
**Off topic (completely):
Many faces (and types) of beer**

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Abstract

Welcome to the world of beer tasting! Are you ready to learn about the diversity and richness of the oldest alcoholic beverage on Earth? Stop associating beer with the common, cheap, non-absorbing drink which doesn't require a second thought. Smell, taste and have fun! This article summarizes beers included in the BachoTeX 2017 beer tasting with short descriptions.

Beer is associated with tasteless, golden beverages whose only purpose of existence is to make watching football games more pleasant. In theory this is true because 90% of consumed beer is pale lager and it is often difficult to find anything else in some regular grocery stores. Gigantic breweries, more similar to modern factories, produce enormous amounts of beer that does not need to taste good, it only needs to be cheap to produce. Beer is something more — this is one of the oldest beverages in the world and it is made in more than 100 different styles; to be honest, the number of combinations of different kinds of malt, hops from different corners of the world, yeast strains and all kinds of additions is endless.

During the tasting I tried to introduce participants to the wide world of beer. I told a bit about its history and a bit about the newest trends. I chose Polish beers that represent traditional Polish styles and some new-wave variants.

This year we tried the following. All photos are courtesy of Harald König.

**Toruńskie Piernikowe Jasne
(Gingerbread Pale Beer from Toruń)**

Poland is known for its mead and honey beer, because of the clear and intense taste of honey. A nearby town — Toruń — is famous for gingerbread with honey being one very important ingredient. In this beer we have the taste of honey beer with a lot of root spices used in gingerbread. Many visitors to Toruń cannot leave the city without trying this unique gingerbread beer.



**Piwo z Grodziska — edycja
specjalna Piwobranie 2016
(Beer from Grodzisk — Special Edition
2016)**

Grodziskie is the only style of beer coming from Poland (other styles are historical beers with unknown recipes). This is a light, low-alcohol, wheat beer, but very unusual, because it is made with the usage of wheat malt smoked with oak wood. Bottle conditioning caused inconsistent overcarbonation — that is the reason to call this beer Polish champagne. The brewery in Grodzisk was closed in the 1990s, but craft breweries started to brew this style and the original brewery was reopened a few years ago. This special edition of grodziskie beer is enhanced by the addition of Earl Grey tea.



Fruit Wheat — Grand Champion 2016

This beer was brewed in Browar Zamkowy Cieszyń as the winning recipe in the biggest homebrew competition in Poland. Judges chose this beer brewed by Piotr Machowicz as the best one from around 350 entries. Usually wheat beer is refreshing by itself and in this case huge amounts of dry frozen strawberries were added. Fruits enhanced the aroma and taste in a very pleasant way and gave a bit of acidity. It is a great thirst quencher for hot summer days.



ART 9 — Oatmeal Hoptart

Berliner Weisse is very light, low-alcohol, sour wheat beer coming from Berlin. The Stu Mostów brewery from Wrocław in collaboration with Bristol Brewing from Colorado made beer which is at the same time slightly sour and very smooth from oat flakes and has a fruity aroma from aromatic American and Australian hops varieties. This combination was greatly appreciated by beer enthusiasts, causing this brew to skyrocket in the rankings.



Vermont IPA

India Pale Ale from Vermont (or New England IPA, or Northeast IPA) is a new trend in new-wave brewing. In this style, the focus is on getting a fruity aroma from aromatic American hops and perfect drinkability. On the other hand, bitterness does not have to be as intense as in a typical IPA. The use of a special yeast strain and no filtration cause such beers to become very hazy and the colour often resembles juice.



Imperator Bałtycki

Polish breweries are specialists in brewing Baltic porters and they are very often awardees at international contests. Baltic porters are appreciated for the rich and complex chocolate and caramel sweetness developing into dark fruit sweetness. Baltic Emperor is brewed as an imperial, even stronger, version of Baltic porter which has even more richness, thickness and deliciousness. No wonder this beer is considered one of the best Polish beers.



Miss Big Foot

Brewed by the Birbant brewery for the Piwna Stopa (Beer Foot) pub with the pub owners' recipe. Smoking is a very important process in Polish cuisine. In this stronger version of stout they used traditional Polish smoked plums, muscovado sugar and vanilla. The addition of smoked plums gives a brand new kind of smokiness, different than smoked malt, and it also brings some fruit notes. Even though outside Poland smoked plums are not popular, beers with this ingredient gain top rankings worldwide.



Beers presented during this tasting are only a few representatives of all beer styles. I encourage you to taste beer on your own. You only need to find an unusual beer and think about its aroma and taste. You can take some notes or compare your feelings with some reviews. This will be a very good first step into the wide world of beer.

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