

BEER

on the wall

"Drinking Beer Promotes Freedom of Speech"

How to Fall In Love with Beer

It is commonly said that beer is an acquired taste, and it's true. Anyone who enjoys Barley Wine style ale can tell you, the taste must be acquired. To enjoy such strong and bold beers requires an experienced and trained pallet. How does one train their pallet? How can you "acquire" a taste for new beers? By drinking beer of course, but there's more to it than that.

Every beer lover knows someone who doesn't like all beers, and it might be hard to understand why, but many times it can simply be attributed to inexperience. This step-by-step guide will help you convert your friends from drinking light beer only into a true beer loving advocates.

Live a little, skip the light beer

Most mass marketed American beers are really just super pale lagers. So a good start would be an actual Pale Lager, maybe something they have had before like a Budweiser, or a Corona. Next grab a lager with a little more flavor and complexity, we recommend Long Board Lager made by Kona Brewing Co. in Kona, Hawaii. If they drink light beer this won't be a big step, but it is a little more hoppy. Try to avoid European Lagers as these tend to be a little more bitter. The idea here is for the light beer drinker to realize that light beer is just like real beer, only without the flavor. There are other beers that are just as easy to drink and can be just as refreshing, but also taste delicious.



Discover the Ale

It's time to move onto Ales. Pale Ales are nice, light and easy to drink such as Thompson Pale Ale by Snowshoe Brewing Co. in Arnold, CA. This is a good transition beer; it's light enough for the light beer drinker but with lots of flavor. If you've gotten to this point and the person you're trying to convert hasn't walked out on you, then you're doing really well. You now have the converttee drinking real beer, congratulate them and let them know that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Dark But Not Bitter

Move on to an American Dark Lager or Brown Ale like Downtown Brown, Lost Coast Brewing Co. in Eureka, CA. These are darker beer styles with a slight roasted flavor, but contain very little hops and malt, so they are very easy to drink.

Hop-tastic

We should be ready for a mild India Pale Ale (IPA), like Hops of Wrath from Dust Bowl Brewing. Then move onto a more bitter IPA like Flying Dog IPA, If this is too sweet, grab another IPA. Stay on IPAs for a bit, it's very important to become accustomed to the hoppy flavor that defines the IPA.

Dark Beers

Time to take the plunge to real dark beers. A natural progression from IPAs is to the Porter. The porter is heavy on the malt and generally pretty heavy on the hops as well. A great choice would be Smoked Porter, by Stone Brewing Co. from San Diego, CA.

If they liked the porter, you're doing great! Your beer hating friend just drank a Strong Dark beer. Put a Stout like Barney Flats Oatmeal Stout, by Anderson Valley Brewing Co. in Boonville, CA in front of them and see what they say.

Wrap it Up

At this point, nothing should be off limits for the former beer hater. If they tried a barley wine, they might not love it, but they should be able to respect the complexity of its flavors. Now that they have been exposed to a broad spectrum of beer they should know what the hops and the malts can bring to a beer. Just experiencing these flavors gives them the needed respect to enjoy any beer.

Hall, Michael "How To: Fall in Love with Beer"

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OVER THE WALL

BEER OF THE MONTH CLUB

this month's featured beers

Full Sail Brewing Company: Hood River, Oregon

When you see the little town of Hood River, it's not hard to figure out what attracted the brewers to this setting. Then again, if you'd stood in this very same spot back in 1987, on the day they first laid eyes on their future brewery, you may not have noticed the sails or the waterfalls.

Looking at what was then an old fruit cannery, you would have been wondering how time had somehow stopped, in 1972. The cannery had pretty much laid abandoned and derelict for 15 years, and, while the workers were long gone, their dusty girlie calendars and magazine clippings still clung to the walls.

The Full Sail Crew knew it was going to take a Herculean effort to turn this place into a brewery, but they felt the potential. And with that, they put a down payment on the cannery, set about converting the apple juice press room into a brew house, and worked night and day to turn a romantic notion into a bonafide brewery.

Determined to make world-class beer, their first, and perhaps best decision was to invest in new, state-of-the-art brewing equipment. Other microbreweries had been brewing with varying degrees of success in open fermentation tanks or old, cast-aside dairy equipment. But they weren't taking any chances: the beer had to be great or there was no point in brewing it, so most of 1987 was spent installing the new system.

By September, the first crew was on board and they were ready to brew. The operation was tiny and the work was nonstop, but to be in Hood River at the forefront of not only the craft beer movement, but also the rise of windsurfing, was thrilling.

Microbreweries were springing up all over the Northwest. The windsurfing craze was in full swing. Hood River's storefronts were filling up with gear shops. They put up a whopping 287 barrels that first year. Things were really humming.

Stoked at their success in getting the brewery up and running, the next year Full Sail set their sights on yet another goal, something the beer literati said was next to impossible: Putting their microbrew in a bottle! Imagine That.

They still craft all their beers by hand, in one of the few manual brew houses of its size in the country. Their hops and barley still come from trusted local farms. Their water, from a spring on Mount Hood. And they continue to do whatever they can to be sensitive to the environment. Their most significant commitment by far, however, came in 1999 when the little brewery reached a turning point, and became an independent, employee-owned company. Of all their accomplishments, this is the one that makes them most proud.

American Pale Ale

The way we see it, brewing a great Pale Ale is a lot like living a great life. It's all about finding the perfect balance. Between work and play, art and commerce, and yes, hops and barley. Dial in each flavor and nuance just right, and it's a beautiful thing. Our Pale Ale has a fresh, hoppy aroma that comes from two (top secret) Northwest hop varieties, while two-row Pale and Crystal malt give it a mild sweetness that finishes clean and crisp. Feeling out of whack? Put on some music, crack a Pale Ale, and readjust your balance.

Amber

Anyone remember the grocery store cooler back before it turned into a kaleidoscopic fantasy world of beer options? You pretty much had two choices: Regular or Light. In 1989, when Full Sail brewed the first batch of Full Sail Amber, not only was it the first Amber ale in Oregon -- it was the first craft beer to go into a bottle. And two things became immediately apparent. It wasn't Regular and it sure as heck wasn't Light. This Amber is a sweet, malty, medium-bodied ale with a spicy, floral hop finish. It's brewed with 2-row Pale, Crystal and Chocolate malts. And they hop it with Mt. Hoods and Cascades. They're as proud of it today as they were back in '89. And over the years it's earned 14 Gold Medals. Not that anyone is keeping track or anything.

Session Black

Short, Dark, and Drinkable and a Gold Medal Winner at the 2009 Great American Beer Festival! Most beers this dark are so heavy-duty, you could eat them with a fork. Session Black, on the other hand, lets you have your dark beer and drink it, too. With just a hint of roasty chocolate character, Session Black is short, dark, and totally drinkable. At long last, a dark beer that doesn't drink like a meal.

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