

Beer Preview: Samuel Adams Hallertau Imperial Pilsner

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In this never-ending sea of hop bombs and extreme beers there seems to be one common thread: Pacwest hops. The IPA and American Style Barleywines that I have experienced all seem to have one, if not all three of the C's hops in them. Those are Columbus, Centennial, and of course the most popular, Cascade. There is nothing wrong with these hops, though their overuse is turning "Extreme" beers into the ordinary. Their citrus and pine aromas emerge from the bottles of almost every extreme beer I open.

A couple of years ago I would have to make a special trip to find anything over 50 IBU's (International Bittering Units). Finding a bottle of beer that weighed in at 70 - 90 IBUs would be a rare treat. Today, most beer store shelves are brimming with hoppy offerings. Alas, a lot of the tastes are similar due to their reliance on the three C's to pull bitterness from. That is, until now.

Boston Brewing Company introduced us to their Imperial Pilsner in 2005. This 130+ IBU beer packed with noble hops was an instant hit with beer aficionados. Not resting on their laurels, Boston Beer tweaked the beer and the artwork to deliver to us what I feel is the most unique hop bomb to date. Due to hit the shelves in the next few weeks, this is the most distinctive style to hit my desk in a while.

So kudos to Jim Koch for breaking away from the world of piney and citrus drenched aroma hops and delivering a beer that adds another dimension to the beer world and hopefully a new component for the beer style guidelines.

Samuel Adams Hallertau Imperial Pilsner - This beer is a cloudy apple cider color with almost no head. The last batch I am pretty sure was made with floral Saaz hops. This batch is earthy Hallertau hops. The aroma is very dirty and earthy with a touch of cheese and grass. The palette is quiet with soft carbonation. The hops take over immediately with an ever-so-slight malt sweetness at the beginning of the palette. It finishes very dirty and bitter. This is truly a hophead's dream. I suggest pairing it with an aged sharp cheddar cheese and some smoked meats.



- Bruce G. Owens, Jr.

rate beers featured in this column

Samuel Adams Hallertau Imperial Pilsner

With the first sip, drinkers will experience an explosion of deep citrus, spicy flavor from the abundance of Hallertau Mittelfruh hops. The extreme hop flavor is pleasantly balanced from beginning to end with a slight sweetness from the malt. The lingering "hop signature" is a treat for hops lovers. The beer's deep golden color and rich creamy head give off an intense and complex Noble hops aroma, very similar to what Jim experiences when he rubs the hops together in his hands to release the essence of the hops flowers during hop selection in Germany.

Samuel Adams Hallertau Imperial Pilsner is a full-flavored, aromatic brew that pairs well with rich, equally flavorful cuisine. Creamy dishes such as beef stroganoff, grilled steak smothered with a thick mushroom sauce, or a traditional Tuscan-style roast meat, such as Osso Bucco pair well. Pungent, creamy cheeses, such as Roquefort, aged Gouda or Camembert would also stand up in flavor complexity.

Samuel Adams Hallertau Imperial Pilsner will be available in 4-packs of 12 oz. bottles at select specialty beer stores beginning in September 2007, for a suggested retail price of \$9.99.