

Shmanners 185: Beer: Ales

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Travis: Hey, did you hear about beer?

Teresa: It's good for what *ales* ya.

Travis: It's *Shmanners*!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy!

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: You know? It's really nice when *you* do the show. [laughs]

Travis: Yes, I'm presenting this week!

Teresa: You *are* presenting.

Travis: *I'm* in chaaaarge. Uh, so, listen. Lemme give you—

Teresa: I feel relaxed.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: I feel... funny. Uh, in a good way.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Funny "Ha ha—"

Travis: Not like, "Ooh, what's that?"

Teresa: Not funny "Oh no."

Travis: 'Cause if you feel like "Ooh, what's that?" It might be that there's a baby flippin' around in your tummy.

Teresa: [laughs] That's true. There is a baby flipping around in my tummy.

Travis: This week we're talking about beer, and specifically ales.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Because I don't know if y'all know this. There's a lot of different kinds of beer.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: Um, and I went into this thinking I knew a lot about beer, and I—listen, I do. But, I did not real—

Teresa: You—you know enough about beer to get you through a grocery aisle.

Travis: Yeah. Or, like, a bar, you know? Here—okay. Gather round, younglings. Uh—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —recently turned 21.

Teresa: Oh, wait. Um, content warning:

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Alcohol.

Travis: Yes. We're going to be talking a *lot* about alcohol usage, uh, and consumption, and that kind of thing. That's the same... thing.

Teresa: If you couldn't tell from the title.

Travis: Yes. Um, so there used to be a time where you would walk into a bar, and they would have, on tap, like, two, maybe three beers. And those beers would almost always be, like—like, Bud Light, Miller Lite, and maybe, like... *maybe*, like, a—a Blue Moon. Maybe. Right? And Blue Moon was, like, the kind of fancy option.

Teresa: What about—what about Old Milwaukee?

Travis: Okay. You're going way back—

Teresa: That's—[laughs]

Travis: —'cause that was, like, your grandfather's favorite beer.

Teresa: That was my grandpa's favorite beer. Some of my best memories of him are sitting in his chair, listening to the baseball game on the radio, even though they had a TV? I don't know. And he would drink Old Milwaukee from one hand and V8 from the other.

Travis: Gross. Now—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —no, I say that. I've—I've had, uh, beer and—

Teresa: Beer and a Bloody Mary?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah, I've seen that, too.

Travis: It's just funnier to say "gross" when you say something like that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Now—but here's the thing! In this day and age, it is *not* uncommon—in fact, I would say it is *more* common than not to walk into a bar and have 10 or more beers on tap.

Teresa: Didn't we go to one that was, like, "27 beers on tap!" or something?

Travis: I've been to one where it was, like, 48. Like, 60—like a just bar full—like, all they do is beer. "[to the tune of "Win" by DJ Khaled] All they do is beer, beer, beer, no ma—"

And that can be really overwhelming and really intimidating. And so I was thinking about it, of, like... it's not necessarily a—though there is some etiquette to—an etiquette procedure, so much as, like—we just did, like, a whole series on charcuterie of, like, "Hey, don't be overwhelmed by this. It's not as hard as it seems."

And so I thought—

Teresa: Okay!

Travis: —this is another thing like that of, like, this can be—this can seem really overwhelming, but another thing that I've been really excited about seeing this kind of craft beer revolution in my lifetime, is beer has also become... kind of a classier viewed thing.

Teresa: That's true. I guess when I think about the old times of beer, it seems kind of like... the—the lower class—it's what the lower class can afford, right?

Travis: Right? Or it's what they prefer. I mean, you would never see, like, in *Mad Men*, like, Don Draper going to, you know, a fancy lunch and ordering... a beer.

Teresa: Well, that's one of my favorite television tropes. [laughs]

Travis: Is—are you talking about the part in *Parks and Recreation* where it's like, "I'm pretty. Boring. I'll just have... a beer."

Teresa: Well, yeah. But also, haven't you ever noticed when characters go to a bar, they don't—they might ask for a mixed drink, but when they ask for a beer they say, "Hey, two beers."

Travis: "I'll have... a beer."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: A lot of that's copyright stuff. So I wanted to talk and kind of give you—listen. I'm not gonna be able to go into everything, right? This is dense.

Teresa: Hey, baby. I understand.

Travis: Right. But, I'm going to try to arm you with enough confidence that you could at least walk in to, like, a craft brewing place or brewery or a bar with a ton of tabs and—taps, excuse me—and be able to, like, speak confidently. So—

Teresa: Let's go!

Travis: —this week, we're going to focus on ales, and there's really two dominant types of beer. Like, if you're looking at the, you know, kingdom—what is it? Kingdom, phylum, genus, species—

Teresa: Oh, man.

Travis: I don't remember the order.

Teresa: I don't remember.

Travis: But, like the top of list—it's, like, ales, lagers, and then, like, miscellaneous, right?

Teresa: Okay, okay.

Travis: But—so we're gonna focus on ales today. Um, and ale is a British word that dates back almost a thousand years. Um, and let's just put the tiger on the table and yell at it: pale ale—

Teresa: What?

Travis: I know. It's a thing from *My Brother, My Brother*—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —pale ale was just a general name for a long time that described anything that wasn't as dark as porter, right?

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: So that's where the term pale ale—

Teresa: The golden hue.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: As opposed to the brown hue.

Travis: Well, basically, anything that wasn't, like, that opaque, brown porter. So ale, like we said, a thousand years. *But*, but, the brewing tradition is far older.

Teresa: Of course!

Travis: Like, if we had to guess—

Teresa: Because beer—

Travis: —probably—

Teresa: I mean, as old as grain.

Travis: Yeah. So, recorded history, at least 7000 years old, right?

Teresa: Yeah, because—

Travis: But might even be older.

Teresa: —I mean, I've always heard that one way to make potable water is to turn it into beer, because the—

Travis: Yes, we'll get into that.

Teresa: —the alcohol and the fermentation and blabbity-blah-blah-blah makes it better to eat—or drink.

Travis: Okay. So, we'll get into that.

Teresa: Okay, okay.

Travis: So, um, 7000 years ago we found evidence that they were brewing beer in Iran, and these beers were often thick, uh, more like gruel than a drink.

Teresa: So somewhere between beer and bread.

Travis: Yes, right.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: And they would use straws to drink 'cause, like, all the solids and stuff would settle at the top, and they would drink the beer-like drink that was in the bottom.

Um, and it was so important, this grain—grainy, beer-y drink, uh, that there are some who believe—there was a theory put forth in 1868 by a guy named James Death, which... whoa.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What an unfortunate name! But he put forth the theory that in the Bible when they talk about manna from Heaven, you know, like the heavenly bread that God gave the Israelites, that is was, like, a porridge-like beer is what they were referring to.

Teresa: Huh. Okay.

Travis: Yeah. Um—

Teresa: I can dig it.

Travis: So it wasn't until The Middle Ages that beering moved to monasteries, 'cause for a long time, brewing was exclusively a woman's job, uh, done in the home. They would do it, like, in their home, and it would be very specific for, like, local families and local—

Teresa: That makes complete sense, especially if you go back to our whiskey episode, where we talk about where most, like, Irish homes had their own still for whiskey.

Travis: Okay. Now, let's get in—'cause I didn't put a place in this, 'cause I was just waiting to bring it up, but let's talk about the difference between making beer and making spirits.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: When we talked in our, like, spirits episode, you know, whiskey; it's dangerous as heck for, like, many reasons. One—

Teresa: The evaporation, for sure.

Travis: —yeah, you're basically creating an explosive, like, fume, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Um, and so that is a problem. It's difficult to get right, and if it catches fire...

Teresa: Ya dead.

Travis: ... it could be a big problem. And two, once you're done, the possibility of creating an alcohol content so high that it's poisonous to drink is not—it's not unlikely, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Now, when you're making—

Teresa: Well, especially—we learned about the head and the heart and all that—and the foot. So, like, even within the same batch, the alcohol content varies wildly.

Travis: Now, when you're creating *beer*, it is comparably a much safer process. Basically, what you're doing is, like, you boil the water with, like, the grains and the malt and the hops in it and stuff, right?

Teresa: You make the porridge.

Travis: Right. And then you let it cool a little bit and you add the yeast, and then it just sits, right? That's if you're doing, like, a yeast beer. But—

Teresa: Is that the mash? The stuff I just called porrish? Porridge?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Mash. So—but basically it's like—you're not creating any fumes, and the strongest your beer might end up being is, like... 12 point, 12%. Maybe. *Maybe*. Right? And—

Teresa: If the yeast are feelin' happy that day.

Travis: Right. And so that's the thing is, like, it was—it's just—it's easy to get it wrong, but when you get it wrong, the chance that somebody dies are very slight, right?

Teresa: Well, it might be more like food poisoning, right?

Travis: Right, correct.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So, uh, then it moved from in the home with women making beer to being something done in monasteries, and it turned into *big* business. During The Middle Ages, nearly half of London's exports were beer.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Right. So, ale was an important source of nutrition in the medieval world as well. It was one of three main sources of grain in the medieval diet, along with pottage and bread. Pottage is, like... stew, you know? Like, really thick, kind of—it sits there for a long time, a lot of stuff in it, stew.

Teresa: Yeah. That's—that's kind of like porridge.

Travis: Yes. There—it—the words—

Teresa: Are very similar.

Travis: They're interchangeable.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, in many ways. So, uh, the—get this: this is how important beer was, as far as a, uh—a... uh—

Teresa: A cultural...

Travis: —yes, and nutritional. Uh, the monks at Westminster Abbey consumed, guess how much ale a day?

Teresa: Um... okay. Lemme think. Are we going empirical measures, so, like, pints and stuff?

Travis: Well—

Teresa: Pints and—

Travis: —how—we're Americans. Answer the question.

Teresa: Uh... let's go for three gallons a day.

Travis: Well, that's too much. A gallon. But still—

Teresa: Oh. [laughs]

Travis: —you went too—oh, this is each individual monk, is consuming *a gallon* of ale—

Teresa: [simultaneously] A gallon of beer a day—

Travis: —a day. Now, traditionally, British ale was brewed using only barley, yeast, and water. Then hops arrived in the 15th century, changed the game, right?

Teresa: Makes it tasty, right?

Travis: Now, here's the thing. When we talk about them drinking a *gallon* of ale a day... that probably doesn't mean what we think it means, right? You can find a lot of, like, "This person drank two gallons a day!" And, like, especially—I always think of Falstaff—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: —from Shakespeare, of, like, there's a lot of reference of he much he drank. But here's the thing: *everyone* drank beer in The Middle Ages. If you have ever heard the term "small beer," which Falstaff referenced, it means watered down beer. It was also called "table beer" or "mild beer," um, and everyone drank it, including kids, and they drank it with every meal, and it was healthier than water.

Now, here's the thing: it was highly nutritious, and contained just enough alcohol to act as a preservative and provide hydration, but it didn't really get you drunk, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So this is—it wasn't like there was, like, all these stumbling toddlers around. Like, it—it was kind of like—I guess like Kombucha would be a good comparison, or something like that?

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Like, it was very, very, very... mildly alcoholic. Um, and it would've been consumed daily.

Now, here's the thing: the reason it was healthier is because, like I said, you would, like, boil the water to make it. Like, you would basically cook it, but there's no evidence that anybody *knew* that.

Teresa: Right. Germ theory of disease doesn't come along for a *long* time.

Travis: No. In The Middle Ages, no one was saying, "We need to drink small beer because it's healthier for us." Everybody just drank it, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, people just didn't drink water.

Teresa: 'Cause water had, like, bacteria and pathogens—

Travis: Yeah, but they didn't—

Teresa: —that could really get you sick!

Travis: —the didn't know that.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And that's the thing is, like—also, when we talk about it being healthier, it had nothing to do with the alcohol content. The alcohol content just wasn't high enough. It was—

Teresa: But it was a preservative.

Travis: It—yes, but it came from the brewing, is what killed off the bacteria.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Now, bottled ale, as we know it, actually came out supposedly by mistake. In 1568—

Teresa: I love when I read about that kinda stuff!

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Where it's like, "[country accent] I'm just messin' around in my kitchen, and look what happened!"

Travis: I'm also always of the opinion that when they can pinpoint something like bottling beer to *one dude* doing something—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —I'm like, okay, this is probably representative of a lot of people making a similar discovery.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: There's no way *one dude* went, "[gasps] Eureka!" And, like, in 1568 it spread throughout—but anyway, supposedly a man poured his ale into a sealed bottle so he could go fishing, and he left one bottle by the riverbank, and when he returned, days later, he found out [gasps] it's still drinkable! Eh, we'll see.

So, up until the 18th century, beer in England was mostly deep brown or black in color, but as malting technology improved, suddenly brewers had the ability to control the roast and flavor of beer! And this is when pale ales as a style begin to take off, and it rocketed into the late 18th century as well as the 1800s.

Uh, and this is when we started to see, like, microbrews and local breweries. And, like wine, beer can be specifically—can, like, take on different profiles depending on the land, the weather, the environment, all of those things.

Teresa: All of that makes complete sense.

Travis: Correct. So, uh, throughout history, ale? It's been close to our hearts, right? During both World Wars, access to raw materials that were needed to make fancier beers were restricted, because all materials were restricted during the World Wars. And it caused the alcohol content in English beers to decline, and because of this, the easy-drinking ale became popular, even into 1960, as alcohol taxes increased in Britain. But! We have skipped over a—a defining era in alcohol in the USA. What is it? What's the defining era of alcohol in the US?

Teresa: Oh, Prohibition.

Travis: Prohibition, correct. Now, Prohibition had a permanent impact on the USA beer industry. Before Prohibition, there were almost 1400 brewers in operation in the US.

Teresa: Commercial brewers?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: After Prohibition? Only 164 remained.

Teresa: And those were all by special, like... uh, like, allowance, right?

Travis: Yeah, they had to had to have, like, permission from the government to keep operating, because during the time—

Teresa: [amused] Because beers were considered medicinal.

Travis: Yes, there were medicinal beers sold.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And, like, this is—just anecdotally, I can say that Prohibition had a huge impact on Cincinnati, 'cause in Cincinnati the brewing industry was huge before Prohibition, and after Prohibition, there was, like, one brewery left open.

Teresa: I do like the idea of takin' my little prescription down to CVS and saying, "I need six beers for today! Thank you, pharmacist!"

Travis: Listen, if you wanna learn more about that, *Sawbones*?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Whole episode about beer as medicine.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Now, uh—so after Prohibition, a generation that had known nothing but soft drinks didn't like the Bavarian style, like, beers that were popular in America before Prohibition. So... [sighs] American beer became... less full of character than traditional beer styles, and that's when we started—your Bud Lights, your Miller Lites, your... not—listen. If you're listening to this and you're like, "I like Bud Light! I like Miller!"

Okay! Cool. But at the time, it was *all* America drank, because it was drinkable, right? Like it was just, like—

Teresa: It was like lowest common denominator.

Travis: Exactly.

Teresa: It's what sells.

Travis: Because they were like, "Ooh, what's—flavor? Ooh. Ooh—ooh, ooh, nope. This is complicated. I don't want this."

And this is why, like, when we think of beer, people looking for, like, a flavorful thing often turn towards spirits, right?

And this really didn't change until 1979 with the legalization of home brewing, and the growth of craft brewing. And now we're starting to see, like, flavors again.

And I found a fun fact, by the way, while I was reading about Prohibition, that has nothing to do with beer. But, spirit—this is, uh, a quote. Quote, "Spirits also entered the United States from the West Indies. The rum runner Bill McCoy became so famous for the quality of his liquor that the 'real McCoy' entered the language to describe the genuine article."

Teresa: Oh, that's great!

Travis: Interesting. So, in the late 1970s, craft beer revolution gained momentum, and it became the big, hipster boom of the pale ale.

Teresa: You know what? I remember when you tried to home brew, and I think that the thing you were lacking is patience. [laughs]

Travis: Correct. Um, well, I just didn't have time! It was when my schedule was too busy. I've wanted to try it again now that, like, I have a Saturday or two off, sometimes. Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I could do—I was always like, "Well, I got 45 minutes free, and it takes 45 minutes to do this. [monster noises]"

Bebe: [laughs]

Travis: Hi, Bebe! Bebe's watchin' *Peppa Pig* over in the corner. Pay no attention—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —to Bebe! Um—

Teresa: What was the flavor that you made that got *real* skunked?

Bebe: [laughs]

Teresa: It was real bad.

Travis: All of them.

Teresa: All of—oh.

Travis: All of them.

Teresa: Oh, all of them. [laughs]

Travis: So, the pale—

Bebe: [laughs]

Travis: Hi, Bebe. So, the style of the pale ale was approachable and balanced, and people started to get—

Bebe: [laughs]

Travis: —it was a fine transition from pale ale to—

Bebe: [laughs]

Travis: —[holding back laughter] like, from lager to pale ale.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Somethin' real funny is happenin' in *Peppa*, you guys. So, here's the thing: what they did to try to get Americans on board with pale ale is they would carbonate it—

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: —and they would serve it chilled.

Teresa: Whoa, whoa, *whoa*. Beer wasn't originally—

Travis: No, it was carbonated. But, like, they *super* carb—

Teresa: Oh, okay. So, like, they—they pushed the CO2 into it.

Travis: Think of like if you went to—and pulled, like, uh, a—you know, an amber ale or, like, a brown ale. It's got a little bit of head on it, right? But if you pour out a pale ale, it's kind of like pouring out a soda. Like, there's bubbles galore in it, right? And it's served cold, right? Where a lot of beer is served kind of chilled or, if you go over to Britain, kind of room—

Teresa: Room temperature.

Travis: —room temperature, right?

Teresa: Which helps you taste the flavor, so if it's cold, they're saying, "You don't need to taste this. It's just a drink!" [laughs]

Travis: And the carbonation and the chilling was specifically to trick Americans into drinking it, 'cause they were so used to, like, Bud Light, Miller Lite, that kind of thing.

Um, so now, craft brewers have increased the alcohol content. They've tried all these different things, and now, like we said, it's not uncommon to walk into a bar and find, like, 40 taps. And we're gonna tell you—so, like, we'll tell you all about the different kind of ales and what goes in the categories, brands, all that stuff. But first, it's time for a word from some other Max Fun shows!

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

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Ted: And I'm Ted Leo.

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Travis: Okay. So, let's talk about different types of, like, ales. Now, the categories of these—they're determined by the, like, head—which is the foam—the color, malt, hop balance, fermentation style—it's a lot, right?

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: But there's, like, 12 main types.

Teresa: [through laughter] 12?!

Travis: Yes. Okay. So, first is the porter. Porter is the, like, dark, deep brown color. If you hold it up to the light it probably has some, like, reddish hues. Uh, and it—

Teresa: Is that what Guinness is?

Travis: Uh, Guinness is a stout.

Teresa: Stout. Okay.

Travis: Yeah. Um, now, a porter usually has, like, a chocolate or roasted nuts, um... I really like a porter. Um... let's see. So, if you're looking at porters—brown, robust, Baltic, right? It might be called any of those. A robust ale. A porter might be called a brown ale, but probably not, 'cause there's a whole other thing called brown ales.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and—

Teresa: Can you see through a porter?

Travis: No.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: It is opaque. Uh, but, like, the light—you might get some light filtered through it. Um... and—let's see.

So then next is the stout, which literally means, like, firm, strong taste. Um, it's even darker than a porter, and it kind of has a bit of a bitter aroma, because the malt is toasted.

Teresa: Mmm.

Travis: Um, the alcohol volume is usually pretty low, because it's, like, so thick, and it's usually, like, coffee or chocolate. And porters and stouts are usually considered to be, like, end-of-meal or—think, like... chocolate, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: There's chocolate, and they're, like, end-of-meal things. They're not really the kind of thing—

Teresa: They're heavier, so you wouldn't wanna drink it first before a meal, 'cause then you wouldn't have, like, room in your stomach.

Travis: Exactly. Um, so then with a stout, you can often see a dry stout, sweet, oatmeal, foreign, or Russian imperial, are kind of the different categories under stout.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, so then we move to brown ale, which is a deep copper or brown color. Um, a medium body with malty flavor and less hops. This one—the malt is, like, medium roasted, so it's like a caramel or chocolate-like palate. Uh, low hop aroma, medium body, and a *little* bit of bitterness you might see—

Teresa: You know, a lot of this makes sense when you think about coffee roasting, too.

Travis: Right, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Teresa: So, when you roast the grain, then, depending upon how dark the roast is, the beer is gonna be that dark.

Travis: Right. Uh, different categories of brown would be, like, a mild brown, English brown, American brown.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, so now, what color do you think amber or red ales are?

Teresa: Are they red?

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Or.. amber. Um, so... they have a little more variety to them. They have, like, a light—light-to-medium body, and they're mostly pretty balanced. I really enjoy—I like a red ale. Um, they're a little bit more hoppy than, like, a brown ale or a stout or a porter, and their flavor can vary from generic to flavor like—they're a pretty good carrier of flavor.

Teresa: Now, I'm sure you're gonna get to this, but... the hops. You describe it as "hoppy" or "not hoppy."

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And you're gonna talk about what that flavor really means?

Travis: So—I'll tell you now, right? How I always think of it, and I'm sure there are smarter people than me who know about beer out there who will tell you different—but I always think of it as malt as being, uh, a little more grainy, bready flavor, like oatmeal or bread, right? Where hops are a little more floral, uh, plant—you know, botanical, right?

So if you've ever had a stout or a porter or a brown ale and it's a little more... it's a little more like eating a cinnamon roll, right? Where it's like, very... almost savory, you know? That is usually, like, the malt, right? It's, like, caramel, um... bready, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Where if you have had, like, a pale ale, right? They're a lot more hop-forward, so that would be a lot more like having, uh—you know, like, a fruity... something. Or—

Bebe: [laughs]

Travis: —Peppa's great. Um, you know, like eating blueberries or raspberries, right?

Teresa: Or juniper berries.

Travis: Or juniper. Right, right, right. Floral. Like whiskey versus gin, that kind of thing, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. Um, when we're talking about the amber and red ales, there is, uh—let's see. There is the Irish red, amber ale, and Scottish ale. I really like a Scottish ale. I enjoy a Scottish ale.

Uh, so now, let's talk about pale ales. The pale ale, not surprising, is going to have a lighter color, and it's hop-forward, right? Um—

Teresa: And I know enough about beer to know that I do not enjoy most pale ales, because hops taste like soap to me.

Travis: Okay. Well... see—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —that's where we're talking about that, like... you—the floral, right? Where they're—for example, if you've ever watched *Great British Bake Off*, right?

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: There is always—you always have to be careful with, like, lavender and rose and stuff of, like, it translates over into soap. It translates over into perfume.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Very, very easily. Um, because a lot of those floral things, we do not associate with eating, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: It's hard to go wrong with chocolate and oatmeal and caramel and that kind of thing. And before anybody tweets at me, I know that I fluctuate between saying caramel [pronounced like "car-mel"] and caramel [pronounced like care-a-mel]. That's me! Gotta love me!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But when it comes to flowery tastes, right? This is where we're getting into—we as, like, beer-drinking society, the world, have a lot of way to go with pale ale. Because it's just not necessarily always a flavor we associate with, like, consuming food of any kind, right?

Teresa: Agreed.

Travis: Okay. Um, but, pale ale also represents the chance for a lot more flavor in ales, right? 'Cause when we're talking about porters and stouts and stuff, we're talking about pretty dark, bready, chocolate, right? Rich.

Teresa: Feels dense.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So the flavor profile can be a lot smaller, because of the density and the feel in the mouth takes the place of a lot of that.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Whereas with the pale ales it's a lot lighter, so there's room for more diversity of flavor.

Travis: Exactly. Yes. Perfect. Um, when we're talking about pale ales, you have: American pale ale, Indian pale ale—which is IPA, Indian pale ale—double imper—double or imperial IPA, ordinary bitter—which [through laughter] s—that's me! Um—[laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Then you have sp—no, I take it back. I'm special/best bitter. That's me. Uh, and then you have *extra* special bitter, or ESB.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, so there's a lot of variety in the pale ale, and this is always where I would say—if you're looking to expand your kind of beer profile that you like, and you've only ever had an IPA, try an American pale ale. Try an ESB. Try an imperial. Like—

Teresa: Now, when I watch British TV shows or comedies or whatever, that's—usually you hear "A pint of bitter—"

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: "—a pint of lager." Those are the two things that they talk about.

Travis: In—in—once again, I'm not British, nor an expert, but I believe, in British parlance and slang, like, bitter and ale become interchangeable.

Teresa: Okay. And lager is a different type of beer!

Travis: Yes. Correct, and we will get to that. Um, and just FYI, Sierra Nevada claims to be, like the first... at least American IPA, the first ones in America doing pale ale, so if you're looking to try a pale ale, try that. Uh, I also—Anchor is a popular one, and Stone is a popular one. I like all of those.

Um, so then we get into *strong* ales. Um, and this is, like, a pale ale... that's *strong*.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, it's got—

Teresa: Strong in what way?

Travis: Well, it has a deeper amber color.

Teresa: Color.

Travis: Um, and it's fruitier—

Teresa: Flavor.

Travis: —uh, is a little bit sweeter, um, and it can have higher—a higher alcohol content.

Teresa: So it—so it's stronger in *all* the ways.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: So, like, if you ever go to a bar, for example, different alcohol—different beer will be served to you in different glasses. Um, and that's for a lot of different reasons. Some of it's aesthetic, but if you ever see, like, a smaller pour into kind of a goblet, right? Instead of, like, a pint glass, it's almost always because it has a higher alcohol content, and so less goes a longer way.

Teresa: Right! Like when I order, um, the Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Ale.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: That I really love.

Travis: Right. That, I would say, is probably a strong ale.

Teresa: It comes in almost, like, a brandy snifter.

Travis: Right. Exactly. And, interestingly, some strong ales are conditioned in the bottle? Which means they get stronger—well, they age over time, like wine, right? Where most beer, once it's in the bottle, it is done brewing, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: With some strong ales, it will continue to condition in the bottle, and can even take on, like, a sherry-like quality.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, so then the—so under strong ales, some of the categories include American barley wine, English barley wine, s—uh, so, there—

Teresa: Oh, which makes sense, right? If it's called a barley win—

Travis: Exactly, it ages like wine.

Teresa: Oh, okay!

Travis: In the bottle. Now... a confusing thing.

Teresa: Oh, wait. I just made sense of something, and now you're gonna confuse me.

Travis: No, this is a different thing.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: In amber, red ales, there is the Scottish ale, right?

Teresa: That you spoke of earlier.

Travis: Right. In strong ales, there is *Scotch* ale.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Different from Scottish ale, like—right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Scottish? Hm, like the place! Scotch, like the drink.

Teresa: Ahhh.

Travis: Scotch ales are stronger, right? That's why they also usually come in—and I would say probably, once again, this is me extrapolating. We're talking about a bourbon ale in a snifter. Scotch ale, it's probably—they're probably cousins, right?

Teresa: [country accent] Cousins.

Travis: And also an old ale, right?

Teresa: Okay. Yeah.

Travis: Um, so then we move to Belgian Trappist or abbey ales. Do you know what the difference is between a Belgian Trappist or an abbey ale?

Teresa: I feel like I've heard the words "Belgian white" together, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um...

Travis: Well—so, don't get confused.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: We're—after this, we're going to talk about Belgian *ale*.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: And that's where you're talking about, like, a Belgian white. A Trappist—so, here's the difference:

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay.

Travis: Regulations.

Teresa: Ohhh, semantics.

Travis: So there is—there is an organization that is called the—the Trappist—the International Trappist Association.

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: That, in order for a beer to be called a Trappist ale, it *has* to be brewed in a Trappist monastery.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: And there's only, like... 11 of those in the world, that are recognized by the ITA. Six are in Belgium, two in the Netherlands, one in Australia, one in Italy, one in the US, um, and—let me add that up. Yep! That's 11. That's it. Other than that, it has to be called an *abbey ale*.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Which means it is basically brewed exactly the same way, but it is not brewed in a Trappist monastery.

Teresa: So it's like the champagne thing.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: You can only really be called champagne if it's from Champagne, and other people try and do it, but you have to say "sparkling wine," legally.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Got it.

Travis: Um, and a Trappist or an abbey ale is kind of a spicy, dark, fruity, um...

Teresa: Like... Christmas cake?

Travis: Yes! Like Christmas cake. Uh, so, this is a double—or dubbel, D-U-B-B-E-L, a tripel, T-R-I-P-E-L, or a Quadrupel, Q-U-A-D-R-U-P-E-L, right? Those are the different kinds of Belgian, Trappist, or abbey ale.

Then we get to the Belgian ale. Uh, and this is, like, a gold or coppery color, and instead of malt or hops being the star of the show, this one tends to be your fruity, spicy, or herbal aroma.

These are some of my favorites. A golden or blond, uh, a saison, or a *bière de garde*.

Teresa: Beer garden? [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. Gardeny beer.

Teresa: Beer—gardeny beer.

Travis: Gardeny beer!

Teresa: Vegetable beer!

Travis: Vegetable beer.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I enjoy them immensely. Um, the—uh, these... I always think of these—

Teresa: And these aren't yet the Belgian beers.

Travis: Well, so, this is a Belgian ale.

Teresa: Ale—okay.

Travis: And then we're gonna talk about a Belgian sour. A lot of beer from Belgium.

Teresa: Ah, yes.

Travis: Uh, so a Belgian *sour* tastes like the name implies. They're brewed in the same flavor-forward way, but with the acidity intentionally balanced to be more tart or sour to the taste. Uh, like, a Belgian Lambic is a popular sour beer.

Teresa: Ohhh.

Travis: I—I also think—I could not find word-for-word confirmation of this, but, like, some of my favorite beers now are Goses, which are, like, a sour beer with, like, a salty thing going on with them. Uh, they are sour beers, so I think they are Belgian sours. If not... uh, this one you can tweet at me, @travismcelroy, and let me know.

Teresa: [laughs] This—oh, this is that beer that I really like, the Framboise?

Travis: Yeah. So, uh—

Teresa: Yeahhh.

Travis: —a Lambic—yeah.

Teresa: Lambic. Mmm.

Travis: Um... also, uh, a Flanders red or a Flanders brown are types of Belgian sour beers.

Um, and then we get into your wheat beers. So, wheat beers are typically lighter in appearance, and served unfiltered, so they can be a little cloudier when they're, like, poured, or if you *swirl*.

Teresa: Isn't Sam Adams a wheat beer?

Travis: Uh, I think so. Yeah, it's a type of wheat beer. Or—Sam Adams is a brand. They have so many different ones.

Teresa: That's true.

Travis: They do have, I think, a cherry wheat?

Teresa: Yeahh, that's what I'm thinkin' of. That's the one I like.

Travis: And it's—it's very popular in America and Germany. The traditional German Hefeweizen is a wheat beer, which is also one of my favorites. I always think Hefeweizen has a little bit of a banana-y flavor to it.

Teresa: I agree with that.

Travis: Um, but it can also—

Teresa: Not like a *real* banana, but like a Runts banana. [laughs]

Travis: Yes, yes, like the Runts. Uh, also, it can boast a clove flavor. So, the traditional German Hefeweizen is a wheat beer. Um, and it has the, like, clove or banana, right? That we were talking about. And then Americans tend to put, like, hoppier styles of it, and have, like, hoppier Hefevi—a Hoppiweizen.

Teresa: Hoppiweizen. [laughs]

Travis: Yes. Um... and it—

Teresa: Now, is that a real thing, or is that a portmanteau you made up?

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: Uh, it feels so real to me, but I might have made it up. Um, and—and so—I think that this is a good way to go if you're lookin' for, like, a light, summery, but very flavorful drink, right? I love a Hefeweizen.

Then, number 11 is spontaneously fermented beer. So, this is what happens when you get natural with your beer. It means instead of guiding the inoculation, which is, you know, yeast and bacteria coming in contact with liquid, a brewer pours the liquid in and leaves the fermentation up to whatever organisms happen to be in the air or the fruit or barrel they're fermenting in.

Teresa: Which seems more of the, like, medieval style.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Where it was just kind of like—like a yeast that—you know, "Let's see what happens" kind of beer, right?

Travis: Right. You're just letting the yeast happen. Um, so they're *incredibly* region specific and special, right? Because you're... using the region's specific ale—or, uh, yeast.

So, one last one. This is "specialty ale," and this is, like, the fun wild card of the bunch, because it's, you know—like, your porters, your stouts, your pale ale—whatever, but with a new flavor added.

Teresa: Like Blue Moon, where it's the orange flavor?

Travis: Sure! Um, you know, they can also add lavender or chocolate or peach or peanut butter or... whatever. Right.

Teresa: Yeah, you've bought some peanut butter porters.

Travis: Right, and it's basically any—any flavor that, like, you can't get naturally from—so when I talked earlier about, like, porters and stouts having chocolate or oatmeal, right? That is the kind of flavor that comes from toasting the malt, not *actual* chocolate flavor. In this, we're talking about literally adding chocolate flavor to the beer, uh, or adding peanut butter flavor to the beer.

Teresa: Is this—do you know if it's usually done in, like, extract? Or is it usually done in, like, "We put some chocolate in it." [laughs]

Travis: I assume it's all kinds of different ones. Oh—

Teresa: "I poured the Hershey's syrup into the beers."

Travis: I didn't break these down, but I should. So, wheat beers? That's a Hefeweizen, Dunkelweizen, American wheat ale, like we were talking about with, uh, Sam Adams; your Berliner Weisse or witbier.

When we talk about spontaneously fermented beer, that's where the Lambic goes, uh, and your fruit Lambic, right? Because you're literally putting fruit in and letting the yeast develop from the fruit you have put into it. Um, and then specialty ales, that's where you get, like, herb and spice, or fruit, your winter or holiday beers, and sometimes even smoke-flavored beers.

Teresa: Blegh.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You don't—I like 'em. So, here's some quick dos and don'ts when going to a brewery for the first time.

Do: ask questions, right?

Teresa: Well, yeah! I mean, if you're gonna have a—like, they even have tours and stuff for breweries, right?

Travis: Right, tours and tastings, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And a lot of places now you can get flights, uh, flights of beer, and they will do tastings for you and tell you, like, "This is what you're tasting in this one," right? Um, especially at, like, breweries, where they are showing off what they have brewed, they're usually pretty excited to tell you about it.

If you're going to do a beer flight, always drink the IPA last. They have a strong flavor, um, and you—you don't want them to overpower the other things you're gonna drink, right?

Teresa: Well, wait a minute. I've also heard that you wanna drink lightest to darkest.

Travis: Well, sure. Do that. Drink your IPA last.

Teresa: Oh—okay. So—

Travis: Lightest to darkest, except the IPA.

Teresa: Except the IPA.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, if you are going to a brewery, listen. A brewery is not a party. You're not at a brewery to slam beers. You're not there to chug, right? This is not Miller Lite. It's not Miller High Life. Which—don't get me wrong! I like both of those. I *like* PBR. But, if you are going to get something that has a more dense flavor profile, *enjoy* it. Take your time.

Um, if there is a beer you don't enjoy, talk to the brewer and tell them, like, "I—you know—"

Teresa: "This one tastes like soap to me."

Travis: Now, here's—be very careful in this. That's great. What you used there is personal—"I will—I—I'm looking for something that's a little more this," or "I don't like the way that this tastes like soap to me," right? *Not*—this is not—you're

not giving a notes sessions to the brewer of, like, "Do you know what this beer needs? It needs more of this and less of this."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: No, no, no-no-no-no. Don't do that. Um, that gets us into the don'ts.

Don't feel like you have to order blindly, right? Here's the secret: as is true with so much etiquette and manners, nobody knows everything. Right? Even—even if you know everything about beer, even if you are a beer expert, when you walk into a brewery you've never been in before, their brews are different, so you should still ask questions.

You know, "What kind of—what should I know about this beer? What do you think of this one? How does this compare to, say, this beer I've had that I've liked?" Right? Like, you don't have to order blindly. You don't have to look cool. Like I said, don't give feedback. Like, even if you are an expert! Don't give feedback, unless they want it.

Don't ask for a frozen glass. That's not a thing in a brewery, right? Most beers are not meant to be served, like, ice cold frozen. That's the thing—"Ah, look at the can! When you see the blue mountains, you know that it—"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's not... no. That's—don't. Um—

Teresa: But there is something so, like... the—the visual of, like, the frosty beer mug with the—the beer inside—

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: —and, like, the head at the top—

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: —and it's just—it's a provoking—provocative image.

Travis: Yeah, but I would—I would put that way more with lagers, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Than I would with an ale. Like, you wouldn't want to have, like, a Guinness in a frozen glass. That would be so weird.

Teresa: What about a Guinness float?

[pauses]

Travis: Okay, maybe.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, don't ask for a bigger glass. You get the glass that you get. We were talking earlier—the alcohol by volume—if it's higher, they'll probably give it in a smaller glass, right? And if you get it in a smaller glass, *savor it*.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and it's probably 'cause it's more expensive to make, right? Like, you're getting a smaller—not just 'cause it's higher alcohol. You're getting a smaller portion for probably the same price as the other ones, because it's more expensive to make. Um—

Bebe: [distantly] Mommy! I want a cookie.

Travis: —and Bebe wants a cookie, so that means it's time to wrap up. I hope that you guys, uh, have learned a lot—

Bebe: [distantly] [crosstalk] Mommy.

Travis: Okay, Bebe. We'll get you a cookie in just one second. Can Mommy and Daddy finish doin' their jobs?

[pauses]

Okay, she's shaking her head "yes." Thanks, producer Bebe!

Um, so I hope you learned a lot from this. We'll talk more in a future episode when we talk about lagers and miscellaneous beers, but mostly I just want to

impart to you the confidence to try something new, right? If you go to a brewery and you're looking to try something new, don't be afraid! Ask questions, have fun.

Um, and speaking of trying something new, go to Maximumfun.org. Check out all the other amazing shows there. You can also go to mcelroy.family. We have all of the McElroy shows there, as well as—you can click on "tours" to get tickets to upcoming shows. Uh, you can—let's see—go to mcelroymerch.com to check out all of our McElroy merch—

Teresa: And new merch drops every first of the month, right?

Travis: That's right, so there's some new merch out now! If you have topic ideas, you can email 'em to us at shmatterscast@gmail.com. If you have any feedback or anything you—I don't know, wanna talk about, you can go to Twitter and tweet at us, [@shmatterscast](https://twitter.com/shmatterscast). We may not respond, but still, feel free to tweet at us. That's totally cool.

Teresa: We see it. Um, thank you, by the way, to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Also, thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for our sweet, sweet theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of the fan-run Facebook group, *Shmatters* Fanners. We'd love for you to join, if you are looking to give and get excellent advice.

Also, thank you to our research assistant, Alex. She is just the bomb when it comes to organizing our—our chaotic thoughts, all together. Um... [quietly] Do people say "the bomb" anymore?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: Is she the bomb?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Alex, you are the bomb. Uh, and I think that is gonna do it for us, so join us again next time!

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*...

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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