

# FOR THE LOVE OF BEER

*An overview of Beer and The Brewing Process*

## Session Number 7

- Belgian Strong Ales, Strong Ales, Fruit, Spice/Herb/Vegetable, Smoked & Wood Aged and Specialty Beers

30 June 2011

# 18A. Belgian Blond Ale

- **Aroma:** Light earthy or spicy hop nose, along with a lightly sweet Pils malt character. Shows a subtle yeast character that may include spicy phenolics, perfumy or honey-like alcohol, or yeasty, fruity esters (commonly orange-like or lemony). Light sweetness that may have a slightly sugar-like character. Subtle yet complex.
- **Appearance:** Light to deep gold color. Generally very clear. Large, dense, and creamy white to off-white head. Good head retention with Belgian lace.
- **Flavor:** Smooth, light to moderate Pils malt sweetness initially, but finishes medium-dry to dry with some smooth alcohol becoming evident in the aftertaste. Medium hop and alcohol bitterness to balance. Light hop flavor, can be spicy or earthy. Very soft yeast character (esters and alcohols, which are sometimes perfumy or orange/lemon-like). Light spicy phenolics optional. Some lightly caramelized sugar or honey-like sweetness on palate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-high to high carbonation, can give mouth-filling bubbly sensation. Medium body. Light to moderate alcohol warmth, but smooth. Can be somewhat creamy.
- **Overall Impression:** A moderate-strength golden ale that has a subtle Belgian complexity, slightly sweet flavor, and dry finish.
- **Comments:** Similar strength as a dubbel, similar character as a Belgian Strong Golden Ale or Tripel, although a bit sweeter and not as bitter. Often has an almost lager-like character, which gives it a cleaner profile in comparison to the other styles. Belgians use the term “Blond,” while the French spell it “Blonde.” Most commercial examples are in the 6.5 – 7% ABV range. Many Trappist table beers (singles or Enkels) are called “Blond” but these are not representative of this style.
- **History:** Relatively recent development to further appeal to European Pils drinkers, becoming more popular as it is widely marketed and distributed.
- **Ingredients:** Belgian Pils malt, aromatic malts, sugar, Belgian yeast strains that produce complex alcohol, phenolics and perfumy esters, noble, Styrian Goldings or East Kent Goldings hops. No spices are traditionally used, although the ingredients and fermentation by-products may give an impression of spicing (often reminiscent of oranges or lemons).
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.062 – 1.075 IBUs: 15 – 30 FG: 1.008 – 1.018 SRM: 4 – 7 ABV: 6 – 7.5% **Commercial Examples:** Leffe Blond, Affligem Blond, La Trappe (Koningshoeven) Blond, Grimbergen Blond, Val-Dieu Blond, Straffe Hendrik Blonde, Brugse Zot, Pater Lieven Blond Abbey Ale, Troubadour Blond Ale

# 18B. Belgian Dubbel

- **Aroma:** Complex, rich malty sweetness; malt may have hints of chocolate, caramel and/or toast (but never roasted or burnt aromas). Moderate fruity esters (usually including raisins and plums, sometimes also dried cherries). Esters sometimes include banana or apple. Spicy phenols and higher alcohols are common (may include light clove and spice, peppery, rose-like and/or perfumy notes). Spicy qualities can be moderate to very low. Alcohol, if present, is soft and never hot or solventy. A small number of examples may include a low noble hop aroma, but hops are usually absent. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Dark amber to copper in color, with an attractive reddish depth of color. Generally clear. Large, dense, and long-lasting creamy off-white head.
- **Flavor:** Similar qualities as aroma. Rich, complex medium to medium-full malty sweetness on the palate yet finishes moderately dry. Complex malt, ester, alcohol and phenol interplay (raisiny flavors are common; dried fruit flavors are welcome; clove-like spiciness is optional). Balance is always toward the malt. Medium-low bitterness that doesn't persist into the finish. Low noble hop flavor is optional and not usually present. No diacetyl. Should not be as malty as a bock and should not have crystal malt-type sweetness. No spices.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-full body. Medium-high carbonation, which can influence the perception of body. Low alcohol warmth. Smooth, never hot or solventy.
- **Overall Impression:** A deep reddish, moderately strong, malty, complex Belgian ale.
- **Comments:** Most commercial examples are in the 6.5 – 7% ABV range. Traditionally bottle-conditioned ("refermented in the bottle").
- **History:** Originated at monasteries in the Middle Ages, and was revived in the mid-1800s after the Napoleonic era.
- **Ingredients:** Belgian yeast strains prone to production of higher alcohols, esters, and phenolics are commonly used. Water can be soft to hard. Impression of complex grain bill, although traditional versions are typically Belgian Pils malt with caramelized sugar syrup or other unrefined sugars providing much of the character. Homebrewers may use Belgian Pils or pale base malt, Munich-type malts for maltiness, Special B for raisin flavors, CaraVienne or CaraMunich for dried fruit flavors, other specialty grains for character. Dark caramelized sugar syrup or sugars for color and rum-raisin flavors. Noble-type, English-type or Styrian Goldings hops commonly used. No spices are traditionally used, although restrained use is allowable.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.062 – 1.075 IBUs: 15 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.018 SRM: 10 – 17 ABV: 6 – 7.6% **Commercial Examples:** Westmalle Dubbel, St. Bernardus Pater 6, La Trappe Dubbel, Corsendonk Abbey Brown Ale, Grimbergen Double, Affligem Dubbel, Chimay Premiere (Red), Pater Lieven Bruin, Duinen Dubbel, St. Feuillien Brune, New Belgium Abbey Belgian Style Ale, Stoudts Abbey Double Ale, Russian River Benediction, Flying Fish Dubbel, Lost Abbey Lost and Found Abbey Ale, Allagash Double



# 18C. Belgian Tripel

- **Aroma:** Complex with moderate to significant spiciness, moderate fruity esters and low alcohol and hop aromas. Generous spicy, peppery, sometimes clove-like phenols. Esters are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges, but may sometimes have a slight banana character. A low yet distinctive spicy, floral, sometimes perfumy hop character is usually found. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity. No hot alcohol or solventy aromas. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Deep yellow to deep gold in color. Good clarity. Effervescent. Long-lasting, creamy, rocky, white head resulting in characteristic “Belgian lace” on the glass as it fades.
- **Flavor:** Marriage of spicy, fruity and alcohol flavors supported by a soft malt character. Low to moderate phenols are peppery in character. Esters are reminiscent of citrus fruit such as orange or sometimes lemon. A low to moderate spicy hop character is usually found. Alcohols are soft, spicy, often a bit sweet and low in intensity. Bitterness is typically medium to high from a combination of hop bitterness and yeast-produced phenolics. Substantial carbonation and bitterness lends a dry finish with a moderately bitter aftertaste. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, although lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest (thanks to sugar and high carbonation). High alcohol content adds a pleasant creaminess but little to no obvious warming sensation. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Always effervescent. Never astringent.
- **Overall Impression:** Strongly resembles a Strong Golden Ale but slightly darker and somewhat fuller-bodied. Usually has a more rounded malt flavor but should not be sweet.
- **Comments:** High in alcohol but does not taste strongly of alcohol. The best examples are sneaky, not obvious. High carbonation and attenuation helps to bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. Most Trappist versions have at least 30 IBUs and are very dry. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (“refermented in the bottle”).
- **History:** Originally popularized by the Trappist monastery at Westmalle.
- **Ingredients:** The light color and relatively light body for a beer of this strength are the result of using Pilsner malt and up to 20% white sugar. Noble hops or Styrian Goldings are commonly used. Belgian yeast strains are used – those that produce fruity esters, spicy phenolics and higher alcohols – often aided by slightly warmer fermentation temperatures. Spice additions are generally not traditional, and if used, should not be recognizable as such. Fairly soft water.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.075 – 1.085 IBUs: 20 – 40 FG: 1.008 – 1.014 SRM: 4.5 – 7 ABV: 7.5 – 9.5% **Commercial Examples:** Westmalle Tripel, La Rulles Tripel, St. Bernardus Tripel, Chimay Cinq Cents (White), Watou Tripel, Val-Dieu Triple, Affligem Tripel, Grimbergen Tripel, La Trappe Tripel, Witkap Pater Tripel, Corsendonk Abbey Pale Ale, St. Feuillien Tripel, Bink Tripel, Tripel Karmeliet, New Belgium Trippel, Unibroue La Fin du Monde, Dragonmead Final Absolution, Allagash Tripel Reserve, Victory Golden Monkey

# 18D. Belgian Golden Strong Ale

- **Aroma:** Complex with significant fruity esters, moderate spiciness and low to moderate alcohol and hop aromas. Esters are reminiscent of lighter fruits such as pears, oranges or apples. Moderate spicy, peppery phenols. A low to moderate yet distinctive perfumy, floral hop character is often present. Alcohols are soft, spicy, perfumy and low-to-moderate in intensity. No hot alcohol or solventy aromas. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Yellow to medium gold in color. Good clarity. Effervescent. Massive, long-lasting, rocky, often beady, white head resulting in characteristic “Belgian lace” on the glass as it fades.
- **Flavor:** Marriage of fruity, spicy and alcohol flavors supported by a soft malt character. Esters are reminiscent of pears, oranges or apples. Low to moderate phenols are peppery in character. A low to moderate spicy hop character is often present. Alcohols are soft, spicy, often a bit sweet and are low-to-moderate in intensity. Bitterness is typically medium to high from a combination of hop bitterness and yeast-produced phenolics. Substantial carbonation and bitterness leads to a dry finish with a low to moderately bitter aftertaste. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Very highly carbonated. Light to medium body, although lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest (thanks to sugar and high carbonation). Smooth but noticeable alcohol warmth. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Always effervescent. Never astringent.
- **Overall Impression:** A golden, complex, effervescent, strong Belgian-style ale.
- **Comments:** Strongly resembles a Tripel, but may be even paler, lighter-bodied and even crisper and drier. The drier finish and lighter body also serves to make the assertive hopping and spiciness more prominent. References to the devil are included in the names of many commercial examples of this style, referring to their potent alcoholic strength and as a tribute to the original example (Duvel). The best examples are complex and delicate. High carbonation helps to bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (“refermented in the bottle”).
- **History:** Originally developed by the Moortgat brewery after WWII as a response to the growing popularity of Pilsner beers.
- **Ingredients:** The light color and relatively light body for a beer of this strength are the result of using Pilsner malt and up to 20% white sugar. Noble hops or Styrian Goldings are commonly used. Belgian yeast strains are used – those that produce fruity esters, spicy phenolics and higher alcohols – often aided by slightly warmer fermentation temperatures. Fairly soft water.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.070 – 1.095 IBUs: 22 – 35 FG: 1.005 – 1.016 SRM: 3 – 6 ABV: 7.5 – 10.5% **Commercial Examples:** Duvel, Russian River Damnation, Hapkin, Lucifer, Brigand, Judas, Delirium Tremens, Dulle Teve, Piraat, Great Divide Hades, Avery Salvation, North Coast Prangster, Unibroue Eau Benite, AleSmith Horny Devil



# 18E. Belgian Dark Strong Ale

- **Aroma:** Complex, with a rich malty sweetness, significant esters and alcohol, and an optional light to moderate spiciness. The malt is rich and strong, and can have a Munich-type quality often with a caramel, toast and/or bready aroma. The fruity esters are strong to moderately low, and can contain raisin, plum, dried cherry, fig or prune notes. Spicy phenols may be present, but usually have a peppery quality not clove-like. Alcohols are soft, spicy, perfumy and/or rose-like, and are low to moderate in intensity. Hops are not usually present (but a very low noble hop aroma is acceptable). No diacetyl. No dark/roast malt aroma. No hot alcohols or solventy aromas. No recognizable spice additions.
- **Appearance:** Deep amber to deep coppery-brown in color (“dark” in this context implies “more deeply colored than golden”). Huge, dense, moussy, persistent cream- to light tan-colored head. Can be clear to somewhat hazy.
- **Flavor:** Similar to aroma (same malt, ester, phenol, alcohol, hop and spice comments apply to flavor as well). Moderately malty or sweet on palate. Finish is variable depending on interpretation (authentic Trappist versions are moderately dry to dry, Abbey versions can be medium-dry to sweet). Low bitterness for a beer of this strength; alcohol provides some of the balance to the malt. Sweeter and more full-bodied beers will have a higher bitterness level to balance. Almost all versions are malty in the balance, although a few are lightly bitter. The complex and varied flavors should blend smoothly and harmoniously.
- **Mouthfeel:** High carbonation but no carbonic acid “bite.” Smooth but noticeable alcohol warmth. Body can be variable depending on interpretation (authentic Trappist versions tend to be medium-light to medium, while Abbey-style beers can be quite full and creamy).
- **Overall Impression:** A dark, very rich, complex, very strong Belgian ale. Complex, rich, smooth and dangerous.
- **Comments:** Authentic Trappist versions tend to be drier (Belgians would say “more digestible”) than Abbey versions, which can be rather sweet and full-bodied. Higher bitterness is allowable in Abbey-style beers with a higher FG. Barleywine-type beers (e.g., Scaldis/Bush, La Trappe Quadrupel, Weyerbacher QUAD) and Spiced/Christmas-type beers (e.g., N’ice Chouffe, Affligem Noël) should be entered in the Belgian Specialty Ale category (16E), not this category. Traditionally bottle-conditioned (“refermented in the bottle”).

# 18E. Belgian Dark Strong Ale (continued)

- **History:** Most versions are unique in character reflecting characteristics of individual breweries.
- **Ingredients:** Belgian yeast strains prone to production of higher alcohols, esters, and sometimes phenolics are commonly used. Water can be soft to hard. Impression of a complex grain bill, although many traditional versions are quite simple, with caramelized sugar syrup or unrefined sugars and yeast providing much of the complexity. Homebrewers may use Belgian Pils or pale base malt, Munich-type malts for maltiness, other Belgian specialty grains for character. Caramelized sugar syrup or unrefined sugars lightens body and adds color and flavor (particularly if dark sugars are used). Noble-type, English-type or Styrian Goldings hops commonly used. Spices generally not used; if used, keep subtle and in the background. Avoid US/UK crystal type malts (these provide the wrong type of sweetness).
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.075 – 1.110 IBUs: 20 – 35 FG: 1.010 – 1.024 SRM: 12 – 22 ABV: 8 – 11% **Commercial Examples:** Westvleteren 12 (yellow cap), Rochefort 10 (blue cap), St. Bernardus Abt 12, Gouden Carolus Grand Cru of the Emperor, Achel Extra Brune, Rochefort 8 (green cap), Southampton Abbot 12, Chimay Grande Reserve (Blue), Brasserie des Rocs Grand Cru, Gulden Draak, Kasteelbier Bière du Chateau Donker, Lost Abbey Judgment Day, Russian River Salvation



# 19A. Old Ale

- **Aroma:** Malty-sweet with fruity esters, often with a complex blend of dried-fruit, vinous, caramelly, molasses, nutty, toffee, treacle, and/or other specialty malt aromas. Some alcohol and oxidative notes are acceptable, akin to those found in Sherry or Port. Hop aromas not usually present due to extended aging.
- **Appearance:** Light amber to very dark reddish-brown color (most are fairly dark). Age and oxidation may darken the beer further. May be almost opaque (if not, should be clear). Moderate to low cream- to light tan-colored head; may be adversely affected by alcohol and age.
- **Flavor:** Medium to high malt character with a luscious malt complexity, often with nutty, caramelly and/or molasses-like flavors. Light chocolate or roasted malt flavors are optional, but should never be prominent. Balance is often malty-sweet, but may be well hopped (the impression of bitterness often depends on amount of aging). Moderate to high fruity esters are common, and may take on a dried-fruit or vinous character. The finish may vary from dry to somewhat sweet. Extended aging may contribute oxidative flavors similar to a fine old Sherry, Port or Madeira. Alcoholic strength should be evident, though not overwhelming. Diacetyl low to none. Some wood-aged or blended versions may have a lactic or Brettanomyces character; but this is optional and should not be too strong (enter as a specialty beer if it is).
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to full, chewy body, although older examples may be lower in body due to continued attenuation during conditioning. Alcohol warmth is often evident and always welcome. Low to moderate carbonation, depending on age and conditioning.
- **Overall Impression:** An ale of significant alcoholic strength, bigger than strong bitters and brown porters, though usually not as strong or rich as barleywine. Usually tilted toward a sweeter, maltier balance. “It should be a warming beer of the type that is best drunk in half pints by a warm fire on a cold winter’s night” – Michael Jackson.
- **Comments:** Strength and character varies widely. Fits in the style space between normal gravity beers (strong bitters, brown porters) and barleywines. Can include winter warmers, strong dark milds, strong (and perhaps darker) bitters, blended strong beers (stock ale blended with a mild or bitter), and lower gravity versions of English barleywines. Many English examples, particularly winter warmers, are lower than 6% ABV.
- **History:** A traditional English ale style, mashed at higher temperatures than strong ales to reduce attenuation, then aged at the brewery after primary fermentation (similar to the process used for historical porters). Often had age-related character (lactic, Brett, oxidation, leather) associated with “stale” beers. Used as stock ales for blending or enjoyed at full strength (stale or stock refers to beers that were aged or stored for a significant period of time). Winter warmers are a more modern style that are maltier, fuller-bodied, often darker beers that may be a brewery’s winter seasonal special offering.



# 19A. Old Ale (continued)

- **Ingredients:** Generous quantities of well-modified pale malt (generally English in origin, though not necessarily so), along with judicious quantities of caramel malts and other specialty character malts. Some darker examples suggest that dark malts (e.g., chocolate, black malt) may be appropriate, though sparingly so as to avoid an overly roasted character. Adjuncts (such as molasses, treacle, invert sugar or dark sugar) are often used, as are starchy adjuncts (maize, flaked barley, wheat) and malt extracts. Hop variety is not as important, as the relative balance and aging process negate much of the varietal character. British ale yeast that has low attenuation, but can handle higher alcohol levels, is traditional.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.060 – 1.090 IBUs: 30 – 60 FG: 1.015 – 1.022 SRM: 10 – 22 ABV: 6 – 9% **Commercial Examples:** Gale's Prize Old Ale, Burton Bridge Olde Expensive, Marston Owd Roger, Greene King Olde Suffolk Ale, J.W. Lees Moonraker, Harviestoun Old Engine Oil, Fuller's Vintage Ale, Harvey's Elizabethan Ale, Theakston Old Peculier (peculiar at OG 1.057), Young's Winter Warmer, Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild, Samuel Smith's Winter Welcome, Fuller's 1845, Fuller's Old Winter Ale, Great Divide Hibernation Ale, Founders Curmudgeon, Cooperstown Pride of Milford Special Ale, Coniston Old Man Ale, Avery Old Jubilation

# 19B. English Barleywine

- **Aroma:** Very rich and strongly malty, often with a caramel-like aroma. May have moderate to strong fruitiness, often with a dried-fruit character. English hop aroma may range from mild to assertive. Alcohol aromatics may be low to moderate, but never harsh, hot or solventy. The intensity of these aromatics often subsides with age. The aroma may have a rich character including bready, toasty, toffee, molasses, and/or treacle notes. Aged versions may have a sherry-like quality, possibly vinous or port-like aromatics, and generally more muted malt aromas. Low to no diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Color may range from rich gold to very dark amber or even dark brown. Often has ruby highlights, but should not be opaque. Low to moderate off-white head; may have low head retention. May be cloudy with chill haze at cooler temperatures, but generally clears to good to brilliant clarity as it warms. The color may appear to have great depth, as if viewed through a thick glass lens. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in “legs” when beer is swirled in a glass.
- **Flavor:** Strong, intense, complex, multi-layered malt flavors ranging from bready and biscuity through nutty, deep toast, dark caramel, toffee, and/or molasses. Moderate to high malty sweetness on the palate, although the finish may be moderately sweet to moderately dry (depending on aging). Some oxidative or vinous flavors may be present, and often complex alcohol flavors should be evident. Alcohol flavors shouldn't be harsh, hot or solventy. Moderate to fairly high fruitiness, often with a dried-fruit character. Hop bitterness may range from just enough for balance to a firm presence; balance therefore ranges from malty to somewhat bitter. Low to moderately high hop flavor (usually UK varieties). Low to no diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied and chewy, with a velvety, luscious texture (although the body may decline with long conditioning). A smooth warmth from aged alcohol should be present, and should not be hot or harsh. Carbonation may be low to moderate, depending on age and conditioning.
- **Overall Impression:** The richest and strongest of the English Ales. A showcase of malty richness and complex, intense flavors. The character of these ales can change significantly over time; both young and old versions should be appreciated for what they are. The malt profile can vary widely; not all examples will have all possible flavors or aromas.
- **Comments:** Although often a hoppy beer, the English Barleywine places less emphasis on hop character than the American Barleywine and features English hops. English versions can be darker, maltier, fruitier, and feature richer specialty malt flavors than American Barleywines.
- **History:** Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, and in recent years many commercial examples are now vintage-dated. Normally aged significantly prior to release. Often associated with the winter or holiday season.
- **Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt should form the backbone of the grist, with judicious amounts of caramel malts. Dark malts should be used with great restraint, if at all, as most of the color arises from a lengthy boil. English hops such as Northdown, Target, East Kent Goldings and Fuggles. Characterful English yeast.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.080 – 1.120 IBUs: 35 – 70 FG: 1.018 – 1.030 SRM: 8 – 22 ABV: 8 – 12% **Commercial Examples:** Thomas Hardy's Ale, Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes Old Ale, J.W. Lee's Vintage Harvest Ale, Robinson's Old Tom, Fuller's Golden Pride, AleSmith Old Numbskull, Young's Old Nick (unusual in its 7.2% ABV), Whitbread Gold Label, Old Dominion Millenium, North Coast Old Stock Ale (when aged), **10** Weyerbacher Blithering Idiot

# 19C. American Barleywine

- **Aroma:** Very rich and intense maltiness. Hop character moderate to assertive and often showcases citrusy or resiny American varieties (although other varieties, such as floral, earthy or spicy English varieties or a blend of varieties, may be used). Low to moderately strong fruity esters and alcohol aromatics. Malt character may be sweet, caramelly, bready, or fairly neutral. However, the intensity of aromatics often subsides with age. No diacetyl.
- **Appearance:** Color may range from light amber to medium copper; may rarely be as dark as light brown. Often has ruby highlights. Moderately-low to large off-white to light tan head; may have low head retention. May be cloudy with chill haze at cooler temperatures, but generally clears to good to brilliant clarity as it warms. The color may appear to have great depth, as if viewed through a thick glass lens. High alcohol and viscosity may be visible in “legs” when beer is swirled in a glass.
- **Flavor:** Strong, intense malt flavor with noticeable bitterness. Moderately low to moderately high malty sweetness on the palate, although the finish may be somewhat sweet to quite dry (depending on aging). Hop bitterness may range from moderately strong to aggressive. While strongly malty, the balance should always seem bitter. Moderate to high hop flavor (any variety). Low to moderate fruity esters. Noticeable alcohol presence, but sharp or solventy alcohol flavors are undesirable. Flavors will smooth out and decline over time, but any oxidized character should be muted (and generally be masked by the hop character). May have some bready or caramelly malt flavors, but these should not be high. Roasted or burnt malt flavors are inappropriate. No diacetyl.
- **Mouthfeel:** Full-bodied and chewy, with a velvety, luscious texture (although the body may decline with long conditioning). Alcohol warmth should be present, but not be excessively hot. Should not be syrupy and under-attenuated. Carbonation may be low to moderate, depending on age and conditioning.
- **Overall Impression:** A well-hopped American interpretation of the richest and strongest of the English ales. The hop character should be evident throughout, but does not have to be unbalanced. The alcohol strength and hop bitterness often combine to leave a very long finish.



## 19C. American Barleywine (continued)

- **Comments:** The American version of the Barleywine tends to have a greater emphasis on hop bitterness, flavor and aroma than the English Barleywine, and often features American hop varieties. Differs from an Imperial IPA in that the hops are not extreme, the malt is more forward, and the body is richer and more characterful.
- **History:** Usually the strongest ale offered by a brewery, and in recent years many commercial examples are now vintage-dated. Normally aged significantly prior to release. Often associated with the winter or holiday season.
- **Ingredients:** Well-modified pale malt should form the backbone of the grist. Some specialty or character malts may be used. Dark malts should be used with great restraint, if at all, as most of the color arises from a lengthy boil. Citrusy American hops are common, although any varieties can be used in quantity. Generally uses an attenuative American yeast.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.080 – 1.120 IBUs: 50 – 120 FG: 1.016 – 1.030 SRM: 10 – 19 ABV: 8 – 12% **Commercial Examples:** Sierra Nevada Bigfoot, Great Divide Old Ruffian, Victory Old Horizontal, Rogue Old Crustacean, Avery Hog Heaven Barleywine, Bell's Third Coast Old Ale, Anchor Old Foghorn, Three Floyds Behemoth, Stone Old Guardian, Bridgeport Old Knucklehead, Hair of the Dog Doggie Claws, Lagunitas Olde GnarleyWine, Smuttynose Barleywine, Flying Dog Horn Dog

## 20. Fruit Beer

- **Aroma:** The distinctive aromatics associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable in the aroma; however, note that some fruit (e.g., raspberries, cherries) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., blueberries, strawberries)—allow for a range of fruit character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The fruit character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and inappropriately overpowering (considering the character of the fruit) nor should it have defects such as oxidation. As with all specialty beers, a proper fruit beer should be a harmonious balance of the featured fruit(s) with the underlying beer style. Aroma hops, yeast by-products and malt components of the underlying beer may not be as noticeable when fruit are present. These components (especially hops) may also be intentionally subdued to allow the fruit character to come through in the final presentation. If the base beer is an ale then a non-specific fruitiness and/or other fermentation by-products such as diacetyl may be present as appropriate for warmer fermentations. If the base beer is a lager, then overall less fermentation byproducts would be appropriate. Some malt aroma may be desirable, especially in dark styles. Hop aroma may be absent or balanced with fruit, depending on the style. The fruit should add an extra complexity to the beer, but not be so prominent as to unbalance the resulting presentation. Some tartness may be present if naturally occurring in the particular fruit(s), but should not be inappropriately intense.
- **Appearance:** Appearance should be appropriate to the base beer being presented and will vary depending on the base beer. For lighter-colored beers with fruits that exhibit distinctive colors, the color should be noticeable. Note that the color of fruit in beer is often lighter than the flesh of the fruit itself and may take on slightly different shades. Fruit beers may have some haze or be clear, although haze is a generally undesirable. The head may take on some of the color of the fruit.
- **Flavor:** As with aroma, the distinctive flavor character associated with the particular fruit(s) should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The balance of fruit with the underlying beer is vital, and the fruit character should not be so artificial and/or inappropriately overpowering as to suggest a fruit juice drink. Hop bitterness, flavor, malt flavors, alcohol content, and fermentation by-products, such as esters or diacetyl, should be appropriate to the base beer and be harmonious and balanced with the distinctive fruit flavors present. Note that these components (especially hops) may be intentionally subdued to allow the fruit character to come through in the final presentation. Some tartness may be present if naturally occurring in the particular fruit(s), but should not be inappropriately intense. Remember that fruit generally add flavor not sweetness to fruit beers. The sugar found in fruit is usually fully fermented and contributes to lighter flavors and a drier finish than might be expected for the declared base style. However, residual sweetness is not necessarily a negative characteristic unless it has a raw, unfermented quality.

## 20. Fruit Beer (continued)

- **Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented. Fruit generally adds fermentables that tend to thin out the beer; the resulting beer may seem lighter than expected for the declared base style.
- **Overall Impression:** A harmonious marriage of fruit and beer. The key attributes of the underlying style will be different with the addition of fruit; do not expect the base beer to taste the same as the unadulterated version. Judge the beer based on the pleasantness and balance of the resulting combination.
- **Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made fruit beer. The fruit should complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and fruits work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. **THE ENTRANT MUST SPECIFY THE UNDERLYING BEER STYLE AS WELL AS THE TYPE OF FRUIT(S) USED. IF THIS BEER IS BASED ON A CLASSIC STYLE (E.G., BLONDE ALE) THEN THE SPECIFIC STYLE MUST BE SPECIFIED. CLASSIC STYLES DO NOT HAVE TO BE CITED (E.G., “PORTER” OR “WHEAT ALE” IS ACCEPTABLE). THE TYPE OF FRUIT(S) MUST ALWAYS BE SPECIFIED.** If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavor. Note that fruit-based lambics should be entered in the Fruit Lambic category (17F), while other fruit-based Belgian specialties should be entered in the Belgian Specialty Ale category (16E). Aged fruit may sometimes have flavor and aroma characteristics similar to Sauternes, Sherry or Tokaj, but a beer with a quality such as this should make a special claim (e.g., amontillado, fino, botrytis). Beer with chile peppers should be entered in the Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer category (21A).
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies with base style IBUs: Varies with base style FG: Varies with base style SRM: Varies with base style ABV: Varies with base style **Commercial Examples:** New Glarus Belgian Red and Raspberry Tart, Bell’s Cherry Stout, Dogfish Head Aprihop, Great Divide Wild Raspberry Ale, Founders Rübæus, Ebulum Elderberry Black Ale, Stiegl Radler, Weyerbacher Raspberry Imperial Stout, Abita Purple Haze, Melbourne Apricot Beer and Strawberry Beer, Saxer Lemon Lager, Magic Hat #9, Grozet Gooseberry and Wheat Ale, Pyramid Apricot Ale, Dogfish Head Fort



# 21A. Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer

- **Aroma:** The character of the particular spices, herbs and/or vegetables (SHV) should be noticeable in the aroma; however, note that some SHV (e.g., ginger, cinnamon) have stronger aromas and are more distinctive than others (e.g., some vegetables)—allow for a range of SHV character and intensity from subtle to aggressive. The individual character of the SHV(s) may not always be identifiable when used in combination. The SHV character should be pleasant and supportive, not artificial and overpowering. As with all specialty beers, a proper SHV beer should be a harmonious balance of the featured SHV(s) with the underlying beer style. Aroma hops, yeast by-products and malt components of the underlying beer may not be as noticeable when SHV are present. These components (especially hops) may also be intentionally subdued to allow the SHV character to come through in the final presentation. If the base beer is an ale then a non-specific fruitiness and/or other fermentation by-products such as diacetyl may be present as appropriate for warmer fermentations. If the base beer is a lager, then overall less fermentation byproducts would be appropriate. Some malt aroma is preferable, especially in dark styles. Hop aroma may be absent or balanced with SHV, depending on the style. The SHV(s) should add an extra complexity to the beer, but not be so prominent as to unbalance the resulting presentation.
- **Appearance:** Appearance should be appropriate to the base beer being presented and will vary depending on the base beer. For lighter-colored beers with spices, herbs or vegetables that exhibit distinctive colors, the colors may be noticeable in the beer and possibly the head. May have some haze or be clear. Head formation may be adversely affected by some ingredients, such as chocolate.
- **Flavor:** As with aroma, the distinctive flavor character associated with the particular SHV(s) should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The individual character of the SHV(s) may not always be identifiable when used in combination. The balance of SHV with the underlying beer is vital, and the SHV character should not be so artificial and/or overpowering as to overwhelm the beer. Hop bitterness, flavor, malt flavors, alcohol content, and fermentation by-products, such as esters or diacetyl, should be appropriate to the base beer and be harmonious and balanced with the distinctive SHV flavors present. Note that these components (especially hops) may be intentionally subdued to allow the SHV character to come through in the final presentation. Some SHV(s) are inherently bitter and may result in a beer more bitter than the declared base style.

## 21A. Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer (continued)

- **Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer. Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented. Some SHV(s) may add additional body and/or slickness, although fermentable additions may thin out the beer. Some SHV(s) may add a bit of astringency, although a “raw” spice character is undesirable.
- **Overall Impression:** A harmonious marriage of spices, herbs and/or vegetables and beer. The key attributes of the underlying style will be different with the addition of spices, herbs and/or vegetables; do not expect the base beer to taste the same as the unadulterated version. Judge the beer based on the pleasantness and balance of the resulting combination.
- **Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made spice, herb or vegetable (SHV) beer. The SHV(s) should complement the original style and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and SHV(s) work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. **THE ENTRANT MUST SPECIFY THE UNDERLYING BEER STYLE AS WELL AS THE TYPE OF SPICES, HERBS, OR VEGETABLES USED. IF THIS BEER IS BASED ON A CLASSIC STYLE (E.G., BLONDE ALE) THEN THE SPECIFIC STYLE MUST BE SPECIFIED. CLASSIC STYLES DO NOT HAVE TO BE CITED (E.G., “PORTER” OR “WHEAT ALE” IS ACCEPTABLE). THE TYPE OF SPICES, HERBS, OR VEGETABLES MUST ALWAYS BE SPECIFIED.** If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavor. The individual character of SHV(s) may not always be identifiable when used in combination. This category may also be used for chile pepper, coffee-, chocolate-, or nut-based beers (including combinations of these items). Note that many spice-based Belgian specialties may be entered in Category 16E. Beers that only have additional fermentables (honey, maple syrup, molasses, sugars, treacle, etc.) should be entered in the Specialty Beer category.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies with base style IBUs: Varies with base style FG: Varies with base style SRM: Varies with base style ABV: Varies with base style **Commercial Examples:** Alesmith Speedway Stout, Founders Breakfast Stout, Traquair Jacobite Ale, Rogue Chipotle Ale, Young’s Double Chocolate Stout, Bell’s Java Stout, Fraoch Heather Ale, Southampton Pumpkin Ale, Rogue Hazelnut Nectar, Hitachino Nest Real Ginger Ale, Breckenridge Vanilla Porter, Left Hand JuJu Ginger Beer, Dogfish Head Punkin Ale, Dogfish Head Midas Touch, Redhook Double Black Stout, Buffalo Bill’s Pumpkin Ale, BluCreek Herbal Ale, Christian Moerlein Honey Almond, Rogue Chocolate Stout, Birrificio Baladin Nora, Cave Creek Chili Beer



# 21B. Christmas/Winter Specialty Spiced Beer

- **Aroma:** A wide range of aromatics is possible, although many examples are reminiscent of Christmas cookies, gingerbread, English-type Christmas pudding, spruce trees, or mulling spices. Any combination of aromatics that suggests the holiday season is welcome. The base beer style often has a malty profile that supports the balanced presentation of the aromatics from spices and possibly other special ingredients. Additional fermentables (e.g., honey, molasses, maple syrup, etc.) may lend their own unique aromatics. Hop aromatics are often absent, subdued, or slightly spicy. Some fruit character (often of dried citrus peel, or dried fruit such as raisins or plums) is optional but acceptable. Alcohol aromatics may be found in some examples, but this character should be restrained. The overall aroma should be balanced and harmonious, and is often fairly complex and inviting.
- **Appearance:** Generally medium amber to very dark brown (darker versions are more common). Usually clear, although darker versions may be virtually opaque. Some chill haze is acceptable. Generally has a well-formed head that is often off-white to tan.
- **Flavor:** Many interpretations are possible; allow for brewer creativity as long as the resulting product is balanced and provides some spice presentation. Spices associated with the holiday season are typical (as mentioned in the Aroma section). The spices and optional fermentables should be supportive and blend well with the base beer style. Rich, malty and/or sweet malt-based flavors are common, and may include caramel, toast, nutty, or chocolate flavors. May include some dried fruit or dried fruit peel flavors such as raisin, plum, fig, orange peel or lemon peel. May include distinctive flavors from specific fermentables (molasses, honey, brown sugar, etc.), although these elements are not required. A light spruce or other evergreen tree character is optional but found in some examples. The wide range of special ingredients should be supportive and balanced, not so prominent as to overshadow the base beer. Bitterness and hop flavor are generally restrained so as to not interfere with the spices and special ingredients. Generally finishes rather full and satisfying, and often has some alcohol flavor. Roasted malt characteristics are rare, and not usually stronger than chocolate.
- **Mouthfeel:** A wide range of interpretations is possible. Body is generally medium to full, and a certain malty chewiness is often present. Moderately low to moderately high carbonation is typical. Many examples will show some well-aged, warming alcohol content, but without being overly hot. The beers do not have to be overly strong to show some warming effects.



## 21B. Christmas/Winter Specialty Spiced Beer (continued)

- **Overall Impression:** A stronger, darker, spiced beer that often has a rich body and warming finish suggesting a good accompaniment for the cold winter season.
- **Comments:** Overall balance is the key to presenting a well-made Christmas beer. The special ingredients should complement the base beer and not overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and special ingredients work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations. **THE ENTRANT MAY DECLARE AN UNDERLYING BEER STYLE AS WELL AS THE SPECIAL INGREDIENTS USED. THE BASE STYLE, SPICES OR OTHER INGREDIENTS NEED NOT BE IDENTIFIED. THE BEER MUST INCLUDE SPICES AND MAY INCLUDE OTHER FERMENTABLES (SUGARS, HONEY, MAPLE SYRUP, MOLASSES, TREACLE, ETC.) OR FRUIT.** If the base beer is a classic style, the original style should come through in aroma and flavor. Whenever spices, herbs or additional fermentables are declared, each should be noticeable and distinctive in its own way (although not necessarily individually identifiable; balanced with the other ingredients is still critical). English-style Winter Warmers (some of which may be labeled Christmas Ales) are generally not spiced, and should be entered as Old Ales. Belgian-style Christmas ales should be entered as Belgian Specialty Ales (16E).
- **History:** Throughout history, beer of a somewhat higher alcohol content and richness has been enjoyed during the winter holidays, when old friends get together to enjoy the season. Many breweries produce unique seasonal offerings that may be darker, stronger, spiced, or otherwise more characterful than their normal beers. Spiced versions are an American or Belgian tradition, since English or German breweries traditionally do not use spices in their beer.
- **Ingredients:** Generally ales, although some dark strong lagers exist. Spices are required, and often include those evocative of the Christmas season (e.g., allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, ginger) but any combination is possible and creativity is encouraged. Fruit peel (e.g., oranges, lemon) may be used, as may subtle additions of other fruits. May use a wide range of crystal-type malts, particularly those that add dark fruit or caramel flavors. Flavorful adjuncts are often used (e.g., molasses, treacle, invert sugar, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, etc.).
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies with base style IBUs: Varies with base style FG: Varies with base style SRM: Varies with base style  
Usually somewhat dark. ABV: Varies with base style  
Generally above 6%. **Commercial Examples:** Anchor Our Special Ale, Harpoon Winter Warmer, Weyerbacher Winter Ale, Nils Oscar Julöl, Goose Island Christmas Ale, North Coast Wintertime Ale, Great Lakes Christmas Ale, Lakefront Holiday Spice Lager Beer, Samuel Adams Winter Lager, Troegs The Mad Elf, Jamtlands Julöl

## 22A. Classic Rauchbier

- **Aroma:** Blend of smoke and malt, with a varying balance and intensity. The beechwood smoke character can range from subtle to fairly strong, and can seem smoky, bacon-like, woody, or rarely almost greasy. The malt character can be low to moderate, and be somewhat sweet, toasty, or malty. The malt and smoke components are often inversely proportional (i.e., when smoke increases, malt decreases, and vice versa). Hop aroma may be very low to none. Clean, lager character with no fruity esters, diacetyl or DMS.
- **Appearance:** This should be a very clear beer, with a large, creamy, rich, tan- to cream-colored head. Medium amber/light copper to dark brown color.
- **Flavor:** Generally follows the aroma profile, with a blend of smoke and malt in varying balance and intensity, yet always complementary. Märzen-like qualities should be noticeable, particularly a malty, toasty richness, but the beechwood smoke flavor can be low to high. The palate can be somewhat malty and sweet, yet the finish can reflect both malt and smoke. Moderate, balanced, hop bitterness, with a medium-dry to dry finish (the smoke character enhances the dryness of the finish). Noble hop flavor moderate to none. Clean lager character with no fruity esters, diacetyl or DMS. Harsh, bitter, burnt, charred, rubbery, sulfury or phenolic smoky characteristics are inappropriate.
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium body. Medium to medium-high carbonation. Smooth lager character. Significant astringent, phenolic harshness is inappropriate.
- **Overall Impression:** Märzen/Okttoberfest-style (see 3B) beer with a sweet, smoky aroma and flavor and a somewhat darker color.
- **Comments:** The intensity of smoke character can vary widely; not all examples are highly smoked. Allow for variation in the style when judging. Other examples of smoked beers are available in Germany, such as the Bocks, Hefe-Weizen, Dunkel, Schwarz, and Helles-like beers, including examples such as Spezial Lager. Brewers entering these styles should use Other Smoked Beer (22B) as the entry category.
- **History:** A historical specialty of the city of Bamberg, in the Franconian region of Bavaria in Germany. Beechwood-smoked malt is used to make a Märzen-style amber lager. The smoke character of the malt varies by maltster; some breweries produce their own smoked malt (rauchmalz).
- **Ingredients:** German Rauchmalz (beechwood-smoked Vienna-type malt) typically makes up 20-100% of the grain bill, with the remainder being German malts typically used in a Märzen. Some breweries adjust the color slightly with a bit of roasted malt. German lager yeast. German or Czech hops.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.050 – 1.057 IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.012 – 1.016 SRM: 12 – 22 ABV: 4.8 – 6% **Commercial Examples:** Schlenkerla Rauchbier Märzen, Kaiserdom Rauchbier, Eisenbahn Rauchbier, Victory Scarlet Fire Rauchbier, Spezial Rauchbier Märzen, Saranac Rauchbier



## 22B. Other Smoked Beer

- **Aroma:** The aroma should be a pleasant balance between the expected aroma of the base beer (e.g., robust porter) and the smokiness imparted by the use of smoked malts. The intensity and character of the smoke and base beer style can vary, with either being prominent in the balance. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive; however, balance in the overall presentation is the key to well-made examples. The quality and secondary characteristics of the smoke are reflective of the source of the smoke (e.g., peat, alder, oak, beechwood). Sharp, phenolic, harsh, rubbery, or burnt smoke-derived aromatics are inappropriate.
- **Appearance:** Variable. The appearance should reflect the base beer style, although the color of the beer is often a bit darker than the plain base style.
- **Flavor:** As with aroma, there should be a balance between smokiness and the expected flavor characteristics of the base beer style. Smokiness may vary from low to assertive. Smoky flavors may range from woody to somewhat bacon-like depending on the type of malts used. Peat-smoked malt can add an earthiness. The balance of underlying beer characteristics and smoke can vary, although the resulting blend should be somewhat balanced and enjoyable. Smoke can add some dryness to the finish. Harsh, bitter, burnt, charred, rubbery, sulfury or phenolic smoky characteristics are generally inappropriate (although some of these characteristics may be present in some base styles; however, the smoked malt shouldn't contribute these flavors).
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with the base beer style. Significant astringent, phenolic smoke-derived harshness is inappropriate.
- **Overall Impression:** This is any beer that is exhibiting smoke as a principle flavor and aroma characteristic other than the Bamberg-style Rauchbier (i.e., beechwood-smoked Märzen). Balance in the use of smoke, hops and malt character is exhibited by the better examples.
- **Comments:** Any style of beer can be smoked; the goal is to reach a pleasant balance between the smoke character and the base beer style. **IF THIS BEER IS BASED ON A CLASSIC STYLE (E.G., ROBUST PORTER) THEN THE SPECIFIC STYLE MUST BE SPECIFIED. CLASSIC STYLES DO NOT HAVE TO BE CITED (E.G., "PORTER" OR "BROWN ALE" IS ACCEPTABLE). THE TYPE OF WOOD OR OTHER SOURCE OF SMOKE MUST BE SPECIFIED IF A "VARIETAL" CHARACTER IS NOTICEABLE.** Entries that have a classic style cited will be judged on how well that style is represented, and how well it is balanced with the smoke character. Entries with a specific type or types of smoke cited will be judged on how well that type of smoke is recognizable and marries with the base style. Specific classic styles or smoke types do not have to be specified. For example, "smoked porter" is as acceptable as "peat-smoked strong Scotch ale" or "cherry-wood smoked IPA." Judges should evaluate the beers mostly on the overall balance, and how well the smoke character enhances the base beer.



## 22B. Other Smoked Beer (continued)

- **History:** The process of using smoked malts more recently has been adapted by craft brewers to other styles, notably porter and strong Scotch ales. German brewers have traditionally used smoked malts in bock, doppelbock, weizen, dunkel, schwarzbier, helles, Pilsner, and other specialty styles.
- **Ingredients:** Different materials used to smoke malt result in unique flavor and aroma characteristics. Beechwood-, peat- or other hardwood (oak, maple, mesquite, alder, pecan, apple, cherry, other fruitwoods) smoked malts may be used. The various woods may remind one of certain smoked products due to their food association (e.g., hickory with ribs, maple with bacon or sausage, and alder with salmon). Evergreen wood should never be used since it adds a medicinal, piney flavor to the malt. Excessive peat-smoked malt is generally undesirable due to its sharp, piercing phenolics and dirt-like earthiness. The remaining ingredients vary with the base style. If smoked malts are combined with other unusual ingredients (fruits, vegetables, spices, honey, etc.) in noticeable quantities, the resulting beer should be entered in the specialty/experimental category.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies with base style IBUs: Varies with base style FG: Varies with base style SRM: Varies with base style ABV: Varies with base style **Commercial Examples:** Alaskan Smoked Porter, O'Fallons Smoked Porter, Spezial Lagerbier, Weissbier and Bockbier, Stone Smoked Porter, Schlenkerla Weizen Rauchbier and Ur-Bock Rauchbier, Rogue Smoke, Oskar Blues Old Chub, Left Hand Smoke Jumper, Dark Horse Fore Smoked Stout, Magic Hat Jinx

## 22C. Wood-Aged Beer

- **Aroma:** Varies with base style. A low to moderate wood- or oak-based aroma is usually present. Fresh wood can occasionally impart raw “green” aromatics, although this character should never be too strong. Other optional aromatics include a low to moderate vanilla, caramel, toffee, toast, or cocoa character, as well as any aromatics associated with alcohol previously stored in the wood (if any). Any alcohol character should be smooth and balanced, not hot. Some background oxidation character is optional, and can take on a pleasant, sherry-like character and not be papery or cardboard-like.
- **Appearance:** Varies with base style. Often darker than the unadulterated base beer style, particularly if toasted/charred oak and/or whiskey/bourbon barrels are used.
- **Flavor:** Varies with base style. Wood usually contributes a woody or oaky flavor, which can occasionally take on a raw “green” flavor if new wood is used. Other flavors that may optionally be present include vanilla (from vanillin in the wood); caramel, butterscotch, toasted bread or almonds (from toasted wood); coffee, chocolate, cocoa (from charred wood or bourbon casks); and alcohol flavors from other products previously stored in the wood (if any). The wood and/or other cask-derived flavors should be balanced, supportive and noticeable, but should not overpower the base beer style. Occasionally there may be an optional lactic or acetic tartness or Brett funkiness in the beer, but this should not be higher than a background flavor (if present at all). Some background oxidation character is optional, although this should take on a pleasant, sherry-like character and not be papery or cardboard-like.
- **Mouthfeel:** Varies with base style. Often fuller than the unadulterated base beer, and may exhibit additional alcohol warming if wood has previously been in contact with other alcoholic products. Higher alcohol levels should not result in “hot” beers; aged, smooth flavors are most desirable. Wood can also add tannins to the beer, depending on age of the cask. The tannins can lead to additional astringency (which should never be high), or simply a fuller mouthfeel. Tart or acidic characteristics should be low to none.
- **Overall Impression:** A harmonious blend of the base beer style with characteristics from aging in contact with wood (including any alcoholic products previously in contact with the wood). The best examples will be smooth, flavorful, well-balanced and well-aged. *Beers made using either limited wood aging or products that only provide a subtle background character may be entered in the base beer style categories as long as the wood character isn’t prominently featured.*



## 22C. Wood-Aged Beer (continued)

- **Comments:** The base beer style should be apparent. The wood-based character should be evident, but not so dominant as to unbalance the beer. The intensity of the wood-based flavors is based on the contact time with the wood; the age, condition, and previous usage of the barrel; and the type of wood. Any additional alcoholic products previously stored in the wood should be evident (if declared as part of the entry), but should not be so dominant as to unbalance the beer. **IF THIS BEER IS BASED ON A CLASSIC STYLE (E.G., ROBUST PORTER) THEN THE SPECIFIC STYLE MUST BE SPECIFIED. CLASSIC STYLES DO NOT HAVE TO BE CITED (E.G., “PORTER” OR “BROWN ALE” IS ACCEPTABLE). THE TYPE OF WOOD MUST BE SPECIFIED IF A “VARIETAL” CHARACTER IS NOTICEABLE.** (e.g., English IPA with Oak Chips, Bourbon Barrel-aged Imperial Stout, American Barleywine in an Oak Whiskey Cask). The brewer should specify any unusual ingredients in either the base style or the wood if those characteristics are noticeable. Specialty or experimental base beer styles may be specified, as long as the other specialty ingredients are identified. **THIS CATEGORY SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR BASE STYLES WHERE BARREL-AGING IS A FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE STYLE** (e.g., Flanders Red, Lambic, etc.).
- **History:** A traditional production method that is rarely used by major breweries, and usually only with specialty products. Becoming more popular with modern American craft breweries looking for new, distinctive products. Oak cask and barrels are traditional, although other woods can be used.
- **Ingredients:** Varies with base style. Aged in wooden casks or barrels (often previously used to store whiskey, bourbon, port, sherry, Madeira, or wine), or using wood-based additives (wood chips, wood staves, oak essence). Fuller-bodied, higher-gravity base styles often are used since they can best stand up to the additional flavors, although experimentation is encouraged.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies with base style  
Typically above average IBUs: Varies with base style FG: Varies with base style SRM: Varies with base style ABV: Varies with base style  
Typically above average **Commercial Examples:** The Lost Abbey Angel’s Share Ale, J.W. Lees Harvest Ale in Port, Sherry, Lagavulin Whisky or Calvados Casks, Bush Prestige, Petrus Aged Pale, Firestone Walker Double Barrel Ale, Dominion Oak Barrel Stout, New Holland Dragons Milk, Great Divide Oak Aged Yeti Imperial Stout, Goose Island Bourbon County Stout, Le Coq Imperial Extra Double Stout, Harviestoun Old Engine Oil Special Reserve, many microbreweries have specialty beers served only on premises often directly from the cask.



## 23. Specialty Beer

- **Aroma:** The character of the stated specialty ingredient or nature should be evident in the aroma, but harmonious with the other components (yet not totally overpowering them). Overall the aroma should be a pleasant combination of malt, hops and the featured specialty ingredient or nature as appropriate to the specific type of beer being presented. The individual character of special ingredients and processes may not always be identifiable when used in combination. If a classic style base beer is specified then the characteristics of that classic style should be noticeable. Note, however, that classic styles will have a different impression when brewed with unusual ingredients, additives or processes. The typical aroma components of classic beer styles (particularly hops) may be intentionally subdued to allow the special ingredients or nature to be more apparent.
- **Appearance:** Appearance should be appropriate to the base beer being presented and will vary depending on the base beer (if declared). Note that unusual ingredients or processes may affect the appearance so that the result is quite different from the declared base style. Some ingredients may add color (including to the head), and may affect head formation and retention.
- **Flavor:** As with aroma, the distinctive flavor character associated with the stated specialty nature should be noticeable, and may range in intensity from subtle to aggressive. The marriage of specialty ingredients or nature with the underlying beer should be harmonious, and the specialty character should not seem artificial and/or totally overpowering. Hop bitterness, flavor, malt flavors, alcohol content, and fermentation by-products, such as esters or diacetyl, should be appropriate to the base beer (if declared) and be well-integrated with the distinctive specialty flavors present. Some ingredients may add tartness, sweetness, or other flavor by-products. Remember that fruit and sugar adjuncts generally add flavor and not excessive sweetness to beer. The sugary adjuncts, as well as sugar found in fruit, are usually fully fermented and contribute to a lighter flavor profile and a drier finish than might be expected for the declared base style. The individual character of special ingredients and processes may not always be identifiable when used in combination. If a classic style base beer is specified then the characteristics of that classic style should be noticeable. Note, however, that classic styles will have a different impression when brewed with unusual ingredients, additives or processes. Note that these components (especially hops) may be intentionally subdued to allow the specialty character to come through in the final presentation.
- **Mouthfeel:** Mouthfeel may vary depending on the base beer selected and as appropriate to that base beer (if declared). Body and carbonation levels should be appropriate to the base beer style being presented. Unusual ingredients or processes may affect the mouthfeel so that the result is quite different from the declared base style.

## 23. Specialty Beer (continued)

- **Overall Impression:** A harmonious marriage of ingredients, processes and beer. The key attributes of the underlying style (if declared) will be atypical due to the addition of special ingredients or techniques; do not expect the base beer to taste the same as the unadulterated version. Judge the beer based on the pleasantness and harmony of the resulting combination. The overall uniqueness of the process, ingredients used, and creativity should be considered. The overall rating of the beer depends heavily on the inherently subjective assessment of distinctiveness and drinkability.
- **Base Style: THE BREWER MAY SPECIFY AN UNDERLYING BEER STYLE.** The base style may be a *classic style* (i.e., a named subcategory from these Style Guidelines) or a broader characterization (e.g., “Porter” or “Brown Ale”). If a base style is declared, the style should be recognizable. The beer should be judged by how well the special ingredient or process complements, enhances, and harmonizes with the underlying style.
- **Comments:** Overall harmony and drinkability are the keys to presenting a well-made specialty beer. The distinctive nature of the stated specialty ingredients/methods should complement the original style (if declared) and not totally overwhelm it. The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and ingredients or techniques work well together while others do not make palatable combinations. **THE BREWER MUST SPECIFY THE “EXPERIMENTAL NATURE” OF THE BEER (E.G., TYPE OF SPECIAL INGREDIENTS USED, PROCESS UTILIZED OR HISTORICAL STYLE BEING BREWED), OR WHY THE BEER DOESN’T FIT AN ESTABLISHED STYLE.** For historical styles or unusual ingredients/techniques that may not be known to all beer judges, the brewer should provide descriptions of the styles, ingredients and/or techniques as an aid to the judges.
- **Vital Statistics:** OG: Varies with base style IBUs: Varies with base style FG: Varies with base style SRM: Varies with base style ABV: Varies with base style **Commercial Examples:** Bell’s Rye Stout, Bell’s Eccentric Ale, Samuel Adams Triple Bock and Utopias, Hair of the Dog Adam, Great Alba Scots Pine, Tommyknocker Maple Nut Brown Ale, Great Divide Bee Sting Honey Ale, Stoudt’s Honey Double Mai Bock, Rogue Dad’s Little Helper, Rogue Honey Cream Ale, Dogfish Head India Brown Ale, Zum Uerige Sticke and Doppel Sticke Altbier, Yards Brewing Company General Washington Tavern Porter, Rauchenfels Steinbier, Odells 90 Shilling Ale, Bear Republic Red Rocket Ale, Stone Arrogant Bastard





**Questions - Comments**