

4 GO-TO BEER STYLES FOR SPRING

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by Red Arrow Tap Room

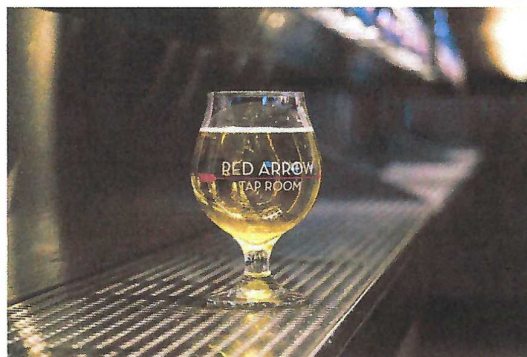


Surrounded by the crowd of summer's wheat beers, fall's Oktoberfests, and winter's porters, spring fades into the background. It's a month of transition, a month of waiting for winter to clear and summer to set in, but spring shouldn't be overlooked. Styles harmoniously paired with this wallflower season are light on the stomach, light in alcoholic content, are sharp and crisp in finishing effect, making them suited for any spring festival, picnic, or St. Patrick's Day celebration.

PILSNER

Pilsner beer had humble beginnings in the Czech Republic where Josef Groll, a Bavarian brewer employed by a Bohemian brewery, crafted a concoction of Saaz hops, Bavarian bottom-fermenting lager yeasts, and pale malts in 1842. In its original Czech form, this pale lager is earthy in flavor, high in foaminess, and floral in scent.

While categorized as a lager, the usage Saaz hops, which are noble hops with distinctive herbal flavors, define pilsner beer. Saaz hops infuse pilsners with a flowery aroma and a spicy bite, all leading to a refreshingly clean finish. The added kick makes pilsners perfect for mid-spring, right when the weather begins to warm.



FRUIT BEERS

If the rain showers and blooming flowers weren't any indication spring's arrived, you'll definitely know when fruit beers hit the shelves. Mainly released in spring, fruit beer saw its modern emergence in Belgium where the Belgians brewed the first cherry lambics and krieks in the 1930s. Beer drinkers recognize fruit beers for their fruity aroma and addition of flavors like peach, cherry, and raspberry.

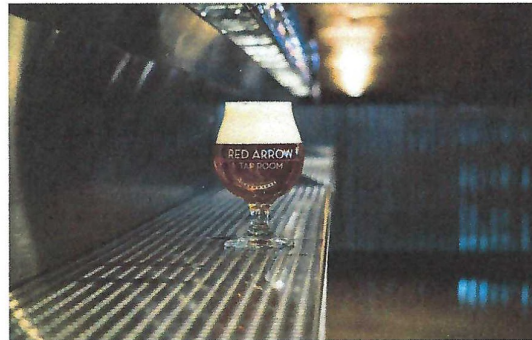
The brewing process incorporates fresh fruit, purée, or extracts which give these brews their hint of sweetness and tartness that plays off the base beer. Flavor, aroma, and finish of fruit beers are dependent on the base beer's style although wheat, sour, and IPAs are some of the more popular styles combined with fruit.



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You can't discuss spring beer styles without mentioning a traditional favorite, bock beer. This strong and smooth lager originated in Einbeck, Germany, and is notorious for bottom-fermenting and extensive lagering, resulting in an uninhibited malt taste. Bock beers are usually dark amber to brown in color with moderate carbonation. The full mouthfeel of bock beer allows for easy sipping during any May afternoon.

There are also various substyles of traditional bock like maibock and doppelbock. Maibock or "May bock" is light and sweet with minimal hop flavor. Doppelbock or "double bock" is slightly stronger than traditional bock, meaning every sip will hold a chocolatey, toasted edge. While bock, maibock, and doppelbock are styles that tend to share the spring limelight, substyles like weizenbock and einsbock aren't to be forgotten either. Bock it up!



STOUT



At first, the term "stout" was used to categorize strong beers, but as darker beers gained more attention in Ireland, stout became its own smooth, dark, and roasted style. Now stout, specifically dry stout, holds the title of Irish icon mostly due to the popularity of Guinness, the most famous brewing family in Ireland. With representative ties to Ireland, this style can't be passed up on St. Patrick's Day.

Stouts possess a harmonious roundness, dry finish, and a touch of roasted flavor. The roasted twist derives from the use of roasted barley, an unmalted barleycorn. This ingredient gives stout its signature espresso bitterness, deep color, and opaque appearance.

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