

# BEST OF Beer



## Best India Pale Ale

**CHAMPION • Breakside Brewery Breakside**

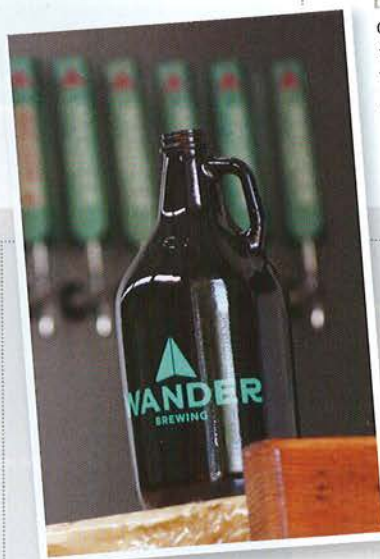
**[ ORIGIN ]** Portland, OR

**[ MERITS ]** Take a whiff of this crisp, dry IPA and discover fruity notes blended into a citrus bouquet. The bitterness is very slight, but you'll taste plenty of hop character with strong notes of mango and nectarines, along

with a resinous pine character that faintly lingers on the back of the tongue. || [breakside.com](http://breakside.com)

**[ 2ND ]** Airways Brewing Co. Seat Kicker

**[ 3RD ]** Black Raven Brewing Co. Beaktweaker Citrus



## Best Amber/Red Ale

**CHAMPION • Laurelwood Brewing Co. Free Range Red**

**[ ORIGIN ]** Portland, OR

**[ MERITS ]** This beer pours deep red, with orange tinges and a creamy head. The backbone offers a slightly roasted, nutty charm and tiny hints



of caramel, balanced with a pronounced hop character that perfectly cuts through the sweetness with a lemon, pine character. This one is noticeably more hop-forward than many amber ales.

|| [laurelwood](http://laurelwood)

[brewpub.com](http://brewpub.com)

**[ 2ND ]** Full Sail Brewing Co. Amber Ale

**[ 3RD ]** Silver City Brewery Ridgetop Red Ale

## Best Newcomer

**Wander Brewing, Bellingham, WA**

Chad and Colleen Kuehl had a plan to create a brewery inspired by the same wanderlust that sent them on a landmark backpacking excursion years before. The husband-wife team opened the Wander Brewing beer hall in Bellingham during spring 2014, and has since been pushing boundaries with a selection of brews beyond ordinary including a rye IPA, a Belgian-style dubbel and Bavarian-style lager. (360) 647-6152 || [wanderbrewing.com](http://wanderbrewing.com)





## Best Local Beer List

**Imperial Bottle Shop and Taproom, Portland, OR**

Guzzle any of the 16 local brews inside the beer-devoted bar, or take home an armful from the bottle shop—essentially a microbrew shrine featuring hundreds of American craft beers. True to its name, Imperial is an empire of local beers, and any beer lover would happily assume the role of empress or emperor. (971) 302-6899 || [imperialbottleshop.com](http://imperialbottleshop.com)

## Best Cascadian Dark Ale

**CHAMPION • Bomber Brewing Absolute Horizon**

[ ORIGIN ] Vancouver, BC

[ MERITS ] This beer's deep, dark brown body is topped with a lasting, thick tan head.



The aroma and the flavor strike you immediately with loads of grassy, piney hop flavors. Drier than most CDAs, there is just a bit of biscuit sweetness that catches up on the finish as a polite bitterness lingers.

|| [bomberbrewing.com](http://bomberbrewing.com)

[ 2ND ] 7 Seas Brewing

[ 3RD ] Kulshan Brewing Midnight KDA



## Best Session Ale

**CHAMPION • Schooner Exact Brewing Company Emerald India Session Ale**

[ ORIGIN ] Seattle, WA

[ MERITS ] This light-bodied, dry, refreshingly hop-forward beer

conjures images of citrus trees growing in a deep, dank Northwest rainforest, combining spicy, fruity zest with a bracing Evergreen character. Clocking in at just 4.7 percent ABV, this beer offers all the hop character of an IPA without the same alcohol impact. || [schoonerexact.com](http://schoonerexact.com)

[ 2ND ] (tie) Red Truck Beer Co. Red "Ute" ISA and Deep Cove Brewers & Distillers Sun Kissed Tea Saison

[ 3RD ] Breakside Brewery Passionfruit Sour Ale



## BEER BUFF'S CHOICE

**BRIAN GOLDEN • Director of Education and On-Premise Development for Hayden Beverage Co. and Certified Cicerone, Hayden, Idaho**

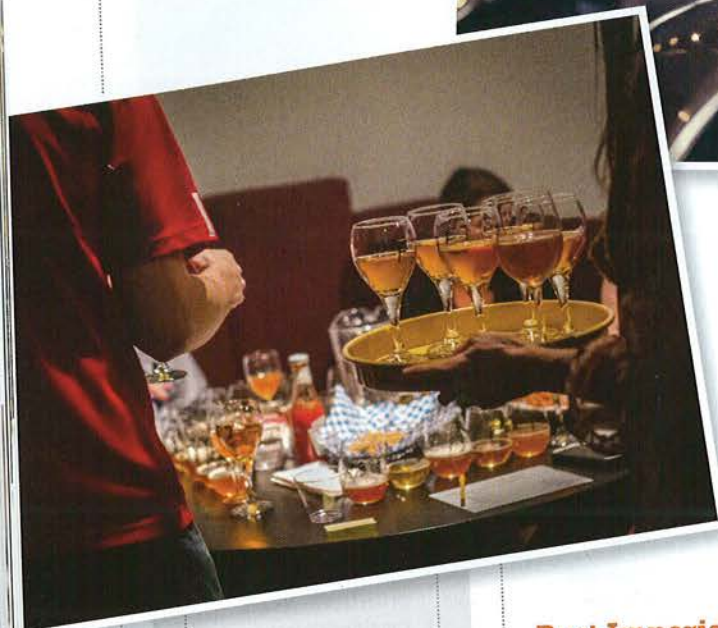
Brian Golden is a Certified Cicerone, Certified Judge by the Beer Judging Certified Program and a Beer Steward endorsed by the Master Brewers Association of America. He is also the Director of Education and On-Premise Development at Hayden Beverage Co., an Idaho beer, wine and spirits distributor that traces its roots to the 1930s when prohibition was repealed in the state. In other words, he knows beer.

Golden recommends the **Mutton Buster Brown Ale** by Boise's **Payette Brewing Co.**, a brewery he represents. "With any brewery, no matter what, there has to be attention to detail," Golden says in reference to the brown ale's focus. "It's a food-friendly beer. That seemed to resonate with consumers."

TOP LEFT PHOTO BY ABA LOBA

SIPNORTHWEST.CO





## Best Festival

**Fresh Hop Ale Festival, Yakima, WA**

In its 12 years of sudsy celebration, Yakima, Wash.,'s annual Fresh Hop Ale Festival has been voted one of the top 10 beer festivals nationwide, and continues to draw in the crowd to prove it. In the honor of the fresh hop harvest, ales, local bites, cider and Yakima Valley wines are served to the tunes of live music with bustling tents of brewers excited to fill your glass. (509) 388-6641 || [freshhopalefestival.com](http://freshhopalefestival.com)

## Best Imperial India Pale Ale

**CHAMPION • Airways Brewing Co. Loud Lady**

[ ORIGIN ] Kent, WA

[ MERITS ] How can something so sweet be so bitter? This beer balances extreme flavors masterfully. The hops provide a rich combination of flavors: pineapple, orange, mango and a wild bitterness that stays on the tongue. Though it's a bit hard to define, there is just enough malt backbone to round things out. This lady will not be ignored.

|| [airwaysbrewing.com](http://airwaysbrewing.com)

[ 2ND ] Old Schoolhouse Brewery

[ 3RD ] Rainy Daze Brewing Co. Hypocrite



## Best Pale Ale

**CHAMPION • Bale Breaker Brewing Co. Field 41**

[ ORIGIN ] Yakima, WA

[ MERITS ] Named for the hop field in which the brewery is located, this sessionable pale ale (4.5 percent ABV) has skyrocketed in popularity since its introduction in 2013. Bone dry, it is heavily hopped, offering just a tiny hint of sweetness that finds itself overgrown with flavors of pine, grass, grapefruit and lemon.

|| [balebreaker.com](http://balebreaker.com)

[ 2ND ] Old Schoolhouse Brewery Epiphany

[ 3RD ] Fremont Brewing Co. Summer



## Best Belgian-Style Ale

**CHAMPION • Propolis Brewing Co. Spruce Saison**

[ ORIGIN ] Port Townsend, WA

[ MERITS ] The sweet, yeasty aroma brings up thoughts of fresh bread smeared with



LEFT PHOTO BY  
BRYAN R. FORD PHOTOGRAPHY



marmalade. However, there's a disconnect between scent and flavor, as sour fruit dryly evaporates on your palate. This contemplative brew invites discussion amongst friends who will all find their own way to describe its uncommon but rich and alluring flavors.

|| [propolisbrewing.com](http://propolisbrewing.com)

[ 2ND ] Airways Brewing Co.  
3rd Anniversary Belgian Dark

[ 3RD ] Seapine Brewing Co.  
Super "C" French Saison

## Best Stout

CHAMPION •  
**No-Li  
Brewhouse  
Coffee-Infused  
Wrecking Ball  
Imperial**

[ ORIGIN ]  
Spokane, WA

[ MERITS ] This beer is dreamy. The smell of melting dark cocoa fills your head with nothing but pleasant, faraway thoughts, and then the first sip slaps you awake with heaps of coffee bitterness, which perfectly complements the sweet, rich chocolate flavor. Delicious on its own, but begging for a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

|| [nolibrewhouse.com](http://nolibrewhouse.com)

[ 2ND ] (tie) 7 Seas Brewing Port  
Royal and The Pike Brewing Co.  
Pike XXXXX Extra

[ 3RD ] Brickyard Brewing  
Masonry Oatmeal



# INDUSTRY Influencer

## MATT LINCECUM

Fremont Brewing

I asked Matt Lincecum, the owner and head honcho at Fremont Brewing Co., about the brewery's impressive growth rate. In particular, I wanted to know what sets his brewery apart and drives its success.

"I think it's because we're really, really good-looking people," he answered immediately, in expressionless deadpan. "And we're really, really humble, too."

That kind of joke speaks volumes about the man. He's a sharp guy and sometimes is a few steps ahead of you already. His words are often snappy and light, but sometimes furtive and well contemplated.

Before opening Fremont Brewing, he worked as an attorney and provided counsel to, among others, companies in the beer industry. One day Lincecum realized he was on the wrong side of the table and decided to make his homebrewing hobby his profession.

Now just five years old, Fremont Brewing Co. recently announced plans to build a new production brewery that will support a six-fold increase in production volume. This should surprise no one: Fremont's beers are among the top-selling craft brews in the Seattle area.

Lincecum seems a bit astounded when he says that Fremont Interurban IPA is the 12th best selling canned craft beer in the entire country, as if he cannot believe the words coming out of his own mouth. Indeed, it's a remarkable fact given the current limits of Fremont Brewing's distribution.

He is more than a successful brewery owner; Lincecum's peers appreciate him as a mentor and advisor for other young breweries and breweries-in-planning. Whether they are seeking help with business plans, real estate negotiations, distributor contracts, or anything else, he is willing to offer his help. However, his advice is not exactly free. There is a quid pro quo. You must guarantee him that you'll do it the "right way," which is how Lincecum strives to run his own brewery.

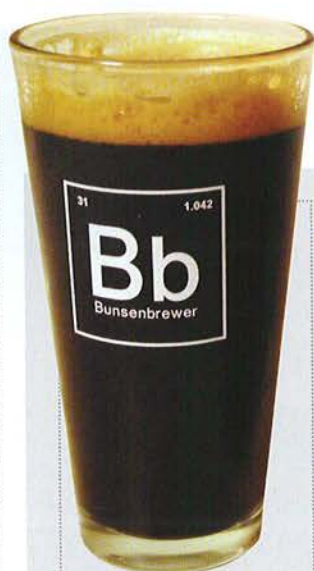


"You've got to be good to your people," he insists, noting that his brewery pays industry-leading wages and offers a full benefits package. "Employees who are treated well and are well compensated will do better work and take more pride in what they do. That's just good business logic."

Next, if you want his advice you must commit yourself to making good beer. Lincecum worries that too many breweries lose focus on the most important part of the business. "We are good to our beer too," he says. "We are very particular about our ingredients. We know the producers and are very familiar with everything that goes into one of our beers."

Likely, dedication to such sound business principles drives Fremont Brewing's success. Then again, maybe Lincecum is right. Maybe we should attribute the brewery's popularity to the fact that they are really, really good-looking people. —By Kendall Jones





### Learn While You Drink BunsenBrewer, Sandy, OR

The experts at the BunsenBrewer "Fermentation Library" are stoked on beer, starting at the molecular level. Load up on house brews from their "Reactor Core" menu, and experience chemistry class all over again (swap involuntary lab partners and emergency eyewash stations for tasty pints). (503) 308-3150  
|| bunsenbrewers.com

### Best Barrel-Aged Beer

**CHAMPION • Fremont Brewing Co.**  
**Bourbon Barrel Aged Dark Star Oatmeal Stout**

[ **ORIGIN** ] Seattle, WA

[ **MERITS** ] Imagine a bowl of steaming oatmeal, mixed with heaps of brown sugar and a big chunk of fudge, and a shot of bourbon on the side. Also known as Kentucky Dark Star, this beer offers plenty of bourbon sweetness, along with a myriad of other flavors like toffee, chocolate, and just enough alcohol burn to alert your senses.  
|| fremontbrewing.com

[ **2ND** ] Fremont Brewing Co.  
Bourbon Barrel Aged Abominable Winter Ale

[ **3RD** ] Breakside Brewery  
Bourbon Barrel-Aged Aztec



### Best Lager/Pilsner

**CHAMPION • Red Truck Beer Co.**  
**Red Truck Lager**

[ **ORIGIN** ] Vancouver, BC

[ **MERITS** ] Atop this sparkling, light-golden beer, snowy white foam releases the scent of

yeast and Old World hops. The flavor is clean and slightly sweet with a mild metallic bitterness lingering. The basic character is similar to the nationally recognized, mega-brand beers but the quality is noticeably higher, making this beer infinitely more quaffable.  
|| redtruckbeer.com

[ **2ND** ] Icicle Brewing Co.  
Crosscut Pilsner

[ **3RD** ] Full Sail Brewing Co.  
Cascade Pilsner

### Best Tour

**Road Dogs, Seattle, WA**

Three hours, three breweries and ample tastings throughout. Road Dogs Seattle brewery tours showcase the city's best microbreweries with a peek at the brewing processes behind each sip of suds, guided by fellow Northwest beer fanatics. Tours depart three times daily and include a van chauffeur, plus souvenirs. (206) 249-9858  
|| seattlebrewerytour.com