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THE BEER GUY: Plenty of special brews available for gifts

By [Tony Kiss](#)

Columnist

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It's less than a week before Christmas: Have you purchased your beer lover something special to drink ... or stocked your own icebox for the holiday season?

Plenty of great Christmas and cold-weather beers are available in the specialty stores, including some made by the local brewers. They make a great gift or a special treat to enjoy on Christmas, either on their own or with that big holiday meal.

One holiday brew that's now almost impossible to find in bottles is Highland's Cold Mountain winter ale, most of which sold very quickly. The draft version is still available at some taprooms, but it won't last long. But Pisgah's new Baptista, in the cool corked bottles, is now in stores, and French Broad's Wee Heaviest is also around.

Anchor Christmas Ale from San Francisco is always a treat, with a recipe that changes annually. Sweetwater Brewing, of Atlanta, has a nice Festive Ale, and Duck Rabbit Baltic Porter is a fine choice for those cold nights.

And then there's Belgium's Corsendonk's Christmas Ale, one of the world's most famous holiday brews. What an amazing beer this is, rich in big, spicy flavors. To really make an impression, consider buying the whopping Jeroboam - a bottle usually associated with champagne. It holds 3 liters of beer, so be sure to have a gang around when you open it - maybe 10 or 12 close friends.

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