the beer we brew is through spontaneous fermentation, and in the summer we brew saisons and farmhouse ales," Extract adds. "It's all about embracing the farmhouse mindset, the promise of the season."

Out of Necessity

"As I was looking to step out on my own in the brewing world, I wanted to make styles that made the most sense for our climate—so incredibly hot," jokes Prairie Artisan Ales (Tulsa, Oklahoma) Brewmaster Chase Healey. "I wanted to make complex beers that were still highly drinkable. More or less, [saisons] came out of necessity."

Ask any number of brewers to define saison as a beer style, and you may never get the same answer twice. Ultimately, no two saisons are the same. Brian Strumke, of Stillwater Artisanal Ales (Baltimore, Maryland), offered the most poignant definition of the style that I've found yet: "Saison is a philosophy and not a beer style because it's brewing what's available however possible." What Strumke and other saison brewers seem to be saying is that each individual beer speaks for itself. Each saison, which ultimately represents each brewer's interpretation of this style, brings new meaning to the category. 

Five on Five

The recent farmhouse ale phenomenon in the United States is a trend many brewers predicted way back when it wasn't as cool to seek out one-of-a-kind beers brewed in remote farmhouses in obscure corners of Europe. Interest in these import beers has undoubtedly inspired American brewers and homebrewers to take their own stabs at these provincial styles, too. Here, professional brewers weigh in on their favorite farmhouse ales, from near and far.

Compiled by Emily Hutto



Shaun E. Hill

Brewmaster at Hill Farmstead Brewery, Greensboro Bend, Vermont

My choice is Saison d'Epeautre, a beautifully dry, highly digestible beer brewed by my favorite little farmhouse brewing family (of mother, father, son) at Brasserie de Blaugies in Blaugies, Belgium. It is perfectly carbonated and highly attenuated—with complex minerality and their distinct yeast character. This beer and the Carlier family are an inspiration.

Phil Leinhart

Brewmaster at Brewery Ommegang, Cooperstown, New York

I think I'd have to go with Saison Dupont from Belgium's Brasserie Dupont. I love the beer's combination of dryness, bright fruity notes, effervescent carbonation, and slightly hoppy character.



James Gentile

Brewer at Victory Brewing Company, Downingtown, Pennsylvania

I currently love a saison with some farmhouse funk. One in particular is Saison-Brett from Boulevard Brewing Co., when I can get my hands on it. It drinks great fresh or can be cellared to bring out even more funk. It's a great beer.

Matt Williams

Brewer at Block 15, Corvallis, Oregon

I got to try the Elder Brett collaboration by Crooked Stave (Denver, Colorado) and Epic Brewing Company (Salt Lake City, Utah, and Denver, Colorado) at Saraveza's farmhouse festival. That beer is prototypical of what I'm looking for when I'm drinking farmhouse ales: well-defined Brett characteristics and big body to back up those flavors, aromas, and esters.



John Schneider

Owner and brewer at Black Fox Brewing, Denver, Colorado

Farmhouse ales are my favorite family of beers because they're dry and spicy—but not necessarily from spices. It's a really artistic family; within it you have sours, Brett beers, saisons, wits—beers that finish instead of linger. They make you want to take another drink. I can't pick just one beer within this category, and if I did I'd go for a smartass answer, like Belgium's Brasserie Fantôme's Fantôme Saison because it has a cool little ghost on the label.



Homebrew Fundamentals for Saisons and Bières de Garde

The Saison, Farmhouse ale, and Bière de Garde styles began as homebrews and are now popular with American homebrewers for the very same reasons—flexible fermentation temperatures, forgiving style parameters, and plenty of flavor at lower ABV levels. Award-winning homebrewer and shop owner **Paul Zocco** shares his strategies for getting the most flavor from your fermentations.

NO BEER STYLE IS more expressive of a brewer's personality, individuality, or skills than one that features local ingredients. Saison (Belgian) and bière de garde (French), two similar but subtly different beer styles, do just that. These rustic ales were originally brewed in hundreds of local farmhouses in an area once known as the kingdom of Flanders, which included parts of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Their areas of origin are relatively close to each other but are separated by a mountain or two (the Ardennes) and (now) by international borders. They are similar in style but reflect the particular and idiosyncratic products grown locally. Whether or not you have a farmhouse, you can brew these interesting beer styles. To get you started, here's some information about the two styles.

Basics Ingredients

Saisons and bières de garde historically used ingredients that were grown locally, hence the name “farmhouse ales.” The combinations and flavors of both styles are as varied as the brewer's imagination and the ingredients available. Saisons are typically dryer while bières de garde may be a bit sweeter, a result of the French having a sweet tooth.

Malted and unmalted grains available close to home were the norm, and combinations of wheat, barley, spelt, oats, or rye were used in limitless variations. Modern-day versions of saisons may be predominately pilsner, while bières de garde typically incorporate a base of pale or pilsner malt. Both styles have additions of wheat or other supplemental grains (e.g., Vienna, Munich).

As for hops, brewers commonly used local varieties such as French Strisselspalt, Belgian-grown Kent Goldings, Styrian Goldings, and various noble German or Czech varieties in both styles. Hop bitterness is generally low to medium, as is hop flavor. Saisons show a bit more hop character than bières de garde, but it's subtle enough to allow the malt character and spiciness to show.

The results of combining these basic ingredients are similar to the experience at an apple pie baking contest at your local country fair. The ingredients are similar, but the combinations and subtle changes in recipe and methods vary with the baker. Both of these beer styles are forms of food art that express the *terroir* of the region.

Alcohol

Both saison and bières de garde typically have an alcohol level that enables the stored beers to stand up during aging but doesn't make them so strong that they can't quench a weary soul's thirst after a long day's work in the fields. As a rule, both frequently show alcohol levels in the range of 5.0–8.5 percent ABV.

Yeast

Yeast is the key to both saisons and bières de garde. Because very individual yeast strains occurred in various locales, each region's beers possessed distinct character. Yeast-produced ester aromas (fruity, honey) are marked in saisons and somewhat subdued in bières de garde. Mentions of "musty" or "corky" aromas are described in bières de garde but are typically not found in saisons. On the other hand, peppery notes are found in saisons but not usually present in bières de garde.

Brewing Saisons and Bières de Garde

In our era of modern brewing, a simple click of the mouse enables us to obtain any number of yeast strains suitable for saisons and bières de garde. Historically, various yeasts came from distinct brewing regions, mostly in Belgium or France. The locals traded and/or shared the ones that produced the desired flavors. In time, yeast labs "captured," cultured, and packaged yeast strains, enabling brewers to produce both styles at any time of year. The key to producing quality saisons and bières de garde is very specific yeast strains and fermentation techniques.

I recently spoke with Michael Dawson of Wyeast Labs about flavor characteristics to expect when using some specific yeast strains and how higher fermentation temperatures might affect those flavors and produce additional character. Let's look at six specific yeast strains that work well for saisons and bières de garde. (Another lab that offers similar type yeast strains is White Labs.)

MAKE IT

Bière de Quattro

Below is the recipe for my personal Farmhouse Ale and, most important, the yeast-strain additions and their particular time of inoculation.

ALL-GRAIN

OG 1.070

FG 1.006

IBUs 25

ABV 8.2%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

12 pounds Pilsner malt

1 pound Vienna malt

1 pound Munich malt

HOP ADDITONS

1 ounce Perle at 60 minutes

1 ounce Styrian Goldings at 15 minutes

YEAST

Wyeast 3724 Belgian Saison

Wyeast 3725 Bière de Garde

Wyeast 3711 French Saison

dry Pasteur Champagne yeast

DIRECTIONS

For optimal fermentation, each yeast strain must be started with DME (dry malt extract) the day before brew day. Each starter should be one liter in volume.

Mash the crushed malt so the rest temperature is 152°F (67°C). The grain to water grist ratio is 1:1. Heat the strike water to 167°F (75°C), add the crushed malt, and mix in thoroughly. Mash for 1 hour. After the mash is complete, recirculate the runoff until it runs clear. Sparge the contents with 170°F (77°C) water until you have 6.5 gallons in your kettle. Follow the hop schedule above.

After the wort has cooled to below 80°F (27°C), transfer the contents to the primary fermentation vessel. Then the fun begins as you start pitching the yeast.

The first inoculation of yeast is Wyeast 3724 Belgian Saison. This strain produces

the spice and earthy notes typical in this style. Fermentation should start within 6 hours, possibly sooner.

Six hours after you observe yeast activity, pitch Wyeast 3725 Bière de Garde. These are competing strains, but there is still a full dinner buffet of malt sugars available for the hungry yeasts. The character of earthy, spicy, and phenolics of the second yeast will be produced.

Give both strains another 6 or 8 hours, and then pitch Wyeast 3711 French Saison. Being a very high attenuator and a good producer of esters, phenols, and spice, this yeast will join the others gorging and finishing the malt buffet.

Conduct the primary fermentation for 10 days. The temperature is up to you. Use what I've said above about the yeasts to guide your decision. (For a simple hot fermentation box, see "Heat up Your Fermentation," page 78.)

After 10 days in primary fermentation, transfer the contents into a secondary vessel. Leave it for 2 more weeks. The fermentation may be complete before, but give it time just to make sure.

Bottle condition with ¾ cup of corn sugar or 1¼ cups of DME (dry malt extract). Add the Champagne yeast to ensure bottle conditioning if the other three yeast strains have become weakened. After a week to 10 days, enjoy your farmhouse ale.

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless otherwise noted.





The Summer of Saison

Heat up Your Fermentation

If your local ambient temperature is 65–70°F (18°C–21°C) and you desire 85°F (29°C), you can build a simple hot fermentation box. Visit your local supermarket or department store and pick up a cardboard box large enough to cover your primary fermenter with a little extra headroom. Hang a 15- or 20-watt incandescent light bulb inside the box so that the bulb is not in contact with the cardboard. You don't want a fire! Cut a 6-inch x 6-inch flap in the top of the box to spill off and adjust the internal heat if the temperature gets too high. Punch a hole in the top of the box with a pencil and push in a thermometer or probe to monitor the temperature within. With a little practice and adjusting, you will be able to get the temperature you desire.

SAISON YEASTS

First let's look at my personal favorite—Wyeast 3724 Belgian Saison. At temperatures near 70°F (21°C), this yeast produces spicy notes, bubblegum aromatics, dry, crisp, and mildly acidic flavors. If you kick up the temperature to the 80s and 90s, increased phenolics, fruity esters, earthy notes, and a particular “funky” mustiness show up. Of the six strains described here, this strain benefits the most from high temperature fermentation. I've used it in a 1.080 OG saison that was fermented at 95°F (35°C). I expected rocket-fuel fusels, but got none. According to Dawson, fermenting Wyeast 3724 hot gives the best character with this yeast.

- Wyeast 3711 French Saison is best known for its ultra-high attenuation properties and moderate levels of esters and spice production in the 70–75°F (21–24°C) range. Increased temperatures in the 80s to 90s produce higher levels of phenols, fruity esters, and the spicy notes that I crave in a saison.

BIÈRE DE GARDE YEASTS

Although you can use the next four strains in the production of saisons, their forte is the bière de garde style.

- Wyeast 3522 Ardennes produces ester, phenol, and spicy profiles similar to Wyeast 3711 at 70°F (21°C) fermentation temperatures and increases all these factors at temperatures of 80–85°F (27–29°C). However, it may produce some fusels at higher temperatures.
- Wyeast 3463 Forbidden Fruit at 63–70°F (17–21°C) produces phenolics

and a subdued ester profile. At increased fermentation temperatures up to 80°F (27°C), it produces fruity ester and clovey, peppery phenols. I've used this strain in one of my saisons with additions of Asian white pepper and bitter orange. It was a good marriage of flavors, and the subtle spice the yeast produced blended well with the citrus and pepper.

- Wyeast 3726 Farmhouse is similar to Wyeast 3724 fermented at lower temperatures, but produces elevated earthy and musty notes at higher temperatures. It is also very attenuated, producing a dry finish.
- Wyeast 3725 Bière de Garde fermented at lower temperatures produces considerable earthy notes, but also some corky and musty aromas. Higher temperatures will give light phenol and spicy characters. This yeast is susceptible to fusel production, so you need to watch that your upper fermentation temperatures don't get too elevated.

Note that some bière de garde brewers use lager strains at various temperatures. It's the brewer's choice.

As you can see from this basic overview, ester, phenols, and spicy aromas are similar in both of these beer styles. The possibility of a fusel character is a reality, so you need to monitor temperatures, but more importantly you should experiment with these various strains and fermentation temperatures. I did just that in a bière de garde/saison I brewed a few summers ago. I used four distinct yeasts in an order of inoculation that would capture the character of each strain. It is a combination saison and bière de garde and is my personal Farmhouse Ale (page 77).



Fermentation Fascination

More than many, the saison and farmhouse ale styles showcase not just the power of yeast in turning sugar into alcohol, but the range of flavor that yeast provides. **Dave Carpenter** offers a primer ...

THE NEXT TIME YOU watch the evening news and remark to yourself or a loved one that society is on a downward spiral leading to humankind's inevitable demise, here's something positive to keep in mind: We're the only species that makes beer.

This is, of course, a lie. We're the only species that can make wort, but science has identified several species that can turn that wort into beer. Once they figure out the wort thing, we are doomed: Yeast will outlive us all, even the roaches.

Ignore yeast at your beer's peril because if you don't know yeast, you don't know beer.

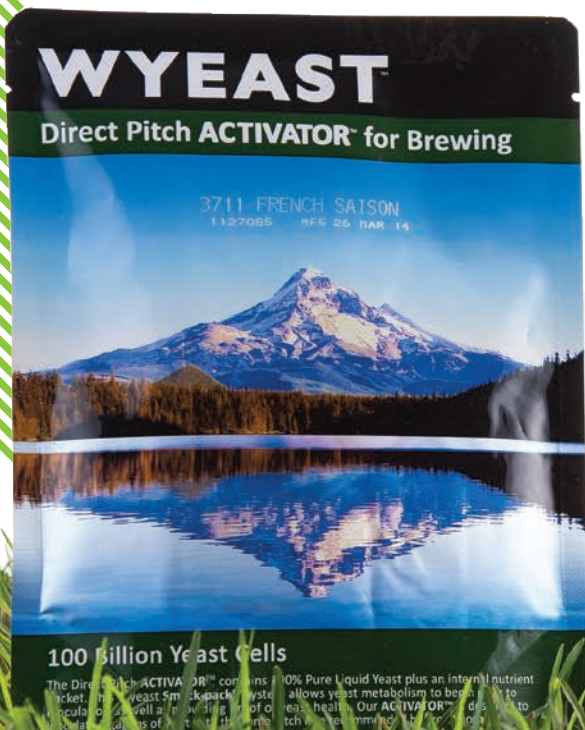
The Least Glamorous Ingredient

Breweries love to go on and on about premium barley, mountain spring water, and fresh whole-cone hops. But when is the last time you heard one build a marketing campaign around yeast? I didn't think so.

Before I started brewing at home, I thought yeast was just something you pick up at the grocery store when you want to bake bread. It comes in a little packet, and when you add it to a warm mixture of flour and water, magic ensues. Perhaps it was the same for you. Perhaps it still is.

But this rudimentary understanding is still far ahead of ancient brewers who believed that fermentation just sort of happened. The famous Bavarian beer purity law of 1516, the *Reinheitsgebot*, didn't even mention yeast because nobody knew what it was. It wasn't until Louis Pasteur proved that yeasts are not only responsible for fermentation but are, in fact, living things, that brewers began to understand these tiny microbes. So important was Pasteur's discovery that lager yeast, *Saccharomyces pastorianus*, bears his name.

That was just 150 years ago. Anthropologists say ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians started brewing about 5,000 years earlier, which means we've known about





The Summer of Saison

yeast for all of 3 percent of the history of beer. No wonder it still seems mysterious.

What Yeast Is

Yeast is a unicellular member of the fungus kingdom, a group of organisms that also makes possible such delicacies as Camembert and chanterelles. Yeast cells are eukaryotes, meaning they have nuclei, whereas bacteria lack such basic features. Imagine having no brain. That's how much more advanced yeasts are than bacteria.

Countless species of yeast have been identified, but only a few are of interest to beer enthusiasts. When brewers discuss yeast without further qualification, they're referring to strains of the species *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (ale yeast) or *Saccharomyces pastorianus* (lager yeast). You'll also hear about so-called wild yeasts, which include several members of genus *Brettanomyces*. Other microorganisms critical for certain sour styles, namely *Lactobacillus* and *Pediococcus*, are bacteria, not yeast.

What Yeast Does

At its most fundamental level, a yeast cell does three things:

1. It consumes sugar.
2. It produces alcohol and carbon dioxide.
3. It creates other yeast cells.

But that's only a small part of the story. In doing all of the above, a yeast cell also creates flavor compounds that can range from fruity (esters) to spicy (phenols), and even buttery (diacetyl) or rotten egg-like (sulfur).

New homebrewers are frequently surprised to learn just how much influence yeast exerts as it transforms wort into beer. If you've ever sampled American and English pale ales side by side, you may have noticed that English pale ale has a more robust malt character and less of a hops focus than its American cousin. But maybe you've also noticed that English

ales have a characteristic fruitiness that's not present in most American ales.

This difference is largely one of yeast selection. British yeast strains tend to produce lots of fruity esters, while many American yeast strains are relatively clean. In fact, certain beer styles such as Bavarian *Hefeweizen*, monastic tripels, and farmhouse saisons are so heavily defined by yeast that it's impossible to brew authentic versions without the correct strains. The considerable differences between American wheat beer and *Hefeweizen* mostly come down to yeast.

Yeast also determines how dry or sweet a beer will be, how clear or cloudy, even how malty or hoppy. It also happens to be the only ingredient in beer that makes more of itself.

How Yeast Works

If you haven't yet had the pleasure of brewing, wort (unfermented beer) is prepared by mashing grains or dissolving concentrated malt extract in hot water and boiling with hops for an hour or more. After the boiled, hopped wort is cooled to room temperature or lower, yeast is added (or *pitched* in brewing parlance). And then you wait a week or two for fermentation to occur. But what is actually going on during that time?

Yeast experts divide the fermentation process into three distinct phases: lag, growth, and stationary.

LAG PHASE

For several hours after yeast is added to fresh wort, a whole lot of nothing appears to happen. This lack of apparent activity prompts many first-time homebrewers to wonder whether they did something wrong and voice their concerns in Internet forums, where they're almost immediately told to relax and not worry. Think of the lag phase as the microbiological equivalent of jet lag

or altitude sickness: a sudden transition from one environment to another takes a bit of getting used to.

But yeast cells aren't being lazy during the lag phase. In fact, quite a lot is taking place, and much of the beer's character is determined at this time. Yeast cells begin to absorb nutrients from the wort and prepare for growth. Especially important to yeast health during this phase is sufficient oxygen. But having just been boiled for an hour or more, wort is usually deficient in oxygen when it comes right out of the kettle. That's why introducing oxygen is so critical at the start of fermentation.

Homebrewing guides usually instruct brewers to vigorously shake the carboy, rock the plastic bucket back and forth, or otherwise agitate chilled wort to introduce oxygen. Don't skip this step! Experienced homebrewers will even go so far as to dissolve pure oxygen into wort using sintered diffusion stones, but a good shake is almost as effective: it just takes a little more time and muscle.

The quality of the lag phase is also affected by pitch rate, which refers to how many yeast cells are used to inoculate the wort. It is a topic unto itself, remaining the focus of much debate and experimentation among professionals and hobbyists alike. An oft-quoted rule of thumb is to pitch 0.75 million cells per milliliter of wort per degree Plato of wort strength for ales, and twice as much for lagers. Pitching too many or too few cells can lead to off-flavors or beer with little character.

Also important is temperature. Every yeast strain has a range of optimal temperatures, typically 60–70°F (15–21°C) for ales and 45–55°F (7–12°C) for lagers. Aiming for a temperature below the optimal range can render yeast cells sluggish and even drop them out of suspension altogether. Allowing the temperature to rise too much will likely result in unpleasant flavors. Generally speaking, starting

fermentation at the low end of the range and letting the temperature gradually increase to the high end gives good results.

GROWTH PHASE

The growth phase is what most of us think of as “active fermentation.” This is when yeast cells are enthusiastically consuming wort sugars and converting them to carbon dioxide and alcohol. You’ll sometimes hear this phase referred to as *logarithmic* or *exponential* because of the rapidity with which cells reproduce.

This is also the most visually arresting portion of the fermentation cycle. A thick, fluffy white foam called *Kräusen* (pronounced “croy-zen”) appears on top of the beer, flecked with brown bits of hops and other wort sediment. If fermentation is taking place in a transparent vessel such as a carboy, you can see streams of carbon dioxide bubbles rising up the sides, and the airlock or blowoff will vigorously release gas.

This is also the phase during which homebrewers, be it their first batch or their five hundredth, can be observed crouched on the floor as they stare at their churning beer and sniff the bubbling airlock.

STATIONARY PHASE

Alas, all great journeys must come to an end, and the stationary phase represents the end of the road for our friendly fermenters. But even as they sense things slowing down, yeast cells remain active to the bitter end.

Unlike children, yeast cells enthusiastically pick up after themselves. During fermentation, they produce all kinds of unpleasant compounds that you definitely don’t want in your beer. But as the process winds down, yeast cells will actually reabsorb these compounds in preparation for going dormant.

One example of this janitorial role is

the so-called *diacetyl rest*, which some lager brewers employ during this phase. Diacetyl is a compound that tastes like movie theater popcorn—in fact, food manufacturers add copious amounts of the stuff to artificial butter flavoring to make it taste more like real butter. Raising the temperature of a lager by just a few degrees toward the end of fermentation can encourage yeast to reabsorb diacetyl, among other by-products of fermentation.

Another process of vital importance to homebrewers (and most craft brewers as well) is flocculation, which is the tendency for yeast cells to clump together. When the clumps reach critical mass, they drop to the bottom of the fermentor, clarifying the beer. Some strains do this more than others. British ale strains are famously flocculent, while German *Hefeweizen* yeast are famously resistant.

After flocculation, fermentation can be considered complete, though flavors may continue to evolve for some time.

Yeast in Practice

Any of the topics I’ve covered could easily fill its own article. But what does it all mean for the practical homebrewer? We can break it all down into five easy guidelines:

» Use the right yeast strain for the job.

Fermenting a German *Hefeweizen* with an American ale strain may very well create good beer, but it won’t be *Hefeweizen*.

» Use enough yeast cells for the job.

Calculate an appropriate pitch rate based upon the volume and strength of your wort (brewing software makes this a breeze). Five gallons of average-strength wort may be fine with just one yeast packet, but higher gravities and higher volumes require more yeast.

» Give yeast the right tools for the job.

Most of the nutrients that yeast cells need are readily available in wort. As long as you provide plenty of oxygen up front,

they’ll treat you well. Add a pinch of yeast nutrient if you’re nervous. Healthy yeast is happy yeast.

» **Ferment at the right temperature for the job.** Know the optimal temperature range for your yeast strain of choice and stay within it. This might mean setting up some form of temperature control or even brewing certain styles only at certain times of the year. But your efforts will be repaid in better beer.

» **Give yeast enough time to do the job.** Waiting may well be the hardest part of all. We’re all eager to taste our first or latest batch of beer, but remember that yeast cells operate on their own schedule, not ours. An English bitter might be ready to bottle in five days; a persnickety saison may need five weeks. With time and practice, you’ll be able to predict how your yeast will behave.

Treat your yeast well. Give it food, oxygen, and time. But above all, give it respect. And you will be rewarded.



More Resources

The Oxford Companion to Beer, edited by Garrett Oliver. (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Yeast: The Practical Guide to Beer Fermentation, by Chris White and Jamil Zainasheff. (Brewers Publications, 2010).





Belgian Beer: You're Probably Doing It Wrong

What makes a Belgian beer Belgian beer? **Joe Stange**, coauthor of *Around Belgium in 80 Beers*, argues that brewing it on Belgian soil makes it Belgian. But here are some tips for making *Belgian-style* beer ...

The Belgians,

who gave the world Tintin and the Smurfs, love their comic books and cartoons. They do not necessarily love it when brewers make cartoon caricatures of their beers.

Okay, so there are some credible American-made, Belgian-inspired beers out there—even a few great ones. Unfortunately, there are also a lot of silly ones: sweet, spiced, boozy, under-attenuated, under-hopped, under-carbonated.

For the moment, let's set aside the question of why an American would feel the need to brew a "Belgian-style" beer. Maybe it is homage, maybe inspiration, or maybe it is trading on a name with proven selling power. Maybe it is all of the above.

Here is the greater problem: Many of you are not doing it very well.

"You know, it's not because coriander is added, that something can be called Belgian," Antwerp-based serial taster and international beer judge Joris Pattyn told a California brewer one day in Bruges, when asked for an opinion on his American-made abbey-style tripel. That was immediately after the Belgian had sampled the brewer's excellent IPA.

"He probably had to stomach that," Pattyn said. "But next day, at the festival, he comes to me and says: 'Thank you for liking my IPA, and thank you for *not* liking my tripel!' That says it all: Many U.S. brewers are overenthusiastic and too easily satisfied. But as a rule, they accept criticism and remarks, and will try to improve."

Ready for some criticism and remarks?

Lock the spice cabinet.

Great Belgian beers are (often) unspiced. Yes, many of Belgium's most famous beers have a dab of spice. These include a few world classics—such as the dark strong ales of Rochefort and their light touch of coriander.

On the other hand: Many of Belgium's greatest beers are totally unspiced. And many of its *worst* beers take a ham-handed approach to throwing nonsense into the kettle.

Maybe Americans have followed the wrong examples. Or maybe the knowledge that Belgians sometimes spice their beers lends itself to an excess of creative license. "Add to that the old U.S. adage 'more is better,' and you might have an inkling of the issue at hand," Pattyn said.

Our best advice: Whisper the word "coriander" over the brew kettle, and bow in the direction of India. You will get more credible Belgian character from the four tips below than anything found in your kitchen pantry.

Our second-best advice: If you feel it absolutely necessary to spice—for example, you want a traditional Hoegaarden-style Witbier—start with the teeniest amount. The goal is to add complexity, not to make a beer that actually tastes like the spice you are adding.

Embrace hops judiciously.

Hops use could be an article, or a book, unto itself. I will try to be brief. Hoppy beers have been around in the Low Countries for about 700 years, but for a while, it was hard to tell.

The modern stereotype of Belgian ale as lightly hopped is based on a historical

quirk. For a relatively short period in Belgium's history—from post-World War II to the Cold War—many "specialty beers" leaned sweeter and stronger, both to differentiate themselves from wildly popular lagers and to appeal to a few generations of Coke drinkers.

That period overlapped with the beginnings of the international craft beer movement—even helping to spawn it. Sweeter imports such as Leffe were among the first that Americans discovered in the 1980s, unlike anything they had tasted before.

But the craft beer movement has many vectors, and one of its hallmarks is a greater appetite for *lupulin*. Belgians are not immune. These days many Belgian craft brewers are as inspired by their own hoppy history as they are by American IPAs.

Not that hoppy beers ever really disappeared from Belgium. Saison Dupont is archetypal, and the Westmalle Trappist Dubbel and Tripel have an underappreciated hop character that countless imitators—including many Belgian ones—seem to miss. But there has been something of a hoppy renaissance gaining steam over the past twenty years.

De Ranke's XX Bitter was an early example, often mislabeled as a "Belgian IPA" when it bears

Is "secret" the Flemish word for coriander? A cartoon display at the Schaerbeek Beer Museum alludes to the tricks of Belgium's local brewers.





Steam still powers the mash tun at the Brasserie à Vapeur in Pipaix, Hainaut.

more resemblance to the rustic farmhouse ales of yore. A more recent example of the trend comes from the Vandewalle nanobrewery in Lo-Reninge, West Flanders. Historian-brewer Chris Vandewalle's Bitter Blond is based on ales enjoyed by seasonal farm workers of the Yser River valley before World War I tore the region apart. He chucks in local Poperinge hops to the tune of 40 IBUs.

This is not to say that you will win competitions with 65 IBU dubbels and witbiers. You won't. Balance matters. But for now let us blast the myth that Belgian beers are not hoppy, and let that wreck sink to the bottom of the Atlantic.

Mashing matters.

Mashing is another topic that could fill a textbook. We can't cover it all, but let's begin with this: Belgian brewers do multi-step mashes.

And I repeat: *Belgian brewers do multi-step mashes.*

Also, they do it with less modified, Continental malt—European malt for European beers.

Now let's back up. Think of the great Belgian ales you have met in your life—that pillowy head of thick foam that looks like meringue as it lasts through the whole glass; that structured body carried on sparkling carbonation that accentuates dryness.

How many American-made beers claiming to be Belgian-style really achieve that kind of head retention and mouth-feel? There are some, but not many. Far too often, brewers are mashing most or all of their beers at the same single temperature—and often carbonating them the same as other styles—counting on “Belgian” yeast to work all the magic. You can make tasty beer that way. But it has nothing to do with Belgium, where presentation matters.

There is nothing wrong with single-temperature mash per se. There are pragmatic and economic reasons for it, and it's ideal for our well-modified malts. Most of us do it at home. And to be fair, mashing well-modified malts at a lower temperature, say, 146–149°F (63–65°C), can get you pretty close. Will you get exactly the same result? No. It's different malt and a different process.

One of the best caps of moussey foam in the business comes from the hilly, wooded Ardennes region, out of a little village called Achouffe. That is where Chris Bauweraerts—a modern craft beer pioneer on Belgian soil—started brewing and selling La Chouffe in 1980. So we asked him.

“It makes no sense to brew ‘Belgian-style beers’ with only one mash temperature,” Bauweraerts said. “The one-mash-temperature works, of course, but then the beer has a bad . . . head retention, and probably the beer has a lack of body.

American or British beer consumers don't care very much about a nice mouthwatering and inviting head on the top of a glass of beer. But Czech, German, Belgian, French—in short, the brewers of the Western part of the European continent—

Key Stats on a Few Belgian Favorites

Using the best information available—directly from the brewers when possible—here are selected metrics on a few well-known Belgian ales.

Orval

Mash schedule:

142°F (61°C) for 15 minutes, 154°F (68°C) for 25 minutes, 162°F (72°C) for 30 minutes, and 170°F (77°C) for 10 minutes before sparging at 170°F (77°C).

IBUs: 38

Carbonation: 5.0 volumes

Chouffe Houblon Dobbelen IPA Tripel

Mash schedule:

127°F (53°C) for 20 minutes, 145°F (63°C) for 20 minutes, 154°F (68°C) for 10 minutes, and ramp to 176°F (80°C) for sparging.

IBUs: 53

Carbonation: 4.3 volumes

Saison Dupont

Mash schedule:

113°F (45°C) mash-in, gradually raised to 162°F (72°C) over more than 90 minutes.

IBUs: 32

Carbonation: about 3.5 volumes

want a nice head on their glass of beer. A nice head is part of the Belgian beer culture.”

Best advice: Use less-modified Continental base malt and try a protein rest with one or two other steps to promote attenuation and fermentability.

Second-best advice: If you must stick with a single temperature, choose a lower temperature for higher attenuation, using some wheat or CaraPils to help boost the foam.

Don't hold back on carbonation.

There are two important points to make here: First, the best Belgian ales are bottle-conditioned, not force-carbonated. I'm sorry to be the one to tell you, but the seemingly sensible mantra—"CO₂ is CO₂"—is a fib. Bottle conditioning is a different process that contributes to a different appearance, mouthfeel, and evolution in flavor. It also leads to a longer shelf life. Yes, there is risk that drinkers will upset your bottles before they pour, leading to a glass of beer that is not as clear as it could be when poured under optimal conditions. I suggest that brewers who obsess about consistently crystal-clear beer stop and think about whether this whole craft/artisanal thing is really for them.

The second point: Lots of sharp little bubbles. Belgian ales tend to be highly carbonated, one of those tricks affecting both mouthfeel and presentation. Most of the all-stars are well over 3.0 volumes of carbonation. Important to note: You will want thicker bottles, as most shell-thin American ones are reliable only up to 2.5 volumes or so.

Stan Hieronymus recorded a few key examples in *Brew Like a Monk* (Brewers Publications, 2005): Westmalle goes to 4.0, Duvel to 4.25, and Orval goes as high as 5.0. As an exercise, pour these beers aggressively down the middle of the glass and wait for the bubbles to calm down, killing some of that carbonation. Then taste it.

Is it yummy? Sure. Is it the same experience? Not at all.

Yeast is not nearly as important as you think.

Brewers are often a little too concerned with the origins of their yeast strains. Yeast catalogs have become vaguely pornographic, catering to every fetish. We are past due for a postmodern view on yeast and fermentation.

The modern view is that yeast makes beer, scientifically tied to the place from whence the yeast originally (supposedly) came. The *postmodern* view is more empowering, although some will find it hard to accept. It holds that *you* make beer. And that beer is whatever you say it is, wherever *you* happen to be.

So, using a "Belgian" yeast strain will not make your beer Belgian. Only one thing will make your beer Belgian: brewing it on Belgian soil. Meanwhile there are lots of things that can make your beer "Belgian-style" besides the yeast—see the points above.

I will take this further: You do not need "saison" yeast to make saison. Saison is a tradition on the one hand and a marketing scheme on the other—and there is nothing wrong with either. Saison is not a microorganism. Its DNA is cultural, not chemical. As Senne brewer (and noted saison history buff) Yvan De Baets recently told a gathering at the Craft Brewers Conference in Denver: "Farmers in the middle of the countryside didn't order their saison yeast from Wyeast."

A Belgian brewer once blew my mind by telling me that he was using the equivalent of Safale US-05 American ale yeast. He was understandably reluctant to let that information slip out. American yeast doesn't make Belgian beer, does it? Well, of course it does. If it's made in Belgium.

Ronald Mengerink's brewery *Dochter van de Korenaar* provides an interesting case. It's in Baarle Hertog, which quirky history made into a Belgian enclave surrounded by Dutch soil. Also, Mengerink is Dutch. His yeast is American, mostly. His beers are Belgian anyway—and not just because of where they are made. His sense of balance, attenuation—yes, he employs a multistep mash—and ample carbonation help to make the case. A dose of eccentricity and packaging with *panache* don't hurt either.

My point here is not to argue that brewers should use cleaner yeast to make Belgian beers. Doing so will not help you make a credible abbey beer, for example, which wants a certain subtly spicy fermentation profile. My point is that yeast is only one of many decisions that give a beer its final character, and that brewers should not feel tied to words on a packet. Yeast evolves. Orval's was probably English in origin.

Furthermore, you can take inspiration from Belgium without making Belgian beer, and even without calling it "Belgian-style." You can steal a trick or three and call it what it is: American beer, made on American soil. I promise that Belgian brewers are stealing American tricks and combining them with their own. Their beer will still be Belgian.

This international craft beer thing is a wondrous, many-vectored thing. It lets you do pretty much whatever you want within the bounds of making drinkable beer.

Seriously though, consider locking that spice cabinet.



MAKE IT

Postmoderne Belgian-Style Blond

ALL-GRAIN

There are two ideas at work with this simple, hoppy, blond, Belgian-inspired recipe. The first idea is to use ingredients and techniques that provide typical Belgian character *without* using crude spices or the usual yeasts.

The second idea is to annoy traditionalists, just for sport.

OG: 1.048

FG: 1.006

IBUs: 35

ABV: 5%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

8 pounds Belgian pale ale malt
1 pound Belgian wheat malt

HOP ADDITIONS

1 ounce Styrian Goldings at 45 minutes
2 ounces East Kent Goldings at 15 minutes

DIRECTIONS

Mash in: 122°F (50°C) for 30 minutes.
Step 1: 152°F (67°C) for 45 minutes.
Mash out: 168°F (76°C) for 10 minutes.
Boil for 90 minutes.

YEAST

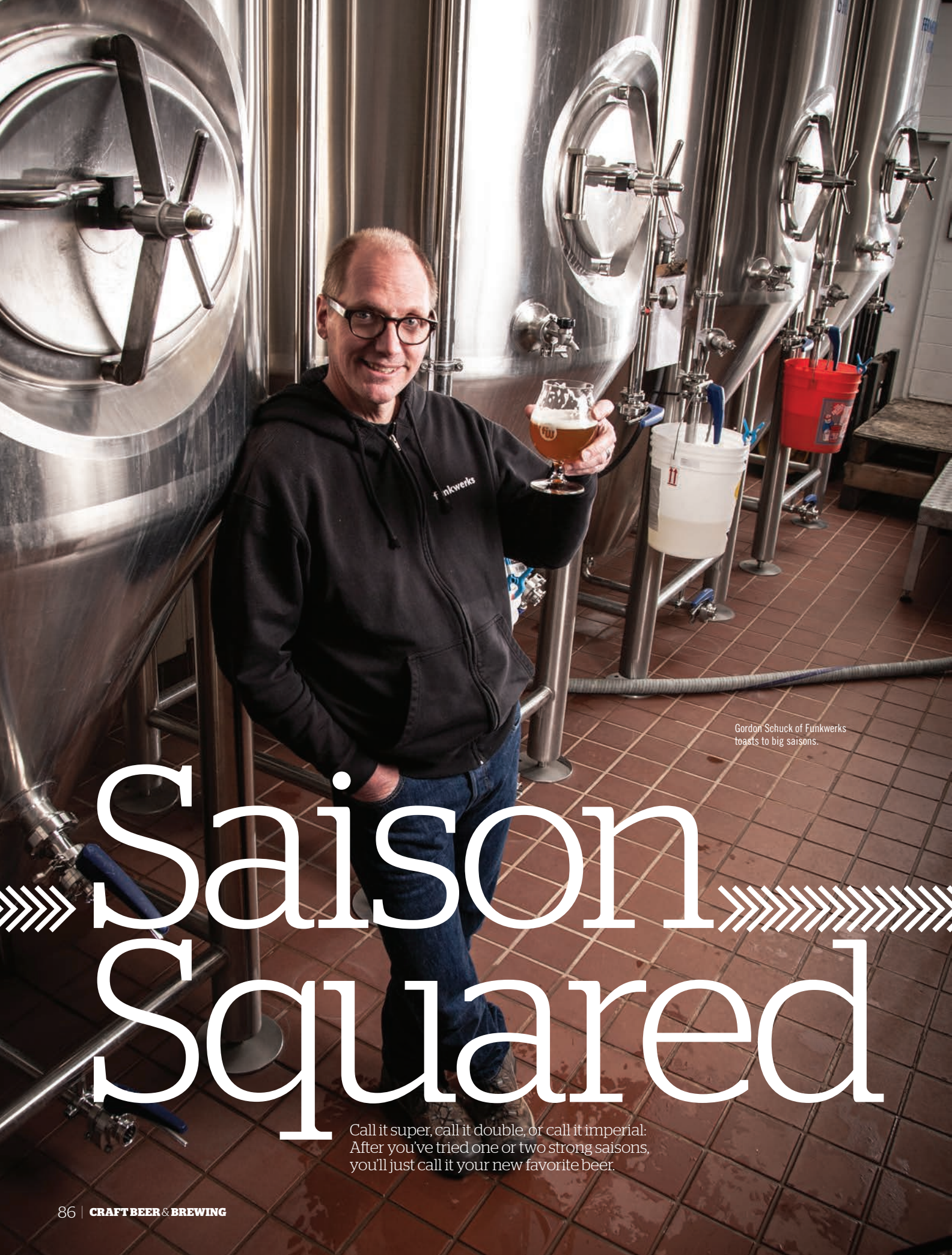
This is where you play. Try your favorite non-Belgian yeast strain, cleaner European strain like S-33, or anything unconventional like WLP670 White Labs American Farmhouse Blend.

BREWER'S NOTES

Prime and bottle-condition to 4.0 volumes of CO₂ in convivial 75 cl (750 ml) bottles.

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless otherwise noted.





Gordon Schuck of Funkwerks
toasts to big saisons.

»»» Saison Squared »»»

Call it super, call it double, or call it imperial:
After you've tried one or two strong saisons,
you'll just call it your new favorite beer.

WHO, OTHER THAN U.S. craft brewers, would dare take a light, refreshing ale, originally meant to sustain farm workers through warm summer days, and then boost the alcohol so much as to promote more snoozing than sowing?

Well, the Belgians, for one. From Belgian super saisons to American imperial interpretations, a stronger farmhouse ale is emerging: a saison that delights modern palates as much as its forebearers fortified farmhands. And brewing one at home isn't so different from making a standard saison.

Super Saison

While term *imperial saison* might sound new, the idea is anything but. In the seventh chapter of what remains the definitive guide to saison and *bière de garde*, *Farmhouse Ales: Culture and Craftsmanship in the Belgian Tradition* (Brewers Publications, 2004), author Phil Markowski describes a class of saison that's stronger and higher in alcohol than the standard farmhouse ale, the so-called "super saison."

When Brasserie Dupont first began exporting Saison Vieille Provision to the United States in the late 1980s, the brewery's best-seller wasn't its now-ubiquitous saison, Markowski notes. No, Dupont's most popular product at the time was Moinette. At 8.5 percent ABV, and brewed in both blonde and brown varieties, it's not the sort of thing you'd keep in your flask for a day of productive work in the field.

But Moinette is far from unique in its strength. Other Belgian examples of super-strength farmhouse ales include

- Avec les bons Vœux de la brasserie, Brasserie Dupont, 9.5% ABV
- Bière de Beloeil, Brasserie Dupont, 8.5% ABV
- Fantôme De Noel, Brasserie Fantôme, 10.0% ABV
- Fantôme Saison, Brasserie Fantôme, 8.0% ABV
- Vapeur Cochonne, Brasserie à Vapeur, 9.0% ABV

As saison gained popularity in the United States, American brewers, as they are wont to do, pushed the limits of the style

further and further north. And because American craft brewers prefer to bestow the appellation *imperial* on beers that go above and beyond, imperial saison was born. It remains an uncommon style, but a few domestic examples you may have encountered include the following:

- Matt's Burning Rosids Imperial Cherrywood-Smoked Saison, Stone Brewing Co. (Escondido, California), 10.5% ABV
- Tropic King, Funkwerks, Inc. (Fort Collins, Colorado), 8.0% ABV
- Unplugged Imperial Saison (not currently produced), New Glarus Brewing Company (New Glarus, Wisconsin), 8.7% ABV
- Zaison, Brewery Vivant (Grand Rapids, Michigan), 9.0% ABV

Overseas readers may also have run into Double Saison, brewed by Stoombierbrouwerij De Keyzer in Maastricht, The Netherlands. At 6.5 percent ABV, however, the beer is more a typical saison than its name suggests.

Imperial Saison by the Numbers

If saison is difficult to define, then imperial saison is even more so. Neither the 2008 Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) nor the 2013 Great American Beer Festival (GABF) beer style guidelines include descriptions for imperial saison. However, categories 16C and 69, respectively, characterize normal-strength saison, and from these numbers we may estimate numbers for imperial saison.

See the chart below for what the two style guides have to say about the everyday saison we all know and love.

It's clear that the standard saison category is broad enough to accept a wide range of interpretations, and this breadth may explain, in part, why imperial saison is less common than other imperial styles. Nonetheless, aiming for the upper end of the recommendations, or slightly higher, is a good target for imperial saison.

Practical Considerations

While homebrewing high-gravity, high-alcohol beer always presents challenges, making imperial saison at home may be somewhat easier than brewing other high-gravity styles. Because so much of the character of saison is driven by yeast, it's possible to "imperialize" a saison with only minor adjustments to the basic formulation.

Yeast

Forget everything you think you know when working with saison yeast. Some strains are notoriously finicky, while others are easier to use. White Labs 565 and Wyeast 3724 (reportedly descended from Brasserie Dupont's strains) are famous for stopping partway through fermentation and may require temperatures as high as 95°F (35°C) to achieve full attenuation. White Labs 568 and Wyeast 3711 may be better choices for homebrewers who have neither the time nor the patience to attend to the demands of a high-maintenance yeast strain. Brewers who prefer dry yeast may consider Safbrew T-58 from Fermentis and Belle Saison from Lallemend. (For

Saison Style Changes

	2008 BJCP Category 16C	2013 GABF Category 69
Original gravity (OG)	1.048-1.065	1.055-1.080
Final gravity (FG)	1.002-1.012	1.004-1.016
Bitterness (IBU)	20-35	20-40
Color (SRM)	5-14	4-14
Alcohol by volume (ABV)	5-7%	4.4-8.4%



The Summer of Saison

more about saison and bière de garde yeast strains, see “Homebrew Fundamentals for Saisons and Bières de Garde,” page 76.)

A signature hallmark of saison is its dry finish. The BJCP and GABF style guides list terminal gravity ranges for saison at 1.002–1.012 and 1.004–1.016, respectively. Imperial saison should also finish dry, but the higher alcohol and higher hops levels demand more body and slightly more sweetness for balance.

But we’re talking only a few gravity points here, not the residual sweetness of a barleywine. Targeting a final gravity in the range of 1.006–1.015 should supply the extra backbone to support a strong, but drinkable brew. Go too low and you risk one-dimensionality; too high, and sweetness could throw the beer out of balance.

Malt

As with regular saison, the malt bill should consist primarily of pilsner or pale malts. Some specialty malts can lend additional depth, but don’t go overboard: too many specialty malts can distract from the fruity and spicy flavors that make imperial saison so different from imperial IPA or barleywine. If you want a more robust malt flavor, including Munich or Vienna malt can lend depth without sweetness.

All-grain brewers should mash for wort fermentability. A long rest (90–120 minutes) at a relatively low mash temperature of 144°–149°F (62–65°C) gives beta-amylase enzymes a chance to work and create very fermentable wort. Brewers who prefer stepped mashes and want a very dry finish can perform individual rests that promote beta-amylase and alpha-amylase.

Extract brewers should use fresh pilsner (extra light) malt extract and add flavor and color with specialty grains. Wort from malt extract is rarely as fermentable as wort from mashed grain, so extract and partial mash brewers should consider including simple sugar in their imperial saison formulations. Simple sugar is 100 percent fermentable and can help lighten body and encourage a low final gravity.

Hops

Now here’s a chance to have some real fun. The right selection of hops can complement the unique flavors generated by saison yeast and deliver flavor combinations simply not possible in other styles.

Some hops offer a cleaner perception of bitterness than others, but just about any variety will do for this purpose. Magnum, Warrior, Chinook, Nugget, and Galena all offer high levels of alpha acids with a clean finish. Aim for the high end of the recommended bitterness for normal saison, around 30–40 IBUs.

For flavor and aroma, the sky is the limit. Classic Continental varieties such as Styrian Goldings, Strisselspalt, Saaz, and Hallertauer Mittelfrüh are traditional for regular saison and can work well in imperial versions as well. Fruity American varieties such as Amarillo, Citra, Mosaic, and El Dorado, and southern hemisphere hops such as Nelson Sauvin, Rakau, and Riwaka can lend additional dimensions to the already spicy and fruity flavors of saison yeast.

Fermentation and Packaging

Saison strains benefit from ramped temperature profiles for full attenuation: a fermentation that starts in the mid 60s and ends in the upper 70s is recommended if you have the means to do so. The Dupont strain, in particular, may need unusually high temperatures (85–95°F; 29–35°C) to finish and may take several weeks. Patience is a virtue, but less saintly brewers may consider strains such as Wyeast 3711 that finish up more quickly.

Effervescence is a key component of farmhouse ales, and so it should be with imperial saison. Between 2.5 and 3.0 volumes of carbon dioxide is common. While brewers who keg will have no problems, those who bottle should make sure their bottles can handle higher carbonation levels.

Whether you brew a traditional, quaffable saison for summer or a strong sipper for cooler weather, the versatility of saison makes it an excellent canvas upon which to paint for your palate. Brew up your own glass of imperial *joie de vivre* and discover how to make imperial saison your own. 

MAKE IT

Funkwerks Tropic King

ALL-GRAIN

Funkwerks, Inc., is a small, saison focused brewery in Fort Collins, Colorado. It was named Small Brewery of the Year at the 2012 Great American Beer Festival. Its signature Saison took gold at the same event after having won silver the year before. If you’re lucky enough to live in one of the few states in which Funkwerks’ beers are distributed, you already know just how good Tropic King imperial saison is. Cofounder and Co-owner Gordon Schuck was kind enough to provide us a homebrew-sized recipe. Brew this yourself and discover why Tropic King has become a local legend.

OG: 1.064

FG: 1.005

IBUs: 30

ABV: 8%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

10 pounds, 2 ounces Pale Malt 2L
2 pounds, 2 ounces Munich 10L
10 ounces Wheat malt
6 ounces Carapils

HOP SCHEDULE

0.5 ounces Rakau at 60 minutes
0.5 ounces Rakau at 10 minutes
0.67 ounces Opal at 0 minutes
0.67 ounces Rakau at dry-hop

DIRECTIONS

Single infusion mash at 150°F (66°C) for 75 minutes.
Boil for 60 minutes.

YEAST

Wyeast 3711 French Saison

BREWER'S NOTES

Pitch yeast at 65°F (18°C) and ramp up the temperature to 75°F (24°C) over 48 hours. The brewery says, “Bursting with aromas of passion fruit, mango, and peach, our imperial saison is brewed using New Zealand Rakau hops. Combined with notes of pepper and ginger produced by our house yeast strain, Tropic King has a unique flavor that has gained it a loyal following. Serve at 50°F (10°C) in a tulip glass.” Gordon adds, “We account for whirlpool isomerization at the brewery, so homebrewers may want to increase the 60-minute bittering addition.”

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless otherwise noted.



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The
Summer
of
Saison



Tasted



Our blind-tasting panel compares the best commercially available **Bières de Garde, Saisons, Brett Saisons, Session Saisons, Wits, and Sour Wheats** in the United States.



Allagash Saison

ABV: 6.1% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Allagash Saison is our interpretation of a classic Belgian farmhouse style. It's golden hued, brewed with a 2-Row blend, malted rye, oats, and dark Belgian candi sugar and hopped with Tettnang, Bravo, and Cascade hops. Fermented with a traditional saison yeast strain, Saison exhibits notes of spice and tropical fruit in the aroma. Citrus and a peppery spice dominate the flavor.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Sweet aroma of bubblegum and lots of lemon/orange candy. Nice floral notes balance the citrus. Almost like a cherry blossom. Some honey."

Flavor: "Moderately sweet malt flavor and citrus with some spicy, peppery notes. Strong lemon zest flavor. Sweetness carries through but is balanced by other complexities. Dryness indicative of light sugar as with a triel. A little too bitter in the finish, like a lemon rind. Some warmth, but not hot."

Overall: "Strongly flavored and pleasant, but the aroma is a little sweet. Good balance of spices. Carbonic, bitter, and refreshing."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

90



Anchor Saison

ABV: 7.2% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

The distinctiveness of roasted Belgian wheat malt is enhanced by the peppery, clove-like flavors of a locally cultured saison-style yeast. For this release, we chose three California ingredients—lemongrass, lemon peel, and ginger—whose synergy adds a tangy crispness and herbal spiciness to this sharply refreshing, uniquely Californian saison.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Fruity sweetness dominates. Slightly earthy, spicy, funky character. Light lemon soap aroma with ginger. An oddly earthy, almost cheese-like or mushroom-like character."

Flavor: "Sweetness is profiled and carries notes of moderate malt and lemon citrus. Lemon and ginger. Fruit character balanced by medium bitterness. Earthy, spicy notes help balance and supply a dry, graham cracker finish."

Overall: "Very enjoyable and refreshing. Interesting choices of ingredients. Good balance of sweet citrus and earthy hops. If you like beets, you'll like this beer. Spices could be crisper."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 17
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 8

85



Aspen Brewing Saison

ABV: 6.8% | IBU: 43 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

A traditional Belgian farmhouse Saison brewed in celebration of long days and spring sunshine. Pilsner malt, curacao orange peel, Kent Goldings Hops, and special farmhouse yeast produce this straw-colored hoppy beer.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Notes of pepper and citrus. Malt sweetness and citrus are apparent. Bright fruitiness of raspberry and sour cherry. Pepper and spices are present but not overpowering. Pineapple and biscuits."

Flavor: "Citrus orange sweetness and a slightly herbal character along with spicy pepper notes. Lots of yeast character. Fruity citrus and apples with light grapefruit. Finishes somewhat bitter with moderate sweetness. Bitterness and sweet orange peel fighting through to the end."

Overall: "Good balance of fruit sweetness with spices. Stronger bitterness than some examples. Complex fruit character. Good yeast esters and hop bitterness, but the orange peel makes for an odd finish."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

93



Boulevard Brewing Tank 7

ABV: 8.5% | IBU: 38 | SRM: 6

What the brewer says:

A straw colored, light-to-medium bodied beer with an earthy, spicy, grapefruit aroma and flavor, a soft, sweet malt flavor and a prominent hop bitterness. Beginning with a big surge of fruity aromatics and grapefruit-hoppy notes, the flavor of this complex, straw-colored ale tapers off to a peppery, dry finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "A strong, excellent aroma with moderate saison spice character. Citrusy orange, lemon, and grapefruit with moderate wheat and Pilsner malt sweetness and some floral notes. Lots of earthiness and some banana esters. Hops seem more American than is typical."

Flavor: "Tastes like a lemon Sweet Tart! Malt sweetness with lemon and slightly spicy notes. Earthy without being funky. An almost rose-like hop note and nice, big fruity banana esters. Highly carbonated with a crisp, dry finish."

Overall: "Strong flavors, but very nice. Floral, perfumey, citrusy, and insanely lemony. A balanced, complex, refreshing beer. Lots of carbonation: It stings and leaves you wanting more."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

98



Brasserie Dupont Saison Dupont

ABV: 6.5% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Coppery blonde, the finest aromas, and a strong bitterness transform this beer into a thirst-quencher. Our selection of yeasts is the perfect base for these typical aromas and ditto taste. A real refermentation in the bottle, which will continue for a long time in your cellar, results in this complex and aromatic beer.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Floral notes in the aroma are backed by sweetness. Light wheat, hint of solvent. A bit of lemon and spice, white pepper and coriander. Unfortunately, review bottle was light struck and somewhat skunky."

Flavor: "Light malt sweetness with moderately earthy hop bitterness. Nice balanced sweetness of lemon and orange citrus with pepper-like spicy notes and some banana. Flavor is much better than aroma. Finishes nice and dry. Highly carbonated."

Overall: "A really good beer that might have experienced poor shipping conditions. A traditional, old-world saison. Very good balance between fruity and spicy flavors. Balanced and refreshing."

AROMA: 9
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

89



Brasserie Fantôme Saison

ABV: 8.0% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Fruity, sweet, golden, 8% alcohol, a best of!

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Tropical fruit aromas of Sweet-Tarts, Smarties, or Sour Patch Kids candy. Faint malt sweetness, honey, and a touch of alcohol. Very different. One of the most unique aromas of any saison."

Flavor: "Very juicy, fruity flavor of lemon, orange, and tangerine. Some spicy notes but dominated by sweetness. Moderate malt with mango, passion fruit, and a bit of pineapple. Finishes dry and crisp with some lingering hop bitterness."

Overall: "A very refreshing, juicy, fruity saison. This is candy for adults! Love the fruity sweetness balanced with just enough hops so as not to be cloying. Very tropical! Out of style in a wonderful way."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

98



Firestone Walker Opal

ABV: 7.5% | IBU: 35 | SRM: 4

What the brewer says:

Lemon grass and gooseberry meet peppery spice and fresh grain aromas. Spicy Belgian yeast creates a complex yet dry and refreshing canvas with splashes of citrus and stone fruit with a bright tropical white wine finish. Hop bitterness is assertive yet harmonious rounding out slightly tart and refreshing.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Nice floral rose notes with some pepper and sweetness from the malt. Lemony citrus with a faint hint of solvent and prominent peppercorn. Noble hop aroma and light continental malt sweetness."

Flavor: "Balance of moderate malt sweetness and fruity character with slight herbal spice. Some earthy hop and slight funkiness. Very nice fruity character and moderate tartness. Good balance. Effervescent, dry finish."

Overall: "Liked this one a lot, but really hard to articulate exactly why. Tartness is excellent and well balanced. Well hopped, but not over-hopped. A very drinkable, beautiful beer. Excellent saison."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

97



Funkwerks Saison

ABV: 6.8% | IBU: 25 | SRM: 4

What the brewer says:

This tawny, orange-hued beer pours with a rocky white head. Aromas are of passion fruit, tangerine, and black pepper. Flavors are a cascade of orange, lemon verbena, ginger, and pepper before finishing with a dry, lingering bitterness that awaits another sip. Serve at 50°F in a tulip glass.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Good lemon profile with malt sweetness. Odd, grassy, lemon zest American hop. Interesting earthy floral in the nose. Crushed pepper. Fruity sweet esters."

Flavor: "Well balanced. Sweet lemon character and light malt sweetness. Pronounced saison yeast character with unique hops that work well but are a departure from the norm. Good, lovely hop complexity with medium bitterness. Crisp, nice carbonation delivers flavors well. Slight carbonic twang."

Overall: "Exceedingly refreshing, balanced, and drinkable. Good complexity of both hop and malt with mild spice and slight sweetness. I liked this and could drink a lot of it."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

96



Goose Island Sofie

ABV: 6.5% | IBU: 20 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Sofie is a tart, dry, sparkling ale. A subtle, spicy white pepper note, a hint of citrus from the orange peel and a creamy vanilla finish make Sofie an intriguing choice for champagne drinkers and beer drinkers who are fond of Belgian saisons.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Fruity character is complex and dances alongside spicy pepper. Very white wine-like with nuances of pears and apples. Moderate malt aroma."

Flavor: "Sweet fruity notes of lemon citrus blend with white wine character. Mild spices balance to keep from finishing too sweet. Low hop bitterness. Slightly dry finish with a little lingering sweetness. A touch of acidity and a little oak round it out. Good carbonation but low head retention."

Overall: "A refreshing, interesting, unique take on saison. Tasty and layered. Sweet, but not too sweet. A very lively beer. Wine character is excellent. If you told someone this was wine, they might believe you: a great crossover beer for pinot grigio or sauvignon blanc drinkers!"

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

94



Great Divide Colette

ABV: 7.3% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Colette is our homage to the saisons that Belgian farmworkers have enjoyed for centuries. Brewed with barley, wheat, and rice and fermented at high temperatures with a special blend of four different yeast strains, Colette is fruity and slightly tart, with a dry finish that makes it that rarest of treats — a beer as refreshing as it is complex.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Fruity and malty, wheaty sweetness balanced with some spicy, peppery aromas. Nice lemon and banana. Wonderfully floral and fruity hop character. A touch of phenols."

Flavor: "Moderate malty sweetness and fruity lemon character. Finish has some hop bitterness but is still sweet. Amazing hop flavor. Some oxidized cardboard flavors. Very sweet. Warming but not hot."

Overall: "A tasty beer, but could use more hop character to round it out. Middle of the road and somewhat muted. Slightly too sweet, but very good. Love the hops."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

90



North Coast Le Merle

ABV: 7.9% | IBU: 26 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Le Merle is a rustic ale, pale in color, inspired by the rich brewing traditions of the Flanders region. Abundant hops and a Belgian yeast strain contribute exotic aromas of tropical fruit.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Spicy notes present with sweetness of malt and orange fruitiness. A hint of lemony tartness and some tropical fruit character. Some herbal notes that work well with the fruit. Not much yeast character."

Flavor: "Malt sweetness up front. Sweet, maybe even too sweet, but sweetness was well balanced with acidity, hops, and carbonic bite. Mild hop character, earthy and lemony, with excellent yeast esters. Wish it were more carbonated."

Overall: "Love the fruitiness and balance. A good beer, but really under-carbonated—not enough to carry the aromas and flavors. Could benefit from a little more complexity of flavors. Would work better as a tripel than as a saison."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

89



Brewery Ommegang Hennepin

ABV: 7.7% | IBU: 24 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

A moderately hoppy ale with a champagne-like effervescence, Hennepin has a crisp start followed by malt sweetness balanced with a firm bitterness. Pouring a bright golden color with a spicy-sweet balance of orange peel, sweet malt, hops, and ginger, Hennepin makes way for a dry finish with a slight bite of ginger.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Coriander, black pepper, and orange. Good sweet malt with apple and pear fruit aroma. Subtle ginger. Light spicy hop notes and faint herbs in the background."

Flavor: "Medium biscuity malt sweetness accented by bright orange citrus. Coriander is obvious but not overwhelming. Low-to-moderate hop bitterness. Finish is sweet and could use more dryness to round it out. Highly carbonated but mellow. Some acidity."

Overall: "Love how the spices are obvious but don't overwhelm the other aspects of this saison. Spice levels are just where they're supposed to be. Nothing over the top. A nicely well-rounded, balanced beer."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

95



Perennial Artisan Ales Saison de Lis

ABV: 5.0% | IBU: 20 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

A straw-colored Belgian-style saison brewed with chamomile flowers. It is fermented with a traditional saison yeast strain that imparts fruity and spicy notes that dovetail perfectly with the tea-like quality of the chamomile. Finishes dry, tart, and refreshing.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Nice malt sweetness that backs and showcases a nice tea-like herbal character. Faint earthiness. Pleasant, understated herbal notes."

Flavor: "Well-balanced and subtle malt and citrus notes blend with herbs and floral flavors. Wonderful sweet orange and vanilla with graham crackers. Spices are subtle and complement the malt nicely. Fruity acidity with light apple from the chamomile. Dry finish."

Overall: "Very enjoyable, drinkable, and refreshing. A well-structured beer with good placement and level of chamomile. Were I not looking for the chamomile, it would just be a pleasant accent to the malt. Reminiscent of a sweet Danish butter cookie. Excellent job."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 6
OVERALL: 10

97



Sierra Nevada Ovila Abbey Saison

ABV: 7.5% | IBU: 24 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

An homage to the monks' noble work, this farmhouse ale is complex with notes of lemon, pepper, straw, and herbs balanced by the tang of mandarin oranges and a spicy kick of pepper.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Strong aromas of fresh-cracked black pepper and cloves balanced by sweet citrus. Light caramel malt sweetness with subtle solvent and light phenolic character. Some interesting esters of pear and ripe apple."

Flavor: "A good balance of fruit with spicy pepper notes. Peppercorns continue through from the aroma. Lemony sweetness with soft malt sweetness and moderate bitterness from earthy hops. Medium body with high carbonation. A touch of tartness offers brightness in the dry, slightly warm finish."

Overall: "A nicely spiced example of a saison. Flavor profile is good with some lingering off notes in the aroma. Fruity, spicy, and dry. Complex character makes this a very enjoyable if, perhaps too-young, beer."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

89



Southern Tier Grand Arbor

ABV: 8.0% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

We add real maple syrup from our friends at Big Tree Maple. Grand Arbor is hazy pale straw in color with a thick rocky white head and persistent lacing. Aromatically earthy with distinct fruity esters and low-to-moderate noble hop character. Balanced fruity character blends into crisp biscuit notes with a dry tart finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Strange herbal character complemented by layers of malt sweetness. Prominent phenols up front. Orange and black pepper with alcohol heat. Spicy yeast character with bananas and maple syrup."

Flavor: "Sweet honey and syrup alongside lemon citrus. High caramel malt sweetness somewhat balanced with acidity. Light maple character, medium body, and medium bitterness. Dry finish with a carbonic bite."

Overall: "Very enjoyable, though a bit too sweet. Nice and complex. Balance is skewed toward malt sweetness. Sweet, but surprisingly dry. Gets better as it warms. Jagged."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

89



Stone Brewing Co. Saison

ABV: 6.0% | IBU: 45 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

A taste of our homespun farm-to-tableism is provided in this farmhouse ale stoked with lemon zest, plus lemon thyme and lavender straight from Stone Farms. This spring-to-summer saison is citric and herbal on the palate with a dry, peppery finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Intense floral and herbal profile of lavender and thyme dominate, backed by sweet lemon citrus notes at the back. Some very light earthy hops. Lemon strengthens as the beer warms."

Flavor: "Profile is complex with a strong herbal (lavender and lemon thyme) and perfumey character that blends with the sharpness and sweetness of lemon. A touch grassy. Light malt sweetness with strong bitterness. Nice dry finish with a deep, lingering pithy aftertaste."

Overall: "A unique take on saison. The herbal notes and lemon offer a nice contrast to this beer, although the malt character could be more present to support these somewhat unbalanced overtones. Love the smell, but bitter aftertaste is overpowering."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 16
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 8

85



Prairie Artisan Ales Birra

ABV: 4.5% | IBU: 18 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Birra is a light, sessionable farmhouse ale. It is crisp with notes of black pepper and orange and goes perfectly with food.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Nice herbal, spicy notes with good citrusy lemon in the back. Light, sweet wheat character. Understated saison aroma profile."

Flavor: "Good balance of sweet citrus character. Very prominent lemon, light malt character and a hint of bittering hops that work well with the yeast. White pepper, some notes of coriander and banana and pear esters. High carbonation gives a little acidity in the dry finish."

Overall: "Nice balance to this mellow, approachable, understated session or table beer. A little lacking in body and no head retention. A light and refreshing beer. Highly drinkable everyday saison."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

92



Victory Swing Session Saison

ABV: 4.5% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

With its citrus swagger and spicy refreshment, Swing Session Saison offers you a jazzy jolt of joy. This Belgian-style ale is bracing but benign and enlivens any experience.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Lots of yeast complexity and good citrus notes of lemon and orange. Prominent fruitiness with a ripe cherry phenolic character. Spices, pepper, oregano, rosemary, and some sulfur. Moderate malt shines through."

Flavor: "Moderate sweet malt is immediately overpowered by dominant bitterness. Lots of lemon zest, almost bitter pithy-ness. Playful fruit character that leans more toward phenols than esters. High carbonation and finishes dry, crisp, and slightly bitter with lingering astringency. Great body for a session beer."

Overall: "This is pretty darn full of body for a session beer. Really enjoyed this one. It's easy drinking and refreshing. I've never smelled oregano like that in a beer. This would pair well with pizza and many other fatty foods."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

92



Lost Abbey Avant Garde

ABV: 7.0% | IBU: 35 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Some might want to label this as a beer brewed in the bière de garde tradition. We prefer to say it was brewed in the avant garde style that will reward all those who seek the not so ordinary. Deep gold in color with hints of biscuits, caramel, and fresh baked bread.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Rich malt sweetness with notes of honey and toffee and hints of citrus in the back. Earthy hops and light fruity character with slight phenolic spice. Somewhat vinous."

Flavor: "Medium malt body with toffee sweetness well balanced by medium hop bitterness. Slightly spicy with notes of black pepper and fruity components, like orange juice. Hops come through in the dry finish. Smooth creaminess and slight warmth, but not hot. Highly carbonated."

Overall: "A really well-balanced beer and a nice example of the style. Excellent layers of malt, from sweetness to biscuit to bread crust. Very flavorful, smooth, and complex. Nice finish: crisp with just enough sweetness."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 6
OVERALL: 10

98



Schlafly Brewing Bière de Garde

ABV: 7.0% | IBU: 20 | SRM: 16

What the brewer says:

Four different types of malt create a toffee sweetness, while French Strisselspalt hops add a subtle spice flavor. The beer is fermented with a distinct French farmhouse ale strain, then bottle conditioned with extra sugar and yeast for at least two weeks.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Toasty, caramel, biscuity malt sweetness. Some nuttiness. Slightly woody with an earthy hop aroma. Pleasant malt notes, some cloves, some pepper, subtle bananas."

Flavor: "Rich malt complexity. Earthy, toasty, and sweet. A bit of dark fruit. Graham-cracker-malt character with golden raisins and a bit of cherry. Nailed the malt, hops are right in line, and yeast is true to style but slightly one-note. Nice dry finish with good carbonation. Crisp finish."

Overall: "Really liked it. A great, complex bière de garde. Good malt-focused farmhouse ale with subtle yeast-derived spices and some esters."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

96



The Bruery Saison Rue

ABV: 8.5% | IBU: 30 | SRM: 9

What the brewer says:

Saison Rue is an unfiltered, bottle conditioned, Belgian/French-style farmhouse ale. This is a beer with malted rye, spicy, fruity yeast notes, biscuit-like malt backbone, and a slight citrus hop character. With age, this beer will dry out and become more complex with rustic notes of leather and earth from the contribution of a wild yeast strain.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Very rich and fruity—dark fruits, cherry, plums, and raisins. Tangy lactic notes. Sweet citrus and malt character with earthy and floral components."

Flavor: "Intense sweet honey and dark fruit character with light hop bitterness. Malty sweet and slightly lacto-acidic. Effervescent finish with lingering sweetness—a tad too sweet for the style at this point, but it should dry out over time."

Overall: "A nice beer but not as much wild yeast character as expected—little to no funky or sour flavors. Complexity may develop over time. Nice example of a straight Belgian beer, but not quite a saison. No obvious Brett character."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

92



Crooked Stave Artisan Beer Project Vieille

ABV: 4.2% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Artisan ale aged in oak barrels. Vieille "Old" Artisanal is a classical saison rustic in character and rooted in tradition.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Obvious Brett funk. Earthy, sweet, tangy notes, almost like a tortilla chip. Wonderful fruitiness of lemon, mango, and papaya. Slightly spicy and fairly acetic. Big floral character."

Flavor: "Amazing fruitiness brightened by acidity. Sweet biscuity malt with tangy tartness. An acidic funkiness that finishes slightly sweet for a Brett beer. Medium bitterness, spicy, salty, and fruity."

Overall: "Very refreshing, great profile of sweet grain with a sour, funky character. This would be an excellent food pairing beer for sushi and pickled ginger. Great acidity and malt complexity. I will dream about this beer when I fall asleep tonight. This is what I want a Brett beer to be."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 21
MOUTHFEEL: 6
OVERALL: 11

100



Jester King Noble King

ABV: 5.9% | IBU: N/A | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Noble King is a medium strength, highly attenuated, unspiced farmhouse ale brewed with an abundance of organic noble hops and fermented with wild yeasts from the Texas Hill Country. Unfiltered, unpasteurized, and 100% naturally conditioned.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Tangy tartness, sweet citrus fruit. Dirty, earthy, and horsey. White grapes and funky acidity. Floral, peppery, and earthy character. Unique phenolic spiciness with a bright citrus zest."

Flavor: "Citrus tartness with tropical fruit and slightly sweet malt. Earthy. Finishes tart with a lactic bite. Very lemony. Hints of spice and an interesting, peanut-like nuttiness. Not a ton of Brett character, but the lactic went to town."

Overall: "A very refreshing, delicious beer. Lactic acid dominates. Slight sweetness. Enjoyable fruitiness, particularly the lemon. Tartness is good but not tooth-melting. The lemonade of beer. If you combined kombucha and lemonade and carbonated it, that's what this tastes like."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

94



Jolly Pumpkin Bam Bière

ABV: 4.5% | IBU: 25 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

An artisan farmhouse ale that is golden, naturally cloudy, bottle conditioned, and dry-hopped for a perfectly refreshing balance of spicy malts, hops, and yeast.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Strong, sharply phenolic Brett character. Funky, tannic notes, sweet pineapple citrus, and some peppery, earthy floral notes. Light smokiness, earthiness, and woody notes are apparent. Tangy sour character with a very earthy background."

Flavor: "Brettanomyces funk and bright tartness add complexity to the base saison. Medium, almost husky, grain-malt profile with strong, fruity acidity. No hop flavor. Very dry finish and highly carbonated."

Overall: "A very refreshing, complex Brett character complements and doesn't overpower a great saison. An excellent Brett beer with bright acidity and a classic, super-dry finish. A great beer to pair with food."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

94



Alaskan White

ABV: 5.3% | IBU: 15 | SRM: 7

What the brewer says:

Alaskan White Ale has a soft, slightly sweet base with the unique spice aroma of coriander and crisp, citrus finish of orange peel. A light and effervescent body combined with the smooth palate creates a complex and delicate beer that is refreshing in any season.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Strong, dominant aromas of coriander, orange, and lemon zest, with the light grain sweetness of wheat."

Flavor: "Good coriander flavor makes itself known but isn't overpowering. Some light spicy hop character with a perhaps too-high, lingering bitterness. Assertive carbonic bite but no flaws. Finishes with sweet fruit-juice profile that is crisp and clean and leaves a lemon tartness on the tongue."

Overall: "A crisp, refreshing beer. Very clean and tasty and profiles sweetness well. Love the finish. Great beer for spring or summer. Good example of wit despite crystal clarity."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 2
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

91



Allagash White

ABV: 5.0% | IBU: 13 | SRM: 5

What the brewer says:

Our interpretation of a traditional Belgian wheat beer. Brewed with a generous portion of wheat and spiced with coriander and curaçao orange peel, this beer is fruity, refreshing, and slightly cloudy in appearance.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Very light wheat with notes of coriander and a little bit of hop spice blended with slight sweetness and subtle hop notes. Mainly coriander and pepper notes."

Flavor: "Moderate sweetness with a strong bittering finish. Significantly more hop bitterness than would be expected for the style. Complex for a wit, with slight sweetness and herbal earthy notes. Sweet citrus in the finish. Big body despite carbonation and crispness. Almost a viscous mouthfeel."

Overall: "Wheat and spice character are well done, but the hop utilization or timing adds a bitterness that's atypical for the style. A refreshing and different take on a wit. More spiced than usual but still finishes with sweet citrus. Good, crisp, refreshing beer."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 10

96



Avery White Rascal

ABV: 5.6% | IBU: 22 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

A truly authentic Belgian-style wheat or "white" ale, this Rascal is unfiltered (yup, that's yeast on the bottom) and cleverly spiced with coriander and curaçao orange peel producing a refreshingly zesty classic ale.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Nice citrus fruit character with some spicy notes to add complexity. Light wheat sweetness accompanied by hints of floral coriander and lemon zest."

Flavor: "Nice sweet lemon citrus, earthy and pepper notes come through with medium malt sweetness. A very faint carbonic twang, but not terribly complex. Spices are subdued. Very nice balance of body and a crisp, refreshing finish."

Overall: "Refreshing and crisp wit. Nice citrus sweetness is profiled in a beer that is solid, but without too much to differentiate it from the crowd. A great example of the style."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

91



Ballast Point Wahoo

ABV: 4.5% | IBU: 12 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Our Wahoo White is brewed with unfiltered, unmalted wheat and oats that give it a distinctive cloudy complexity. True to the Belgian tradition, this Witbier boasts a refreshing, citrusy flavor thanks to the orange peel and coriander we add to the boil.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Very interesting, unexpected spice aroma. Sweet background wheat with lemon, almost like lemon candy. Very faint and earthy hop notes. Nice floral coriander."

Flavor: "Peppery phenolic notes. Some yeast character and coriander with a carbonic bite and some bitterness. Strong wheat graininess, but finishes crisp and clean. Balance is exceptional: fruity tartness is the prominent feature. Good blend of spice and earthy notes with creaminess from wheat malt."

Overall: "An interesting take on the style. Crisp and refreshing. Excellent beer that accents both the wheat and lemon character well. Refreshing wit with nice balance of sweet and spice. This would pair really well with certain types of food, especially Cantonese."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

94



Blue Moon White

ABV: 5.4% | IBU: 9 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Our brewmaster, Keith Villa, wanted to craft a beer inspired by Belgian wits. He brewed his interpretation using Valencia orange peel versus the traditional tart curaçao orange peel, for a subtle sweetness. Oats and wheat create a smooth, creamy finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Citrus orange notes come through with spicy pepper and coriander aromas. Malt sweetness in the back. Floral and almost spicy aroma. Slight grain sweetness with hints of lemon zest. Coriander aroma is slightly stale, bordering on artificial."

Flavor: "Good balance of acidity and malt background with a creamy mouthfeel. Coriander and some spicy pepper notes. Good balance of citrus orange sweetness with peppery and spicy flavor. A bit too thick and chewy for the style, but nice acidic carbonation."

Overall: "A good example of the style, but just a bit too heavy and sweet. Still, a refreshing, complex take on a wit. Spices, tartness, and sweetness carry through. Good balance of citrus and spice."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

90



Cigar City Florida Cracker

ABV: 5.5% | IBU: 18 | SRM: 3

What the brewer says:

The Cracker Cowboys of Florida were colonial settlers who arrived in Florida when Spain traded their territory to the English. We brew Florida Cracker White ale with unmalted wheat, orange peel, and coriander and then ferment it with a French Saison yeast strain to give it a spicy and dry finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Smells like fresh-cut grass! Strong coriander and light wheat aroma with earthy spice. Good lemony citrus character."

Flavor: "Light malt sweetness, but a bit of a coriander bomb. The carbonic bite helps cut through and deliver a crisp finish, but the coriander still lingers. The wheat malt sweetness adds a good creaminess and the citrus finishes with a nice acidic bite. No flaws."

Overall: "Balance seems good, but the spices could stand to be toned down a bit. Very refreshing, with the acidic bite in the finish. Pleasantly sweet, crisp, and easy drinking. Great example of the style."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

89



Dogfish Head Namasté

ABV: 4.8% | IBU: 20 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

A witbier bursting with good karma. Made with dried organic orange slices, fresh-cut lemongrass, and a bit of coriander, this Belgian-style white beer is a great thirst quencher.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Herbal and perfumey, with strong, floral coriander and subtle lemongrass and citrus notes backed up by malt sweetness. A really unusual, kind of heavy aroma, but super complex. There's some funky lemon and a touch of smokiness."

Flavor: "Spicy, herbal, peppery-like flavors up front with moderate malt sweetness balanced by bitterness that lingers on the palate. Very light, smoky phenolics and mild tartness. Perfect body. Beer finishes dry after a nice, velvety front."

Overall: "Overall, not a bad beer. Interesting, enjoyable, crisp, and refreshing. A unique take on a wit, with a robust profile of spices adding to the complexity. Nice hops and subtle herbal notes."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

89



Flying Dog Woody Creek

ABV: 4.8% | IBU: 17 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Woody Creek is light and refreshing for a reason, so be careful not to overpower it with heavy foods. Flavor notes: Refreshing and light citrus notes with subtle wheat, coriander, and orange flavors.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Nice, grainy, sweet wheat character and slight citrus notes. Low levels of DMS (canned corn) aroma. Peppercorn and herbal dill notes along with a tobacco, cigar, or pipe aroma. This aroma dissipates somewhat and coriander comes to the fore."

Flavor: "Good profile of wheat character, with a slight tartness and mild hop kick. Creamy body. Citrus character is present more in the finish with an acidic bite and carbonic twang that makes for a nice, crisp finish. Big coriander flavor with light tobacco note. Crisp and refreshing."

Overall: "Refreshing sweet profile showcases the wheat well. Good tannic bite. Balance and flavors are spot on except for slight DMS in the aroma. One of the hopper wits we've tried."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

89



Hoegaarden Wit Blanche

ABV: 4.9% | IBU: 13 | SRM: 3

What the brewer says:

This beer features the aroma of orange peel, coriander, and herbs that the merry monks imported from Curaçao. Pouring Hoegaarden is just like letting the sun fall into your glass: light yellow and naturally murky. And then there's the soft taste, light and slightly sweet and sour and with subtle citrus notes.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Nice balance of spice and herbal notes with sweet citrus and wheat character. Floral notes of jasmine and rose petals. Hints of herbal notes and spicy black pepper. Slightly medicinal phenolic character. Big coriander aroma, some spice, but not much else."

Flavor: "Complex spice and herbal notes. Coriander and pepper balance with orange peel and citrus. Creaminess and light but earthy sweetness come through from the wheat. A bit of a plastic phenolic aftertaste. Light citrus. Very crisp yet creamy mouthfeel. Dry finish."

Overall: "A good example of a wit, with nice acidity and sweetness. Easy to drink and refreshing. Well balanced, though the phenols border on unpleasant."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 9

91



Brewery Ommegang Witte

ABV: 5.2% | IBU: 11 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

Witte, our version of the classic Belgian wit, is brewed with malted and unmalted wheat, orange peel, and coriander. It is pale straw in color, slightly hazy, and topped with a white, fluffy head. Hops and spice with a subtle clove note backed by flavors of lemon and sweet orange give way to a dry, crisp finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Very floral aroma with slight caramel notes in front of the wheat. Nice floral coriander notes and slight citrus. Hints of herbs. Almost a banana-like ester."

Flavor: "Nice sweetness of honey and citrus orange fruitiness with notes of lychee. Slight wheat flavor and light earthy hop character. Earthy pepper notes are present. Sweet, almost banana profile. Nice balance of acidity and carbonation. Crisp and refreshing. No flaws, but almost more like a hefeweizen than a wit."

Overall: "Excellent. Great balance. Sweet and refreshing wit with an acidic lactic taste gives a good finish. Very nice profile of yeast characteristics. Very fresh coriander."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 10

95



St. Bernardus Wit

ABV: 5.5% | IBU: 10 | SRM: 3

What the brewer says:

St. Bernardus Wit is a traditional Belgian white beer developed and brewed in collaboration with the legendary Master Brewer Pierre Celis. This ale is very pale (whitish-yellow color) and quite hazy. The head is white and dense. In aroma, it has a wheaty, apple-like tartness; herbal-spicy notes with coriander and orange fruitiness and honeyish sweetness.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Sweet malty aroma with notes of biscuits and wheat. Some nice fruity citrus notes with coriander and floral characteristics. Subtle sour apple and white grape. Hints of black pepper."

Flavor: "Light wheat malt sweetness with a slight honey character. Orange and lemon citrus with nice, mild, fresh coriander. Dry, lingering, slightly tangy finish accompanied by good background bitterness."

Overall: "An excellent exemplar of the style. Spices are noticeable but not overpowering. Well balanced between bitterness and malt sweetness. A crisp wit beer with fruit, citrus, and orange character. Very refreshing and flawless."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 10

98



Samuel Adams Cold Snap

ABV: 5.3% | IBU: 10 | SRM: 6

What the brewer says:

From the subtle sweetness of orange peel and plum to the peppery bite of fresh ground coriander, the blend of spices creates just the right refreshing kick to signal that spring is on its way.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Sweet aroma with perfumey herbal notes and slight spices. Subtle citrus, but the herbal spice is far more prominent. Bright wheat with bits of tangerine and black pepper. Floral with earthy almost coffee-like aromas."

Flavor: "Floral and herbal spice are balanced by the sweetness of wheat and citrus orange. Finish is not as crisp as one expects from a wit. Fruity acidity with some honey malt character backbone. Some spicy, peppery notes. No coriander and no citrus, but nice acidity."

Overall: "A refreshing and complex take on a wit. Spices are showcased, but the creaminess of unfiltered wheat comes through nicely. No obvious flaws, but grain sweetness seems out of balance and could use more coriander and citrus. The balance improves as you drink it."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 18
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

88



Shiner White Wing

ABV: 4.7% | IBU: 15 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

This beer rules the roost. Brewed with authentic Belgian yeast and hints of coriander and orange peel, White Wing has all the spice and citrus aroma of a true-to-style Belgian wheat ale. Slightly sweet and highly drinkable, it's a delightfully odd bird.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Strong, perfumey coriander with deep, earthy notes, backed up by a light, sweet wheat aroma."

Flavor: "Big coriander notes! Crisp and refreshing with a good carbonic bite. Clear but creamy mouthfeel (almost like Cream of Wheat) with a nice grainy sweetness in the background. Well balanced with some tartness and a crisp, slightly cidery finish."

Overall: "Good example of the style except for an odd earthy aroma. But very clean and refreshing. Spices are well balanced with the malt. Refreshing and herbal character is showcased. An easy drinking wit, but if you don't like coriander, you won't like this beer!"

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 10

93



Shock Top Belgian White

ABV: 5.2% | IBU: 10 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

We've shaken up traditional tastes by brewing a spiced Belgian-style wheat ale with real orange, lemon, and lime peels and then added a little coriander spice to the mix. This award-winning ale is unfiltered to create a brew that is naturally cloudy with a light golden color and a smooth, refreshing finish.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Light, malty wheat sweetness accented by barely there coriander and orange. Some light floral and spice notes. Nose is hard to detect, almost absent. More spice than wheat."

Flavor: "Malty sweet with some acidity and some coriander. Nice sweet profile of fruity notes, orange, citrus with floral and pepper notes. Medium wheat character and balanced earthy hop flavors. Slight slickness on the tongue. Finish is sweet rather than crisp but has good acidity."

Overall: "Tastes carbonated despite no head. A crisp version of a wit. Nice sweetness and easy drinking. This beer could be excellent with a little more crispness and a little residual sweetness."

AROMA: 10
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 17
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

87



Unibroue Blanche de Chambly

ABV: 5.0% | IBU: 10 | SRM: 4

What the brewer says:

Blanche de Chambly is the very first ale brewed by Unibroue and as Belgian tradition dictates for white ales, it is named after the city in which it is brewed. In 1996, the Chicago Beverage Testing institute declared Blanche de Chambly "The World's Best White Ale." Since then, it has gone on to win numerous other awards and distinctions.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Coriander with a hint of coconut, nice floral notes, and sweet citrus character produce a nose that fades quickly. Light wheat sweetness. The strong coriander character is sharper and less herbal than is typical."

Flavor: "Nice level of acidity to carbonic bite. Simple flavors of slightly musty coriander and honey wheat sweetness with very little hop flavor. Finish is a bit cloying instead of crisp."

Overall: "Not-too-sweet finish makes this an easy drinking, refreshing wit. Body does not hold up to strong coriander flavor. The individual pieces are there, but the overall structure doesn't seem coherent. Would make a great beurre blanc."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 17
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 8

85



Westbrook White Thai

ABV: 5.0% | IBU: 16 | SRM: N/A

What the brewer says:

This beer, inspired by the flavors of Southeast Asian cuisine, is a twist on the classic Belgian witbier style. Instead of the traditional coriander and orange peel, we add fresh lemongrass, ginger root, and a dash of Sorachi Ace hops.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Big fruity aroma, very Belgian. Slight bubblegum. Peppery and herbal, jasmine with notes of coriander and orange. Hints of pine needles and earthiness. Hops are mildly citrusy and floral."

Flavor: "Very spicy and peppery. There's a tannic character at the end and a considerable woody flavor. High hop bitterness with moderate honey wheat sweetness. The citrus works well. The dried banana, candy, and interesting peppery and spice notes are more typical of a Belgian yeast. Finishes slightly bitter with nice acidity."

Overall: "The brewer took some chances on it compared to a classic wit, and it paid off. Nice complexity of pepper and spice with light sweetness that is complemented by the wood. Great creamy mouthfeel and a very refreshing beer."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 10

96



Evil Twin Justin Blæber

ABV: 4.5% | **IBU:** N/A | **SRM:** N/A

What the brewer says:

OMG! It's JUSTIN BLÆBER!!! If you have "Blæber Fever," then this is the only cure. We stuffed so many blueberries into this beer, it's going to make you shout, "Oh, Baby!" A collaboration among Evil Twin Brewing, Westbrook Brewing Co., and The Charleston Beer Exchange.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Complex acidic and tangy tart character, wheaty and fruity. Sweet malt and moderate sourness. Smells like tannic raspberries. Some Shredded Wheat-like cereal notes."

Flavor: "Fruity sweet, lemon, and citrus. Bright lactic acid gives a nice, tart bite, while the wheat base provides sweetness. Moderate bitterness is well complemented by the berries. No hop flavor. Effervescent finish, but the flavor is a bit flatter than expected."

Overall: "A beautifully crafted, enjoyable, fruity wheat beer. Light and refreshing. Fruit addition is nice and doesn't overpower the other flavors. Very tart and slightly tannic. Could use a bit more blueberry aroma."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

93



New Belgium Snapshot

ABV: 5.0% | **IBU:** 13 | **SRM:** N/A

What the brewer says:

Aromas of citrus hops jump from the nose, accompanied by the sweetness of coriander and grains of paradise. Brewed with wheat and pale malt, Snapshot pours a hazy, lemon-yellow with bright-white lacing. But the real enticement is the snap of tart from in-process blending of *Lactobacillus* to pucker up Snapshot's base.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Floral and bright. Good sweet malt character with a light lactic, tangy, acidic lemon spritz. Strong Belgian yeast spice character."

Flavor: "Moderate sweet wheat malt profile. A bit of lactic acidity in the front end. Some lemon notes. Very malty with some acidic fruit. High carbonation, finishes dry but with a lingering grainy sweetness."

Overall: "A very well-balanced, tasty, and approachable wheat beer. Enjoyable and refreshing. Lightly tart, just enough to make it interesting and accentuate the wheat. Sweetness is nicely balanced with the acidity and bitterness. Tastes like a wheat beer with the lemon built in!"

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 19
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 10

95



Off Color Troublesome Gose

ABV: 4.5% | **IBU:** 10 | **SRM:** N/A

What the brewer says:

We blend together two different beers to make Troublesome. The first is a somewhat uninteresting wheat beer and the second is an overly acidic and funky beer fermented solely with *Lactobacillus*. We blend the two beers together with coriander and salt at the tail end of fermentation to create a mild, lemony tartness and a fuller sensation of mouthfeel. And yes, it's hard to make.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Sweet malt, lemon tartness, and warm dirt. Fresh-cut grass and floral, herbal character in the nose. Slight lemon and earthiness, with Belgian yeast spice."

Flavor: "Lemon tartness with slight malt wheat sweetness. Some lactic acidity and lemon zest. Round, full body with some background bitterness and slight mineral character. Very creamy. Pleasant graininess in the finish."

Overall: "Enjoyable and refreshing, but a little one-dimensional. Sour character is extremely subtle, and flavors taste a little mismatched. Great raw wheat character."

AROMA: 11
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 17
MOUTHFEEL: 4
OVERALL: 9

88



Westbrook Gose

ABV: 4.0% | **IBU:** 5 | **SRM:** N/A

What the brewer says:

This is our interpretation of Gose (pronounced "Gose-uh"), a traditional German-style sour wheat beer brewed with coriander and salt. Once nearly extinct, this very refreshing style is making a comeback.

What our panel thought:

Aroma: "Fresh hay with lemon and grapefruit. Bright, sharply acidic, lactic nip in the nose. Salty. Tangy, fruity, citrus notes. Very light malt sweetness. Sour and fruity with some goat and barnyard."

Flavor: "Good, clean lactic acid tartness. Moderate sweet malty wheat with salt and high carbonation. Very lemony. Goaty in a good way. Finishes dry and slightly earthy with a nice mineral character. Crisp and refreshing."

Overall: "An excellent sour for the summer! A very clean beer with nice lemony tartness. The balance of salt, sourness, and sweetness makes this a great beer to have with food. This would be killer with fried chicken and potato salad, or even to cut through a beurre blanc. Light and refreshing."

AROMA: 12
APPEARANCE: 3
FLAVOR: 20
MOUTHFEEL: 5
OVERALL: 10

99



Inside CB&B:

How We Taste & Test

REVIEWING BEER may sound like a dream job, but our tasting and review panel takes the role seriously. Composed entirely of Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) judges who have all studied, trained, and been tested on their ability to discern characteristics in beer, our panel is independent and doesn't include any CB&B editors or staff. The panel tastes all beer blindly—they do not know what brands and beers they are tasting until the tasting is complete—and they test in multiple sessions to avoid palate fatigue (three separate sessions for the beers reviewed in this issue).

Unlike festival competitions, our goal is not to name the top three medalists, but to instead inform you about the strengths and weaknesses of these beers as well as their relative differences (not everyone has the same taste in beer, so accurate descriptors are more valuable than straight numerical values). The quotes you see are compiled from the review panel's score sheets to give you a well-rounded picture of the beer.

Our panel does not always agree—we've included comments that may, at times, conflict, because the reviewers' opinions vary.

As our reviewers judge, they score based on the standard BJCP components: Aroma (maximum of 12 points), Appearance (maximum of 3 points), Flavor (maximum of 20 points), Mouthfeel (maximum of 5 points), and Overall Impression (maximum of 10 points). We've listed these individual component scores, and the bottom-line number is derived from adding then doubling these component scores to produce a rating on a 100-point scale. Note that we've rounded the printed component scores to the nearest whole number, so the math won't necessarily add up if you try to recompile these scores at home, but we thought the value of looking at these additional points of comparison merited the potential for confusion.

We'd love for you to keep one thing in mind as you read these reviews—your perception of a beer is more important than that of our review panel or editorial staff, and reading reviews in a magazine (or on the Web or in a book) is no substitution for trying it yourself. 



Focus Recipes



Citrillo Wit

ALL-GRAIN

This American take on a Belgian Witbier eschews the traditional coriander and citrus and instead derives its unique flavor from late kettle American hops.

OG: 1.051

FG: 1.013

IBU: 22

ABV: 5%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

8 ounces Rice Hulls
7 pounds Pale Malt
3 pounds Wheat Malt
8 ounces Flaked Oats

HOP SCHEDULE

0.25 ounce Citra at 60 minutes
0.50 ounce Amarillo at 0 minutes
0.25 ounce Citra at 0 minutes
0.50 ounce Amarillo at 0 minutes
0.50 ounce Citra at 0 minutes

Directions

Protein rest for 10 minutes at 122°F (50°C).
Saccharification: 60 minutes at 153°F (67°C).
Boil for 60 minutes.
Ferment at 68°F (20°C) for 10 days or until the Final Gravity stabilizes.

Yeast

Wyeast 3944 Belgian Witbier

Brewer's notes

The rice hulls are optional but recommended to avoid a stuck mash.



Guide to Brewers' Shorthand

OG: original gravity

FG: final gravity

IBUs: international bittering units

ABV: alcohol by volume

About the timing on recipes: The times quoted in all recipes are based on a countdown, meaning a hop addition at 60 minutes should be added with 60 minutes left in the boil.

Batch sizes: All recipes are based on a 5-gallon batch size unless otherwise noted.

Note: all numbers are estimates

Koriander und Salz, Gotterhalt's

ALL-GRAIN

The *Reinheitsgebot* limits most German beers to hops, malt, water, and yeast. But Gose, a centuries-old sour style from Leipzig, also features coriander and salt. In this homebrew-sized interpretation, the wort is soured with *Lactobacillus* bacteria before being boiled. A souring period shorter than twenty-four hours produces moderate tartness, while three days supplies a potent pucker that's not for the faint of heart. After the souring period, the wort is boiled as usual, and fermentation is completed with a traditional Bavarian Weizen strain. *Zum Wohl!*

OG: 1.050

FG: 1.010

IBU: 13

ABV: 5%

Malt/Grain Bill

6 pounds Wheat malt
4 pounds Pilsner malt
8 ounces Rice Hulls

Hop Schedule

0.50 ounce Perle at 45 minutes
1.00 ounce coriander seed at 10 minutes
0.50 ounce salt at 10 minutes

Directions

Protein rest for 15 minutes at 122°F (50°C).
Saccharification: 90 minutes at 148°F (64°C).
Boil for 90 minutes (see Brewer's Notes).

Yeast and Bacteria

Wyeast 5335 *Lactobacillus*
Wyeast 3068 Weihenstephan Weizen

Brewer's Notes

Mash as usual and collect the wort, but do not boil. Add *Lactobacillus* to the kettle when the wort temperature drops below 90°F (32°C). Cover, and allow to sour for 2–3 days. After the wort has soured, boil for 90 minutes. Chill to 65°F (18°C) and pitch Weihenstephan Weizen yeast. Ferment until the Final Gravity is stable, and bottle or keg. Drink this one young!

Recipes by Dave Carpenter



Homebrewing in Switzerland

American **Ian Hoke** turned to homebrewing in his new home of Switzerland when he couldn't find the hoppy pale ales he craved. But homebrewing abroad has presented many challenges and opportunities for the ex-pat...

BEFORE MOVING TO SWITZERLAND,

here's what I knew to expect: epic skiing, cheese, seamless public transportation, and ubiquitous chocolate. What I didn't expect was the beer. The thin, thin, watery beer.

After three years in China imbibing Tsingdao and Kingway (a palate-ravaging formaldehyde stew from Chengdu that cost \$3US per case delivered), moving to Switzerland conjured images of *dirndle*-clad waitresses hauling liters of classic lagers and grocery shelves laden with funky Belgian beers.

Wrong.

Despite outstanding established craft breweries, such as Brasserie Des Franches

Montagnes (BFM) or Trois Dames, and a number of upstart small craft brewers, such as Storm & Anchor, Blackwell Brewery, or Bad Attitude, Switzerland is a beer desert to rival China.

Switzerland remains outside of the European Union, despite being nestled in the heart of the continent. German, French, Czech, Italian, and Belgian beers are all imports, and are few and far between. In contrast to neighboring nations, Swiss beers exist in a narrow range from light lager, or *helles*, to dark lager, or *dunkel*. Enterprising Swiss breweries crank out the staples, as well as specialty lagers brewed from spelt and corn. Some even approach a German-style pilsner with some success.

In the land of the Alps, diversity of any kind proves an ongoing challenge. For the most part, Swiss beer flavors stand as neutral as their international politics. For a couple who spends most of our summers in the Colorado mountains mainlining superhopped local brews, my wife and I felt so close to the good stuff, but so, so far away.

Homebrew to the Rescue

Years ago in the States, I entered homebrewing through a time-honored method: A buddy got a few buckets and some extract kits for his birthday; we brewed a few beers ranging from involuntary gag reflex to passable; and the hook was set. A few years of life in urban China, however, quashed my burgeoning passion to brew. Not only was I unable to figure out homebrewing in the Middle Kingdom, but also in three years, I never learned my home mailing address! Brewing fell off my radar.

After six months in Zurich drinking Quollfrisch, a local Swiss beer whose name translates, honestly, to "Spring Fresh," my wife started scanning classifieds for homebrew gear. I wound up buying a complete set of brewing equipment, including five-liter kegs and dispensing gear, for 160 Francs from a lovely woman mired in domestic strife who encouraged me to "be nice to your wife, or she'll sell all your shit." Duly noted! Time to brew that Odell's St. Lupulin clone again.

Like most homebrewers, my brew buddies and I make what we love with (usually) local ingredients. Just as many of the first wave of contemporary American homebrewers sought to replicate European beers absent in a U.S. market dominated by homogenous corporate lagers, we focus



Clockwise from top »
A group tasting of homebrew sours yielded notes for tweaking recipes. A Swiss basement sour project shares space with ski gear. Brew days sometimes start with runs down the slopes of Davos.



on styles we can't buy here: hoppy pale ales and their kin, Belgian-style sours, and the farmhouse ales that appear to be more popular every day Stateside.

The homebrewer less adept than my wife at surfing expat classifieds can find two fine Swiss brew suppliers in the Zurich area, ready to sell similar kits and dispense similar advice about the right and wrong ways to brew. Many Swiss brewers opt for an electric kettle of the sort used for cider or canning, giving it double duty as a mash tun. Gas burners are available but are either weak or just shy of jet propulsion,

unpopular because small apartments, cramped balconies, and fire create exciting opportunities that are decidedly un-Swiss.

Of our local brew suppliers, Sios in the bucolic town of Wald is the most engaging and homebrew friendly. Richi, the owner-operator, is a talkative guy who always has beer on tap for the leisurely shopper and will usually send me away with a few bottles of his Ur-Alt or the lager-of-the-month. Several iterations of his cracked black pepper dunkel have been excellent.

Sios also operates the SIOS-Trophy homebrew competition with some rigid,

interesting categories that have evolved from *Reinheitsgebot*-only to a more international, inclusive selection including beers aged in wood, beers brewed with—gasp—adjuncts or “interesting” ingredients, and pale ales. Richi has also been known to fire-brew a beer during the yearly Craft Bier Festival, organized by Bier Factory Rapperswil and held in a castle courtyard in Rapperswil, a picturesque town on Lake Zurich.

In four years of regular visits to Sios, I have never failed to encounter a fellow homebrewer from Germany or a distant corner of Switzerland picking up a pilsner kit or ingredients for lager done like Mamma used to do. In the land of bottom fermentation, it seems hilarious to spend time replicating everything on the shelf at the corner store, but homebrewers make what they love, no matter where they are on Earth.

Making Connections

Forging connections with good people such as Richi in the Swiss homebrewing world has been essential to successfully navigating this landscape. For example, in Zurich, every recipe needs a small percentage of acid malt to fight our hard, mineral-laden water, or the mash won't convert. Funky tax rules exist, as well, even for personal production once the homebrewer crosses a fairly low yearly liter threshold. A little local knowledge provides a big boost.

Besides Richi, I have been lucky to meet a small cohort of brilliant brewers, including Sam Aeschlimann, the author of the *Eureka Brewing* blog, a PhD course in recipe development, yeast styles, and bacteria of all kinds. Sam is also the proprietor of the aforementioned Blackwell Brewery, winner of the Best New Brewery award in Switzerland for 2013.

At a recent gathering, homebrewing friends from at least five countries converged in Zurich for a Sour Fest, and bottle after bottle, Sam gathered bugs in prepared slant tubes for cultivation and storage. Sam is a great guy to know, even if we ignore his almost savant-like ability to blend sours and brew uberbeefy Imperial Stouts that reach well over 20 percent ABV.

Local Malts and Hops

Weyermann (a major German maltster) is the premier malt sold in Switzerland. A regular topic of conversation with like-minded Swiss brewers is ways of blending Weyermann malts to replicate British or North American malt profiles. Using what is readily available and cheap, we've made wheat IPAs, sweet rye porters, hoppy Munich ambers. Vienna malt, with notes of caramel and tree nuts, lends a velvety mouthfeel to saisons and pale ales, even at lower mash temperatures. Most recently, pilsner malt IPAs, boiled

long and hot, have become a favorite of mine.

Noble hops from Tettngang just across Lake Constance in Germany are nice for a bittering hop, or blended with big, citrusy American or New Zealand powerhouses like Citra, Simcoe, Pacific Jade, or Nelson Sauvin. Perle hops are considered a native Swiss hops, but their grassy character needs support for my palate.

Bier Factory Rapperswil has recently produced an IPA named “Hopp Schwiiz,” which uses the first commercial example of an American and Swiss Perle hops blend, resulting in a nicely balanced IPA with solid hop bite and aroma. And they produced this beer just in time for the Winter Olympics: *Hopp Schwiiz* in Swiss-German means “Go Switzerland!”

Brewing an American-style bitter beer is risky for any Swiss brewer, because the local palate loathes what they refer to as “cat piss” flavor and aroma, the same dank bite we love from an Avery Maharaja. And yet, there seem to be more options every day.

Lost in Translation

So maybe the Swiss beer scene isn’t as dire as it seemed at first glance, and the craft beer industry is blooming. Still, for the homebrewer, the dangers of translation vary from absurd to alarmingly real.

Often, salespeople speak enough English to save the day. I once had several long conversations about what size cock I needed when I sought to install a tap on my brew kettle. I found myself repeating, straight-faced, that I wasn’t sure, but that I had heard size didn’t matter. The saleswoman was adamant that it did, so I opted for slightly above average.

For eighteen months, my brewing partners Brian Wilson, Elias Barlow, and I brewed rye pale ales and saisons with rice hulls that we later realized were rice flakes, leading to some volcanic fermentations and hot, boozy brews. Oops!

But language struggles are not always harmless. When Brian took my empty CO₂ tank to be refilled, his fledgling German seemed to hit an odd roadblock. After twenty minutes of gesticulating and earnest prodding by the salesman, Brian used Google Translate on his phone to clear up the word that he felt he was stumbling over: *Theft*. Gladly, he escaped Swiss prison!

Still, when we tap a keg after a hard day of skiing Davos, paddling the Vorderrhein, or riding Graubünden singletrack, the minor obstacles of homebrewing abroad disappear from memory. Already gorgeous, Switzerland looks better with a homebrewed double IPA in hand.



From left » Lack of space drives Swiss efficiency as even the balcony is used for brewing. An electric kettle in addition to a propane burner allows for parti-gyle brews.



MAKE IT

More Cowbell Farmhouse Ale

ALL-GRAIN

The mash schedule is a bit baroque, but it works great for a farmhouse ale in the style of Boulevard Tank 7. This should be a fairly highly carbonated beer.

OG: 1.077

FG: 1.005

IBUs: 24

ABV: 9.45%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

9.85 pounds Weyermann Pilsner

2.82 pounds Flaked Corn/Maize

1.4 pounds Flaked Soft White Wheat

3.5 ounces Weyermann Cararye

3.5 ounces Weyermann Sauer maltz (Acid malt)

HOP SCHEDULE

.1069 ounces Magnum (pellet) at 70 minutes

.42 ounces Tettnganger (whole) at 55 minutes

2.17 ounces Motueca (pellet) at 5 minutes

1.665 ounces Motueca (pellet) at 0 minutes

.869 ounces Motueca (pellet) at dry-hop

DIRECTIONS

Mash in: 50-min rest at 145°F (63°C). Infuse with 3.65 gallons at 163°F (73°C).

Step 1: 20-min rest at 154°F (68°C). Infuse with 3 quarts at 207°F (97°C).

Step 2: 15-min rest at 163°F (73°C). Infuse with 4.2 quarts at 207°F (97°C).

Mash Out: 5-min rest at 172°F (78°C). Infuse with 3.17 quarts at 207°F (97°C).

Boil for 70 min.

YEAST

Wyeast 3711 French Saison

BREWER'S NOTES

Keep fermentation temperature about 68°F (20°C) at first, then raise it naturally. Below 68°F (20°C), Wyeast 3711 will stall, but too warm can get too many bubblegum phenols.

NOTES ON THIS RECIPE FROM STEVEN PAUWELS (BOULEVARD BREWMASTER / CREATOR OF TANK 7)

“This recipe hits key points: 20% adjunct and extensive mash for high attenuation, acidified malt and keeping phenols under control to keep the beer refreshing. This should help to keep this 9.45% ABV drinkable. I would love to try this beer.”

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless noted.



Have Faith in Your Beer

"Don't sweat the small stuff when you're brewing," says **Michael Copado**. History assures us that most homebrew mistakes are "small stuff." **Dave Carpenter** shares his stories of reassurance.



MICHAEL COPADO IS MANY things. He's a resident of a Detroit suburb called Fraser. He's an audiovisual specialist in the field of medical education. And he's an ordained minister.

Revy, as he's known online, is also an active member of online homebrew forums. And he's one of the most vocal advocates for the resiliency of homebrew you're likely to encounter. In thread after thread (he's written more than 40,000 posts on HomeBrewTalk.com alone), you'll find Michael encouraging new brewers to have patience with their beer, to slow down, to give the process the time it needs.

But as with many of life's worthwhile pursuits, such an enlightened approach comes from years of experience—ten to be precise. And those ten years naturally featured a few mistakes. That's why it's Revvy's mission to calm new brewers' nerves and encourage peace of mind.

It Will Be Okay

"It sounds trite, and we say it all the time," he says, "but *relax*, and don't worry. I've probably made every mistake that beginner books and websites tell us not to do, and my beers have all turned out okay. Some may not have been spectacular (though some were), but they've all been drinkable."

Among the blunders Revvy admits are

- Dropping "everything imaginable" into a fermentation bucket full of wort or beer.
- Plunging his unsanitized arm into a bucket of beer to fix a broken spigot.

- Accidentally transferring beer into a vessel that he forgot to sanitize.
- Allowing a fermentation to reach 88°F (31°C), about twenty degrees higher than it ought to have been. (Hot fermentations can produce terrible flaws such as bubblegum and banana flavors.)
- Transferring beer into a bucket with an open spigot and then walking away—thankfully, only half a gallon was lost.

While there's not much to be done for beer that escapes through an open spigot and onto the floor, Michael preaches the virtues of patience when it comes to almost everything else.

"Many new brewers—actually *all* new brewers—tend to be hyper-vigilant, even neurotic, in the beginning. They hover over their first batch like it's a newborn baby and worry that if they even look at it wrong, they might kill it, along with a few of their friends."

But you have to realize that beer is more resilient than we think it is," Michael continues reassuringly. "It takes a lot to ruin homebrew. And most of the basic, boneheaded mistakes we make really won't destroy the beer. This isn't surgery. We're human, so we're going to make mistakes."

History's Lessons

Revy especially enjoys learning about the history of beer and frequently revives lost and forgotten styles. Using what little historical information is available, he has developed a recipe for Kentucky Common, which alongside California Common is one of the first beer styles North America can truly call its own. And in a podcast for Michigan's Brew Bubbas, Michael discusses *bochet*, a burnt mead from the

fifteenth century. This interest in history has engendered an appreciation for beer's resilience in the face of adversity.

He asks new brewers to consider small mistakes in a broader historical context. In the past, beer was often safer to drink than water because it was boiled, acidic, and fortified with hops. Certain conditions might produce a contaminated beer, or even vinegar, from time to time, but suboptimal beer won't make you sick or cause harm.

"Beer has been brewed for thousands of years, often in primitive conditions. It may not have been as clear or as clean-tasting as what we enjoy today, but it's not human nature to continue eating or drinking things that are truly unpleasant. Long before modern sanitizers, or even an understanding of germ theory, beer managed to remain culturally relevant," Michael says.

He insists that if beer were as fragile as new brewers sometimes fear, our beloved barley beverage would never have survived to modern day. No matter how poor conditions may have been in the past, the results must have been sufficiently pleasant and enjoyable for societies to continue brewing it.

With today's access to such technologies as sanitizer, closed fermentation vessels, pure yeast cultures, and temperature control, "we're still light years ahead of the ancient Egyptian brewer who brewed over a fire pit," says the relaxed reverend. "Just because you dropped something in your beer doesn't necessarily mean you've ruined it."

According to the Revvy Doctrine, the most egregious homebrew sin you can commit is dumping beer just because you think you've done something wrong. "I tell people all the time: pitch your yeast and walk away for a month, or two weeks if you're racking to a secondary," he says. "Don't hover over it, and don't try to gauge success from the bubbles that may or may not appear in the airlock. Pitch your yeast, and then let it do its thing. It's in charge, not us. Give it enough time to work, and it won't let you down."

Michael especially recommends that initially disappointing beer be given more time and says that putting it away to mature for a few weeks, or even months, can improve flavor dramatically. "I've had beers that just sucked right after carbonation but turned out perfect later. So don't write them off right away. Time often heals a multitude of wounds."

Amen to that, brother.



"Pitch your yeast and walk away. Let the yeast do its thing."

Reader Recipe



The Bitter Earl English Pale Ale

ALL-GRAIN

Brewed with Earl Grey Creme tea, The Bitter Earl is malty and complex with a pronounced Earl Grey flavor and earthy hop presence. The recipe overshoots the IBU range for the style by a few points to balance the Earl Grey flavor. The color is also dark for the style because of the infusion of the black tea.

OG: 1.054

FG: 1.014

IBUS: 56

ABV: 5.23%

MALT/GRAIN BILL

10 pounds floor-malted Maris Otter

1 pound UK medium crystal malt (50-60)

1 pound UK Cara malt

HOP SCHEDULE

2 ounces East Kent Goldings at 60 minutes

.5 ounce Fuggles at 30 minutes

.5 ounce Fuggles at 15 minutes

.5 ounce East Kent Goldings at 15 minutes

1 ounce Fuggles at 5 minutes

.5 ounce East Kent Goldings at 5 minutes

DIRECTIONS

Make a yeast starter the day before brew day.

Mash at 154°F (68°C) for 75 minutes. Mash out at 170°F (77°C) for 10 minutes. Sparge with 170°F (77°C) water to collect 7-7 1/2 gallons of wort.

Boil for 60 minutes.

Transfer to the fermentor and pitch yeast starter at 64°F (18°C). Allow the temperature to free rise to 66-68°F (19-20°C) over the next few days. Primary fermentation should complete in just a few days. When complete, raise the temperature to 70°F (21°C) and let sit for a 2-3 day diacetyl rest. Transfer to secondary fermentor for 1 week to allow the beer to clear, then package.

YEAST

Wyeast 1968 London ESB

BREWER'S NOTES

Add 1 Whirlfloc tablet to the boil at 15 minutes. Add 1.5 ounces Earl Grey Creme tea (I recommend Adagio Teas's Earl Grey Moonlight in a fine mesh bag) at flameout and steep for 8 minutes while cooling the wort. My efficiency is generally on the low side. This brew usually comes in about 66%.

This ale tends to end up very bright and clear because the yeast is highly flocculent; however, chill haze can be an issue because of the makeup of the grist as well as tannins in the black tea. You can do a protein rest or cold condition for a few weeks after packaging to combat this. I highly recommend serving at cellar temperature (although it's good cold, the malt tends to sing at a higher temperature). This beer does exceptionally well in a cask, but bottles nicely as well.

John McHenry lives in Lindenwold, New Jersey, and is the full-time dad of two little girls.

Recipes are built to yield a batch size of 5 gallons and assume 72% brewhouse efficiency unless noted.



Brewing A-Z

-A-

acetic » vinegary aroma caused by acetic acid bacteria; common in sour beers.

acetaldehyde » chemical present in beer that has the aroma and flavor of fresh-cut green apples or green leaves.

acid » a pH value between 1 and 7.

acrospire » the barley shoot that develops during germination and malting.

adjunct » any non-enzymatic fermentable material that will feed the yeast. Common examples are rice, corn, refined sugar, raw wheat, flaked barley, and syrup.

aerobic » a process that occurs in the presence of oxygen.

aftertaste » the flavor that lingers after beer leaves the mouth.

aldehyde » a chemical precursor to alcohol. In some situations, alcohol can be oxidized to aldehydes, creating off-flavors.

ale » a beer brewed using a top-fermenting yeast at 60°–75°F (15°–24°C) for a relatively short time (2–3 weeks). The ale family includes pale, amber/red, strong, and dark.

aleurone layer » the outermost layer of the endosperm of a barley grain, containing enzymes.

alkaline » a pH value between 7 and 14.

alpha acid » a class of chemical compounds found in hop cones' resin glands that is the source of hop bitterness.

alpha acid unit (AAU) » a homebrewing measurement of hops that is calculated by multiplying the percent alpha acid of the hops by the number of ounces of hops.

American Society of Brewing

Chemists (ASBC) » the organization that sets standards and test methods for brewing materials and processes.

amino acids » a group of complex organic chemicals that form the building blocks of protein.

amylase » an enzyme group that converts starch to sugar.

attenuation » the degree to which the fermentation process converts residual sugars to alcohol and CO₂.

anaerobic » a process that occurs in the absence of oxygen.

autolysis » self-digestion and disintegration of yeast cells that can cause off-flavors if beer isn't racked from dead yeast after primary fermentation.

-B-

°Balling » one of three units that are used as the standard to describe the amount of available extract as a weight percentage of cane sugar in solution.

barley » cereal grain, member of the genus *Hordeum*. Malted barley is the primary ingredient in beer.

barrel » standard unit in commercial brewing. A U.S. barrel is 31.5 gallons; a British barrel is 43.2 U.S. gallons.

Baumé » hydrometer scale, developed by the French chemist Antoine Baumé, used to measure the specific gravity of liquids.

beerstone » a hard brown scale (calcium oxalate) that deposits on fermentation equipment.

beta glucans » a group of gums that are produced in the malting process and can, if present in excess, cause problems with runoff and fermentation.

biotin » one of the B-complex vitamins found in yeast.

blow-off tube » a tube used during vigorous fermentation to allow the release of CO₂ and excess fermentation material.

Brettanomyces » colloquially referred to as "Brett," a genus of yeast sometimes used in brewing. In a glucose-rich environment, it produces acetic acid.

-C-

calcium » mineral ion important in brewing-water chemistry.

caryophyllene » one of four primary essential hop oils. Also found in basil, caraway, cloves, oregano, and pepper.

chill haze » cloudy protein residue that precipitates when beer is chilled but re-dissolves as the beer warms up.

citronellol » a monoterpene alcohol that is primarily biotransformed by yeast from geraniol when high levels of linalool are present.

cold break » rapid precipitation of proteins that occurs when the wort is rapidly chilled before pitching the yeast.

conditioning » a term for secondary fermentation, in which the beer matures.

cone » the part of the hops plant used in brewing.

corn sugar » dextrose. Sometimes added as an adjunct in beer to raise alcohol percentage and lighten the color of the beer.

-D-

decoction » a mashing technique that involves removing some of the mash to another pot, boiling it, then returning it to the mash tun to raise the temperature.

dextrin » a complex sugar molecule, not normally fermentable by yeast, that contributes to body in beer.

diacetyl » a powerful flavor chemical with the aroma of butter or butterscotch.

diastase » an enzyme complex in barley and malt that is responsible for the conversion of starch into sugars during the mashing process.

dimethyl sulfide (DMS) » a powerful flavor chemical found in beer, with the aroma of cooked corn or cabbage.

dough-in rest » the process of mixing the crushed malt with water in the beginning of the mash operation.

dry-hopping » adding hops directly to the fermenter at the end of fermentation to increase hop aroma without adding bitterness.

-E-

endosperm » the starchy middle of a barley grain that is the source of fermentable material for brewing.

enzymes » proteins that act as catalysts for most reactions crucial to brewing, including starch conversion and yeast metabolism.

esters » aromatic compounds formed from yeast's complete oxidation of various alcohols and responsible for most fruity aromas in beer.

ethanol » the type of alcohol found in beer, formed by yeast from malt sugars.

ethyl acetate » a common ester in beer.

European Brewing Convention (EBC) » Most commonly encountered as a term applied to malt color. °EBC is about twice °Lovibond/SRM.

European Bitterness Unit (EBU) » equivalent to International Bittering Unit (IBU).

extract » concentrated wort in dry or syrup form.

-F-

farnesene » one of four primary essential hops oils. Although farnesene makes up a very low percentage of total oil in most hop varieties, it is considered significant because it makes up a substantial proportion of some noble hops.

fatty acid » among the secondary elements that are produced during fermentation and create much of a beer's flavor.

fermentation » yeast's biochemical process involving the metabolism of sugars and the release of CO₂ and alcohol.

finings » clarifying agents that are added post-fermentation to help pull suspended yeast, malt proteins, and polyphenols out of the beer.

firkin » British cask containing 10.8 U.S. or 9 Imperial gallons (40.9 liters).

first runnings » the first few quarts of wort that are drained off at the beginning of runoff until the draining wort is fairly clear.

flocculation » the clumping together and settling of the yeast out of solution.

fusel alcohol » a group of more complex alcohols that esterify under normal conditions. In beer, fusel alcohols can be produced by excessive amounts of yeast.

FWH » "first wort hopping" is a process that involves adding finishing hops to the boil kettle as the wort is drained from the lauter or mash tun.

-G-

gelatin » one of several fining agents.

gelatinization » the process of breaking down the starch granules in corn or other unmalted cereals to make the starch accessible for conversion into sugar.

geraniol » one of many hop compounds. Researchers have determined that citronellol is primarily generated from geraniol when high levels of linalool are present.

germination » the process by which the barley shoot begins to grow and emerge from the hull.

glucanase » an enzyme that acts on the beta glucans of unmalted barley, oatmeal, rye, and wheat.

glucose » corn sugar or dextrose, the most common type of sugar.

gravity (specific gravity) » describes the concentration or density of malt sugar in the wort.

grist » ground grain ready for brewing.

-H-

hardness » a term indicating the presence of water mineral levels.

hops » a climbing vine of the Cannabaceae family, whose cones are used to give beer its bitterness and characteristic aroma.

hopback » a sealed container that is filled with whole hops and inserted in line as the wort is transferred into the fermenter. The hops add aroma and act as a filter for removing the break material.

hot break » (also known as hot trub) the rapid coagulation of proteins and tannins that forms a brown scum on top of the wort as the boil begins.

humulene » one of the chemicals that give hops their characteristic aroma.

husk » the outer covering of barley or other grains.

hydrolysis » in homebrewing, the process by which the addition of water breaks down proteins and carbohydrates.

hydrometer » a glass instrument used in brewing to measure the specific gravity of beer and wort to calculate alcohol percentage and fermentation status.

-I-

IBU (international bittering unit) » the accepted method of expressing hop bitterness in beer.

impact hops » also called "special

flavor hops." Hops varieties bred to exhibit such flavor and aroma attributes as pine, pineapple, grapefruit, mango, lychee, and gooseberries.

Infusion » a mashing technique where heating is accomplished with addition of boiling water.

Irish moss (also called carrageen) » a marine algae used to promote the formation of break material and precipitation during the boil.

isinglass » a fining agent that comes from the clear swim bladder of some fish.

iso-alpha acid » predominant source of bitterness in beer. Derived from the hops during the boil.

isomerization » the chemical change during wort boiling that causes hop alpha acids to become more bitter and soluble in wort.

-K-

kettle » boiling vessel, also known as a copper.

krausen » as a noun, the thick foamy head on fermenting beer. As a verb, a priming method where vigorously fermenting young beer is added to beer during secondary fermentation.

-L-

lactic acid » a tart, sour acid that is a by-product of *Lactobacillus*.

Lactobacillus » large genus of bacteria. Some species are used in the production of yogurt, sauerkraut, pickles, and some beers.

lactose » an unfermentable sugar that comes from milk. Traditionally used in milk stout.

lag time » adaptation phase after the yeast is pitched during which the yeast begins a period of rapid aerobic growth.

lager » a beer brewed with a bottom-fermenting yeast between 45°–55°F (7°–13°C) and given 4–6 weeks to ferment. The lager family includes light, pilsner, amber, bock, and dark.

lautering » a process in which the mash is separated into the liquid wort and the residual grain.

lauter tun » traditional vessel used to separate the wort from the residual grains.

lightstruck » a skunky off-flavor in beer that develops from exposure to short-wave-length light.

linalool » one of many hop compounds. Although linalool constitutes a tiny percentage of hop oils, combined with geraniol, it strongly affects the aroma of beer.

lipid » types of fat in animal and plant matter.

liquification » the process by which alpha amylase breaks up the branched amylopectin molecules in the mash.

°Lovibond » a method of measuring beer and grain color, superseded by the SRM method for beer, but still often used in reference to grain color.
lupulin » hops' resinous substance that contains all the resins and aromatic oils.

-M-

Maillard browning » a caramelization reaction that creates malt's roasted color and flavor.
malt » barley or other grain that has been allowed to sprout, then dried or roasted.
maltose » a simple sugar that is the predominant fermentable material in wort.
mash » the hot-water steeping process in which starch is converted into sugars.
mash tun » vessel with a false bottom in which mashing is carried out.
melanoidins » the strong flavor compounds produced by Maillard browning.
milling » grinding or crushing grain.
modification » the degree to which the protein-starch matrix breaks down during malting.
mouthfeel » sensory qualities of a beer other than flavor, such as body and carbonation.
myrcene » one of four primary essential hop oils. Also found in bay, wild thyme, and parsley.

-O-

original gravity (OG) » measure of wort strength expressed as specific gravity.
oxidation » chemical reaction that occurs between oxygen and various components in beer.

-P-

pasteurization » the process of sterilizing by heat.
peptidase » an enzyme that breaks up small proteins in the endosperm to form amino acids.
peptide » a short fragment of a protein.
pH (potential of hydrogen) » the scale used to express the level of acidity and alkalinity in a solution. Neutral is a value of 7; most acidic is a value of 1; most alkaline is a value of 14.
phenol » chemical family responsible for spicy, smoky, clove-like, and other aromas in beer.
pitch » adding yeast to the fermenter.
°Plato » European and American scale of gravity based on a percentage of pure sugar in the wort. A newer, more accurate version of the Balling scale.
polishing » final filtration before bottling that leaves beer sparkling clear.

polyphenol » tannins that contribute to haze and staling reactions.
polysaccharide » polymers of simple sugars.
ppm » parts per million. 1 milligram per liter. Most commonly used to express dissolved mineral concentrations in water.
precipitation » a chemical process involving a material coming out of solution.
primary fermentation » initial rapid stage of yeast activity when maltose and other simple sugars are metabolized.
priming » adding a small amount of sugar to beer before bottling to restart fermentation and give the beer carbonization.
protein » complex organic molecules involved in enzyme activity, yeast nutrition, head retention, and colloidal stability.
proteinase (protease) » an enzyme that breaks proteins apart into smaller, more soluble units. The breaking up of the proteins is called proteolysis.
protein rest » during mashing, a rest that allows remnant large proteins to be broken down into smaller proteins and amino acids and any remaining starches to be released from the endosperm.

-R-

racking » carefully siphoning the beer away from the trub to another fermenter or to bottles.
Reinheitsgebot » Bavarian beer-purity law, enacted in 1516 decreeing that beer can have only three components: water, barley, and hops.
Runnings » wort that is drained from the mash during sparging.

-S-

saccharification » conversion of starch to sugars in the mash through enzymatic action.
Saccharomyces » scientific genus name of brewer's yeast.
sanitize » to reduce microbial contaminants to insignificant levels.
secondary fermentation » after the primary fermentation, beer is racked to a sterile container for a slower phase of yeast activity during which complex sugars are metabolized.
session beer » a beer that is lighter in gravity and alcohol (usually less than 4.5% ABV).
set mash » during sparging, when the grain bed plugs up and no liquid flows through it.
six-row » the type of barley most often grown in the United States and used in the production of American-style beers.

sparge » rinsing mashed grains with hot water to recover all available wort sugars.
specific gravity » a measurement of malt sugar density in the wort, expressed relative to the density of water.
SRM (Standard Reference Method) » the measurement of beer color.
starch » complex carbohydrates that are converted into sugars during mashing.
starch haze » suspended starch particles that cause cloudiness in beer.
steep » soaking barley or wheat in water to begin malting.
step mash » mashing technique that uses controlled temperature steps.
sterilize » to eliminate all forms of life by either chemical or physical means.
strike » adding hot water to the crushed malt to raise the temperature and begin mashing.

-T-

tannins » polyphenols, complex organic materials with an astringent flavor, extracted from barley husks and hops.
terpenes » the flavor chemicals in hop oils.
trub » the hot and cold break material, hop bits, and dead yeast sediment at the bottom of the fermenter.
two-row » the most common type of barley for brewing everywhere except America.

-U-

underlet » adding water to a mash from below to encourage quicker and more thorough mixing of the grains and water.

-V, W, X, Y, Z-

Vinnie nail » attributed to Vinnie Cilurzo from Russian River Brewing. Made of stainless steel and typically 1.5"–2" long, these are used to plug the small hole that is drilled into a wooden barrel to retrieve a sample of aging beer.
whirlpool » a device that separates the hops and trub from the wort after boiling.
wine thief » an instrument used for taking a sample of wine or beer from a fermenter.
wort » the sugar-laden liquid from the mash.
wort chiller » a heat exchanger that rapidly cools wort from near boiling to pitching temperatures.
yeast » a large class of microscopic fungi, several species of which are used in brewing.
zymurgy » the science of brewing and fermentation.

HOT

1. THE MASH (AND STEEP)

This process extracts fermentable and non-fermentable sugars from the grains as well as valuable color, flavor, and body.

2. THE BOIL

Boiling not only concentrates the wort into a delicious sugary liquid, it also pulls bitterness from the hops and causes reactions that are necessary for rigorous fermentation.

3. ADD HOPS

Hops are generally divided into two categories—bittering hops and aroma hops. The longer you boil hops, the more bitterness you extract. Aroma hops are added later in the boil process to preserve the essential oils that contribute their distinct aromatic profiles.

4. ADD MISC (OPTIONAL)

Toward the end of the boil, recipes may call for adding other ingredients such as brown sugar, spices, extracts, or herbs. Clarifying agents such as Whirlfloc or Irish moss may also be added at this time.

FERMENT

8. PITCH YEAST

Make sure that your yeast and wort are both at room temperature and then add the yeast to your fermenter.

7. OXYGENATE WORT

Oxygen plays a key role in jumpstarting the yeast's fermentation ability. While not mandatory, adding oxygen to your wort via an aeration stone or O₂ tank is recommended.

6. TRANSFER TO FERMENTER

5. CHILL WORT

Rapidly chilling the wort helps add clarity to the wort and gets the wort to a temperature where it will be ready to accept yeast. Rapidly chilling also decreases the chance of potential bacterial infection of the wort.

9. RACK TO SECONDARY

After primary fermentation is complete, beer is racked to a secondary fermenter. This removes the beer from the trub left in the bottom of the primary fermenter, which has the potential to produce off-flavors.

10. DRY HOP

An optional step based on the style of beer and personal taste, additional hops are added to the secondary fermenter after primary fermentation is complete. This process adds hop aroma without bitterness.

11. BOTTLE/KEG

Once fermentation is complete, the beer can then be racked to either a bottling bucket or keg. If bottling, priming sugar is added to the beer, giving the yeast material with which to carbonate the beer in the bottle. If kegging and force carbonating, no additional sugar is required.

COLD

Homebrewing Start to Finish

Once you've decided on a recipe or ordered your kit, follow these eleven steps and you'll be drinking great beer in no time!

ENJOY!

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bierhausbrewing.com

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baldbrewer.com

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warhammersupply.com

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hiccountrhomebrew.com

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brew-wine.com

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maltoseexpress.net

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luckandlevity.com

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bootleggingcompany.com

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Brandon, FL 33511
(813) 413-4951

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sunseedfoodcoop.com

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(239) 494-1923

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grapeescape.com

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Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547
hopheadsflw.com

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(352) 367-4455
hoggetowne.com

Grape Expectations
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(727) 938-4385
grapeexpectations.us

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(904) 381-1983
justbrewitjax.com

Just Brew It
1314 North 3rd St.
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
(904) 435-4767
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heartshomebrew.com

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beerandwinemaking.com

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Sanford, FL 32771
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sanfordhomebrewshop.com

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inthespirits.com

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St Cloud, FL 34771
(407) 957-2337
thehomebrewstore.net

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St. Petersburg, FL 33713
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longneckbrewhouse.com

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Nampa, ID 83686-2974
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ida.netusersgrapevine

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naturalharvestfoodcoop.com

Bakers Hobby and Framing
51 3rd St NE
Waite Park, MN 56387
(320) 252-0460
bakershobby.com

Mississippi

Delta Brewing Supply
631 Washington Ave.
Greenville, MS 38701
(662) 537-4984
deltabrewingsupply.com

Brewhaha Homebrew Supply
4800 I-55 N, Suite 17A.
Jackson, MS 39211
(601) 362-0201
brewhahasupply.com

Missouri

Missouri Malt Supply
2275 Cassens Dr. #130
Fenton, MO 63026
(314) 779-6258
momalt.com

Brew & Wine Supply
10330 Business 21, Suite 5
Hillsboro, MO 63050
(888) 225-5093
brewandwinesupply.com

Apex Brew Wares
4380 S Noland Road
Independence, MO 64055
(816) 875-6242
apexbrewwares.com

Homebrew Supply of Southeast MO
3463 State Hwy FF
Jackson, MO 63755
(573) 579-9398
homebrewsupply.biz

Cowtown Brew Supply
10919 N. Richmond Ave
Kansas City, MO 64157
(816) 645-3950
cowtownbrewsupply.com

Grains & Taps
224 SE Douglas St.
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
(816) 866-5827

Home Brewery (MO) The
1967 W Boat St.
Ozark, MO 65721
(417) 581-0963
homebrewery.com

Montana

Belgrade Liquor
7001 Jackrabbit Ln #B.
Belgrade, MT 59714-8971
(406) 388-6858
belgradeliqor.com

Billings Homebrew Supply
1916 3rd Ave N.
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 256-0261

Rock Hand Hardware
2414 N. Montana Ave.
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 422-7770
rockhandacehardware.com

Big Sky Homebrew Supply
5417 Trumpeter Way PO Box 17170
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 549-2777
bigskybrew.com

Chapman Homebrew
2330 S Higgins Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 549-1111
lolopeak.com

Nebraska

Patriot Homebrew Supply
2929 N 204th St. #107
Elkhorn, NE 68022
(402) 515-1365

Kirk's Brew
1150 Cornhusker Hwy
Lincoln, NE 68521-2336
(402) 476-7414

Cornhusker Beverage
8510 K St.
Omaha, NE 68127-1697
(402) 331-5404

Fermenters Supply and Equipment
8410 K Plaza, Ste 10
Omaha, NE 68127
(402) 593-9171
fermenterssupply.com

Nevada

U Bottle It
2230 West Horizon Ridge Pkwy,
Henderson, NV 89502
(702) 565-5040
ubottleit.com

Vegas Homebrew & Winemaking
5140 W. Charleston Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV 89146
(702) 207-2337
vegashomebrew.com

Reno Homebrewer
2335 Dickerson Road
Reno, NV 89503
(775) 329-2537
renohomebrewer.com

New Hampshire

Fermentation Station (NH)
79 Main St.
Ashland, NH 03217
(603) 279-4028
2ferment.net/index.php

Hops and Dreams
PO Box 914
Atkinson, NH 03811

New Hampshire Yeastern Homebrew Supply
4 Franklin Plaza
Dover, NH 03820
(603) 343-2956
yeasternhomebrewsupply.com

The Homebrew Barn
861 Lafayette Rd Unit 6A
Hampton, NH 03842
(603) 601-2548

Lebanon Health Food Store
90 Hanover St.
Lebanon, NH 03766
(603) 448-3700

Mt. Washington Homebrew Supply
150B Old Country Rd.
Littleton, NH 03561
(603) 444-7775
brewbyyou.com

Jaspers Home Brew Supply
522 Amherst St.
Nashua, NH 03063
(603) 881-3052

A & G Homebrew Supply
165 High Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801
(603) 767-8235

Craft Beer Cellar Portsmouth
767 Islington Stree
Portsmouth, NH 03801
(603) 373-0993

Border Brew Supply
10 Lawrence Rd.
Salem, NH 03079-3290
(603) 216-9134

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123 Main Street
Suncook, NH 03275
(603) 485-2054

Smoke N Barley
485 Laconia Rd.
Tilton, NH 03276
(603) 524-5004
smokenbarley.com

New Jersey

Keg & Barrel Homebrew Supply
41 Clementon Rd. Store # 112
Berlin, NJ 08009
(856) 768-5181
kegandbarrelhomebrewsupply.com

Cask & Kettle Homebrew
904-B Main Street
Boonton, NJ 07005
(973) 917-4340

Grape Expectations (NJ)
25 Kearney St.
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
(732) 764-9463
grapeexpectationsnj.com

Corrado's Wine & Homebrewing Center
600 Getty Ave
Clifton, NJ 07011
(973) 340-0848

Rubinos Homemade Wine & Beer
2919 Route 206 Ste 405
Columbus, NJ 08022
(609) 261-8420

Tap It Homebrew Supply Shop
129 Philadelphia Ave
Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215
(609) 593-3697

Brewers Apprentice
865 State Route 33 Ste 4
Freehold, NJ 07728-8475
(732) 863-9411

Homebrew University
160 Main Street
Hackettstown, NJ 07840-2041
(908) 310-4070

Vintners Circle (Hackettstown)
57 Route 46
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
(908) 979-0700

The Thirsty Quaker
492 Monmouth St.
Jersey City, NJ 07302
(201) 659-2304

Love2Brew
1583 Livingston Ave Unit #2
North Brunswick, NJ 08902
(888) 654-5511
love2brew.com

Richland General Store
1275 Harding Hwy
Richland, NJ 08350
(856) 697-4326
mywine4less.com

U-Brew (NJ)
15 S Orange Ave.
South Orange, NJ 07079
(973) 376-0973
gaslightbrewery.com

North Jersey Homebrew
354 Lafayette Road
Sparta, NJ 07871
(973) 383-2739

Princeton Homebrew
208 Sanhican Dr.
Trenton, NJ 08618-5013
(609) 252-1800

LaTorre Hardware
1607 S Delsea Dr.
Vineland, NJ 08360
(856) 691-9468
latorre-hardware.com

Brew Your Own Bottle
162 Haddon Ave.
Westmont, NJ 08108
(856) 858-6000
brewyourownbottle.com

Vintners Circle (Whippany)
831 State Route 10
Whippany, NJ 07981
(973) 585-4719
vintnerscirclewhippany.com

New Mexico

Southwest Grape & Grain
2801 Eubank Blvd NE Ste N.
Albuquerque, NM 87112
(505) 332-2739

Victors Grape Arbor
2436 San Mateo Pl Ne
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 883-0000
victorsgrapearbor.com

U Bru
1408 Hutton Avenue
Farmington, NM 87402
(505) 327-3000

The Grain Hopper
4116 Jackie Rd, Ste 104
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
(505) 859-7606
thegrainhopper.com

Santa Fe Homebrew Supply
6820 Cerrillos Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87507
(505) 473-2268
santafehomebrew.com

New York

Wolfe's Wines & Brew House
249 Main Street #1
Arcade, NY 14009
(585) 492-2739
wolfe'swinesandbrewhouse.com

Grains & Grapes Homebrew Supply
2334 W. Lake Rd, Rte. 394
Ashville, NY 14710
(716) 526-1121
shop.grainsgrapeshomebrew.com

Homebrews & Handgrenades
2378 Grand Ave
Baldwin, NY 11510
(516) 223-9300
brewgrenades.com

Beacon Homebrew
469 Main Street
Beacon, NY 12508
(845) 838-2337
beaconhomebrew.com

Docs Homebrew Supplies
451 Court Street
Binghamton, NY 13904
(607) 722-2476
docsbrew.com

Brooklyn Homebrew
163 8th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11215
(718) 369-0776
brooklyn-homebrew.com

The Brooklyn Kitchen
100 Frost St.
Brooklyn, NY 11211
(718) 389-2982

Bitter & Esters
700 Washington Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11238
(917) 453-6616

The Green Growler
368 South Riverside Ave.
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520
(914) 862-0961
thegreengrowler.com

Lets Do Wine!
5864 Transit Road
Depew, NY 14043
(716) 686-9969
letsdowine.com

KarpsEast Northport Hardware
2 Larkfield Road
East Northport, NY 11731
(631) 261-1235

Brewshop At Cornell's Hardware
310 White Plains Rd.
Eastchester, NY 10709-2802
(914) 961-2400
homebrewshop.com

North Brewery Homebrew Supplies
110 Washington Ave.
Endicott, NY 13760
(607) 785-0524
northbrewery.com

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120 Fairport Village Lndg.
Fairport, NY 14450
(585) 377-4520

Homebrew Too-Hydroponic Garden Centers
146-49 Horace Harding Expressway
Flushing, NY 11367
(718) 762-8880

Glen Cove Home Brew
58B School St
Glen Cove, NY 11542
(516) 200-9300
glencovehomebrew.com/contact-us.html

Arbor Wine and Beer Making Supplies, Inc.
184 Islip Ave.
Islip, NY 11751
(631) 277-3004
arborwineandbeermakingsupplies.com

Ithaca Coffee Company-Gateway Commons
311 East Green Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 273-7800
ithacacoffee.com

Keegan Homebrew & Mercantile
36 St. James St.
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 853-8273

Hammersmith Homebrew LLC
883 New Loudon Road (Route 9)
Latham, NY 12110
(518) 786-1853
hammersmithhomebrew.com

EJ Wren Homebrewer Inc.

Ponderosa Plaza
Liverpool, NY 13088
(315) 457-2282

Pantano's Wine Grapes & Homebrew
249 Rte. 32 South
New Paltz, NY 12561
(845) 255-5201

Westchester Homebrew Emporium
550 North Ave.
New Rochelle, NY 10801
(914) 637-2337

American Homesteader
6167 State Highway 12
Norwich, NY 13815
(607) 334-9942

Bottom of the Barrel
1736 Mount Hope Ave
Oneida, NY 13421
(315) 366-0655
bottomofthebarrel.biz

Hoptron Brewtique
22 West Main Street
Patchogue, NY 11772
(631) 438-0296
hoptronbrewtique.com

The Merry Wine Makers
37 Durkee St.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
(518) 562-0064
themerrywinemakers.com/

Party Creations
345 Rokeby Rd.
Red Hook, NY 12571-1911
(845) 758-0661

Homebrew Emporium
470 N Greenbush Rd.
Rensselaer, NY 12144-8406
(518) 283-7094

Sunset Hydroponics & Home Brewing (Rochester)
1590 W Ridge Rd.
Rochester, NY 14615
(585) 323-2180
sunsethydro.com

Saratoga Zymurgist
112 Excelsior Ave.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-8550
(518) 580-9785

The Simple Brewer
346 RT 202
Somers, NY 10589
(914) 617-8617

Home Brewery (NY), The co Smith Restaurant Supply
500 Erie Blvd. East
Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 478-7004

Sunset Hydroponics & Home Brewing (Syracuse)
3530 Erie Blvd E.
Syracuse, NY 13214
(315) 446-5208
sunsethydro.com

Niagara Tradition Homebrewing
1296 Sheridan Drive
Tonawanda, NY 14217
(716) 877-8676
nthomebrew.com

Sunset Hydroponics & Home Brewing (Victor)
Cobblestone Court Plaza, 40
Cobblestone Court Dr.
Victor, NY 14564
(585) 223-3410

Mistucky Creek Co.
331 Route 94 South
Warwick, NY 10990
mistuckycreek.com

Mayers Cider Mill Inc.
699 Five Mile Line Road
Webster, NY 14580
(585) 671-1955
mayerscidermill.com

North Carolina

Asheville Brewers Supply
712 Merrimon Ave Ste B
Asheville, NC 28804-2450
(828) 285-0515

Alternative Beverage
1500 River Dr-Ste 104
Belmont, NC 28012
ebrew.com

Appalachian Homebrewing Supply
904 West King Street
Boone, NC 28607
(828) 386-1018
appalachianhomebrewingsupply.com

Fifth Season Gardening (Carrboro)
106 S Greensboro St.
Carrboro, NC 27510
(919) 932-7600
fifthseasongardening.com

Homebrew Adventures
209 Iverson Way
Charlotte, NC 28203
(888) 785-7766

Bull City Homebrew
1906 E. NC Hwy 54, Suite 200-B
Durham, NC 27713
(919) 682-0300
bullcityhomebrew.com

Grape & Hops, LLC
5407 Ramsey St. # C
Fayetteville, NC 28311
(910) 822-8700
grapesandhops.net

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121 Raleigh St.
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526
(919) 290-3959

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1616 Battleground Ave, Ste D
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Triad Homebrew Supply
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homebrew-supply.com

Brewers Discount
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(252) 758-5967
brewersdiscount.net

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105 1st Ave West
Hendersonville, NC 28792
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Advantage Beer & Wine Supplies
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hickorybrewer.com

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Jacksonville, NC 28540
(910) 455-7309
fermentation-station.com

American Brewmaster Inc.
3021-5 Stony Brook Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27604
(919) 850-0095
americanbrewmaster.com

Hops and Vines
797 Haywood Rd. Ste 100
West Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 252-5275
hopsandvines.net/

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wilmingtonhomebrew.com

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Winston Salem, NC 27101
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(330) 762-1000

Hydro House of Ohio

2234 S. Union Ave
Alliance, OH 44601
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hydrohouseohio.com

Unicorn Wine Guild

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Belpre, OH 45714
(740) 423-1300
unicornwineguild.com

Orme Hardware of Berlin

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Berlin, OH 44610
(330) 893-2812
berlinohioinfo.com

Vino Novello Winery

1419 Boardman Canfield Rd.
Suite 320
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(330) 758-2880
vinonovellowinery.com

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228 North Main Street
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blackswamp-bootleggers.com

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Cincinnati, OH 45207-1007
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(216) 574-2271

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Cleveland, OH 44118
(216) 382-2400

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Clyde, OH 43410
(419) 547-2720
vinetowinemakingsupplies.com

Gentiles Carry Out Inc.

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Columbus, OH 43212
(614) 486-3406
gentiles.com

Winemakers Shop

3517 N. High St.
Columbus, OH 43214
(614) 263-1744
winemakersshop.com

Miami Valley BrewTensils

2617 South Smithville Rd.
Dayton, OH 45420
(937) 252-4724

Jungle Jims

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Fairfield, OH 45014
(513) 674-6000
junglejims.com/planyour
tripstore_info.asp

Wolf's Premium Nuts & Crafts

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Findlay, OH 45840
(419) 423-1355
wolfiesnuts.com

Slaters Inc.

1141 N Memorial Dr.
Lancaster, OH 43130
(740) 654-2204

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Mentor, OH 44060
(440) 951-2739
thebrewmentor.com

World Wines & Liquor

8760 Mentor Ave.
Mentor, OH 44060
(440) 255-1311
worldwinesohio.com

Osborn Brewing Co.

820 Lebanon St Suite A
Monroe, OH 45050
(513) 360-0076
osbornbrewing.com

Leeners Brew Works

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Northfield, OH 44067
(330) 467-9870
leeners.com

Home Brew Ohio

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Sandusky, OH 44870
(419) 502-9019
homebrewohio.com

The PumpHouse Homebrew Shop

336 Elm St.
Struthers, OH 44471
(330) 755-3642

Sabco Industries

4511 South Ave.
Toledo, OH 43615-6418
(419) 531-5347

Titgemeier's Inc.

701 Western Ave.
Toledo, OH 43609-2717
(419) 243-3731

Wine Makers Headquarters

3100 Youngstown Rd SE
Warren, OH 44484
(330) 369-3981
winemakershq.com

Haynes Lubricants

24142 Detroit Rd.
Westlake, OH 44145-1515
(440) 871-2188

JW Dover Beer and Wine Makers Supplies

24945 Detroit Road
Westlake, OH 44145
(440) 871-0700
jwdover.com

Winerak Market

2336 Maple Ave.
Zanesville, OH 43701
(740) 454-6333

Oklahoma

Learn To Brew

2307 S. 135 Frontage Rd.
Moore, OK 73160
(405) 793-2337

The Brew Shop

3624 N Pennsylvania Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
(405) 528-5193
thebrewshopokc.com

High Gravity

7142 S Memorial Dr.
Tulsa, OK 74133
(918) 461-2605

Oregon

Hondo's Brew and Cork Pub

2703 Marine Drive
Astoria, OR 97103
(503) 325-2234
hondosbrew.net

Uptown Market

6620 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Beaverton, OR 97008
(503) 336-4783
uptownmarketpdx.com

The Brew Shop

1203 NE Third Street
Bend, OR 97701
(541) 323-2318
thebrewshopbend.com

Winemakers Depot

P.O. Box 3182.
Central Point, OR 97502
(541) 690-1508
winemakersdepot.com

Corvallis Brewing Supply

119 SW 4th St.
Corvallis, OR 97333
(541) 758-1674
corvallisbrewingsupply.com

Northwest Hops

PO Box 620
Donald, OR 97071
(503) 974-4677
northwesthops.com

Falling Sky Brewing

30 East 13th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 484-3322
brewabeer.com

Home Fermenter Center

123 Monroe St.
Eugene, OR 97402
(541) 485-6238
homefermenter.com

The Hoppy Brewer

328 N. Main Street
Gresham, OR 97030
(503) 328-8474

Brew Brothers

2020 NW Alcleok Dr Ste 107
Hillsboro, OR 97124-8053
(888) 528-8443

Mainbrew

23596 NW Clara Lane
Hillsboro, OR 97124
(503) 648-4254
mainbrew.com

Hood River Brewers Supply

202 Cascade Ave.
Hood River, OR 97931
(541) 387-4727

Davison Winery Supply

1819 North Baker St.
McMinnville, OR 97128
(503) 472-1711
dwinesupplies.com

Blackbird Shopping Center Inc

1810 West Main St.
Medford, OR 97501
(541) 779-5431
blackbirdshoppingcenter.com

Grains, Beans & Things

820 Crater Lake Ave, Suite 113
Medford, OR 97504
(541) 499-6777
grains-n-beans.com

Bier One

424 SW Coast Hwy
Newport, OR 97356
(541) 265-4630
bier-one.com

Bridgeview Beer and Wine Supply

624 Main St.
Oregon City, OR 97045
(503) 650-8342
bridgeviewbeerandwine.com

F.H. Steinbart Co.

234 SE 12th Ave.
Portland, OR 97214
(503) 232-8793
fhsteinbart.com

Lets Brew

8235 SE Stark St.
Portland, OR 97216
(503) 256-0218
letsbrew.net

Portland U-Brew & Pub

6237 SE Milwaukie Ave.
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 943-2727
portlandubrewandpub.com

The Homebrew Exchange

6550 N Interstate Ave.
Portland, OR 97217
(503) 286-0343

Above The Rest Beer & Wine

Homebrewing Supplies
11945 SW Pacific Hwy. #235
Tigard, OR 97223
(503) 968-2736
atr-homebrewing.com

Pennsylvania

Wunderlars Market

429 E. Main St.
Bath, PA 18095
(610) 837-9720

Nittany Valley Feed & Hardware

1169 Nittany Valley Dr.
Bellefonte, PA 16823
(814) 355-4930

Keystone Homebrew Supply-

Bethlehem
126-128 E 3rd St.
Bethlehem, PA 18015-1306
(610) 997-0911

Blairsville Homebrew

5 W Market St.
Blairsville, PA 15717
(724) 771-8048
blairsvillehomebrew.com

Wine & Beer Emporium

100 Ridge Rd Ste 27
Chadds Fort, PA 19317-9784
(610) 558-2337

Homebrew4Less

890 Lincoln Way West (RT 30)
Chambersburg, PA 17202
(717) 504-8534
homebrew4less.com

In and Out Beverage

1106 Sheller Ave.
Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 264-2614

The Homebrew & Hobby Shop

540 Franklin St.
Clymer, PA 15728
(724) 905-8043
thehomebrewhobbysshop.com

Back Mountain Feed & Seed Inc

777 Memorial Hwy.
Dallas, PA 18621
(570) 675-0660
backmountainagway.com

Vintners Cirlice (Dickson City)

1152 Commerce Blvd
Dickson City, PA 18519
(908) 979-9463

Artisan Homebrew

128 E Lancaster Ave.
Downingtown, PA 19335
(610) 873-4677
artisanhomebrew.com

Simply Homebrew

2 Honey Hole Rd.
Drums, PA 18222
(570) 788-2311
simplyhomebrew.com

Halligan Homebrew

2 Spring Garden St.
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
(717) 689-3487

Beer & Pop Discount Warehouse

901 Peninsula Dr.
Erie, PA 16505
(814) 454-2337
beerandpop.com

Bierhaus International

3723 W 12th St.
Erie, PA 16505
(814) 616-2101

Wine, Barley & Hops

Homebrew Supply
248 Bustleton Pike
Feasterville Trevose, PA
19053
(215) 322-4780

Keggle Brewing

207 North Rose Drive
Glenshaw, PA 15116
(412) 443-8295
kegglebrewing.com

Windsor Distributing Inc

800 S 4th St.
Hamburg, PA 19526
(610) 562-2474
windsordist.com

Hamlin Distributors

590 Hamlin Hwy
Hamlin, PA 18427
(570) 689-2891

Mr. Steves Homebrew Supplies

11 Carlisle St.
Hanover, PA 17331
(717) 630-0123

Brew Your Own Beer

2026 Darby Road
Havertown, PA 19083
(610) 449-5496
brewyourownbeerhavertown.com

Duncan True Value Hardware

1112 Lowry Ave.
Jeannette, PA 15644
(724) 523-2921

The Fermentoria

132 Constitution Ave.
Jessup, PA 18434
(570) 489-0489
thefermentoria.com

Lancaster Homebrew

1920 Lincoln Hwy E Suite B
Lancaster, PA 17602-5903
(717) 517-8785

Petrosky Hardware

602 Alexandria St.
Latrobe, PA 15650
(724) 537-3541

Wet Your Whistle

1136 Federal St.
Lebanon, PA 17042
(717) 274-2424
wetyourwhistle.net

Northeast Homebrew Supply

613 Blakeslee Boulevard Dr. E
Leighton, PA 18235
(610) 377-2739

Scotzin Bros

65 C North Fifth Street
Lemoyne, PA 17043
(717) 737-0483
scotzinbros.com

Windy Hill Wine Making

10998 Perry Highway
Meadville, PA 16335
(814) 337-6871
windyhillwine.net

Bald Eagle Brewing Co

315 Chestnut St.
Mifflinburg, PA 17844
(570) 966-3156
baldaglebrewingco.com

Delta Blues Homebrewing Supply

PO Box 193
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(814) 349-4369

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Outtake:

The systems on which we brew are as diverse as the individuals brewing on them. Gas or electric; plate, immersion, or counterflow; jacketed kegg or cooler; single level with pumps or tiered for gravity ...