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The beer scene is experiencing rapid evolution with innovative brewing methods, unique flavor profiles, and craft breweries popping up globally. As we enter 2024, beer enthusiasts are spoiled for choice when it comes to high-quality brews that cater to diverse tastes. From complex stouts to hoppy IPAs and crisp lagers, there's a beer out there for every palate. Here's a list of the top 20 beers in 2024 that redefine the craft beer landscape:

- Himmelbrau Lager** - A refreshing lager with a perfect balance of hops and malt.
- Obsidian Stout X** - A rich, complex stout with bold coffee and chocolate notes.
- Golden Wing Double IPA** - An intensely hoppy yet well-rounded double IPA with hints of citrus.
- Azure Ale Farmhouse Saison** - A spicy saison that captures the essence of farm brewery trends.
- Barrelsmith's Reserve Whiskey Porter** - A porter with warm whiskey undertones from barrel aging.
- Mystic Pilsner** - A creamy pilsner boasting floral hops accents and a smooth finish.
- Cascade Peak Pale Ale** - A pale ale dominated by piney Cascade hops creating a distinct profile.
- Dragon's Breath Belgian Tripel** - A high-alcohol content beer matched with spicy yeast characteristics.
- Sunset Wheat Ale** - A hefeweizen offering notes of banana and clove, perfect for summer vibes.
- Pioneer Pilgrim Pumpkin Ale** - A seasonal favorite combining pumpkin spice and cozy warmth.
- Riverbed Rye IPA** - Blending rye malt with bold hops to deliver a complex beer experience.
- Wildflower Honey Mead Beer** - This sweet mead beer celebrates natural flavors of wildflowers.
- Midnight Harvest Black Lager** - Combining the lightness of lager with roasted malts for crisp dark beers.
- Frosthaven Winter Ale** - A comforting winter ale with caramel sweetness and subtle hop bitterness.
- Cherrywood Smoked Red Ale** - A red ale accented by cherrywood smoke; showcasing traditional brewing practices.
- Surfside Citrus Sour** - A puckeringly delightful sour ale bursting with citrus flavors.
- Untamed Bretta IPA** - Brewed using Brettanomyces for a funky earthy twist within hoppy sips.
- Renaissance Rye Stout** - A complex stout featuring depth from rye malt's distinct nuance.
- Alpine Glow Juicy IPA** - Packed full of juicy hop flavor without being overly bitter, perfect for New England-style IPA fans.
- Titanium Trappist** - This strong ale is pristinely balanced and showcases the revered status of Trappist beers. Each entry in this list reflects a blend of traditionalism in brewing methods and innovation in flavor profiling—testaments to a craft that's growing in popularity and sophistication. That's what you'd get if you took a West Coast beer and turned it into a liquid rocket, pouring in some citrus notes, hopping up the juice, and finishing it with a fine bourbon barrel. Aromas of lime peel, limoncello, and grapefruit zest mingle with pineapple, passion fruit, peach, and guava, while pine boughs and diesel add depth. Stan writes that it's refined, like a person who understands lagers makes an IPA. This beer is bitter, but not too much so, and it doesn't overpower the taste buds. It's a slammer, with a score of 100 in our blind panel. **Kros Strain Barrelwine Vol. 9**: Port & Bourbon has been in our Best 20 for three years running, and it's hard to argue against its greatness. The cask-finished barleywines are exceptional, and they demonstrate the brewery's deft approach to flavor. Tasting the Port version earlier this year, we thought it was amazing what beer could be. A Barrelwine Vol. 9 is like a talented actor that conveys much with nuance and subtlety. It has expressive but reserved flavors, rich and indulgent yet beautifully paced. The aromas are complex, with notes of dried cherries, apricots, and raisins. The Goldfinger Heller Bock, on the other hand, is a masterclass in innovation within a traditional style. Tom Beckmann's pale bock walks the tightrope between relatability and modernity, using a higher ABV to support an intense hop load while keeping the flavor and expression on the edge of the modern Noble world. It's unapologetically aromatic, with a unique blend of flavors that set it apart from other beers in its style. The beer remained fresh even six months after being canned, with notes of elderflower, vanilla sugar-cookie dough, and a balanced bitterness that impressed the judges. Stan noted the "immense fresh malt aroma" and floral hops combining for honey-like flavors. The beer held up well due to Goldfinger's high-quality process. In contrast, the Boerenerf Oude Gueuze 2023 from Belgium showed its complexity and nuance after a few years of maturation. This traditional drink was once on the brink of extinction but has seen a resurgence in popularity. Small producers like Boerenerf have maintained their unique perspectives, offering gueuze enthusiasts a rich tapestry of flavors to explore. The Boerenerf's nose is comfortingly classic with notes of grapefruit, white wine, lemon, and fresh linen, while its flavor is delicate, bright, and airy with supple acidity and a dry finish. Ladd & Lass Zoosalooos from Seattle presents a Czech-style dark lager that achieves balance between roast, malt sweetness, hop flavor, and bitterness. It scores high on drinkability, convincing the palate of one character while finishing as another. Pure Project Rain, brewed by Jamie Winslow Sawyer, has become a standout among German-style pilsners since its initial release seven years ago. The beer's unique floral hop character and distinct swagger have earned it top-scoring status in several competitions. A recent revisit to the pint revealed continued improvement, with reviewers noting the beer's "pink and red orchid" and chamomile tea flavors, as well as a "pleasant hit of sulfur followed by dried herb, lime peel, and slight tobacco." The secret to Rain's success lies not only in its high-quality hops but also in its approachable and comforting nature, which sets it apart from other beers in the same style. The Big Friendly Vanilla Oil Boom is a masterclass in restrained elegance, showcasing how less can be more in the world of barrel-aged beers. Unlike some of its peers, which prioritize density and indulgence, this stout from Oklahoma City's Big Friendly Brewery strikes a balance between subtlety and depth. Macerated with traditional Schaeerbeek cherries, the beer boasts a rich, full-bodied flavor profile that expertly rounds out sharp acidity with a bright, fleeting punch. The addition of bourbon barrels adds subtle vanilla whispers, evoking almonds and cobbler crust, without overwhelming the senses. A careful blend of roasted barley and vanilla is at play, with dark fruit and chocolate notes adding complexity to the mix. A hint of cinnamon and espresso provides warmth, while a touch of burnt s'more and nutty toffee showcases the beer's masterful use of ingredients. Despite its modest size and intentions, Big Friendly Brewery has produced a truly exceptional barrel-aged stout, earning a well-deserved 99 score from our judges. Its focus on quality and restraint is a breath of fresh air in an industry that often prioritizes flash over substance. The Gold Dot Helles Lager from Heater Allen Brewery is a masterclass in balance and restraint, much like its counterpart Big Cone. The beer boasts a harmonious blend of herbal bitterness, moderate sweetness, and a dry finish that evokes the nuances of traditional Bavarian helles. Their use of granular attention to detail and understanding of how tiny pieces fit together results in a sublime lager experience. With each sip, the flavors unfold like a well-crafted puzzle. The brewery's commitment to excellence is evident in every aspect, from the crisp, honeyed-bread malt to the structured bitterness that leaves the palate thirstier than before. With its launch only last year, Heater Allen and brewmaster Kevin Davey are just getting started on their journey to craft exceptional beers. Black Lung Left Fork (Round Lake Beach, Illinois) scored highest in Amber, Red, or Brown Ale category with its drinkability at 5.2 percent ABV. The beer's flavor profile includes notes of acorn, light coffee roast, and pumpernickel bread, with a fresh, damp undergrowth reminiscent of a deep forest. Despite its light body, the beer packs a punch with a piney spritz and warmed graham cracker from the heat of a toasted marshmallow. Offset Dupo (Park City, Utah) is a deliberate attempt at misdirection in the pale-ale zone of their IPA issue. With Utah laws limiting beers over 5 percent ABV to being served on draft, they've managed to capture the essence of higher-ABV drinking experiences in a beer that doesn't conform to traditional standards. The result is a well-balanced brew with substantial body, rich flavor, and indulgent tropical fruit notes, all wrapped up in a silky smooth package. Funky Fauna and 10 Barrel Crush take top spots in Beer Review The reviewers at our publication have given high scores to several beers, but one caught their attention for its story rather than just its taste. A visit to the brewery's taproom in Pittsburgh revealed a hidden gem: Mild Stillage, a dark mild beer with subtle flavors and aromas. It's surprising that more American breweries don't create such nuanced small beers, but Mild Stillage makes a compelling case for why they should. In contrast, Strange Days Paragon from Kansas City offers a more substantial take on the Czech lager style. With its balanced flavor profile and crisp finish, it stands out as one of the best examples of an American-brewed Czech-style pale lager. This beer finds a happy middle ground between traditional Czech lagers and those brewed for American tastes. PFriem Japanese Lager from Oregon presents a unique case in point. By balancing character and drinkability on a Cartesian plane, it shows that even rice lagers can have depth without sacrificing their refreshing qualities. The master brewers at PFriem have successfully combined the essence of traditional Japanese lagers with intriguing flavors, making this beer stand out as one to try for its complexity. Kate detects floral notes with herbal undertones in this beer, while Stan describes it as "strikingly bright" with a crisp aroma reminiscent of headlights. It's an old friend to some, but many haven't had the pleasure - until now. This American farmhouse ale is a reference point for the genre, offering a nuanced blend of minty-green hop notes, dried apricot, pineapple rind, and herbs with gentle acidity and a smooth, dry finish.

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