

Cascadian Dark Ale (aka India Dark Ale)

Aroma: Prominent NW hop aromas: citrus, pine, resinous, sweet malt, hints of roast, toast, chocolate malt, and/or Carafa back-up the hops. Dry hopped character is often present. No diacetyl, esters generally range from low to none. Though the resinous, piney, and citrus hop aroma generally comes from NW American hop varieties, hops of other origins may be used to achieve this character.

Appearance: Deep brown to black with ruby highlights. Head varies from white to tan/khaki, and is generally long-lasting.

Flavor: A balance between piney, citrus-like and spicy NW hop flavor, bitterness, caramel malt, and roast, chocolate, or Carafa-type malts. Roast character ranges from subtle to medium. Black malt is acceptable at low levels, but should not be astringent. Intense ashy, burnt character is not appropriate. Caramel malt is acceptable at low levels but the finish should be dry. Diacetyl should not be present. Emphasis should be on hop flavor, which when combined with roast/black malts often exhibits a minty, spicy character.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium, hop bitterness and tannins from roast malts combine to create a dry mouthfeel. Resinous character from high levels of dry hopping may create a tongue coating sensation.

Overall Impression: A highly-hopped, medium-bodied dark ale, similar in many ways to a strong version of American IPA, except that it incorporates dark malts and signature NW hop varieties, sometimes in conjunction with fruity esters. Bitterness and body is much closer to an IPA balance than a strong ale or American stout. Finish is a nuanced interplay of hop and roast bitterness to create a dry quenching impression. Alcohol can accentuate the roast character in stronger versions.

Comments: Some brewers prefer to cold steep the dark grains to achieve a very dark beer without the tannin contribution of adding the grains to the mash. The use of Sinnamar to enhance color is common. The interaction of dark, roasted malts and grains with NW hop character creates a unique spicy flavor component described as minty, or rosemary like.

History: A style that came to prominence on the Northwest Coast of North America in the early 21st Century. Northwest hops play key flavor roles, balanced with malt, roast malts give color and flavor, but body should be reminiscent of an IPA, not heavy like a porter or stout. The style celebrates the hops of Cascadia, the Pacific Northwest, but is commonly brewed in other regions.

Ingredients: Pale or pilsner malt, some mid-range caramel malt in a supporting role, Carfa type malts, both regular and debittered, small amounts of chocolate malt, roast barley, and black patent malts can also be used. Northwest American hop varieties, or hops with similar characteristics (e.g. New Zealand), for flavor and aroma additions. Heavy dry-hopping is common.

IBUs: 60-90+

Color: 40+ SRM

OG: 1.060-1.075 (15-18 P)

FG: 1.008-1.016 (2-4 P)

Abv: 6.0-7.75%

Classic Examples: Phillips Black Toque, Rogue Brewer, Hopworks Secession CDA, Widmer W'10 Pitch Black IPA, Barley Brown's Turmoil, Lucky Lab Black Sheep, Three Creeks 8 Second IBA, Block 15 Benton Brigade, Stone 11th Anniversary (Sublimely Self-Righteous) Ale, Walking Man Big Black Homo, Rogue Black Brutal, Laughing Dog Dogzilla, Southern Tier Iniquity