

Get the right glassware...

Some of the most humble brewpubs in Belgium have hundreds of glasses hanging above their bars, waiting to serve as specialized vessels for tripels, stouts or saisons. The often logo-emblazoned glassware's motivated in part by marketing, but experts say vessels affect a brew's head, appearance, aroma and—as a result—its taste.

In fact, most of what we commonly refer to as taste is not taste at all, but aroma, says Dr. Jon T. Roll, who explained the tongue can only really sense sweet, salt, bitter, sour and umami. "The rest is all aromas," says Roll, who teaches brewing courses at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "That is also, in part, why the head is important, in that much of the aroma is released when the head on the beer is formed."

Properly pouring and swirling a beer can enhance that aroma

even more, says Dr. Mark Denny, author of "Froth!: The Science of Beer."

"A snifter-type glass will emphasize the aroma of the beer just the same as it does a spirit or a wine," said Denny, who added aesthetics are also important. Narrow glasses highlight the bubbly luminosity of light-colored beers, making a flute-shaped glass the ideal vessel for serving saisons and lambics. "A narrow glass is nice because it looks elegant and makes the beer look good," he said.

More important than a glass's shape is its cleanliness, so Denny advised eschewing ceramic and pewter mugs or fancy patterns that hang on to soap residue and lipstick. (see No. 3) "Those immediately destroy the head of the beer," he says. "Old-fashioned tankards are going out of style, and there is good reason for that." —*Charlene Oldham*



- Flute**
The long, thin body showcases color and carbonation in bubbly, brightly colored beers. Use with highly carbonated beers like gueuzes, lambics and saisons.
- Goblet**
A wide mouth supports big heads and enables easy gulping, with some featuring scoring on the inside for head retention. Use with Belgian dark strong and sour ales.
- Mug**
The handle makes big swigs easy and prevents heat transfer from drinkers' hands. Use with bocks, Oktoberfests, pale ales and session beers.
- Pilsner**
This funnel-shaped glass is tapered at the bottom to maintain carbonation; the wider rim holds in head and aroma. Use with pilsners, steam beers, light lagers and schwarzbiers.
- Home Pint**
About 20 percent larger than a standard pint, this glass features a bulge near the top to hold frothy heads, improve grip and make stacking simple. Use with head-heavy brown ales, red ales, stouts, porters and cask ales.
- Standard Pint**
The 16-ounce glass's slightly tapered top concentrates the head and funnels aroma without trapping it. Use with nearly every beer style, particularly pale ales and hop-heavy brews that don't need help holding their aromas.
- Snifter**
The stem and wide bowl facilitate swirling to intensify aromas, while the tapered mouth traps them. Use with highly aromatic, high-ABV beers like American barleywines, strong Scotch ales and Russian imperial stouts.
- Stoup**
The word means "stick" or "rod" in German and describes the shape of this narrow, straight-sided glass designed to complement the light, hoppy aroma of kölsch. Use with kölsches and altbiers.
- Tulip**
The flared lip of this flower-shaped glass supports huge heads that carry aromas for beers with strong noses and flavors to match. Use with Scotch ales, Flemish reds, saisons and English barleywines.
- Weizen**
This tall, thin-walled glass curves from a narrow center to an ample top that props up a fluffy head and retains citrusy smells. Use with wheat beers, other light-colored ales and ryes.