

What's wrong with my beer?

SOURCE

EXPLANATION

VERDICT

Bubbles clinging to the sides of beer glass



Improperly rinsed/washed glasswear causing some form of residue on the inside.

Bubbles don't stick to clean glass, thus, they must be sticking to some residue that is creating a nucleation site: grease, food particles, soap or sanitizer.

Bubbles are just as unacceptable as lipstick on the rim of a glass or chipped/cracked glasswear. The only thing that should be in your beer glass is beer.

Frosted Glasses



Restaurants that don't have a clue.

Extremely cold temperatures make it difficult to taste and smell beer. Ice creates unneeded foaming, and hopefully it's just frozen water and not frozen sanitizer. Yuk!

While annoying to those of us who want to taste our beer, the cold has no lasting effects, and the beer will eventually warm up to a suitable temperature.

No Glass



Restaurants that don't have a clue.

Unless you are looking to just funnel beer down your throat, serving a beer without a glass takes away many aspects of the craft beer experience that we have learned to love.

Easy fix, just ask for a glass.

Cloudy Beer/UFOs



Precipitated proteins or tannins; yeast that has not fallen out of solution or been filtered.

Cold, or highly-hopped beers can have a haze. Hefeweizens are expected to be cloudy because they are unfiltered.

Not all beer needs to be crystal clear, and vintage beers will break down with age, but huge yeast chunks might be symptomatic of greater problems.

Papery flavor, aroma or sensation



Beer stored for an extended amount of time; stored at improper temperature; or introduction of oxygen to the beer.

In almost all cases, oxygen and beer don't mix. Improperly storing beer at warmer temperatures will accelerate the oxidation of beer.

A certain of oxidative character is expected in beers that are aged, like Old Ales. If the beer is undrinkable, and it is not a special circumstance, alerting management is appropriate.

Butterscotch/buttery flavor, slick palate sensation



Diacetyl: Yeast by-product; beer contamination.

Diacetyl is a yeast-derived compound that has a characteristic flavor of fake popcorn butter. Diacetyl can also be a telltale sign of bacterial contamination or beer spoilage caused by dirty draught lines.

Naturally occurring, some yeast are known for their diacetyl character. In this case the character prized by the brewers who make them and the people who drink them. However, dirty draught lines are unacceptable.

Sulphurus, cooked/creamed corn – like character



DMS: ingredient derived by-product or contamination.

DMS or Dimethyl sulfide is present in beers that use pale malt and beer styles that utilize corn as an ingredient.

Proper brewing techniques will diminish this character in most beer styles. In some styles it is acceptable (American-style Cream Ale). Contaminated draft lines will also produce DMS, which is unacceptable.

Sour/tart beer character, vinegar, sour milk



Any number of intentional or unintentional souring agents. These can be sourced from unclean brewing areas, equipment, used wine barrels, intentional inoculation or straight through an open window.

Feisty, microbes and wild yeasts that can infect beer anywhere from the start of a brewing process to the tap faucet.

Proper understanding of beer styles will go a long way in deciding whether the beer is meant to exhibit such character. An informed server should be able to answer this if you're not sure.

Wrong Beer



Things happen.

If you order a Stout and get a pale-colored beer, I think that's pretty obvious.

You should get the beer you ordered.