

13A. Dark Mild

Is it even real?

History

- The current BJCP guidelines describe the modern British version.
- The term 'mild' is currently somewhat out of favour with consumers and many breweries no longer use it.
- There is no historic connection or relationship between Mild and Porter.

History

- Historically, 'mild' was simply an un-aged beer
- Modern milds trace their roots to the weaker X-type ales of the 1800s
 - Dark milds didn't appear until the 20th century
- In current usage, the term implies a lower-strength beer with less hop bitterness than bitters

Overall Impression

- A dark, low-gravity, malt-focused British session ale readily suited to drinking in quantity
- Refreshing, yet flavourful, with a wide range of dark malt or dark sugar expression

Aroma

- Low to moderate malt aroma, may have some fruitiness (yeast or malt/sugar driven)
- Malt expression can take on a wide range of character
 - Caramel, toffee, grainy, toasted, nutty, chocolate, or lightly roasted.
- Little to no hop aroma
 - Earthy or floral if present
- Very low to no diacetyl

Appearance

- Copper to dark brown or mahogany in colour
- Generally clear, although the beer is traditionally unfiltered
- Low to moderate off-white to tan head
 - Retention may be poor

Flavour

- A malty beer with a very wide range of flavours
 - Sweet, caramel, toffee, toast, nutty, chocolate, coffee, roast, fruit, licorice, plum, raisin
 - Not all of those at once though!
- Sweet to dry finish depending on malt profile
 - Chocolate/coffee/roast finished dryer
- Low to moderate bitterness
 - There just to balance out the finish
- Fruity esters moderate to none with diacetyl and hop flavour low to none.

Mouthfeel

- Light to medium body
- Generally low to medium-low carbonation
- Roast-based versions may have a light astringency
- Sweeter versions may seem to have a rather full mouthfeel for the gravity.

General Rules

- Most are low-gravity session beers around 3.2%
 - Some versions may be 4%+
- Generally served on cask
 - Accounts for their low carbonation
- A wide range of interpretations are possible
 - How toasty/roasty/caramelly/nutty/grainy it comes across is up to the brewer

Tips and Tricks for Brewing

- Getting body in a low OG beer
 - Mash high, don't be afraid to get into the low 160s
- Use higher % of specialty grains than normal
 - Think of the grain to water ratio instead of grain to grain ratio
- Keep hop schedule simple
 - Bittering and a 15 minute addition is fine
 - I like to match IBUs from 60 min and 15 min addition

Characteristic Ingredients

- Pale British base malts
 - Usually Maris Otter
 - There are mild ale malts as well
- Crystal malts and dark malts
 - Usually not more than 2 or 3 of them
- Dark sugar or brewer's caramel can be used
 - Adds a touch of flavour (sugars) or color (brewer's caramel)
- Characterful British ale yeast