

St Austell, Tribute, 4.2%

Cornish drinkers are a patriotic crowd and St Austell's award-winning Tribute has been a local favourite since it was brewed in 1999. Originally called Daylight Robbery in honour of the eclipse, it was developed by the brewery's innovative head brewer Roger Ryman and has since become the brewery's biggest seller and signature ale throughout its 160-strong pub estate and beyond. It is a gorgeous golden-coloured beer, whose nose has bags of tropical fruit (think lychees, grapefruit) thanks to the presence of the aromatic Willamette hop in the mix. The palate kicks off with a biscuity maltiness, before tropical fruit and an elegant hoppiness burst onto the scene, leading to a long bitter and zesty finish. St Austell have been brewing in the former china clay mining capital of Cornwall since the 1850s and their Victorian tower brewery at the top of town is a visible reminder of the foresight of founder William Hicks, whose descendants are still involved with the company.

Wadworth, 6x, 4.3%

6x is one of the great beers of England and also the flagship ale of Wadworth, whose imposing 19th century redbrick brewery stands proud just off the centre of the Wiltshire market town of Devizes. First brewed over 80 years ago, this is a rich and bold beer that is surprisingly complex for its strength. The nose features an enticing resinous hop aroma, while the palate starts off with a rich tea biscuit maltiness, before succumbing to a beefy, well-built hoppiness courtesy of the Fuggles hop, tangy citrus and a restrained sweetness, before a long and lingering finish. Try a glass and reflect on the brewing traditions of Wadworth. Their shire horses are a common sight across town as they deliver casks to the brewery's local pubs (Wadworth has over 250 across the region). They even have their own cooper, down-to-earth Yorkshire Alastair Simms, who fashions wooden barrels for the growing number of Wadworth's pubs that request it.

Harveys, Sussex Best Bitter, 4%

Sussex Best Bitter is justly recognised as one of the region's classic beers, a thrilling and exquisite example of the best a British bitter can be. It is imposing and uncompromisingly bitter, with a muscular and musky hoppy nose, thanks to the presence of four hops: Fuggles, Goldings, Progress and Brambling Cross, all originating from either local hop growers in Sussex or just over the border in Kent. The palate is full-bodied and bittersweet, and demonstrates an effortless balance between rich maltiness and tangy citrusy hop notes. The bitter and hoppy finish lingers. The historical town of Lewes has been home to Harveys Brewery for over 200 years, and its picturesque brewhouse can be found alongside the River Ouse. It's a splendid setting to gladden the heart of all cask beer lovers, though the river was more foe than friend when it burst its banks in 2000 and flooded the brewery. Harveys remains a true family-run company with the seventh generation of the descendants of original founder John Harvey still at the helm.

Fuller's Smith & Turner, London Pride, 4.1%

Known simply as 'Pride' to its many fans, London's premier ale is a stunning example of the brewer's art, in this case Fuller's master of the mash tun and head brewer John Keeling. A blend of Challenger, Northdown and Target hops magics up a gloriously floral and fruity nose joined by hints of rich malt, while the palate is a

dazzling dance between bready, biscuity maltiness and tangy bitter orange and spicy hop, before its luscious bittersweet finish. London Pride is brewed on the banks of the Thames, downriver at Chiswick, where records show that beer has been created on site for well over 300 years. Fuller's is also the last remaining family-owned brewery in London and many of its 361 pubs provide a welcome respite from the rigours of city life. That's not all: like many responsible brewers, Fuller's involves itself in the life of its home city, with London Pride being recently announced as the official beer of the London Marathon.

Timothy Taylor, Landlord, 4.3%

Drinkers in two regions are in complete agreement with disco diva Madonna, who famously named Landlord as her favourite tippie and sparked off celebrity interest in this most traditional of ales. Brewed with Pennine water at the Knowle Spring Brewery in the West Riding town of Keighley, Landlord is a classic pale ale that weaves a spell with rich citrusy aromas that come from the use of Styrian Goldings late in the boil, a perfumy and aromatic hop that adds that extra something when used. Robustly bitter WGV and full-bodied Fuggles hops also join in the fun. In the mouth, a rich and juicy maltiness is followed by with more refreshing, zingy citrus notes. The finish is as long as a June day and just as life enhancing. Landlord apparently started life as a throat-clearing ale for parched miners, but it has gone on to become the beer of choice for pop stars and pub-goers alike.

Marston's, Pedigree, 4.5%

Mild has historically been seen as the preferred beer of choice in the Midlands, but drinkers in that region have plumped for this world-famous pale ale, which is brewed in the historic town of Burton-on-Trent. Pedigree, one of the best selling cask beers in the country, is a sprightly, complex ale boasting a fruity, peppery nose working hand in glove with the famous sulphury struck-match 'Burton snatch'. There's a lightness of touch on the palate, with plenty of biscuity malt offset by rich orange fruitiness. The finish is long and dry. The character of this ale is further shaped by being fermented in the fabled union sets, a system of oak casks that is now solely used for Pedigree. The hard mineral-rich water (or liquor as brewers like to call it) of Burton-on-Trent was such an influence on local beers, that in the 19th century other brewers sought to replicate it by the addition of various salts, a process called Burtonisation, which continues today.

Black Sheep, Best Bitter, 3.8%

When Paul Theakston turned his back on the famous family brewery in Masham in 1992, he didn't go far to set up his own business. He moved into the old stone-built maltings next door and after firing up his copper, his first task was to deliver to the good folk of this small town in the Yorkshire Dales a Best Bitter that has become a Yorkshire legend. Black Sheep's Best Bitter is a craggy, uncompromisingly bitter beer. Challenger, Progress and Fuggles are the hops, with the latter being added late to the brew. This results in a burly hop-driven beast of a nose, while the palate is a complex and quenching celebration of rich maltiness and refreshingly sharp yet restrained bittersweet citrus fruit. The finish continues in this theme. When Paul Theakston was trying to come up with a name for his new venture, he remarked to this wife that this business would make him the black sheep of the family. Little did

he know that his action would see the meteoric growth of a brewery that has no pubs but supplies nearly a thousand outlets, many of them with its formidable Best Bitter.

Caledonian Brewery, Deuchars IPA, 3.8%

They used to call Edinburgh Auld Reekie in the 19th century because of the rich malty vapours swirling over the city as dozens of breweries satisfied the demand for local ale. Nowadays, Caledonian Brewery is the sole survivor of this dynamic time but they compensate for their solitary existence with the stupendous Deuchars IPA. Both a favourite with cask ale drinkers and writer Ian Rankin and his cop creation Inspector Rebus, this is an exquisitely fruity beer that is aromatic and flowery on the nose. Hops used are Fuggles and Styrian Goldings. The palate is an elegant balance between a soft, gentle maltiness and emerging citrus hoppy notes. The finish is dry and bittersweet, tempting the drinker to try more. Deuchars IPA is also a beer that has changed history in Scotland. A pint of the malt-sweet Heavy was the clarion call at the Scottish bar until the advent of this hoppy golden-coloured beer.

Greene King, IPA, 3.6%

The small Suffolk town of Bury St Edmunds is home to one of Britain's largest brewers, Greene King, who also own nearly 3000 pubs throughout England. Naturally enough most of their outlets major on the fresh and hoppy IPA, which unsurprisingly is the bestselling cask ale in the country. First Gold and Challenger are the preferred hops of head brewer John Bexon, hops that bring a fruity, tangy and aromatic character to beer. Kicking off proceedings with sprightly fruity notes on the nose, Greene King IPA is a clean-tasting and refreshing beer with biscuity malt and tangy fruit vying for attention on the palate, while the bittersweet finish lingers. It's an ideal 'session' beer, low in alcohol but bursting with flavour, just the job for a couple of pints after work. Greene King started life in 1887, when the neighbouring brewing families of Greene and King merged, though beer has been brewed at the Westgate site since the 1700s.