

Gadd's Sixpack

by David Gadd

What with melting **polar icecaps** and Paris Hilton's **jail sentence**, I've just been too pre-occupied to worry about a theme for this month's Sixpack. So here's a casual and eclectic roundup of some of the best brews to slip past my uvula over the past few weeks.



Iron Hill Brewery Fe 10

I've had lots of practice but I have never had such a hard time opening a bottle of beer. I finally had to resort to a Vise-Grip to extract the stubborn composite cork from the 750 milliliter bottle. Fortunately, this Belgian-style strong ale from Delaware would be worth a trip to the nearest Sears tool department should you choose to follow my method of extraction. "Fe" refers to the chemical symbol for iron, and "10" to the brewery's tenth birthday. It's a deep and spicy glassful of lovely brown nectar once you get it open.

Marin Brewing Hefe Doppel Weizen

The gorgeous and forward nose is the stuff of an Edwardian fop's breakfast—hot buttered toast with stringy orange marmalade washed down by a glass of good Pouilly-Fumé. The citrusy-winey flavors continue on the palate but it ultimately has less oomph than the killer nose promises. Still, a unique brew that wins points for sheer outré indulgence.

Ommegang Witte

From the thick, sudsy soap-suds head to the hue of white gold in the glass to the velvet mouthfeel and beyond, this is gorgeous stuff. Made in Cooperstown, New York, this Belgian-inspired New World brew almost redefines the witte

style (and that's coming from a Hoegaarden fanatic). The coriander and orange peel aromatics are there if you go poking around but are understated enough to let the pure, wholesome wheatiness do most of the talking.

He'Brew Origin Pomegranate Ale

Beware the number 8, for it refers to the alcohol content of this righteous "chosen" brew. I knew there had to be some other employment for the red, rotund pomegranate than syrupy grenadine, and Upstate New York's Schmaltz Brewing has found it; there are 150 gallons of pomegranate juice per batch of this stuff. Far from kitschy or bizarre, this is a superbly conceived and executed beer, completely and utterly delicious.

Spaten Optimator

If indeed there is such a thing as an Optimator—a being or substance that puts everything right with our world—then this is that very thing. High enough in the good stuff (7.2 percent) to be labeled a malt liquor by the government we elected to protect us from too much pleasure, it's a brown devil of a doppelbock that makes a fine doppelgänger for life's long, strange journey.

