

Old Stock Ale

North Coast Brewing | www.northcoastbrewing.com

Country of origin United States
First brewed 2000
Alcohol content 12.5% abv
Serving temperature 55°F, 13°C



Tasting notes

Aromas of toffee, oak, and dark fruit announce the flavors in this rich beer. A strong caramel backbone leads the way as dessertlike nips of chocolate, rum, and dates take flight. A boozy, bourbonlike presence makes Old Stock Ale a pleasant nightcap.

With an alcohol content that rivals many wines, plus a more than generous measure of hops, which acts as a natural preservative, North Coast's Old Stock Ale was not meant to be enjoyed immediately after purchase (even though the beer is quite tasty fresh from the brewery). This beer was designed to spend time in the cellar, languishing in the bottle much like a port, until the sweet nectar inside flourishes with a symphony of flavors that rivals anything produced from the grape. The bottles are vintage-dated to help keep track of when the beer has reached its prime.

North Coast's president and brewmaster Mark Ruedrich says, "We encourage vertical tastings of Old Stock." Ruedrich, who lived in Devon, England, for a few years in the 1970s, says Old Stock is brewed with classic Maris Otter pale ale malt and Fuggle and East Kent Golding hops, all of which are imported from England. "Old Stock, the most English-inspired of our beers, is my homage to the southwest—of England, that is," he says, adding that, for pairing with cheese, Old Stock is unparalleled. Keeping to the English theme, he says, "It's a natural with farmhouse Cheddars like Montgomery or Keen's (both of which are made in southwest England) or Lincolnshire Poacher. Ditto with Reggiano Parmigiano—my favorite pairing."

A pioneer in the craft beer movement, North Coast opened in 1988 as a local brewpub in Fort Bragg on California's Mendocino Coast. In addition to its North Coast brands, the brewery has resurrected the brand of Acme, a historic San Francisco brewery with a heritage that dates back to the 1860s. **LMO**

Old Thumper Extra Special Ale

Shipyard Brewing | www.shipyard.com

Country of origin United States
First brewed 1994
Alcohol content 5.9% abv
Serving temperature 50°F, 10°C



Tasting notes

This rich amber-copper-colored beer pours with a generous off-white head. The nose features a flurry of light hop notes, while fruity flavors dance on the palate. Overall, Old Thumper has a very smooth mouthfeel with a pleasant hop note in the finish.

The story of how Old Thumper Extra Special Ale came to be brewed at Shipyard Brewing in Maine is a rather unusual one. British brewer Peter Austin, the founder of Ringwood in Hampshire, England, first produced the ale in 1978 (Austin is often seen as the father of the microbrewery revolution in the United Kingdom). It was known as "No Name Bitter." A radio promotion was held to name the beer, and the winner told the story of enjoying the beer so much in his local pub that he overindulged. He said he woke up the next morning with a thumping headache, so the beer should be called "Old Thumper." As a prize, he received two gallons of Old Thumper each year for life. A decade later, Old Thumper Extra Special Ale was named Grand Champion at the Great British Beer Festival.

Alan Pugsley, Shipyard's brewmaster, trained under Austin at Ringwood. In 1992, Pugsley and entrepreneur Fred Forsley started brewing beer at Federal Jack's Restaurant and Brewpub in Kennebec, Maine. The pair soon opened a brewery in the waterfront area of Portland, Maine, in the former Crosby Laughlin Foundry. It was natural for Pugsley to start brewing Old Thumper under license at Shipyard in October 1994. The U.S. launch featured a "simultap" at thirty-five New England taverns connected by phone to Shipyard in Maine and Ringwood in England.

Today, Shipyard ships beer to more than thirty states and makes a range of twelve brews, including Summer Ale, made with wheat; Pumpkinhead, made with pumpkin and spices; and Longfellow Winter Ale, a porter-Scotch Ale hybrid. **RL**

P.I.L.S.

Pausa Café | www.pausacafe.org

Country of origin Italy

First brewed 2007

Alcohol content 4.2% abv

Serving temperature 43°F, 6°C

Pausa Café is a cooperative involving two prisons—the Lorusso e Cotugno in Turin and the Rodolfo Morandi in Saluzzo. It also involves three communities of coffee and cocoa producers in Guatemala, Mexico, and Costa Rica. In Turin, coffee and cocoa are roasted and packed; in Saluzzo, since 2009, beer is produced.

Pausa Café's brewer is Andrea Bertola, a former Troll brewery worker who decided to produce his own beer. He started in a factory in Venice before moving his new brewery to the prison where it has a strong social value—primarily, to teach prisoners a job that they can continue once they are released. The link with the Latin American farmers means that many of the beers are also produced using products that come from their communities. Coffee and cocoa are prime ingredients, but even quinoa and amaranto get used.

P.I.L.S. is produced in the style of a Czech pilsner in its most traditional way. It is brewed with bottom- (or cold-) fermenting yeast and lagered; it is also gold in color, while Saaz whole-flower hops are added to give the all-important aromatic and grassy nose. They also help to give it an appetizingly bitter character on the palate. The production process follows venerable Czech traditions: the beer is matured in wooden barrels, while more hops are added in a triple infusion, giving different characteristics at different stages. **ES**

Tasting notes

Pale yellow, with gold flashes, and a persistent foam head.

On the nose, there are clear notes of Saaz hops, which are grassy with a little honeylike sweetness. In the mouth, it is bittersweet.

Pilsner Urquell

Pilsner Urquell | www.pilsner-urquell.com

Country of origin Czech Republic

First brewed 1842

Alcohol content 4.4% abv

Serving temperature 44°F, 7°C

At one point in the 1830s, the beer from the Bohemian town of Pilsen was considered undrinkable, with many locals preferring the new lagers arriving from Bavaria. Unfortunately, the main brewery in Pilsen didn't have room to switch to the new style of production, and the quality of its own top-fermented beer fell. One day in 1838, locals protested by dumping thirty-six barrels of spoiled beer in front of the town hall. The citizens with brewing rights agreed to build a new brewery.

Hiring Josef Groll as brewmaster might have been their real stroke of luck. Hailing from the Bavarian town of Vilshofen, Groll had experience working with bottom fermentation, as well as the knowledge he had received from his brewmaster father. Still, the first batch brewed in 1842 came as a shock. With the combination of bottom fermentation, triple-decocted pale barley malt, and the city's extremely soft water, Groll had created the world's first clear, pale, bottom-fermented beer. It tasted different as well, in part due to the delicate floral aroma and light bitterness from a healthy dose of Bohemia's long-treasured Saaz hops.

The beer was selling in Vienna by 1856, in Paris by 1869, and in the United States as early as 1873. Meaning "original source," the Urquell name was trademarked in 1898. Now part of the SABMiller group, Pilsner Urquell is considered one of the best large-volume brews. **ER**

Tasting notes

A fine balance between its own sweet pilsner malt and delicately bitter and aromatic Saaz hops, this is one pale lager that is remarkably rich in the body.

