

BEER BUZZ

BY KENDALL JONES

Stop Calling It Lawnmower Beer!

Time will tell if the climate-change doomsday prophets are correct, but right now it feels like the summer of 2015 will never end. Like so many other things in life, that sets me to thinking about icy-cold beer. Not just any beer, but light-bodied, refreshing brews to chill my fried brain.

Many chronically afflicted beer geeks, the subculture with which I identify, often use the term *lawn-mower beer* to describe diminutive beers that are designed to refresh our palates without entirely inebriating or minds. But I hate the term lawn-mower beer even more than I hate insipid, rhetorical comments about the heat. “Is it hot enough for you?” Yes, as a matter of fact, it’s too damn hot. And stop calling it lawn-mower beer!

I fucking loathe mowing the lawn and I love drinking beer, so please don’t remind me of one while I’m trying to enjoy the other. Think of all the other things we could call it that are so much more pleasant. For instance: picnic beer, bikini beer, or session beer.

Beer is about relaxation and fun, good times and friends, not toiling in the field like a sunbaked serf. I will mow the lawn if I must, but know that I’d rather sit around in the shade watching someone else do the work while I sink my hand deep into an ice-filled cooler to grab a second, third, or fourth brew.

I’m guessing that you agree with me.

I’m talking about the kind of beer we reach for in the summer. The kind of beer that quenches our thirst as much as it distorts reality—and invites you to have a third, fourth, or more. To hell with *lawn-mower beer*, I prefer the term *session beer* because it more accurately describes what I want to do in the summer: lounge effortlessly in repose all day, slowly slurping one beer after another for an entire beer-drinking session that may stretch from the bikini-clad heat of the afternoon until the pie-eyed, wee hours of the morning. Now isn’t that a lot nicer to think about than mowing the lawn?

Session beers are loosely defined as any craft beer clocking in at 5 percent alcohol by volume (ABV) or less. Beyond that vague description, anything goes. Luckily, beer drinkers these days, even those who favor the good stuff over that watery crap our grandparents drank, enjoy no shortage of tasty, light-bodied, refreshing session beers. Below I share some of my favorite beers—mostly session beers—that are especially well suited for summer drinking.

Unless otherwise noted, these beers are available in bottles or cans at local bottleshops and better grocery stores. Also, they can be found hither and yon on tap at local pubs and most certainly at the breweries where they were born.

Day Hike Summer Session Ale, Two Beers Brewing (4.1 percent ABV): Don’t let the name freak you out. Nobody is suggesting that you must go hiking in the woods to enjoy this one, although The Woods tasting room at the brewery in Sodo is a damn fine place to enjoy a Day Hike without getting dirty or even breaking a sweat. The lemony and grassy character of the hops and the faint sweetness that finishes bone dry serve to revitalize your soul after a long day hiking on the trail or an afternoon lounging in the hammock. [ll twobeersbrewery.com](http://twobeersbrewery.com)

Field 41 Pale Ale, Bale Breaker Brewing (4.5 percent ABV): Can a beer taste like the place it’s made? Apparently so.

This brewery is located in the middle of a sun-kissed hop field (Field 41) just outside of Yakima, where the brewmaster enjoys an unfair advantage in the procurement of hops. Perhaps that explains the flowery hop aroma and abundant, crisp, clean citrus flavor imparted by the unapologetic use of too much Simcoe and Ahtanum hops. [ll balebreaker.com](http://balebreaker.com)

Finger Gun IPA, Iron Horse Brewery (4.8 percent ABV): The brewery best known for producing the widely popular and ever-bamboozling Irish Death created this beer to remind you of your childhood, when you innocently made a gun with your fingers and pointed it at your little sister and



said, “Peew peew!” There’s plenty of hop character, hints of tangerine and orange, but also a nice touch of malty sweetness to provide some balance and help it go down easy. || ironhorsebrewery.com

Johnny Utah Citra Pale Ale, Georgetown Brewing (5.6 percent ABV):

Yes, this one’s a bit big for a session beer, but it’s just too damn beautiful to ignore. Not every beer from this brewery is named after Manny. For instance, this beer is named after the lead character in the movie *Point Break*. This wildly restorative beer offers a lot of citrus character and not much malty sweetness to get in the way. It is lush, stimulating, and a little bit spicy, just like a young Keanu Reeves. If you’re lucky, you’ll find it on tap around town; if you’re smart, you’ll head to the brewery and pick up an \$8 growler (four pints). No cans or bottles. || georgetownbeer.com

Pogo Duck ISA, Counterbalance Brewing (5 percent ABV): This young brewery opened last winter in Georgetown and hit the ground running. Rather, hopping on one leg. A one-legged duck has to do a good job of balancing itself, which is what this beer does, counterbalancing gobs of citrusy, piney, spicy hop flavors with a very soft, biscuit-like malt character. To drink this one, you’ll have to find it on tap around town or visit the brewery’s tasting room (pints and growlers) just off Michigan Street in Georgetown. No bottles or cans. || counterbalancebeer.com

Preflight Pilsner, Airways Brewing (5 percent ABV): A traditional and popular European style, pilsner is named after the city of Pils (aka Plzen) in the Czech Republic, where it was born more than 150 years ago. Today, Airways Brewing’s version features fresh, crisp cracker flavors that dance politely with a grassy, herbal hop character. The delicate flavors are short-lived, but sharp and snappy. Sounds too fancy to be so damn refreshing. || airwaysbrewing.com

Session Pale Ale, Fremont Brewing (4.5 percent ABV): Last spring, the brewery at the center of the universe hit another home run when it unleashed this one, the newest addition to the Fremont year-round lineup. You’ll marvel at how such a light-bodied beer can dominate your senses with such intense tropical fruit flavors, like lemon zest and orange. Spoiler alert: It’s the heavy-handed use of Citra and Simcoe hops. || fremontbrewing.com

Summer Ale, Fremont Brewing (5.2 percent ABV): This beer was originally called Summer Solstice Ale, but some bored lawyers in California made them change the name because another brewery made a *solstice* beer first. Drinking this thirst-quenching and hop-forward beer, you’ll notice fruity notes, like orange peel and cantaloupe, and just a little bit of a cracker flavor as it finishes dry and light on your tongue. || fremontbrewing.com

Ziggy Zoggy Summer Lager, Silver City Brewery (5 percent ABV): From far across the water in Bremerton, this refreshing lager pays homage to a beloved German tradition: chanting silly stuff before you drink. Crisp, light, and immensely quaffable, with nary a trace of hop bitterness, you’ll quickly find yourself chugging beer arm-in-arm with strangers, chanting, “Ziggy zoggy, ziggy zoggy, oye oye oye!” This beer is defined as a Zwickelbier, which is a fancy German way of saying unfiltered beer. || silvercitybrewery.com

For more beer news from Kendall Jones, visit his website at washingtonbeerblog.com.

THINGS TO DO BEER



Maritime Pacific Brewing Company 25th Anniversary Celebration

A new craft brewery seems to open up every week in Seattle, but what about those that have been around making excellent microbrews? Maritime Pacific Brewing Company has been at it for an impressive 25 years and it's time to celebrate. Proceeds from food served (hot dogs! beans! BBQ pork! potato!) will benefit the Ballard Food Bank. Children are allowed, so bring the lil scooters. Also: music, large inflatable toys, and a rock climbing wall. *(Sat Aug 22, 11 am-7 pm, Maritime Pacific Brewing Company, 1111 NW Ballard Way, \$25)*

Bacon, Eggs, and Kegs

What's better than breakfast food paired with beer? This "brunchy booze fest" will include tastings from over 60 local and national breweries and cideries, a locally sourced (Pike Place Market) Bloody Mary bar, and \$5 "bacon-centric" brunch dishes from local chefs. In case that's not enough to entertain you, there will also be a dueling piano show and life-size beer pong, cornhole and Yahtzee! *(Sat Aug 22, 11 am-3 pm, CenturyLink Field, 800 Occidental Ave S, \$35 adv/\$45 starting 8/21 at 11 am)*

South Sound Craft Beer Festival

30 Washington breweries offering 100+ craft beers (including plenty of IPAs), plus live music and food. *(Sat Aug 29, noon-6 pm, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E D St, \$20)*

Cider Summit Seattle

This traveling cider festival presents two days dedicated to celebrating over 150 of the best ciders from around the world in this traveling cider summit, from places ranging from Seattle to Spain, and from New Hampshire to England. *(Sept 11-12, South Lake Union Discovery Center, 101 Westlake Ave N, \$30 adv/\$35 DOS/\$40 VIP)*

Oktoberfest at Chuckanut

Everything you could want out of a free Oktoberfest celebration—live music from bands like The Happy Wanderers German Band, lederhosen/dirndl costume and yodeling contests, "bier

garden games," German food, and face painting for kids (and adults!) And of course, lots of Chuckanut's German and Oktoberfest beers. *(Sat Sept 12, noon-midnight, Chuckanut Brewery & Kitchen, 601 W Holly St, Bellingham, free)*

Whistler Village Beer Festival

Canada is getting in on the beer fest action with five days of food, parties, and over 200 beers from over 80 of the best breweries in BC and the PNW. Plus, seminars on the history of beer and cider, beer pairing dinners, trivia nights, a mountain-top salmon bake, a Deschutes Brewing beer dinner, a bannock and beer event, and trivia. *(Sept 16-20, Whistler Village, BC, \$35-\$90 adv/\$40-\$100 DOS)*

Woodinville Wine & Beer Country Half Marathon

Want to feel less guilty about all that booze you'll be consuming? Try running 13.1 miles first through wine and beer country—then drink as much as you want during the Wine, Beer, and Music Festival. *(Sat Sept 19, 7 am-noon, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, 14111 NE 145th St, Woodinville, \$110 for individual or \$30 for guest admission to festival)*

Fremont Oktoberfest

Celebrate Oktoberfest at "The Center of the Universe," with a tasting garden, a Buxom Beer Garden with liter steins and boots, the Miss Buxom Contest on Friday, and a sports bar. On Sunday, burn off some of those calories with the Fremont Oktoberfest 5k—but don't worry, there will be beer waiting at the finish line. Kids are also allowed in the (root) beer tasting garden on Sunday. *(Sat Sept 19 from 11 am-midnight, Sun Sept 20 from 10:30 am-6 pm, Between Phinney Ave N and 1st Ave NW, and N 35th St and N Canal St, Fremont, Fri Sept 18 from 5 pm-midnight, \$20-\$30 adv/ \$25-\$40 DOS)*

Kirkland Oktoberfest

Grab a bier and celebrate Oktoberfest with a NW spin: live music by bands with appropriately Oktoberfest-y names (The S-Bahn, Happy Hans, and even Smilin' Scandinavians), an 140-foot festhalle,

THINGS TO DO BEER

keg rolling, and wiener dog races. (Sept 25-27, Marina Park, 25 Lakeshore Plaza Drive, Kirkland, \$10 one day/\$25 weekend)

Renton Oktoberfest

The fourth-annual festival, a nod to Bavaria's Oktoberfest in Germany, features German brews served up in full-sized steins, live German entertainment, and whatever beer-fueled antics may ensue. Event on Saturday (Sept. 26) is all ages. (Sat Sept 26 from 11 am-6 pm, Sun Sept 27 from 6 pm-midnight, City of Renton Pavilion Event Center, 233 Burnett Ave S, Renton, Fri Sept 25 from 4 pm-midnight, \$10 adv/\$15 DOS)



Brew at the Zoo

Get drunk and experience "live animal encounters." (Thurs Oct 1, 6-9 pm, Woodland Park Zoo, 5500 Phinney Ave N, \$27/\$67 VIP)

Great Pumpkin Beer Fest

Don't take that name lightly. Over 80 pumpkin beers, a several hundred-pound pumpkin that's carved, filled with Elysian pumpkin beer, and tapped like a keg, and lots of orange will be at GPBF. Enough pumpkin for you? (Oct 2 from 4-10 pm, Oct 3 from 2-8 pm, Elysian Airport Way Brewery, 5510 Airport Way S, \$28 per day/\$50 for weekend pass)

Anacortes Bier on the Pier

Two days, 30 breweries, and six cideries. Wahoo! (Fri Oct 2 from 5-9 pm, Sat Oct 3 from 12-6 pm, 100 Commercial Avenue, Port of Anacortes, \$25/\$45)

Inland Northwest Craft Beer Festival

30 craft breweries offer 100+ types of beer. The event is baseball-themed and is held at the Spokane Indians stadium, so you get not just one but two of America's favorite pastimes. (Oct 2-3, Avista Stadium, 602 N Havana St, Spokane, \$20 adv/\$25 DOS)

Fresh Hop Ale Festival

The 13th annual event includes access to suds from more than 40 breweries, wineries, and cideries; a cigar tent; live music; food; and much more. (Sat Oct 3, 5 pm, Fresh Hop Ale Festival Grounds, 7 South 3rd Street, \$35/\$65 VIP)