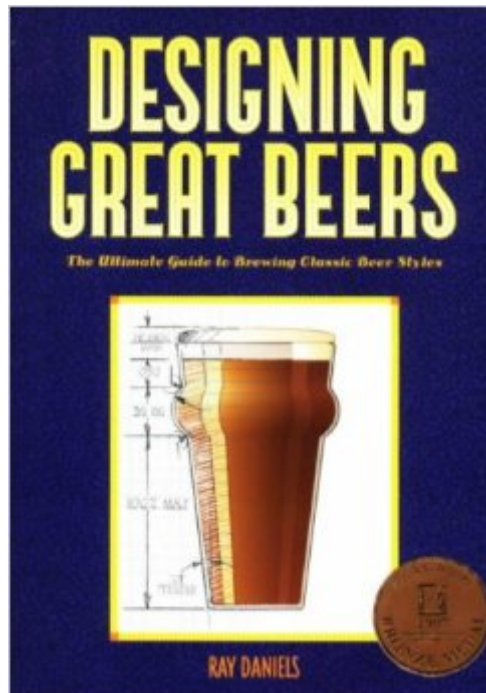


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# Designing Great Beers: The Ultimate Guide To Brewing Classic Beer Styles



## Synopsis

Author Ray Daniels provides the brewing formulas, tables, and information to take your brewing to the next level in this detailed technical manual.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First, let me say what this book is not. It is not a recipe book, or a book which describes the techniques for brewing beer. In other words, it is not for beginners. After following recipes for a number of batches of beer, it was time to learn how to create my own recipes. The purpose of this book is to do just that; come up with your own recipes. The first part of the book tells the reader how to compute the grain bill, the hop bill and how to hit original gravity. It also contains information on beer color, yeast and water. I used this section to make the computations for my first original recipe. This, in turn, gave me the incentive to buy a brewing software package which I now use in conjunction with the second part of the book. The second part describes beer styles and what ingredients go into each style described. There is a chart for each style which gives information on ingredients used in beers which made it to the second round of the NHC. I found some of the charts in this part somewhat confusing and there are a few references in the text to wrong charts. However, as a result of this book, I have started to formulate my own recipes with a lot of success.

The first section of Ray's book covers the fundamentals of all grain brewing. I seldom refer to it. However, the second section not only profiles many of the classic beer styles, it analyzes the

recipes and techniques used in producing competition winning entries for the styles. While one can argue that strict style guidelines and competitions based on style guidelines are counterproductive in the craft beer industry, it is very interesting to see how accomplished brewers are formulating their recipes. Many of the formulation compilations are surprising. If anything, they show that you CAN deviate from strict recipe guidelines and produce a quality beer. I have two shelves full of brewing books. This is the one I would hang onto if I was allowed only one brewing reference.

The print version of the book is excellent. Unfortunately, when preparing the ebook, the publishers apparently used optical character recognition software, and didn't proofread the final copy. Many of the equations needed to determine the amounts needed in the recipes make no sense. This makes the strongest points of the book worthless. Until the equation errors are corrected, I would recommend saving your money for the print copy

For anyone who has brewed at least one batch, this is a must-have book. You will learn more from reading this book, than from brewing a hundred more batches. Read Papazin, then graduate to this. You will learn to hit target gravities, target IBU's, and how to balance them against each other. Styles are broken down into easily (for the most part) reproducible processes and techniques, allowing you to formulate your own recipe within the style, not copy someone else's. I never brew a batch without reading up on the particular style in this book first. Best book out there on beer. Bar none.

All-in-all, I recommend this book, but be prepared to use additional resources for designing recipes. HOPS--The hop chapter is the best in the book. You can tell that the author is an authentic hop head. He gave a wealth of information about how to get the hop flavors and characters you are looking for, and how to pick just the right hops for the situation. Five stars for this section. MALT--This part has some good information, but not enough. In contrast to the extensive details about getting all the right flavors from hops, the malt section is terribly sparse. The information is there to pick malts that will produce caramel flavors, or toasted flavor, and so on, but actual usage rates are left as an exercise to the reader. That was disappointing, but it's still a good reference. YEAST--This chapter is hamstrung by the fact that the author couldn't list commercially available yeasts by name. The websites of the major yeast distributors is a still a must-use resource. WATER--The chapter is terrible. There is so much more to beer water chemistry than pH, and this chapter addresses only pH. Worse, it recommends a single ideal pH for all beers, and that

level is inappropriate to some styles. RECIPES--The recipe section is a bit bizarre. The selection of beer styles included seems to be shotgun. Some obscure styles are included, which is nice, but some very major styles (like Oktoberfest and Belgians) are excluded. The recipes are also dated. They come from homebrew competitions from about 15 years ago, when malt options available to homebrewers were more restricted than today. Many styles suggest crystal malt when more authentic malts are readily available today. All in all, the book is a very valuable resource that taught me a lot about how to design a beer and get the results that I expect, but it is not a bible on recipe design.

The title of this book is the truth. It IS a book about Designing Great Beer: The Ultimate Guide to Brewing Classic Beer Styles. If I were allowed only one book about brewing beer, this would be it. With this book and a little work on my brewing system to figure out certain variables (efficiency, how much water is lost etc...), I was able to create an Excel Spreadsheet that walks me through the process of designing my own beer and it works. I plug in the size of the batch I want, original gravity, bittering, and a few other things and it tells me how much mash water and sparge water I need to start. Then when things don't come out perfect, an additional spread sheet helps me calculate how much malt extract, sugar, honey or even water to add to get the gravity to where I want it. This is all from what I learned from part one of this book. If you are an all grain brewer and you don't have this book, you are not brewing to the best of your ability. If you like to enter contests, you know that the judges don't care if the beer is good. They want beer that is good and true to style. The second part of this book is such a comprehensive guide to style I can almost guarantee it will help you improve your scores.

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