

The Brewsletter: India Pale Ales



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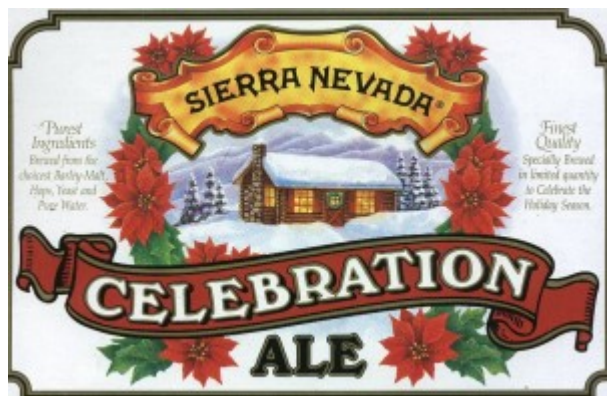
The chill in the air has finally arrived and most of us have caved and turned on our heat on as the 2010 rolls into its last month. For beer drinkers, this usually means a slew of cliché wheat bocks, overpowering stouts and porters, or Christmas-themed spiced ambers that taste like someone knocked a spice rack over into your fruitcake. But what about the hopheads? Won't someone please think of the hopheads? Don't worry my humulus lupulus-craving friend, the IPA was created to survive cold weather, and it will help you do the same.

In Britain during the early 19th century, in the times of the East India Company, beer just wasn't surviving the long journey along trade routes to India. The British realized that the more hops they put into the beer, the longer it stayed fresh. Hops contain natural oils and other qualities that naturally preserve beer.

In fact, many of the beer styles we know today were born from the need to adapt to the elements (see my article on Russian Imperial Stout). I call it "Beerevolution." Explorers out of Britain developed a love for this bitter, citrusy ale and later demanded it after arrival at port. Thus, another British Beer style was born: India Pale Ale.

For a style of beer born from cold, frosty voyages, I.P.A. seems to fly under the radar this time of year. There are,

however, many seasonal India Pale Ales out there to consume, so you are reading this just in time! Breweries such as Southern Tier, Rogue and Sierra Nevada all have hop-bombs just waiting to thaw you out, and they are all available right now!



Let's start with Sierra Nevada, one of the most important breweries to the craft beer renaissance. Located in the fertile lands of California, this brewery has innovated the use of the hop plant in the United States. From their

flagship Pale Ale to their innovative Torpedo IPA, Sierra cranks out quality, hoppy beer after quality, hoppy beer.

"Celebration," their winter seasonal India Pale Ale, is no exception. First brewed in 1981, this beer has become a time-honored tradition in American craft beer culture. I poured myself a tulip glass from a tap at The Rose Alley Ale House, and immediately detected a beautiful, amber-colored brew, clean and translucent, with a resinous white head that clings to the end of the glass. It smells of candied grapefruit, marmalade, and cannabis, with a slight alcoholic bite. Upon tasting, rough carbonation rushes the palate, leaving flavors of pepper, pine, and citrus peel, with a beautiful toffee backdrop. The mouth feel is creamy and finishes surprisingly soft for an IPA that starts off so aggressively. It truly is a delicious and warming India Pale Ale with something for every palate.

Another great winter hop-bomb is, "Mogul Madness," which is brewed in Oregon by Rogue Brewing Company. Opened in 1989, Rogue is known for its fresh ales and spirits made in the Yakima region of the Northwestern United States. As winter casts its cold shadow, Mogul Madness casts a shadow of its own.



It's a "Black India Pale Ale", an American style growing in popularity in which the malt is roasted for a longer period of time, giving the beer a richer malt note despite its aggressive hopping.

Mogul Madness is a prime example of a "black" I.P.A. It pours a semi-translucent, borderline opaque brown, with small flakes of a tan head that dissipate quickly. The aroma is that of an astringent Sauvignon Blanc, bright, citrusy and fresh, with a touch of smoke in the finish. Upon taking the first sip, carbonation is light and forgiving, leading the way to a grassy and earthy hop-tone with woody bitterness. The end flavor is malty and semisweet, with after flavors similar to a malted milk ball. This beer is surely a new favorite among my top hoppy brews.

For those interested, there are many more winter brews that tend to be on the hoppier side for you to try. Both "Celebration" and "Mogul Madness" can be found on draft at Rose Alley Ale House right now! Other beers to consider include Southern Tier's, " Old Man Winter," Rogue's, "Yellow Snow," and some other year round I.P.A.'s that qualify like Dogfish's, "Head 90 Minute," Heavy Seas, "Loose Cannon," and Stone's, "Sublimely Self Righteous. All of these excellent choices are available on draft at Rose Alley.

So come by and have a pint, or build a winter I.P.A. flight with me on a Sunday night at the bar! Thanks again for reading The Brewsletter, and until next time...Cheers!