



Hop Heavy

The Double India Pale Ale

By Daniel Schumacher

When brewers discovered, whether by accident or design, that doubling a traditional India Pale Ale's hops and malt resulted in a bittersweet higher-alcohol beer, I imagine they were quite pleased. Expect Double IPAs, sometimes labeled Imperial IPAs, to deliver a tart, predominantly hoppy flavor with spicy malted undertones that may have been necessary (or not, depending on who you ask) to transport the beer from England to India.

Birmingham's own Good People Snake Handler and Great Divide Brewing Company's brutish-yet-lovable Hercules are excellent examples of the style.

Earlier this year, when legalization of higher-alcohol beers appeared imminent, Good People polled the Free The Hops community to find a consensus on which high-gravity style they produce first. Snake Handler rose to the top and became Alabama's first homegrown HG beer.

The principal distinction between the two is balance. Good People's brewer Jason Malone calls Snake Handler "obnoxiously bitter" while Great Divide backs up Hercules' hops with extra malty sweetness, giving it a slightly honeyed finish. Treat them like the treat they are by savoring them in a wide-mouthed glass or brandy snifter.

Availability: Find Snake Handler on tap at The J. Clyde and No Way Jose Grill, and by the half-gallon at Dee's Package Store (\$9.99). Try Hercules by the 4-pack (\$11.99) at Western Supermarkets, V. Richards and Whole Foods. ●

