



The Northern Craft Brewers

"We Live We Brew"



11B. Best Bitter

Overall Impression: A flavourful, yet refreshing, session beer. Some examples can be more malt balanced, but this should not override the overall bitter impression. Drinkability is a critical component of the style.

Aroma: Low to moderate malt aroma, often (but not always) with a low to medium-low caramel quality. Bready, biscuit, or lightly toasty malt complexity is common. Mild to moderate fruitiness. Hop aroma can range from moderate to none, typically with a floral, earthy, resinous, and/or fruity character. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed.

Appearance: Pale amber to medium copper colour. Good to brilliant clarity. Low to moderate white to off-white head. May have very little head due to low carbonation.

Flavour: Medium to moderately high bitterness. Moderately low to moderately high fruity esters. Moderate to low hop flavor, typically with an earthy, resinous, fruity, and/or floral character. Low to medium maltiness with a dry finish. The malt profile is typically bready, biscuity, or lightly toasty. Low to moderate caramel or toffee flavours are optional. Balance is often decidedly bitter, although the bitterness should not completely overpower the malt flavour, esters and hop flavour. Generally no diacetyl, although very low levels are allowed. Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body. Low carbonation, although bottled examples can have moderate carbonation.

Comments: More evident malt flavour than in an ordinary bitter, this is a stronger, session-strength ale. History: See comments in category introduction.

Characteristic Ingredients: Pale ale, amber, and/or crystal malts. May use a touch of dark malt for colour adjustment. May use sugar adjuncts, corn or wheat. English finishing hops are most traditional, but any hops are fair game; if American hops are used, a light touch is required. Characterful British yeast.

Style Comparison: More alcohol than an ordinary bitter, and often using higher-quality ingredients. Less alcohol than a strong bitter. More caramel or base malt character and colour than a British Golden Ale. Emphasis is on the bittering hop addition as opposed to the aggressive middle and late hopping seen in American ales.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.040 – 1.048 IBUs: 25 – 40 FG: 1.008 – 1.012 SRM: 8 – 16 ABV: 3.8 – 4.6%

Commercial Examples: Adnams SSB, Coniston Bluebird Bitter, Fuller's London Pride, Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, Shepherd Neame Master Brew Kentish Ale, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Young's Special Tags: standard-strength, amber-colour, top-fermented, British isles, traditional-style, amber-ale-family, bitter