

A BREW EVERY OCCASION

Choosing the right beer for the right moments BY JOHN LOCANTHI

Beer is an interesting concoction. First brewed nearly 5,000 years ago in Sumeria, this alcoholic beverage has been with man throughout the lion's share of civilized history. Few can say they didn't grimace at their first sip of this beloved beverage, but the taste grows on you. Today, some restaurants pair beer with fine cuisine. Now, let us pair beer with experiences.



BEST BREW FOR WHEN IT'S TOO DAMN HOT OUTSIDE

Widmer Brothers X-114 IPA

It's been said there is nothing better than a cold beer on a hot day. This is especially true of India pale ale. The brief, sour bite of hops takes your mind off the sweltering pulses of a scorching summer day. The crisp aftertaste refreshes even in the muggiest of afternoons. This particular brew also has a hint of citrus that adds a subtle, fruity sweetness to the hoppy mixture. The 6.2 percent ABV doesn't hurt, either.

BEST CAMPING BEER

Caldera Pale Ale

A pleasant, smooth pale ale is the perfect accompaniment for warm evenings by the campfire. Swapping stories and telling jokes while sipping on this treat from Ashland makes for a most pleasant experience out in the wild, especially because the ale doesn't taste too bad warm if you forgot to put enough ice in your cooler. It doesn't even matter if one of your absent-minded friends forgot to bring a bottle opener, as Caldera has embraced the growing movement of selling microbrews in cans — which also makes it that much easier to hike in and pack out.



BEST JUST-GOT-OFF-WORK BEER

Oakshire Overcast Stout

After a grueling day at the office, sometimes you just need a way to unwind and relax. Sure, if it was a really hard day you'd break into the whiskey, but then you may find yourself more relaxed than you wanted to be. Beer is a far better choice of chill, and Oakshire's sweet espresso-infused stout is just what you need. Thick and smooth, the Overcast Stout provides a delicious, dessert-like taste and a gentle buzz to enhance the rest of your evening.



BEST ON-TOP-OF-THE-WORLD BEER

Stone Arrogant Bastard Ale

You just completed a big project, or maybe you just nailed that job interview — for whatever reason, you're on top of the world. There's no finer accompaniment for that fat Cuban cigar you just lit up than the Arrogant Bastard Ale. The label tells you that you aren't good enough to understand (let alone drink) this beer, but damn it, you're good enough today.



BEST BEER TO DUCK INTO A BACK ALLEY AND CHUG

Genesee Ice

We've all been at this point in our darkest hours. In the middle of a raging evening, you're committed to making a beast of yourself but have run low on funds and you feel like drinking more — without paying bar prices. Genesee Ice is the answer. At 24 oz. and for little more than a buck, this very light, American-style lager is a steal. Stroll into the alley, gain your balance, have no fear (or shame), tilt your head back and finish the beer.



BEST BEER THAT HARMS BOTH BRAIN CELLS AND TASTE BUDS

Six Rivers Chili Pepper Spicy Ale

Replacing hops with Anaheim, serrano and jalapeño pepper flavorings might seem like a masochistic idea, but it works with this brew. Six Rivers combines the intense, long-lasting burn of eating chili peppers with the pleasure of getting drunk — a step outside the box for many beer drinkers, but a wet dream for the beer-drinking chilihead.




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