

JOHN PORTER

Matchings for Beer Day Britain on June 15!

As a fully qualified and accredited Beer Sommelier, one question I'm often asked is: "Really? Since when?" However, I've got a badge and a certificate, as well as a polo shirt with 'beer sommelier' printed on it in gold letters, so I think we can all agree that a far more relevant question would be: "John, with Beer Day Britain 2016 fast approaching, what seasonal dishes would you serve with the fabulous range of beers available from Fuller's this summer?"

Well, I couldn't be more pleased that you asked me that. Beer Day Britain on June 15 is the ideal opportunity to lock away the wine lists for 24 hours and encourage customers to explore the bounty that matching great beers with freshly cooked food offers.

- **LONDON PRIDE** – let's start with the guv'nor. It's more usual to save the cheeseboard for the end, but I'm going to break with tradition and kick off by urging everyone to match this classic English bitter with the tangy richness of mature cheddar. Whether it's a freshly cut cheese and onion sandwich or a summertime ploughman's with sweet chutney and crisp pickled onion, London Pride's distinctive malty notes are the perfect partner to cheese.

- **QUINTESSENTIAL/NINETY** – this seasonal ale is said to be the quintessential British pale ale, but the late-added Jester hops also give it the zesty grapefruit note which is often more associated with new world beers. Sticking

with those wake-you-up citrus notes, I suggest matching Quintessential with an all-day breakfast or lazy weekend brunch, with each sip clearing the palate for more of those rich flavours.

- **FRONTIER** – what could be a more summery starter than a classic prawn cocktail? Nothing, so that's what we're going to serve up with a glass of Frontier. The distinctive citrus, passionfruit and melon notes of the beer turn an ordinary prawn into a thing of wonder, while the light and spritzy flavour cuts through the sticky sweetness of the sauce.
- **SUMMER ALE** – this seasonal favourite is made with Czech Saaz hops, which add a touch of both citrus and spice. Match the beer with dishes that combine creamy, buttery flavours with a touch of spice, such as a goulash or chicken Kiev.
- **IPA** – packed with spicy hop bitterness, Fuller's new IPA works well as a contrast to the delicate flavours of grilled fish, such as sea bass, sole and plaice. Check with your supplier

which fish are in season, and serve with rice or a summer salad alongside a suitably chilled glass of IPA. You can also add a drop of the beer to the batter to spice up your fish and chips.

- **MONTANA RED** – Montana Red opens with fresh aromas of grapefruit and blackcurrant, and also has sweet and citrusy passionfruit flavours from the Galaxy hops. Beer Day Britain sadly falls outside the season for most game dishes, but all those

When it comes to what to drink with dishes on your menu, beer sommelier and food writer John Porter proves he's in the know – he's got THE T-SHIRT and everything



fruit flavours make it an ideal match with dishes such as venison or pigeon, which also need a robust beer to complement their richness.

- **HONEY DEW** – the team at Ale & Pie House have done my work for me here, with Honey Dew being served up alongside a chicken and chorizo pie on the tasting board on offer at some of the pubs. The gentle sweetness of the beer counters the spicy, pepper flavours in the sausage, while its light effervescence works well with the creamy sauce and rich pastry.
- **SIERRA NEVADA** – America's original craft beer, with distinctive, clean aromas of pine and grapefruit that counter the sweet and smoky flavour note of an authentic American barbecue. If you're cooking al fresco in the pub garden this summer, serve Sierra Nevada with a sticky, slow cooked rack of ribs or messy burger.
- **WILD RIVER** – a pale gold beer, Wild River has a citrus aroma and more of those spicy, zesty grapefruit notes, complementing light summer dishes such as a duck salad or risotto. If you add more intense vegetable accompaniments, such as fennel, artichoke or a peppery rocket salad, the intense finish of the beer will more than match them.

- **BENGAL LANCER** – I couldn't let my favourite Fuller's beer pass unmatched. The obvious pairing with the floral and spicy notes delivered by the hops in Bengal Lancer is a curry, but because it's summer, let's think less about the heat of India and more about the fragrance of Thai cuisine. An aromatic chicken, coriander and coconut curry enjoyed al fresco with a bottle of the Bengal is a wonderful way to spend a sunny evening.
- **BLACK CAB STOUT** – dark beers are often neglected in summer, which is a real shame. There's a light and fruity note in the flavour of Black Cab Stout that makes it a surprisingly great match with desserts. A half pint in an elegant stemmed glass alongside a summer fruit cheesecake or Eton Mess is a very civilised way to finish a meal.
- **HSB** – let's finish with another classic. HSB's official tasting notes tell us that it imparts the flavour of a traditional Dundee cake, with malt and raisin on the nose. I'm going to look elsewhere on the cake-stand though, and serve it with a bakewell tart. The richness of the beer matches with the almond flavour, while smooth finish helps to clear the palate of the cherry jam in time for one more mouthful.

Here's hoping we get a summer warm enough to try them all. Cheers! 🍷

