

IN THE MUG

GOOD BREW

Five flavorful intersections of coffee and craft beer to shake up your a.m. (and p.m.!) routine.

1 THE BEAN

There's stout, and there's bourbon-barrel-aged stout: stronger, more complex, a bigger kick. Swap the ABV for caffeine, and you can get the same thing with coffee.

Well, almost the same thing. Rather than aging liquid coffee, caffeine crafters are taking green coffee beans—that's dry, unroasted ones—and aging them in barrels. "The bean essentially becomes a sponge," says Aaron Campos, director of roasting operations at Dark Matter Coffee in Chicago, who's experimented with barrels that held everything from bourbon to absinthe to Goose Island beer. Dry beans are ultrasensitive to moisture, so they leach barrel nuances that express profoundly in the cup, from the oak itself to whatever liquid lived there before.

Whiskey-barrel-aged beans can lead to coffee with smooth vanilla, a hint of burnt sugar and a lingering, unmistakable whiskey taste, sans any traces of alcohol. But the flavors will shift based on how long the beans age or how many batches aged in that barrel. In short, there's little consistency in the world of coffee, and even less in the aging process.

"We can't replicate it from batch to batch," says Rebecca Hurlen-Patano, co-founder of Idaho's DOMA Coffee Roasting. "We're not trying to hit a profile that we're guaranteeing."

Even without guarantees, these cool beans are still worth trying. If you're in Chicago or northwest Idaho, you can track down a fresh cup, but both Dark Matter and DOMA ship barrel-aged beans, complete with batch and barrel info. Colorado's Whiskey Barrel Coffee, operating mainly online, does the same. —John Bray

2 THE BEER

San Diego's **Modern Times** isn't the first to make coffee beer, but it is the first to use beans they age in bourbon, rye, port, wine and madeira barrels—and roast themselves. A new stout built around the bespoke beans hits shelves in May.

3 THE MUG

Harmon Brewery morphs its beer into syrups that are the foundations of espresso drinks at Hop Coffee, a java bar attached to its Tacoma, Wash., tasting room; go for the Puget Sound Porter Mocha.

4 THE TO-GO CUP

Late last year, **Starbucks** piloted a stout-inspired Dark Barrel Latte topped with whipped cream and drizzled with caramel. Hope it's back next winter!

5 THE SPOT

New coffee and craft beer cafes offer laptops and lattes by day, live music and lagers at night. Scottsdale, Ariz.'s **Sip** has 19 taps that draw from a 500-mile radius, and coffee from local roaster Cartel Coffee Lab on tap and in take-home growlers. Austin's **Radio Coffee and Beer** also leans local with 24 taps that showcase 512. Real Ale and Austin Beerworks, and Stumptown Nitro Cold Brew on draft.

BEFORE YOU POUR:

French press and pour-over are the best ways to extract flavor from barrel-aged beans.