

~~Drinking Beer~~ Beer Tasting

Tasting beer, when you want more
than just drinking beer

2017 PNWHC Vancouver, Washington
Presented By Ted Hausotter

Drinking versus Tasting Beer

- Drinking Beer: We all know how. It is the least amount of work, can be a great time sitting with your friends enjoying a few beers. Many beer drinkers drink for reasons other than flavor.
- Causal Taster: Wants more out of beer, not here just to get “buzzed”. Concerned with what they are tasting and want to try new beers.
- Beer Judge: Finds the best beer in a group of beers. Usually 2 or 3 judges review each beer so all the judges learn from each other.
- Beer Writer: Writes for magazines, books, blogs or reviews.

Why Taste versus Drink Beer

- So you get the good stuff!!!
- Know what the best beers are in restaurants and stores
- Stop paying for bad beers in restaurants
- Have people give you free beer

Glassware Styles

- Pint Mug sturdy but does not hold in aromas
- Needs to be comfortable
- Glasses that flare in hold the aromas
- Where the glass delivers the beer into your mouth will accentuate flavors
- Glass type effects beer temperature



Other Tasting Tools

- Placemats with beer locations and reference numbers
- Pen
- Paper
- Thermometer
- Dump bucket
- Beer Clubs
- Tasting Buddy, make it a weekly commitment.
- Beer Books
- Color Guide



Components of Beer



- Malt
- Hops
- Water
- Yeast
- Alcohol
- Balance
- Color

Malt

- Ranges from grainy, bread, bread crust, toast, caramel, plum, raisins, prunes, dark cherries, coffee, roast, chocolate, burnt, smoke
- Generally they are in color to flavor order
- Malt derived fruits are from darker crystal and Munich malts
- Helps in lowering the PH to give beer that snap
- Country of origin, each countries predominate brewers set the flavor expectations and flavor goals for the malt houses.

Hops

- Ranges from spicy, earthy, woody, citrus, resinous, piney, apricot, peaches and berries, melon, tropical fruit
- English hops tend to be Resinous, Earthy, Herbal, Woody, Fruity
- Noble Hops tend to be Spicy, Herbal and very light lemon
- American Hops tend to be Resinous, Citrus and Piney



Water

- Beer is mostly water
- Only use good clean water!
- Water salts are part of the water profile
- Water salts helps with PH
- Water salts can add roundness
- Water salts can help with hop flavor
- Water effects every aspect of beer!
- Don't overdo it and make a watery beer!
- No Chlorine!



Yeast

- Each variety is unique and allows different flavors to come out in the final beer. Think of them as gate keepers where they will open the gate to allow flavors to come out. Sometimes they will not open the gate at all or just partially.
 - Base: bread, yeasty
 - Esters: apple, pear, strawberries, berry, bubble gum, banana
 - Phenols: spice, pepper, clove, vanilla, smoke
 - Look at county of origin (style)



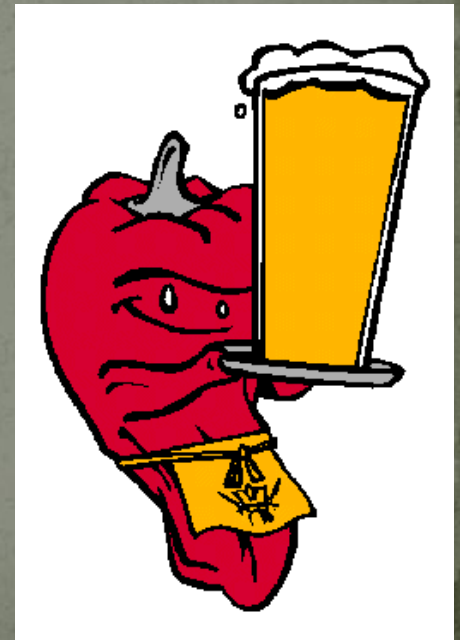
Alcohol

- Adds to mouth feel, can be sharp, prickly, hot and even burn
- Flavor can be spicy, solventy, aftershave, perfume, ethanol or alcohol
- Adds the spice to alcoholic beverages
- Fusel alcohols are never fun in excess
- Alcohol can help balance a beer



Balance

- How well do all the components work together?
Balance can be skewed hard to one side as long as the end product is inviting, whispering quietly, “drink me, drink me”
- Good balance, how many pints can you drink?
- Do any flaws add or subtract?
- Is it too complex to order another?
- Very subjective
- All beers need balance,
.....even an IPA chili beer!



Color tells about the beer

- Sets the expectations
- Black: expect roasted flavors of coffee, chocolate perhaps burnt
- Browning: is the beer oxidized? Possible paper and cardboard may be found in the beer. Look for backend harshness.
- Ruby highlights: roasted, Munich and dark crystal malts, these can lead to plum, raisin and prune character.
- Fruit Colors: Is fruit added? I.e. pink heads can come from watermelon

Pallet Fatigue

- We all get it; some are just used to working with it.
- Smoke is tough, clogs the pallet fast so a strong smoke beer will overpower a lighter one where you may not even find the smoke
- Hops and spice can also clog your pallet.

Pallet Extenders

- Pallet extenders
 - water
 - crackers
 - smelling coffee beans
 - Opposing beer styles, hoppy versus malty, sweet versus sour.
 - I like to keep a Berliner Weise or dry cider to clean my pallet. A Munich Helles helps with IPA. Find a beer that works and keep it till you are done tasting.
- Practice to know what your limitations are.
- Clean you pallet before moving on.

Tasting Techniques

- Always compare 2 beers in the same type of glass
- High Low: smell the beer low side of a tilted glass, than smell it on the high side. Different aromatics will come across.
- Triangle Test: three beers, 2 the same, the third different, pick out the odd beer.
- Edge Styles: include edge styles in beer tastings where you are style specific. Example, German Pilsner tastings include Dortmunder Lagers, Bohemian Pilsner and Blonde Ales. Select also by ABV, color, hop flavor, malt flavor or sourness.

More Tasting Techniques

- Blind tasting panels: Set out the glasses and taste the beers. Leave the brewery, beer name, brewer etc a mystery. While we should be good enough to set our ideas about a beer aside, don't let advertising persuade you!
- Don't follow the pack, follow your taste buds!
- Blind folded: is it really a stout, or are your eyes telling you it is?



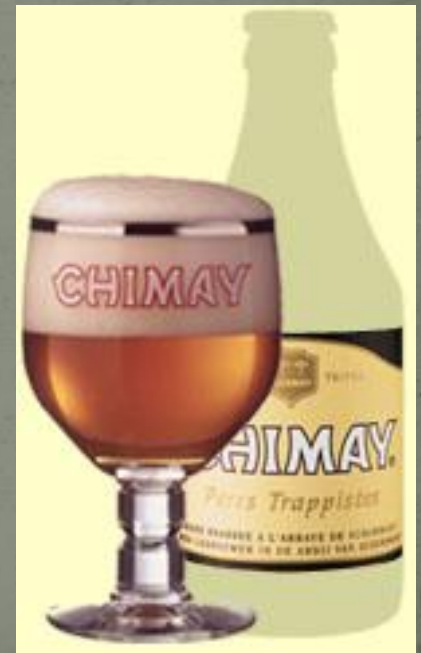
Thinking and Drinking

To learn the most about a beer you need to taste it and think about what you are tasting and what is missing

- Take you time a taste the beer, over the entire mouth.
- Guess the beer!
 - Have a blind tasting
 - Guess the style
 - Guess the brewery
 - Guess the beer name.

Random Thoughts.....

- Plastic cups are not great, many have a slight odor. The rims are also sometimes uncomfortable, preventing you from drinking tasting beer all day long.
- Gold rims can give off flavors. Taste the rim and you will see what I mean.
- Steroids can enhance sense of taste. If you are on them, you need to mentally adjust to natural conditions when discussing the beer.
- Major medical events can interfere with your sense of taste. My sister lost her sense of smell after giving birth.



More Random Thoughts.....

- Your nose is required to fully taste beer
- Tongue tasting charts are not always accurate, you may find that you sense flavors in different locations. Take the time to learn how and where you sense flavors.
- Communication: work on the lingo so you can discuss what you are tasting. “Nice beer” what did you really say?
- Level of a flaw, does it help add character to the beer or detract? Flaws may be technically bad, but we are beer tasters first. Some oxidation may add to a beer.
- If your glass is empty, you know it is a good beer!

How to properly taste Light Beer

- Commonly asked how to serve Light Beer?
- How to taste Light Beer
- It is all in the glass!!!

Thanks for attending

Ted Hausotter BJCP Grand Master 4 Judge

lagermanted@gmail.com