



Summer Means Time for Some Lemon (or Lime) With That Lager

Jun 24, 2015, 11:06 AM ET

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Don't let life's lemons sour your summer. Use them to sour your beer, instead.

It's what's called a shandy, a refreshing drink that classically is beer mixed with lemonade, though other flavors can be used. It has been a seasonal staple in Europe since at least the mid-1800s when British drinkers ordered their "shandygaff," often beer mixed with ginger ale.

But lately it's been showing up on American cocktail menus and supermarket shelves, with new bottled and canned varieties on the market and bartenders experimenting with their own fruity beer combos.

"Shandies have gained tremendous momentum the past several years, and we don't see this slowing down anytime soon," says Danelle Kosmal, vice president, alcoholic beverages, for market research firm Nielsen.

In fact, while shandy sales remain a tiny niche of the overall multibillion dollar beer market, sales have grown 15 percent by volume and 18 percent by value over the past 52 weeks, Nielsen data show.

Brands on the market include MillerCoors' Leinenkugel's Summer Shandy and Samuel Adams Porch Rocker from Boston Beer Co., as well as Shock Top Lemon Shandy from **Anheuser-Busch**. Also in stores, Narragansett Del's Shandy, made in collaboration with Del's Lemonade, a **Rhode Island** institution, and Curious Traveler Lemon Shandy from The Traveler Beer Co., part of Boston Beer Co.'s Vermont-based Alchemy & Science subsidiary.

Lemon mixes are a zesty classic, but shandies aren't always made with lemonade, and they aren't always called shandy.

In **Germany**, the drink is known as radler, or bicyclist, because the fruity, lower-alcohol drink was considered just the thing to refresh a weary cyclist, says Armin Buehler, senior market manager for Radeberger Gruppe USA, which introduced Schofferhofer Grapefruit Hefeweizen (wheat beer) in 2013.

It sounds a little out there. Grapefruit? Beer? But in the case of Schofferhofer, the grapefruit shandy is refreshing with a strong but not overpowering taste of citrus harmonizing with the yeasty beer. And grapefruit turns out to be a trend within a trend. Other recent releases include Leinenkugel Grapefruit Shandy and Illusive Traveler Grapefruit Ale.

Buehler likes Schofferhofer Grapefruit as an outdoor drink. "I envision myself being on a rooftop seeing the sun go down, drinking that," he says, though he also finds it makes a great mixer.

Beer cocktails have been a trend for a while now and the shandy surge is giving them an extra kick.

Take the Shandy slushy, a summer offering of Narragansett lager and lemon shaved ice that is on the summer menu at the New York City branch of Toro, the Barcelona-inspired tapas bar from chefs Ken Oringer and Jamie Bissonette.

Beverage Director Caitlin Doonan, who has spent some time on Rhode Island beaches, was inspired by the popularity of the frozen Del's Lemonade sold there in summer to create Shandy slushy, a mix of Narragansett beer with a house-made lemon shaved ice. Depending on how well the slushy does, she's got a few other variations in mind, including grapefruit.

The idea is to have fun with a drink that's a little bit lower in alcohol and a departure from some of the oh-so-serious drinks that have been dominating cocktail menus recently.

"This was a way for us to have something that's a little bit tongue in cheek," Doonan says.