



Beer Hall of Fame Inductee: Stoup Brewing Porter

July 20, 2017
Sip Magazine
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Welcome back to *Sip Northwest's* Beer Hall of Fame: a twice-monthly induction into a list of essential Northwest beers that have made their mark on the field and region.

Back some hundred years ago when the British Empire was booming and everyone and their brother drank good ol' British brew, the people had a different love of flavor than today's average hophead. Often, during the days of Dickens and Uncle Scrooge, the preferred pint was a porter, not an ale or even the lighter German pilsner.

Named after the working class people who lugged the large barrels of fermented dark, malty beer, porters have a storied history among pubs and breweries. Today, that story is continued by Seattle's Stoup Brewing, which has produced one of the region's finest versions of the stuff. (And yes we know, Stoup has been around since 2013, which breaks our five-year rule for the BHOF inductions. But so what, the beer is that good!)



Stoup head brewer Brad Benson — who homebrewed beer for 20 years before co-founding the Ballard brewery — admits he loves the chemical reactions involved in the brew process. “I just love the fluid dynamics, thermodynamics,” says Benson, a former environmental consultant. “Yeast is a biological organism and we’re trying to get them to do what we want to get the right flavor characteristics. It’s fascinating.”

Along with chemistry, Benson says he loves the heft and layered flavors of the oft-overlooked porters. “They were disappearing from the market,” he adds. “So we wanted to make it one of our flagship beers. I really like the way a porter can blend the complexity of hoppy and malty beers.”

Benson explains he aims for his porter to be multifaceted in terms of flavor, with hints of coffee and toffee, caramel and roasted flavors in the concoction. Not as bitter as a dry Irish stout, but dark and big enough to remind everyone at the bar there is more than a floral Mosaic hop to beer consumption. “If you look at, like, a pilsner, there’s maybe two different malts being used,” he says. “But we have 15 malts in our porter.”

And while the Stoup porter sells like gangbusters in the winter and fall months — especially after the first rainy day — Benson says there are always those tried-and-true dark beer drinkers who love the stuff year-round. “It could be 90-degrees in August,” he says. “And it’s still the porter they like.”

