

How to *chick* BUY A A BEER

Even the snobbiest brew-sucker will pardon a charming benefactor's misguided gift. But that doesn't apply to you.

words: Jennifer Litz

Chances are she doesn't like Victory Brewing Company's HopDevil Ale. But then, it's an acquired taste for most guys, too. And if you're sure she only likes Miller and Bud Lite, why are you so intent on impressing her anyway? She can't be that special.

Truth is, women naturally prefer craft beer to light piss—er, brew. Really: Research from Morgan Stanley proves that women overindex toward (read: prefer) craft beer. Brewers Association Director Paul Gatza says he's come across evidence that women have a stronger olfactory sense, which may provide one explanation for the predilection.

But not all beer-guzzling dames worth your possibly crucified self esteem have the same discriminations. So here it is, guys. Your guide on what to slide down the table to whom, and when.



The Group

Your first line of offensive territory is the people surrounding your target drinker.

Sometimes a group scenario offers your largesse relative anonymity. But if her cohorts are all tuned in to her, you've got a veritable Supreme Court to potentially judge your efforts, and some of them are bound to be angry drunks. Use your distorted judgment.

*** Rule of thumb:** Make your move if she's with a small group of girls or guys—3 or 4, max. If they're all girls, buy them all drinks if you can. A girl out with that many guys likely isn't infringing on her boyfriend's guy's night—but you never know, so watch the table's body language.

And never buy a girl a drink if she's only with one guy. Even if they're identical twins. Because you know he'll get offended that you moved in on what might have been his territory.

The GAME

Conversely, that headless pale could well be a hoppy beer—a 5 or so percent chance if there are several tongue-lashers on tap. But how to find out if this hot chick is the Holy Grail? You could get close enough to smell her drink.

Or ask the bartender what she had.

If hers is one of many harried servers on a tightly packed floor, you might just want to take a gander at the hue of her brew.

If it's dark—how dark? Is it schwarzbier, or a thick, strapping porter? If you're not sure, take the bathroom path near her table. Nobody should notice if you just glance at the drinks. If her table's out of the way, take a "smoke break." Play Pac-Man if she's close enough—but if she catches you staring at her beer from inside the dirty curtain of a photo booth, she's gonna think you've got roofies in your pocket.

And if you do, please don't buy her a beer.

The Girl

Well, that's up to you, obviously. But if you see her ordering a Budweiser Select, or worse, low-carb beer, know that there's a chance she won't be embarking on the airspun wings toward awesome beer heaven in the future. You could take her to Belgium or Germany if you get serious—but what the hell would she do there?



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The Brew

So once you've more or less identified what she's drinking, the goal isn't necessarily to give her the same—it's to give her something similar. This shows that you are either A) very considerate, or B) posses qualities of extrasensory perception. Both are high on women's "must have" list.

By now you've identified the brew, more or less, so let's go over some best bets from my own circle of choosy chuggers.

Golden, with Lots of Head

Probably a wheat or witbier, maybe a tripel (this is where that bartender or server could come in handy). But probably something wheaty. Maybe she's drinking Leinenkugel Sunset Wheat or Blue Moon's flagship, if there's an orange. Upgrade her to the creamy smoothness of Hoegaarden Witbier. Better yet, if you're in the Midwest, Bell's Oberon is good. Or Three Floyd's Gumballhead, if she seems like a beer nerd. If she's not, the name's fun, anyway.

Want to play it dangerous? Order her a tripel. The spicy-sweet smoothness covers its liberal amounts of alcohol, as you know. You cannot go wrong with Chimay's Cinq Cents, or Brugge Brasserie's Tripel de Ripple. You're much more likely to find the Chimay, so tell her it's brewed to sustain Belgian monasteries whose cheese-making cows stay fat and happy on beer-tainted feed (really!). That should appeal to her inner animal lover.

The Thin Pale Line

Ouch, American Lagertown. Not to worry: Full Sail Session Lager is a bit fuller and more flavorful than your gas station 12-pack. Plus, the bottle's cooler.

Or try a framboise, if you're willing to pony up for it.

And if you're buying one for me, I'll take a Chimay Grand Reserve, please. That's the big bottle. ☺

Brownies

Newcastle isn't bad, but that's probably what she's drinking, statistics wise. If she likes Newcastle's slight sweetness, she'll probably like the roasted chocolate notes of Abita Turbodog. And OMG, it's from New Orleans!

I'm also a big fan of Samuel Smith's (everything) Nut Brown Ale. And if and when she has the chance to thank you for the beer, you can drop this line: "Did you know they have an organic line, too?" If her eye flash or stunted response tell you she's not into the environment, follow that up with, "Yeah, I didn't give a shit either." Perhaps you could interest her in a farting contest to deplete the ozone layer.

On to more substantial things—porters and stouts. If her glass looks thick (yeaah), it's hard to go wrong with Left Hand Brewing Co.'s Milkstout, the milkshake of beers. Anchor Steam makes a well-balanced, very drinkable porter.

Oatmeal stouts have their own smooth, oat-kissed taste: Samuel Smith wins here again. But honestly, it's hard to find a bad oatmeal brew.



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