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Reference Sources on Beer

by Sue Polanka

Ancient Egyptians used to say the mouth of a perfectly happy man (or woman) is filled with beer. Now, the mind of a perfectly happy beer drinker can be filled with knowledge about that beer!

Beer and beer resources come in many varieties. Listed here are books and Web sites with a focus on beer from around the world. There are three well-known authors in the beer world, Michael Jackson, Brian Glover, and Stephen Beaumont. Each author has several books on beer, brewing, and other malts and ales. Their most current or comprehensive books are highlighted. Web sites were last accessed on February 4, 2003.

Books

The Running Press Pocket Guide to Beer: The Connoisseur's Companion to More Than 2,000 Beers of the World. 7th ed. By Michael Jackson. 2000. 208p. Running Press, \$12.95 (0-7624-0885-5).

The worldly traveler's guide to beer, pubs, and breweries discusses and rates beers from around the globe. The history, culture, and geography of each region or country are discussed along with the beer. Each beer is rated with up to five stars and is compared only to other beers in the region. A lengthy introduction includes a beer glossary and summation of what makes a great beer. The index includes both beers and breweries.

Other books by Michael Jackson include *Michael Jackson's Beer Companion: The World's Great Beer Styles, Gastronomy and Traditions* (Running Press, o.p.), *Michael Jackson's Great Beer Guide: The World's 500 Best Beers* (DK, 2000), and *Ultimate Beer* (DK, 1998).

Premium Beer Drinker's Guide. By Stephen Beaumont. 2000. 224p. Firefly, \$24.95 (1-55209-510-X).

Beaumont defines premium beers as "the special-occasion drink for everyday people." Naturally, this guide includes only premium beers, ones that according to Beaumont "stimulate your senses and challenge your perceptions and, above all else, make a bold statement in your glass." Arrangement is by type of beer—wheats, hops, bocks, darks. Ratings for price, freshness/durability, and availability are noted along with extensive notes on the beer and brewery. Beers are recommended to accompany barbecue, spicy foods, desserts, cigars, and seasons of the year. Other books by Beaumont are *Taste for Beer* (DIANE, 1999) and *The Great Canadian Beer Guide*. (McArthur, 2001).

The World Encyclopedia of Beer. By Brian Glover. 2001. 256p. Lorenz Books, \$29.95 (0-7548-0933-1).

This book makes you thirsty just looking at it. It is both a written and pictorial history of beer and the brewing process as well as a guide to beers from around the world. It does not rate beers;

rather, it provides a brief description of beers from a particular region or country, their alcohol content, and flavors or ingredients that give each beer a unique taste. Vibrant color photographs depicting beer bottles and cans; malts, barley, and hops; and the history and culture of beer add flavor to each page. Glover is also the author of *The Beer Companion: An Essential Guide to Classic Beers from Around the World* and *The Complete Guide to Beer*, both published by Lorenz in 1999 but now out-of-print.

Web Sites

The Beer Hunter. [<http://www.beerhunter.com/>].

If you want one expert opinion on good beer, then try this site. Sponsored by *RealBeer.com* (see below), it is the official site of Michael Jackson, known in the beer world as "the Beer Hunter." Jackson discusses different beer styles, offers personal beer tasting notes and ratings, and provides a Q and A on beer. Much of the content on the site is reproduced from Jackson's books, which you may purchase via the site. Unique features include reviews of beer events and postcards—all of course with Jackson's name on them.

The Beer Info Source.

[<http://beerinfo.com/>].

This is a homegrown index of beer-related resources, compliments of Webmaster John Locke. The design is simple and outdated, but there is no advertising. The links are updated weekly and focus on beer alone, no cigars or food. The Beer Info Source supports and encourages the responsible enjoyment of alcoholic beverages. It provides a large collection of resources for those planning to open a brewpub, tavern, or bar. Books, legal information, brewer's calculations, and formulas can be found in the more than 1,000

links to the WWW Virtual Library page on beer and brewing.

BeerAdvocate.com. [<http://www.beeradvocate.com/>].

"There are no beer experts, just beer drinkers with opinions" is the slogan of this Web site, which has been around since 1996. A cozy hangout for the less knowledgeable beer connoisseurs, containing beer reviews from both the site owners, Jason Alstrom and Todd Alstrom, as well as everyday beer drinkers, this site is self-funded, with no advertising, so the reviews are honest and

opinionated. A beer forum is on tap for lively discussions with other beer lovers.

RealBeer.com: The Beer Portal. [<http://www.realbeer.com/>].

"The beer portal" is an accurate description of this sleek, consumer-focused Web site. Don't let the advertisements deter, as the content is rich with hundreds of links to beer-related Web sites, online books and publications, and beer headlines from around the world. For travelers, a worldwide database of bars and taverns, brewpubs, breweries, festivals, beer tastings, and tours awaits. *RealBeer* is a great source for "Beer of the Month" club information.

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