

# Hating on Whitey

Okay, Craft Beer Industry, we need to have a talk.

I'm never one to be a slave to trends, which explains a little about my ostracism in school, but I've noticed a new trend going on that we need to put a stop to right now.



When Black IPA's appeared, they were hailed as bold new style, and everyone jumped on that bandwagon like it was the last ride out of Pompeii on volcano day.

Despite the trendiness, a lot of truly excellent brews appeared. That's because a little roasted, malty flavor in an IPA can balance the high alpha acid bitterness of hops and create a very tasty, balanced little brew and give a style that's been beaten to death a whole new life. It worked, is what I'm saying, and not just for one company. I haven't yet tasted a bad black IPA, though according to the law of averages there must be at least one.

But here's the thing. Just because something was a good idea and worked once doesn't mean you can take the same idea and do it again in the opposite direction and have the same effect. Lightning might strike twice, but keep in mind that lightning striking is a very rare occurrence, and striking twice even more so. Sometimes, you're just going to be standing in the rain with numb hands and a ruined kite.

With that, let's talk about White IPAs. I'm not a fan of White Ales in general. The particular mix of that yeasty-wheatiness and coriander hits my stomach, which promptly responds with something I like the call the 'Waiter, send it back!' response. Tastewise, I guess there's nothing wrong with a White Ale, and to date, the only one I've had that I was really able to enjoy was the Samuel Adams White Ale. But that's because it was mild, skimmed on the coriander, and didn't try too hard. But combining a White Ale with the hop signature of an IPA sounds like a terrible idea, and in my opinion, really is a terrible idea.

Taking a White Ale into the kind of alpha acid percentage that defines an IPA seems unnecessary. More to the point, it's counterintuitive. Piney hop flavors will only serve to sour a White Ale's natural sweet-tart sort of nature, citrus hops can enhance the flavors to a degree. The only way I can see it working is if you used very citrusy hops to give it a lemon-grapefruit flavor, which would eliminate the need for people to drop in slices of fruit to make a beer palatable. I'm looking at you, Blue Moon!

Floral hops would seem to be a more natural mix for this kind of beer, and giving a white ale the kind of hop signature of the infamous Flower Power could create a uniquely pleasurable flavor that might even turn White Ale detractors, like myself, around.

And let's face it, White Ales are not big sellers. Aside from Blue Moon, and sometimes Hoegaarden, I've rarely seen a White Ale fly off the shelf with any kind of real momentum. Even the aforementioned Samuel Adams White Ale suffered from very cool sales until it was replaced by the significantly more popular Noble Pils as the Spring Seasonal a couple of years ago.

You might notice by now that I haven't actually reviewed anything. That's because I have to be perfectly honest here and say I haven't tasted a single White IPA that I liked.

Not one.

And yet, there's a few out there, some from legitimately good breweries that should know better. But then again, this is all opinion. Maybe you love white ales and wish they had more hops in them. Maybe this is your holy grail of beer flavor and you're reading this with half a mind to write an angry letter. Maybe you've already thrown this paper away without reading the entire article. First of all, don't be wasteful, recycle this paper properly. Secondly, and I don't want to come off sounding flippant, but what the hell?

BeerAdvocate scores some of these brews into the mid-eighties out of 100. So don't take my opinion as gospel, I guess, but I just honestly did not enjoy any of the White IPA's I've tried. I guess what we can take away from this is that beer nerds who like white ales will actually enjoy this brew, but if you're not a fan of White Ales, just do like I will and hide in a basement with a keg and canned food until the whole terrible trend rolls past us like an eighteen wheeler on a rickety old country bridge, ignoring the noise with our fingers in our ears while sipping on bland amber ales until the sun rises again.