

12. PALE COMMONWEALTH BEER

This category contains pale, moderately-strong, hop-forward, bitter ales from countries within the former British Empire.

12A. British Golden Ale

Overall Impression: A hop-forward, average-strength to moderately-strong pale bitter. Drinkability and a refreshing quality are critical components of the style, as it was initially a summer seasonal beer.

Aroma: Hop aroma is moderately low to moderately high, and can use any variety of hops – floral, herbal, or earthy English hops and citrusy American hops are most common. Frequently a single hop varietal will be showcased. Low bready malt aroma with no caramel. Medium-low to low fruity aroma from the hops rather than esters. Low diacetyl optional.

Appearance: Straw to golden in color. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white head. A low head is acceptable when carbonation is also low.

Flavor: Medium to medium-high bitterness. Hop flavor is moderate to moderately high of any hop variety, although citrus flavors are increasingly common. Medium-low to low malt character, generally bready with perhaps a little biscuity flavor. Caramel flavors are typically absent. Hop bitterness and flavor should be pronounced. Moderately-low to low esters. Medium-dry to dry finish. Bitterness increases with alcohol level, but is always balanced. Low diacetyl optional.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Low to moderate carbonation on draught, although bottled commercial versions will be higher. Stronger versions may have a slight alcohol warmth, but this character should not be too high.

Comments: Well-hopped, quenching beer with an emphasis on showcasing hops. Served colder than traditional bitters, this style was originally positioned as a refreshing summer beer, but is now often brewed year-round. Once brewed with English hops, increasingly American citrus-flavored hops are used. Golden Ales are also called Golden Bitters, Summer Ales, or British Blonde Ales. Can be found in cask, keg, and bottle.

History: Modern golden ales were developed in England to take on strongly-marketed lagers. While it is difficult to identify the first, Hop Back's Summer Lightning, first brewed in 1986, is thought by many to have got the style off the ground.

Characteristic Ingredients: Low-color pale or lager malt acting as a blank canvas for the hop character. May use sugar adjuncts, corn, or wheat. English hops frequently used, although citrusy American varieties are becoming more common. Somewhat clean-fermenting British yeast.

Style Comparison: More similar to an American Pale Ale than anything else, although it is often lower in alcohol and usually features British ingredients. Has no caramel and fewer esters compared to British Bitters and pale ales. Dry as Bitters but with less malt character to support the hops, giving a different balance. Often uses (and features) American hops, more so than most other modern British styles. Balance of hoppiness between a Blonde Ale and an American Pale Ale.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.038 – 1.053 IBUs: 20 – 45 FG: 1.006 – 1.012 SRM: 2 – 5 ABV: 3.8 – 5.0%

Commercial Examples: Adnams Explorer, Crouch Vale Brewers Gold, Golden Hill Exmoor Gold, Hop Back Summer Lightning, Oakham JHB, Spitfire Golden Ale

Tags: standard-strength, pale-color, top-fermented, britishisles, craft-style, pale-ale-family, bitter, hoppy

12B. Australian Sparkling Ale

Overall Impression: A well-balanced, pale, highly carbonated, and refreshing ale suitable for drinking in a hot climate. Fairly bitter, with a moderate herbal-spicy hop and pome fruit ester profile. Smooth, neutral malt flavors with a fuller body but a crisp, highly-attenuated finish.

Aroma: Fairly soft, clean aroma with a balanced mix of esters, hops, malt, and yeast – all moderate to low in intensity. The esters are frequently pears and apples, optionally with a very light touch of banana. The hops are earthy, herbaceous, or might show the characteristic iron-like Pride of Ringwood nose. The malt can range from neutral grainy to moderately sweet to lightly bready; no caramel should be evident. Very fresh examples can have a lightly yeasty, sulfury nose.

Appearance: Deep yellow to light amber in color, often medium gold. Tall, frothy, persistent white head with tiny bubbles. Noticeable effervescence due to high carbonation. Brilliant clarity if decanted, but typically poured with yeast to have a cloudy appearance. Not typically cloudy unless yeast roused during the pour.

Flavor: Medium to low rounded, grainy to bready malt flavor, initially mild to malty-sweet but a medium to medium-high bitterness rises mid-palate to balance the malt. Caramel flavors typically absent. Highly attenuated, giving a dry, crisp

finish with lingering bitterness, although the body gives an impression of fullness. Medium to medium-high hop flavor, somewhat earthy and possibly herbal, resinous, peppery, or iron-like but not floral, lasting into aftertaste. Medium-high to medium-low esters, often pears and apples. Banana is optional, but should never dominate. May be lightly minerally or sulfury, especially if yeast is present. Should not be bland.

Mouthfeel: High to very high carbonation, giving mouthfilling bubbles and a crisp, spritzzy carbonic bite. Medium to medium-full body, tending to the higher side if poured with yeast. Smooth but gassy. Stronger versions may have a light alcohol warmth, but lower alcohol versions will not. Very wellattenuated; should not have any residual sweetness.

Comments: Coopers has been making their flagship Sparkling Ale since 1862, although the formulation has changed over the years. Presently the beer will have brilliant clarity if decanted, but publicans often pour most of the beer into a glass then swirl the bottle and dump in all the yeast. In some bars, the bottle is rolled along the bar. When served on draught, the brewery instructs publicans to invert the keg to rouse the yeast. A cloudy appearance for the style seems to be a modern consumer preference. Always naturally carbonated, even in the keg. A present-use ale, best enjoyed fresh.

History: Brewing records show that the majority of Australian beer brewed in the 19th century was draught XXX (Mild) and porter. Ale in bottle was originally developed to compete with imported bottled pale ales from British breweries, such as Bass and Wm Younger' Monk. By the early 20th century, bottled pale ale went out of fashion and "lighter" lager beers were in vogue. Many Australian Sparkling and Pale Ales were labeled as ales, but were actually bottom-fermented lagers with very similar grists to the ales that they replaced. Coopers of Adelaide, South Australia is the only surviving brewer producing the Sparkling Ale style.

Characteristic Ingredients: Lightly kilned Australian 2-row pale malt, lager varieties may be used. Small amounts of crystal malt for color adjustment only. Modern examples use no adjuncts, cane sugar for priming only. Historical examples using 45% 2 row, 30% higher protein malt (6 row) would use around 25% sugar to dilute the nitrogen content. Traditionally used Australian hops, Cluster, and Goldings until replaced from mid-1960s by Pride of Ringwood. Highly attenuative Burton-type yeast (Australian-type strain typical). Variable water profile, typically with low carbonate and moderate sulfate.

Style Comparison: Superficially similar to English Pale Ales, although much more highly carbonated, with less caramel, less late hops, and showcasing the signature yeast strain and hop variety. More bitter than IBUs might suggest due to high attenuation, low final gravity, and somewhat coarse hops.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.038 – 1.050 IBUs: 20 – 35 FG: 1.004 – 1.006 SRM: 4 – 7 ABV: 4.5 – 6.0%

Commercial Examples: Coopers Sparkling Ale

Tags: standard-strength, pale-color, top-fermented, pacific, traditional-style, pale-ale-family, bitter

12C. English IPA

Overall Impression: A bitter, moderately-strong, very wellattenuated pale British ale with a dry finish and a hoppy aroma and flavor. Classic British ingredients provide the most authentic flavor profile.

Aroma: A moderate to moderately-high hop aroma, typically floral, spicy-peppery, or citrus-orange in nature. A slight dryhop aroma is acceptable, but not required. Medium-low to medium bready or biscuity malt, optionally with a moderatelylow caramel-like or toasty malt presence. Low to moderate fruitiness is acceptable. Optional light sulfury note.

Appearance: Color ranges from golden to deep amber, but most are fairly pale. Should be clear, although unfiltered dryhopped versions may be a bit hazy. Moderate-sized, persistent head stand with off-white color.

Flavor: Hop flavor is medium to high, with a moderate to assertive hop bitterness. The hop flavor should be similar to the aroma (floral, spicy-peppery, or citrus-orange). Malt flavor should be medium-low to medium, and be somewhat bready, optionally with light to medium-light biscuit, toast, toffee, or caramel aspects. Medium-low to medium fruitiness. Finish is medium-dry to very dry, and the bitterness may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. The balance is toward the hops, but the malt should still be noticeable in support. If high sulfate water is used, a distinctively minerally, dry finish, some sulfur flavor, and a lingering bitterness are usually present. Some clean alcohol flavor can be noted in stronger versions.

Mouthfeel: Smooth, medium-light to medium body without hop-derived astringency. Medium to medium-high carbonation can give an overall dry sensation despite a supportive malt presence. A low, smooth alcohol warming can be sensed in stronger versions.

Comments: The attributes of IPA that were important to its arrival in good condition in India were that it was very wellattenuated, and heavily hopped. Simply because this is how IPA was shipped, doesn't mean that other beers such as Porter weren't also sent to India, that IPA was invented to be sent to India, that IPA was more heavily hopped than other keeping beers, or that the alcohol level was unusual for the time. Many modern examples labeled IPA are quite weak in strength. According to CAMRA, "so-called IPAs with strengths of around 3.5% are not true to style." English beer historian Martyn Cornell has commented that beers like this are "not really distinguishable from an ordinary bitter." So we choose

to agree with these sources for our guidelines rather than what some modern British breweries are calling an IPA; just be aware of these two main types of IPAs in the British market today. The beers were shipped in well-used oak casks, so the style shouldn't have an oak or Brett character.

History: Originally a pale stock ale from London that was first shipped to India in the late 1700s. George Hodgson of the Bow Brewery did not create the style, but was the first well known brewer to dominate the market. After a trade dispute, the East India Company had Samuel Allsopp recreate (and reformulate) the beer in 1823 using Burton's sulfate-rich water. The name India Pale Ale wasn't used until around 1830. Strength and popularity declined over time, and the style virtually disappeared in the second half of the 20th century. While the stronger Burton-type IPA remained, the name was also applied to hoppy, lower-gravity, often bottled products (a trend that continues in some modern British examples). The style underwent a craft beer rediscovery in the 1980s, and is what is described in these guidelines. Modern examples are inspired by classic versions, but shouldn't be assumed to have an unbroken lineage with the exact same profile. White Shield is probably the example with the longest lineage, tracing to the strong Burton IPAs of old and first brewed in 1829.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pale ale malt. English hops, particularly as finishing hops. Attenuative British ale yeast. Refined sugar may be used in some versions. Optional sulfate character from Burton-type water.

Style Comparison: Generally will have more late hops and less fruitiness and caramel than British pale ales and Bitters. Has less hop intensity and a more pronounced malt flavor than typical American IPAs.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.050 – 1.070 IBUs: 40 – 60 FG: 1.010 – 1.015 SRM: 6 – 14 ABV: 5.0 – 7.5%

Commercial Examples: Berkshire Lost Sailor IPA, Fuller's Bengal Lancer, Marston's Old Empire IPA, Meantime London IPA, Thornbridge Jaipur, Worthington White Shield

Tags: high-strength, pale-color, top-fermen