

DareMe: Well, Aren't You Just a Tall Glass of, um, Beer



Me: Mmmmm. That has a full-bodied sip.

Vendor: Wow. How do you know so much about beer?

Me: Well, I drink a lot of beer.

Vendor: No you don't.

Me: Excuse me?"

Vendor: There is no way you drink a lot of beer with that body.

Well, I guess that guy caught me. My mission this month was to attend Beervana, which is a national beer festival with over 150 craft beers. This festival is notorious for hosting beer connoisseurs, and I was to attempt to convince beer experts that I was one of them. I consulted *Motif's* publisher, Mike Ryan, who is quite knowledgeable on the subject, and he gave me seven key phrases to just shove into conversation.

That has a full-bodied sip.

The flavor has added layers of complexity.

What a nose!

This has remarkable balance.

That's deceptively drinkable.

The taste is moderately aggressive.

That tastes pleasingly authentic.

Despite being gluten intolerant I took this dare. Why you might ask? Well ... because I'm stupid. Basically, I am willing to do anything to guarantee *Motif* readers enjoy my silliness even if I make myself sick.

When you step into the main hall at Beervana, beer booths line the circumference of the room with a mob of patrons corralled in the middle. As I squeezed and pushed through the crowd to get to beer vendors, I began to realize there were a lot of people there I knew. A lot of people who knew me well. People who know I never drink beer. It just never sat well with me. When I drink it, I usually fall asleep in random positions and places after about two beers. Avoiding friends was an unexpected challenge. I didn't want them to blow my cover.

I heard rumors about the pretzel necklaces. People string a bunch of pretzels onto a necklace and wear it around a beer festival. They nibble as they go to cleanse their palate and stay sober. The wheels started to turn — I wonder how many people will let me eat off of their necklace using no hands? I wandered around the fest chatting with vendors and patrons. The center of the room buzzed with conversation about what everyone was drinking and what they enjoyed the most. I snuck my phrases into conversation, but people didn't really notice my vocabulary. What they did notice is that my actual taste in beer was apparently not cool enough for them because my palate was not as developed as theirs. I would feel judged if I was capable of feeling that emotion. I realized this beer fest was kind of like high school — those with similar tastes were cool and I was the dork.

There was one vendor (quoted in the beginning) who appeared to be stone cold sober. His comments on my appearance made for a silly accusation, but a fairly spot-on assumption. So kudos to you, sober man! My favorite part of the night was the pretzel necklaces, which, just so you know, are not gluten-free either. I only got around to asking two women for a bite. They displayed their necklaces by pushing out their bosoms for me to shove my face into. It was a good time. Kind of like bobbing for apples.

This was my first beer fest and although it was fun, I'm not sure I will attend another. However if there's ever a wine or vodka fest, you can count on me being there! All I can tell you, Providence, is sick to your guns and continue to consume what you love, but never be afraid to develop your palate.