

# BEER BUZZ:

## DON'T BE SCARED OF THE DARK!!!

by Justin Cody



I think it is time to clear up a huge misconception. I use term “misconception” loosely here because entangled in it all lies a largely misinformed population, several old wives tales and a natural, cautious instinct to stay away from what you are unsure about. I’m talking about a phenomenon called “dark beer”.

Historically, American commercial brewing has been dominated by yellow fizzy lagers that hail from Golden, Colorado, St. Louis, Missouri and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Since the ‘70s, these lagers have continued to get lighter and lighter in calories and body. As a result, most popular beers have also lost most of their color and taste. These days our television sets are filled with tons of commercials showing nothing but these pristinely clear beers and have almost everyone convinced that only beers of this color have “drinkability”.

Nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, there are countless dark beers that are light, easy to drink and actually have flavor. They are called schwarzbiers. German for “black beer”, we tend to call these black lagers here in the States. No matter what you call them, they are under-hyped, under-rated and under-represented in the beer community. Hopefully, that all stops here.

The first documented mention of schwarzbier dates back to 1390. The first beer coined as a black beer was Kostritzer back in 1543, a popular black beer still produced today. Black Lagers range from solid black to an almost deep ruby depending on the choice and quantity of black malt used in the brewing process. Side by side, a black lager looks very similar to a stout or porter.

Where these beers differ from other dark beers is in their body. Due to being fermented with a lager yeast and going through the lagering process, the beer pulls in the best from both worlds. All the flavors are carried over into a beer with a light, smoother, more approachable body with an ABV somewhere around 5%. Easily enjoyable, these black beauties are a fantastic change of pace.



Here is a quick list of some must try Black Lagers:

### Full Sail Sessions Black Lager

This beer only comes in 12-packs for a reason, it’s a session beer meant to be consumed in large amounts...Released back in 2009, the beer won Gold at the GABF the same year and has been stock piling various other awards ever since.

### Rahr Ugly Pug Black Lager

This is the only black lager produced in Texas; Go Texan!

### Kostritzer

Oddly enough, for a style that originated in Germany, this was the only German version available in Texas until very recently. Who needs others when you have the original...

### Xingu Black Beer

Pronounced “shin-goo”, a black lager from the rain forests of Brazil. ☺



E-mail me: [justincody@specsonline.com](mailto:justincody@specsonline.com)