

Beer Education Series: Protagonist Brewing & Finicky Foods Pimento

About Protagonist Brewing:

Beer is the everyman's drink and beer is better with people. That's why our beers are named after Protagonists who inspired them. We respect our planet and our great state by using ingredients that are sustainably farmed or North Carolina native. Our beers are odes to classic styles which call out, "Slow down, you're here."

About Finicky Foods:

Stemming out of a love for made from scratch Southern recipes from childhood, Finicky Foods makes meticulously crafted gourmet bites to fit your mood. Driven by all things local and community focused, the company shares its passion for flavor and the comfort and happiness that its food brings

About Pimento Peppers:

A pimento (or cherry pepper) is a variety of large, red, heart-shaped chili pepper (*Capsicum annuum*). Pimentos can have various colors including yellow, green, red, and maroon. The flesh of the pimento is sweet, succulent, and more aromatic than that of the red bell pepper. Some varieties of the pimento type are hot, including the Floral Gem and Santa Fe Grande varieties. The fruits are typically used fresh or pickled.

The Pairings We Are Sampling:

1. Original Pimento + Cube IPA [6.8%]: Crisp and clear West Coast style IPA. Big notes of tropical fruit and citrus peel in the aroma followed by a refreshing bitterness and distinct citrus peel meets tropical fruit flavor.

Original Pimento: Pimento cheese is a spread most popularly made of cheese, mayonnaise and pimientos and served on crackers and vegetables or in sandwiches. Believed to originate in the Southeast United States.

BJCP Analysis of IPA:

Aroma: A prominent to intense hop aroma featuring one or more characteristics of American or New World hops, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Many versions are dry hopped and can have an additional fresh hop aroma; this is desirable but not required. Grassiness should be minimal, if present. A low to medium-low clean, grainy-malty aroma may be found in the background. Fruitiness from yeast may also be detected in some versions, although a neutral fermentation character is also acceptable. A restrained alcohol note may be present, but this character should be minimal at best. Any American or New World hop character is acceptable; new hop varieties continue to be released and should not constrain this style.

Appearance: Color ranges from medium gold to light reddish-amber. Should be clear, although unfiltered dryhopped versions may be a bit hazy. Medium-sized, white to off-white head with good persistence.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body, with a smooth texture. Medium to medium-high carbonation. No harsh hop-derived astringency. Very light, smooth alcohol warming not a fault if it does not intrude into overall balance.

Taste: Hop flavor is medium to very high, and should reflect an American or New World hop character, such as citrus, floral, pine, resinous, spicy, tropical fruit, stone fruit, berry, melon, etc. Medium-high to very high hop bitterness. Malt flavor should be low to medium-low, and is generally clean and grainy-malty although some light caramel or toasty flavors are acceptable. Low yeast-derived fruitiness is acceptable but not required. Dry to medium-dry finish; residual sweetness should be low to none. The bitterness and hop flavor may linger into the aftertaste but should not be harsh. A very light, clean alcohol flavor may be noted in stronger versions. May be slightly sulfury, but most examples do not exhibit this character.

2. Jalapeño + Queen City Pilsner [5%]: Inspired by the famed pale lagers of Pilsen, Czech Republic; Queen Charlotte has a traditional Pilsner malt base but is hopped with the new aged varieties of Zuper Saazer and Motueka in the kettle. We get light aromas of lemon/lime followed by flavors of honey, biscuit, and a mild spiciness. Moderately bitter with a light body and a slightly creamy after taste, QC is an easy drinker that keeps you coming back for more.

Jalapeño Pimento: The original gets jalapeños added to it. The jalapeño is a medium-sized chili pepper pod type cultivar of the species *Capsicum annuum*. It can have a range of pungency, with Scoville heat units of 4,000 to 8,500. Commonly picked and consumed while still green, it is occasionally allowed to fully ripen and turn red, orange, or yellow.

BJCP Analysis of German Pilsner:

Aroma: Medium-low to low grainy-sweet-rich malt character (often with a light honey and slightly toasted cracker quality) and distinctive flowery, spicy, or herbal hops. Clean fermentation profile. May optionally have a very light sulfury note that comes from water as much as yeast. The hops are moderately-low to moderately-high, but should not totally dominate the malt presence. One-dimensional examples are inferior to the more complex qualities when all ingredients are sensed. May have a very low background note of DMS.

Appearance: Straw to light gold, brilliant to very clear, with a creamy, long-lasting white head.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light body. Medium to high carbonation.

Taste: Medium to high hop bitterness dominates the palate and lingers into the aftertaste. Moderate to moderately-low grainy-sweet malt character supports the hop bitterness. Low to high floral, spicy, or herbal hop flavor. Clean fermentation profile. Dry to medium-dry, crisp, well-attenuated finish with a bitter aftertaste and light malt flavor. Examples made with water with higher sulfate levels often will have a low sulfury flavor that accentuates the dryness and lengthens the finish; this is acceptable but not mandatory. Some versions have a soft finish with more of a malt flavor, but still with noticeable hop bitterness and flavor, with the balance still towards bitterness

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3. Smoked Gouda / Soyrizo + Franz Märzen [5.8%]: Brewed in the tradition of the beer served at the annual Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany, we named our Festbier after German soccer legend Franz Beckenbauer. Prost!

Smoked Gouda: Gouda, or "How-da" as the locals say, is a Dutch cheese named after the city of Gouda in the Netherlands. It accounts for 50-60 percent of the world's cheese consumption. Smoked Gouda is a variant of this famous cheese wherein it is smoked in ancient brick ovens over flaming hickory chip embers. Sensational with beer, this hard cheese has an edible, brown rind and a creamy, yellow interior.

Smoked Soyrizo: In 1997, El Burrito Mexican foods company created a soy chorizo by incorporating spices into textured soy protein, soaking it with spices, sea salt, and soybean oil, and packaging it in sausage-like links. Typically spices include: chile pepper, paprika, ancho chile, onion powder, garlic powder, and sea salt.

BJCP Analysis of Marzen:

Aroma: Moderate intensity aroma of German malt, typically rich, bready, somewhat toasty, with light bread crust notes. Clean lager fermentation character. No hop aroma. Caramel, dry-biscuity, or roasted malt aromas inappropriate. Very light alcohol might be detected, but should never be sharp. Clean, elegant malt richness should be the primary aroma.

Appearance: Amber-orange to deep reddish-copper color; should not be golden. Bright clarity, with persistent, off-white foam stand.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, with a smooth, creamy texture that often suggests a fuller mouthfeel. Medium carbonation. Fully attenuated, without a sweet or cloying impression. May be slightly warming, but the strength should be relatively hidden.

Taste: Initial malt flavor often suggests sweetness, but finish is moderately-dry to dry. Distinctive and complex maltiness often includes a bready, toasty aspect. Hop bitterness is moderate, and the hop flavor is low to none (German types: complex, floral, herbal, or spicy). Hops provide sufficient balance that the malty palate and finish do not seem sweet. The aftertaste is malty, with the same elegant, rich malt flavors lingering. Noticeable caramel, biscuit, or roasted flavors are inappropriate. Clean lager fermentation profile.

4. Old Bay + Dolly Honey Blonde Ale [5.2%]: Dolly is a house favorite- easy drinking blonde ale with notes of honey throughout. Made with Brewers Clarex, Dolly has been tested to be under 10ppm gluten, making it easier to drink if you and gluten don't always get along.

Old Bay seasoning is a mix of celery salt (salt, celery seed), spices (including red pepper and black pepper) and paprika. Some of the other spices that may be used are laurel leaves, mustard, cardamom, cloves and ginger.

BJCP Analysis of Blonde Ale:

Aroma: Moderate intensity aroma of German malt, typically rich, bready, somewhat toasty, with light bread crust notes. Clean lager fermentation character. No hop aroma. Caramel, dry-biscuity, or roasted malt aromas inappropriate. Very light alcohol might be detected, but should never be sharp. Clean, elegant malt richness should be the primary aroma.

Appearance: Amber-orange to deep reddish-copper color; should not be golden. Bright clarity, with persistent, off-white foam stand.

Mouthfeel: Medium body, with a smooth, creamy texture that often suggests a fuller mouthfeel. Medium carbonation. Fully attenuated, without a sweet or cloying impression. May be slightly warming, but the strength should be relatively hidden.

Taste: Initial malt flavor often suggests sweetness, but finish is moderately-dry to dry. Distinctive and complex maltiness often includes a bready, toasty aspect. Hop bitterness is moderate, and the hop flavor is low to none (German types: complex, floral, herbal, or spicy). Hops provide sufficient balance that the malty palate and finish do not seem sweet. The aftertaste is malty, with the same elegant, rich malt flavors lingering. Noticeable caramel, biscuit, or roasted flavors are inappropriate. Clean lager fermentation profile.

Honey – Depending on its nectar source, honey can be floral, fruity, smoky, woody, spicy, nutty or earthy. It can smell fresh as grass or pungent like aged cheese. It can look nearly clear as water or dark as molasses.

Dropping Some Beer Knowledge:

Malts: Base vs Specialty:

- Base malt: The larger percentage of a grain bill used to make a beer. These malts provide enzymes to convert malt starches into sugars. Provides extra enzymes to convert specialty malts/adjuncts without enough enzymes of their own to convert into sugars. Includes: Pale Malt, Pilsner Malt, Vienna Malt, Munich Malt, Rye Malt, & Wheat Malt. 2-Row vs 6-Row: Differentiates based on the formation of corns on the barley stalk rows.
- Specialty Malt: Smaller percentage of a grain bill used to make a beer. These malts are cracked & steeped to release the sugars and flavor compounds. The color of a beer typically comes more from the Specialty Malts. Includes: Roasted Malts, Chocolate Malt, Crystal/Caramel Malts, Smoked/Peated Malts, Acidulated Hops

– Oils, Acids, and Regions:

- Hop Oils: Main source of flavor and aroma from hops; provide non-bitter tastes/aromas for hops.
 - o Myrcene: natural organic compound that is classified as a hydrocarbon. In thyme, bay, parsley, lemongrass, cannabis. Used in the perfume industry.
 - o Humulene: named after the scientific name for hops, Humulus lupulus, it's an isomer of Caryophyllene. Key part of hops that gives the "hoppy" aroma. It's been found to possess anti-inflammatory properties, and is being studied.
 - o Caryophyllene: one of the oils that help to give black pepper its spiciness. Gives a strong dry wood, pepper, earthy flavor, and an herbal character. This compound has been seen to reduce inflammation & been in anti-cancer studies. Used in the perfume industry.

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- Bittering: During longer boil times hop oils evaporate, so they're added at beginning of boil to impart bitterness.
- Aroma: During shorter boil times and dry hopping, hop oils don't evaporate as much, so get the non-bitter aspects of the hops during shorter boil times and/or flameout/dry-hopping additions.
- Alpha Acid: Basis of bittering; quick breakdown: Humulone, Cohumulone, Adhumulone, Posthumulone, Prehumulone.
- Beta Acid: Slow breakdown: Lupulone, Colupulone, Adlupulone.
- Noble Hops [original Hops, Central Europe]: Terrnanger, Spalt, Hallertauer, Saaz; *Spalt, Styrian Goldings, Perle, Hersbrucker*

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