

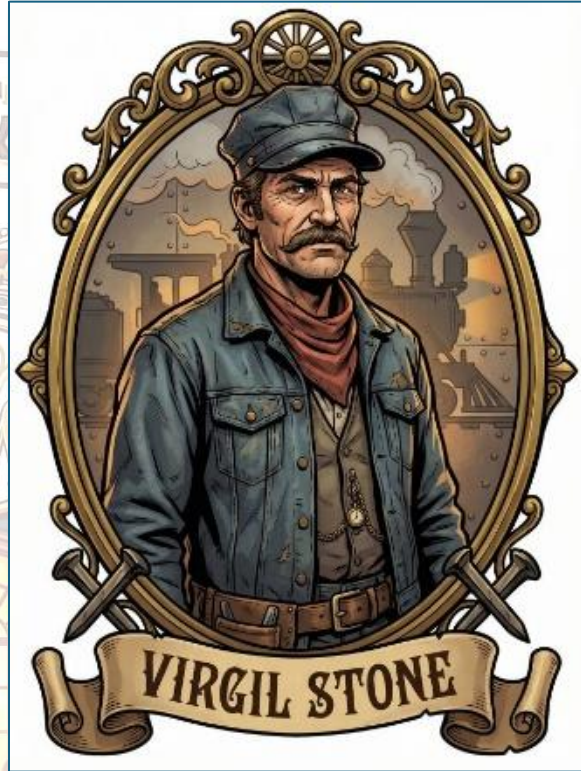
VIRGIL STONE'S CALIFORNIA COMMON

Steam Driven. Iron Willed.

5-GALLON ALL-GRAIN HOMEBREW RECIPE

THE CHARACTER

Virgil Stone built railroads. Not with blueprints and banker's money — with his own two hands, a shovel, a sledgehammer, and the kind of stubbornness that moves mountains because the mountain didn't move itself. He drove steam locomotives across desert, over mountain passes, through tunnels blasted from solid rock. He ate dust for breakfast and coal smoke for dinner. His California Common is a steam beer — a hybrid born in Gold Rush San Francisco when brewers couldn't get ice and had to improvise. Lager yeast at ale temperatures. Rules broken out of necessity. Something new created from sheer determination. That's Virgil in a glass. He shakes your hand once. You never forget the grip.



THE STYLE

California Common, historically known as Steam Beer, is one of the only beer styles truly native to the United States. The style was born out of necessity during the California Gold Rush of the 1850s, when German immigrant brewers in San Francisco attempted to brew lager beer without access to the refrigeration or ice caves that the style traditionally required. Lager yeast normally ferments at cool temperatures between 45-55°F, but without ice, the San Francisco brewers were forced to ferment their lager yeast at much warmer ale temperatures — often in shallow, open-air rooftop vessels called "coolships" that maximized surface area for natural cooling in the foggy San Francisco air.

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The result was a unique hybrid — a beer fermented with lager yeast at ale temperatures, producing a characteristically crisp, clean lager-like quality combined with a slightly fruity, more robust character from the warmer fermentation. The name "Steam Beer" has several origin theories — some suggest it came from the steam that rose off the rooftop coolships, others attribute it to the high carbonation that produced a rush of steam when kegs were tapped.



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The Anchor Brewing Company of San Francisco, founded in 1896, is the last surviving brewery from the original steam beer era. Their Anchor Steam, first brewed in its modern form in 1971 by Fritz Maytag, is the definitive example of the style. Anchor trademarked the term "Steam Beer," which is why the style is officially designated "California Common" by the Beer Judge Certification Program.

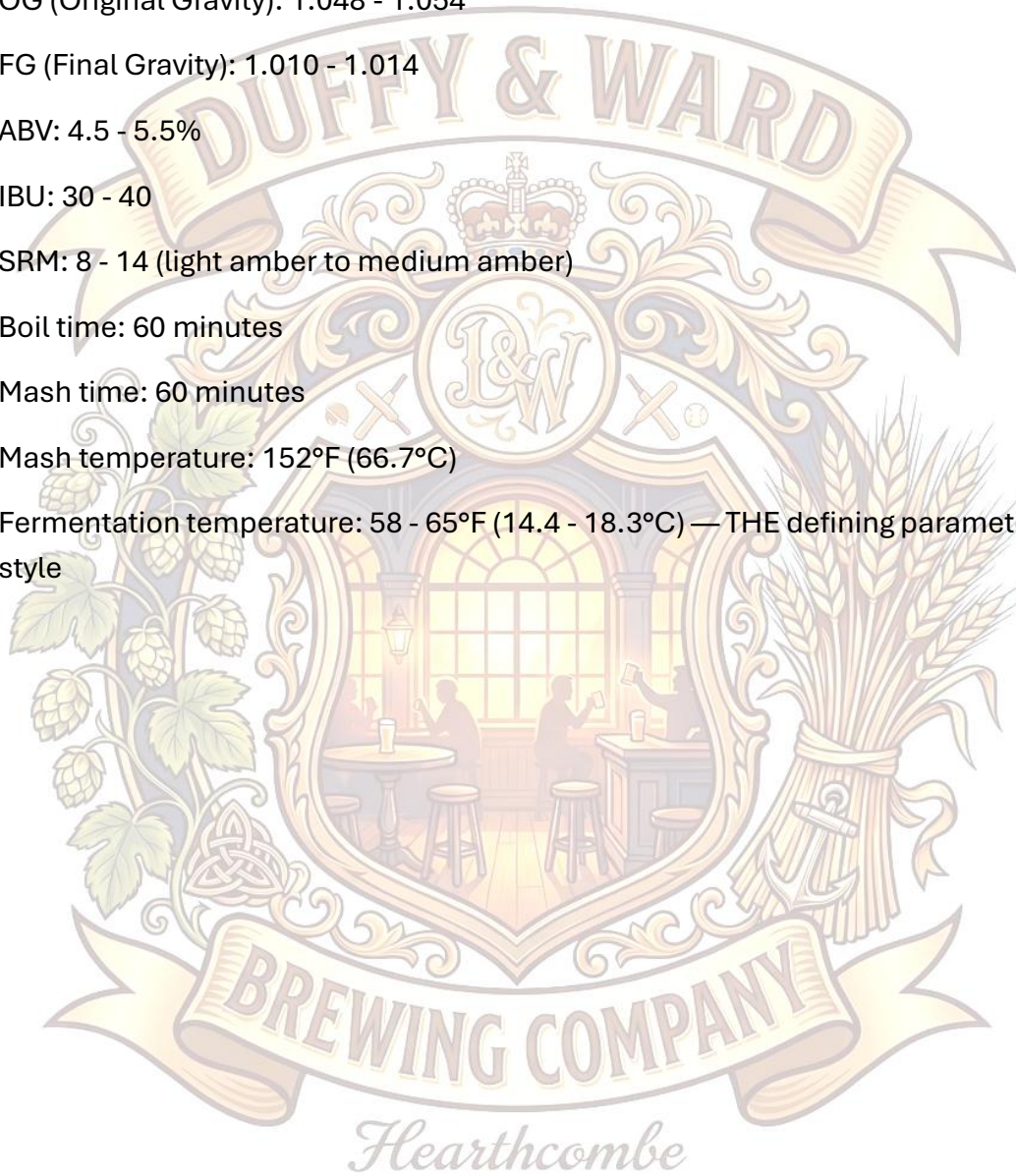
This is the BRIDGE beer in the Duffy & Ward lineup — the transition between ales and lagers. It uses lager yeast but ferments at ale temperatures. If you've never brewed a lager, this is where you start. Virgil Stone didn't wait for perfect conditions. He worked with what he had.



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THE SPECS

- Batch size: 5 gallons (into fermenter)
- Pre-boil volume: 6.5 gallons
- OG (Original Gravity): 1.048 - 1.054
- FG (Final Gravity): 1.010 - 1.014
- ABV: 4.5 - 5.5%
- IBU: 30 - 40
- SRM: 8 - 14 (light amber to medium amber)
- Boil time: 60 minutes
- Mash time: 60 minutes
- Mash temperature: 152°F (66.7°C)
- Fermentation temperature: 58 - 65°F (14.4 - 18.3°C) — THE defining parameter of this style



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THE WATER

Start with RO or distilled water — build from scratch

Treat ALL water with one Campden tablet per 20 gallons to remove chlorine and chloramine

Target a moderate, balanced water profile — neither aggressively hoppy like Burton nor soft like Munich. San Francisco water is relatively soft with moderate mineral content. The California Common should taste balanced, clean, and straightforward — not minerally, not flat, just right. Virgil Stone is not a complicated man. Neither is his water.

Mineral Additions (for 8 gallons total water — mash plus sparge):

- Gypsum (calcium sulfate): 4 grams
 - Moderate sulfate — more than the Hefeweizen or Cream Ale but less than the ESB or IPA
 - Enough to provide a crisp, dry edge to the hop bitterness without making the beer aggressively hop-forward
- Calcium chloride: 3 grams
 - Moderate chloride to support malt smoothness
 - The roughly balanced sulfate-to-chloride ratio creates a beer that is NEITHER malt-forward NOR hop-forward — it's balanced
- Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate): 1 gram
- Lactic acid (88%): as needed to achieve mash pH of 5.2 - 5.4
 - Start with 1-2 ml and measure

Target Water Profile (approximate ppm):

- Calcium: 70-100
- Magnesium: 5-15
- Sodium: 10-20

- Sulfate: 80-120
- Chloride: 60-80
- Bicarbonate: 20-50

Note: A balanced, middle-of-the-road water profile. The sulfate-to-chloride ratio is roughly 1.5:1 — slightly favoring hop dryness but not dramatically so. This creates the clean, crisp, balanced character that defines California Common. It should taste like clean water with character, not mineral water. Virgil didn't overthink his water. You shouldn't either.



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THE GRAIN BILL

Straightforward. Honest. Rustic. Like the man. Like the style. Like Gold Rush California — no frills, no pretense, built from what's available and what works.

- American two-row pale malt: 8.0 lbs (76%)
 - This is the ONE beer in the lineup where American two-row is the CORRECT choice over Maris Otter
 - California Common is an AMERICAN style — it should taste American
 - American two-row provides a clean, neutral, slightly sweet base — less biscuity than Maris Otter
 - The clean base lets the Northern Brewer hops and the lager yeast character shine through
 - If you use Maris Otter, the beer will taste more "English" than "Californian" — that's the wrong character
- Crystal 40L: 1.0 lb (9.5%)
 - Adds light caramel sweetness and amber color
 - Provides the warm amber hue that defines the visual identity of the style
 - Adds body and a touch of sweetness to balance the firm hop bitterness
- Munich malt: 0.75 lb (7%)
 - Adds toasty, bready depth
 - Contributes to the slightly rustic, robust character that separates California Common from a standard American lager
 - Fills out the malt middle so the beer doesn't taste thin

- Victory or Biscuit malt: 0.5 lb (5%)
 - Adds toasty, nutty complexity
 - Gives the malt backbone enough character to stand alongside the assertive Northern Brewer hops
 - Without this, the beer can taste two-dimensional — just sweet and bitter with nothing in between
- Crystal 60L: 0.25 lb (2.5%)
 - Adds a touch of deeper caramel and toffee
 - Rounds out the malt complexity
 - Small amount — supporting role

Total grain bill: approximately 10.5 lbs

Mash Instructions:

- Strike water volume: approximately 3.9 gallons (1.5 quarts per pound)
- Strike water temperature: approximately 163°F (to achieve 152°F mash temp — adjust based on your system)
- Mash in at 152°F (66.7°C) — hold for 60 minutes
 - Same mash temperature as the ESB, Porter, Brown, and Red
 - 152°F produces medium body with balanced fermentability
 - California Common should be smooth and sessionable — not thin and dry like a light lager, not thick and chewy like a strong ale
 - Right in the middle. Like Virgil. Solid. Dependable.

- Mash out at 168°F for 10 minutes (optional but recommended)
- Vorlauf until wort runs clear
 - Should be a straightforward lauter — clean grain bill, no wheat, no issues
 - The wort will be a warm amber — like polished copper
- Sparge with 170°F treated water to collect approximately 6.5 gallons pre-boil volume
- Treat sparge water with Campden and mineral additions proportionally



THE HOPS

California Common has a **DISTINCTIVE** hop character that comes from one specific variety: Northern Brewer. This is not negotiable. Northern Brewer is THE defining hop of the California Common style. Anchor Steam has used Northern Brewer since its revival in 1971. It gives the beer a unique woody, rustic, slightly minty character that is unlike any other hop in any other Duffy & Ward beer.

- Northern Brewer: 1.5 oz at 60 minutes (bittering)
 - THE California Common hop — woody, rustic, slightly minty, clean bitterness
 - Moderate alpha acid (7-10%) — produces firm bitterness without needing huge quantities
 - Approximately 30-35 IBU
 - This is more assertive than the ESB but less than the IPA — firmly bitter but balanced
- Northern Brewer: 0.75 oz at 15 minutes (flavor)
 - Adds woody, minty, herbal flavor depth
 - The 15-minute addition is where the Northern Brewer CHARACTER emerges
 - Approximately 5-7 additional IBU
- Northern Brewer: 0.75 oz at 5 minutes (late aroma)
 - Adds fresh, woody, slightly minty aroma
 - Subtle but detectable — the nose should have a rusticity, a roughness around the edges
 - Minimal IBU contribution

Total hops: 3.0 oz — ALL Northern Brewer Total IBU: approximately 35-42

Note: A SINGLE HOP variety. No blending. No complexity for the sake of complexity. Northern Brewer does one thing and it does it perfectly — it gives California Common its identity. The woody, slightly minty, rustic character of Northern Brewer is what separates this beer from a generic amber ale or a standard pale ale. Without Northern Brewer, it's not a California Common. It's just an amber beer with an identity crisis.

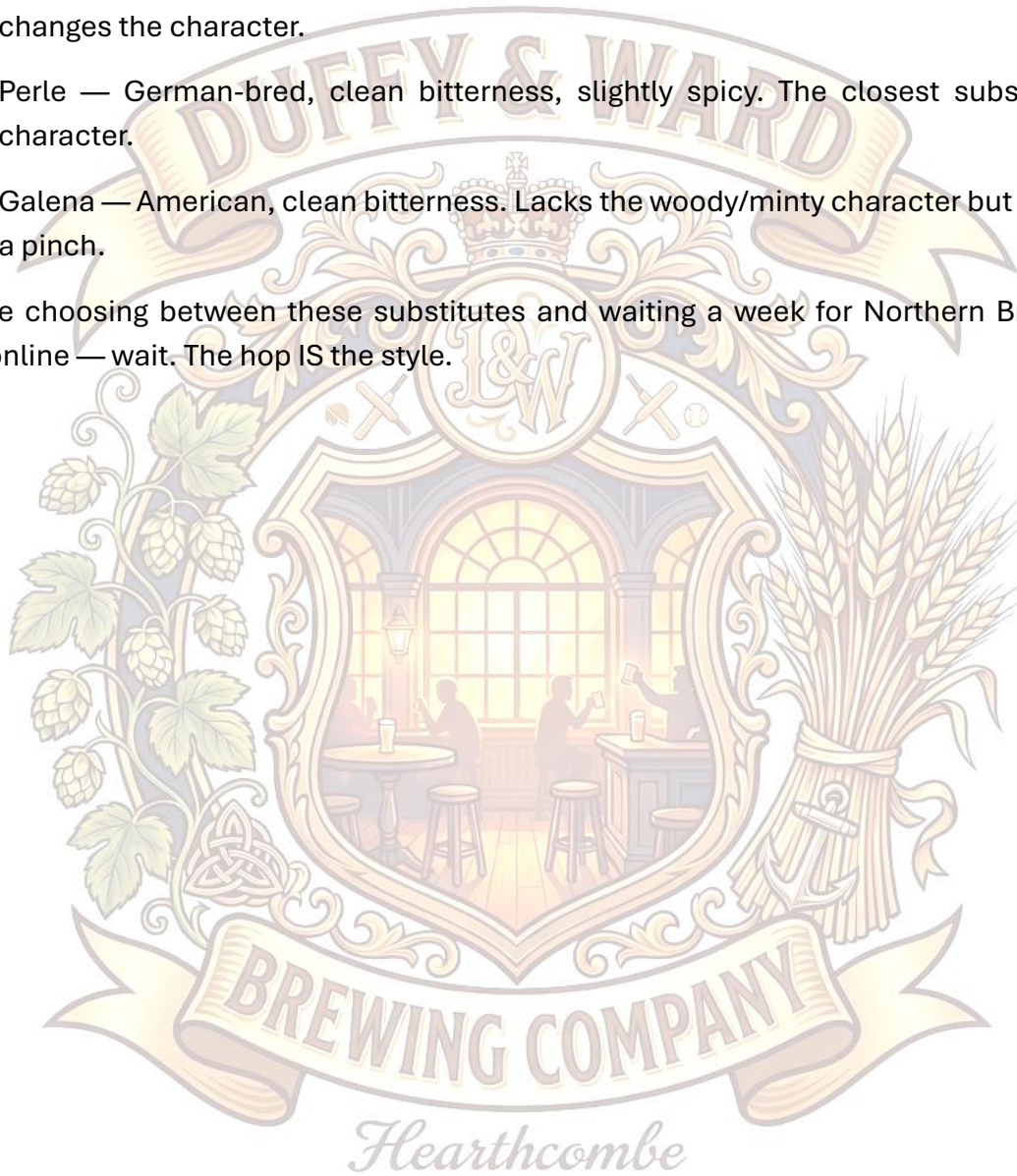
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Virgil Stone didn't need a fancy toolbox. He needed a sledgehammer. Northern Brewer is the sledgehammer.

If Northern Brewer Is Unavailable:

- Chinook — American, slightly more aggressive, piney and spicy. Acceptable but changes the character.
- Perle — German-bred, clean bitterness, slightly spicy. The closest substitute in character.
- Galena — American, clean bitterness. Lacks the woody/minty character but works in a pinch.

If you're choosing between these substitutes and waiting a week for Northern Brewer to arrive online — wait. The hop IS the style.



THE YEAST

This is the most UNIQUE yeast application in the entire Duffy & Ward lineup.

Every other ale in the lineup uses ale yeast at ale temperatures. Every lager (Pilsner, Märzen) uses lager yeast at lager temperatures. California Common uses LAGER yeast at ALE temperatures.

This hybrid approach is the ENTIRE POINT of the style. It's what makes California Common different from everything else on the shelf. It's what happened when Gold Rush brewers couldn't get ice.

Primary recommendation: White Labs WLP810 (San Francisco Lager) or Wyeast 2112 (California Lager)

- THE California Common yeast — a lager strain specifically adapted to warmer fermentation
- Ferments clean at 58-65°F — much warmer than typical lager yeast (45-55°F)
- At these warm temperatures, it produces a MOSTLY clean lager character with a subtle fruity edge
 - More fruity esters than a cold-fermented lager
 - Less fruity esters than a typical ale
 - The hybrid character — cleaner than ale, fruitier than lager — is the defining quality
- The yeast provides a crisp, smooth finish with just enough complexity to be interesting

Alternative: Any clean lager yeast fermented warm

- White Labs WLP830 (German Lager) at 60-65°F
- Wyeast 2124 (Bohemian Lager) at 58-62°F

- Saflager W-34/70 at 58-65°F
 - This dry yeast is extremely versatile and performs well at warmer temperatures
 - Many homebrewers successfully brew California Common with W-34/70
 - It produces a slightly cleaner, less characterful beer than WLP810 but is reliable and affordable
 - The Baron just felt a chill. Using a German lager yeast in an American steam beer. He'll recover.

What NOT To Use:

- American ale yeast (US-05, WLP001) — produces an American amber ale, not a California Common
- English ale yeast (WLP002, S-04) — produces an English amber, wrong character entirely
- Hefeweizen yeast — banana and clove in a California Common would make Virgil throw his sledgehammer at you

Yeast Preparation:

If using liquid yeast (WLP810 or Wyeast 2112):

- Make a 1.5 liter starter 24-48 hours before brew day
 - Lager yeast, even at warm temperatures, benefits from a healthy pitch
 - Lager yeast is typically less vigorous than ale yeast — a starter ensures sufficient cell count
 - Stir plate recommended
- Pitch at your target fermentation temperature

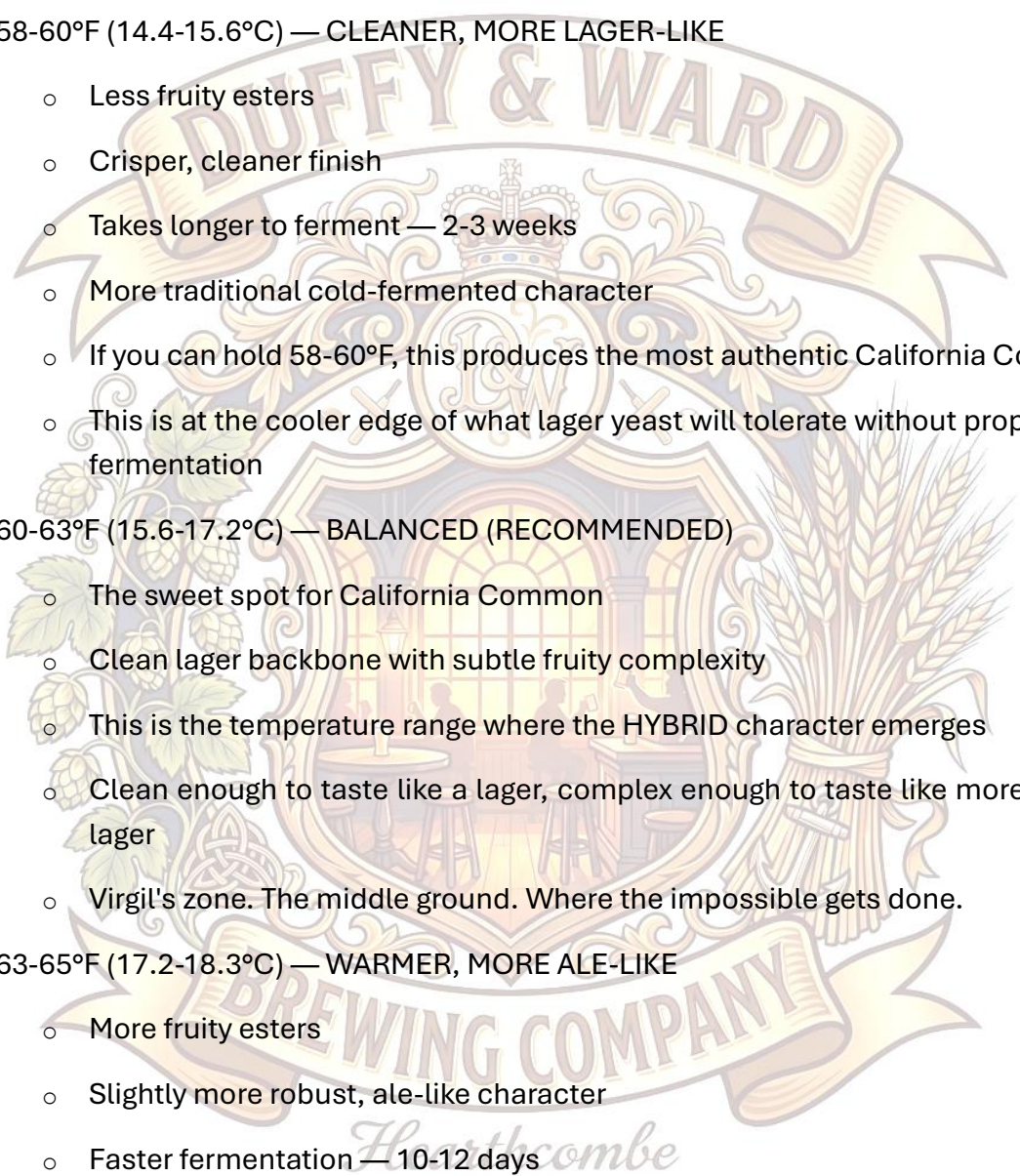
If using dry yeast (W-34/70):

- Rehydrate in 4 oz of sterile water at 77°F for 15 minutes before pitching
- Two packets recommended for a cleaner fermentation
- Or pitch directly — W-34/70 is arguably the most reliable yeast on the market

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FERMENTATION TEMPERATURE — The Defining Decision

This is the CRITICAL variable. Too cold and you brew a lager. Too warm and you brew an ale. The magic zone is the overlap — warm enough for lager yeast to produce fruity esters, cool enough for lager yeast to produce clean, crisp character.

- 
- 58-60°F (14.4-15.6°C) — CLEANER, MORE LAGER-LIKE
 - Less fruity esters
 - Crisper, cleaner finish
 - Takes longer to ferment — 2-3 weeks
 - More traditional cold-fermented character
 - If you can hold 58-60°F, this produces the most authentic California Common
 - This is at the cooler edge of what lager yeast will tolerate without proper cold fermentation
 - 60-63°F (15.6-17.2°C) — BALANCED (RECOMMENDED)
 - The sweet spot for California Common
 - Clean lager backbone with subtle fruity complexity
 - This is the temperature range where the HYBRID character emerges
 - Clean enough to taste like a lager, complex enough to taste like more than a lager
 - Virgil's zone. The middle ground. Where the impossible gets done.
 - 63-65°F (17.2-18.3°C) — WARMER, MORE ALE-LIKE
 - More fruity esters
 - Slightly more robust, ale-like character
 - Faster fermentation — 10-12 days
 - Still tastes like California Common but with a fruitier edge
 - This is the temperature range the original Gold Rush brewers would have fermented at — they had no choice

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- Above 65°F — DANGER ZONE
 - Excessive fruity esters and fusel alcohols
 - Loses the clean lager character entirely
 - Tastes like a mediocre ale, not a California Common
 - Virgil wouldn't tolerate sloppy work. Neither should you.

RECOMMENDED: Start at 60°F. Hold steady. Adjust in future batches.



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THE PROCESS — Brew Day

- Step 1: Collect and treat water — RO or distilled, add minerals, add Campden tablet
- Step 2: Heat strike water to approximately 163°F
- Step 3: Mash in — add grain slowly, stir thoroughly, target 152°F
 - Straightforward mash — clean grain bill, no complications
 - Check temperature at 15 and 30 minutes
 - Check mash pH — target 5.2 to 5.4
 - Adjust with lactic acid if needed
- Step 4: Hold mash at 152°F for 60 minutes
- Step 5: Mash out at 168°F for 10 minutes (optional)
- Step 6: Vorlauf — recirculate until wort runs clear
 - The wort should be a warm copper-amber color
- Step 7: Sparge with 170°F treated water — collect approximately 6.5 gallons
- Step 8: Bring to a rolling boil
 - Watch for hot break
- Step 9: Add bittering hops — 1.5 oz Northern Brewer at 60 minutes
- Step 10: Add flavor hops — 0.75 oz Northern Brewer at 15 minutes
- Step 11: Add late aroma hops — 0.75 oz Northern Brewer at 5 minutes
- Step 12: Optional — add one Whirlfloc tablet at 10 minutes for improved clarity

- Step 13: Chill wort as quickly as possible to 60°F (or your target fermentation temperature)
 - This is COOLER than most ale pitching temperatures — you need to chill further than usual
 - If your chiller can't get below 65°F with tap water temperature, use an ice bath to supplement
 - Do NOT pitch the yeast until the wort is at or below your target fermentation temperature
 - Pitching lager yeast into warm wort produces off-flavors immediately
- Step 14: Transfer to sanitized fermenter
 - Aerate the wort well — shake vigorously for 3-4 minutes or use an oxygenation stone
 - Lager yeast requires MORE oxygen than ale yeast to build healthy cell membranes
 - Under-oxygenation with lager yeast produces sulfury off-flavors and sluggish fermentation
- Step 15: Pitch yeast
- Step 16: Seal fermenter, attach airlock, place in temperature-controlled environment at 60°F
 - Temperature control is MORE important for this beer than for the English ales
 - Lager yeast is more sensitive to temperature fluctuations
 - A chest freezer with an Inkbird temperature controller is the ideal setup
 - If you don't have precise temperature control, aim for the coolest consistent spot in your house
 - A garage in early spring or late fall may naturally hold 58-62°F
 - Virgil worked with what he had. So can you.

FERMENTATION

Primary fermentation: 58-65°F for 14-21 days

- Lager yeast at warm temperatures ferments SLOWER than ale yeast at the same temperature
 - Don't panic if fermentation takes longer to start — 24-48 hours lag time is normal with lager yeast
 - Activity may be less visually dramatic than ale fermentation — lager yeast is quieter
 - This does not mean nothing is happening. It is happening. Slowly and deliberately. Like Virgil laying rail.
- Hold your target temperature STEADY throughout
 - Avoid temperature swings — lager yeast produces off-flavors (acetaldehyde, sulfur) when stressed by temperature changes
 - Consistency is more important than the exact number
 - Steady 62°F is better than swinging between 58°F and 66°F
- Check gravity at day 14 and again at day 18-21
- Fermentation is complete when gravity is stable over three consecutive days
 - Three days, not two — lager yeast is slower to finish and can produce false stability readings
- Target FG: 1.010 - 1.014

DIACETYL REST — IMPORTANT

Diacetyl is a butterscotch-flavored compound that ALL lager yeast produces during fermentation. In cold-fermented lagers, a specific "diacetyl rest" phase is critical. In California Common, the warm fermentation temperature helps the yeast clean up diacetyl naturally, but a brief rest at the end is still recommended.

- After fermentation appears complete (gravity stable), raise temperature to 65-68°F for 2-3 days
 - This encourages the yeast to reabsorb diacetyl
 - If you fermented at 63-65°F, you may not notice any diacetyl — but the rest doesn't hurt
 - If you fermented at 58-60°F, this rest is more important — spend the full 3 days
- After the diacetyl rest, proceed to conditioning

How To Test For Diacetyl:

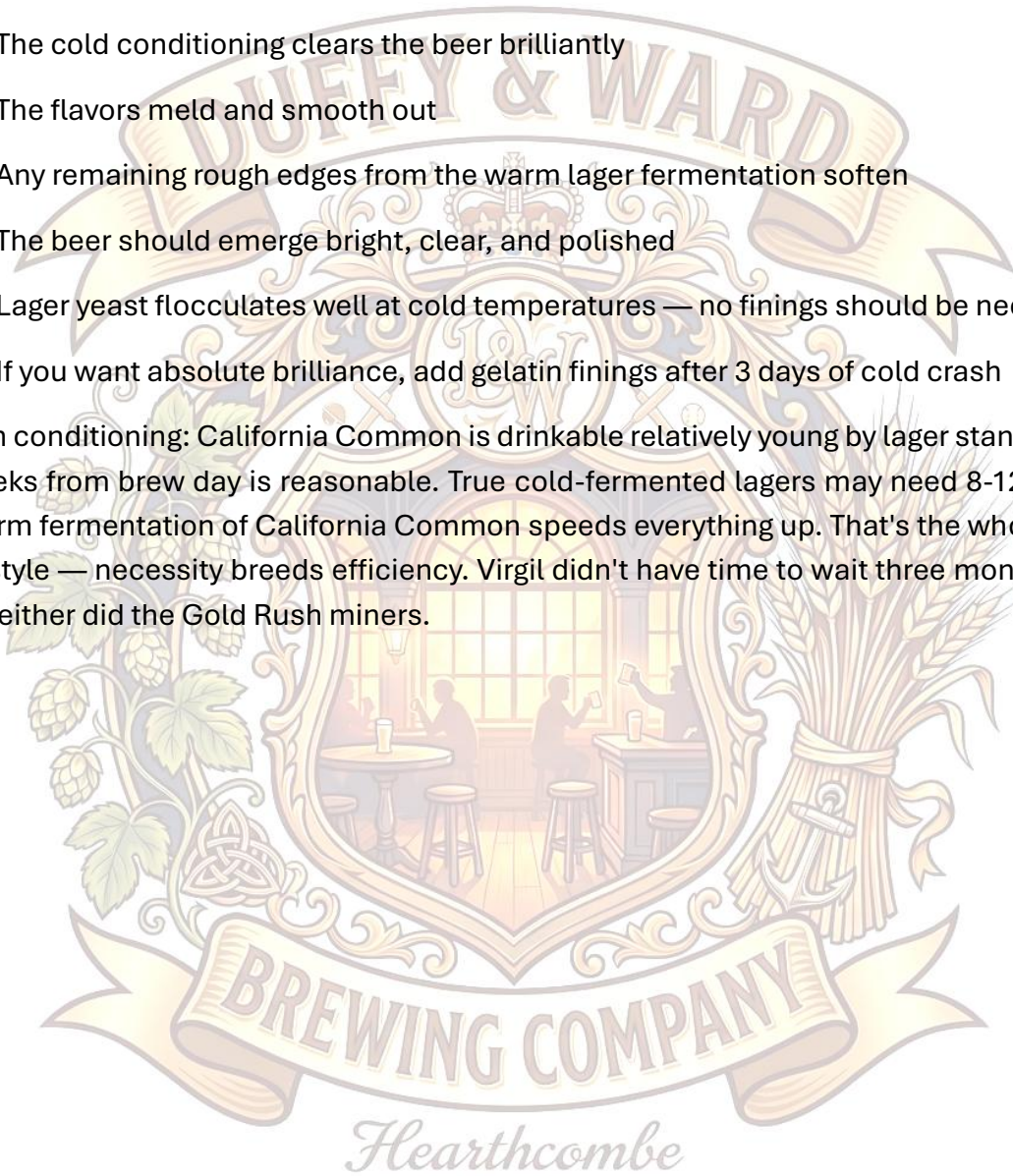
- Pour a small sample into two glasses
- Cover one glass with a plate and microwave for 15 seconds (or heat in a water bath)
- Smell both — the warm sample will amplify any diacetyl aroma
- If you detect butterscotch or artificial butter in the warm sample, extend the diacetyl rest by 2-3 more days
- If no butterscotch detected, proceed to conditioning

CONDITIONING

Cold conditioning: Cold crash at 34-38°F for 7-14 days

- This is LONGER than the English ale cold crash — California Common benefits from extended cold conditioning
- The cold conditioning clears the beer brilliantly
- The flavors meld and smooth out
- Any remaining rough edges from the warm lager fermentation soften
- The beer should emerge bright, clear, and polished
- Lager yeast flocculates well at cold temperatures — no finings should be necessary
- If you want absolute brilliance, add gelatin finings after 3 days of cold crash

Note on conditioning: California Common is drinkable relatively young by lager standards — 4-6 weeks from brew day is reasonable. True cold-fermented lagers may need 8-12 weeks. The warm fermentation of California Common speeds everything up. That's the whole point of the style — necessity breeds efficiency. Virgil didn't have time to wait three months for a beer. Neither did the Gold Rush miners.



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PACKAGING

Kegging (Preferred):

- Transfer to sanitized keg
- Purge headspace with CO₂
- Carbonate at 12-14 PSI at 38°F for 5-7 days
- Target carbonation: 2.4 - 2.8 volumes CO₂
 - HIGHER carbonation than the English ales
 - California Common was historically highly carbonated — the "steam" may have referred to the pressure release when tapping a keg
 - The higher carbonation makes the beer crisp, lively, and refreshing
 - It should tingle slightly — more effervescent than the ESB or Porter but less than the Hefeweizen

Bottling:

- Prepare priming solution: 4.0 oz corn sugar dissolved in 2 cups boiling water, cooled
 - More priming sugar than the English ales — we want higher carbonation
 - Less than the Hefeweizen — we don't want explosive carbonation
- Add priming solution to bottling bucket
- Transfer beer onto priming solution gently — avoid oxygen exposure
 - California Common, like all lager-family beers, is relatively sensitive to oxidation
 - The clean flavor profile means off-flavors from oxidation are more noticeable than in robustly flavored ales
- Fill bottles, cap
- Condition at room temperature (68-72°F) for 2-3 weeks
- Refrigerate before serving

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SERVING

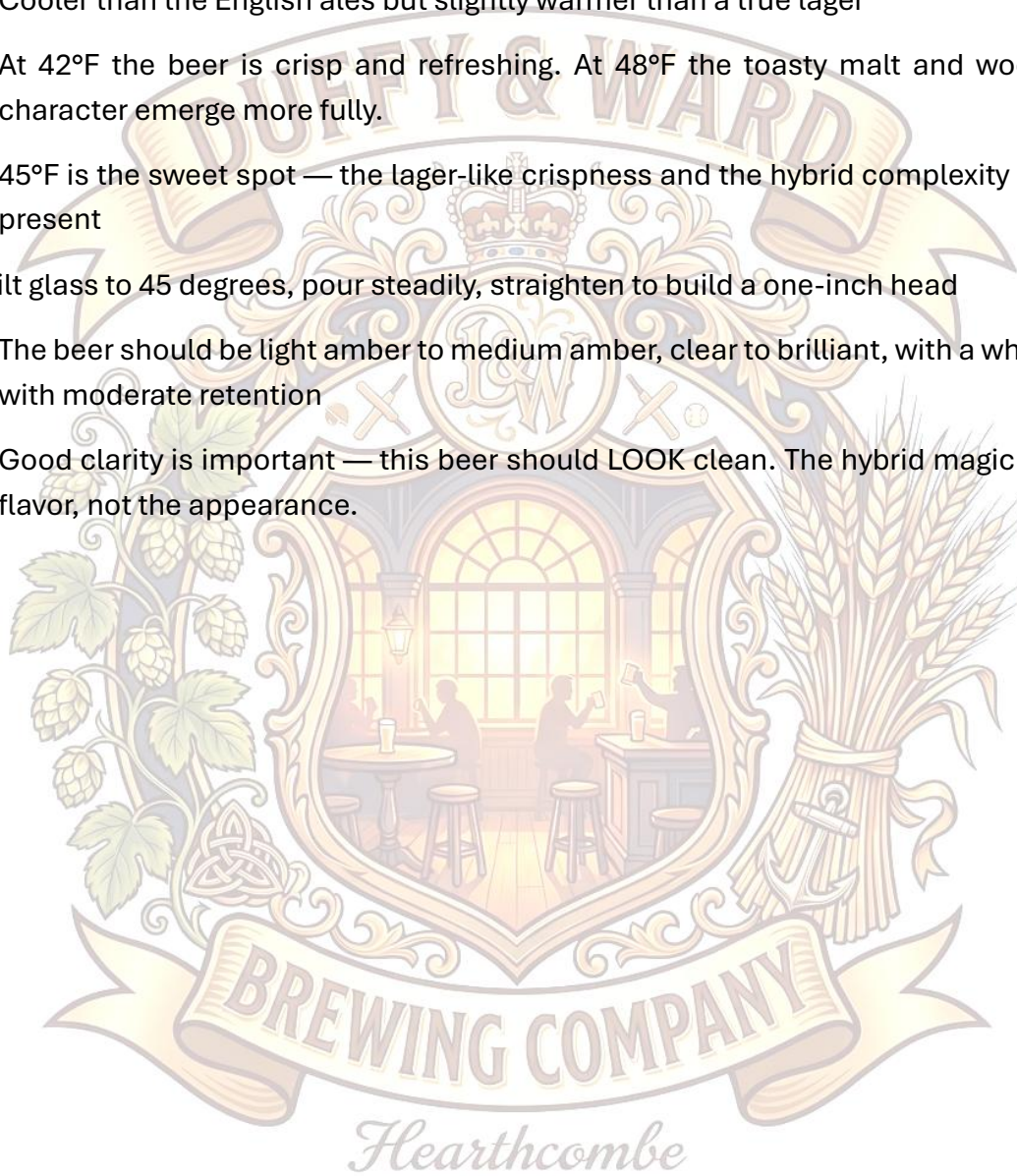
Glass: American shaker pint glass

Serving temperature: 42-48°F (6-9°C) — cool and crisp

- Cooler than the English ales but slightly warmer than a true lager
- At 42°F the beer is crisp and refreshing. At 48°F the toasty malt and woody hop character emerge more fully.
- 45°F is the sweet spot — the lager-like crispness and the hybrid complexity are both present

Pour: Tilt glass to 45 degrees, pour steadily, straighten to build a one-inch head

- The beer should be light amber to medium amber, clear to brilliant, with a white head with moderate retention
- Good clarity is important — this beer should LOOK clean. The hybrid magic is in the flavor, not the appearance.



TASTING NOTES — What To Expect

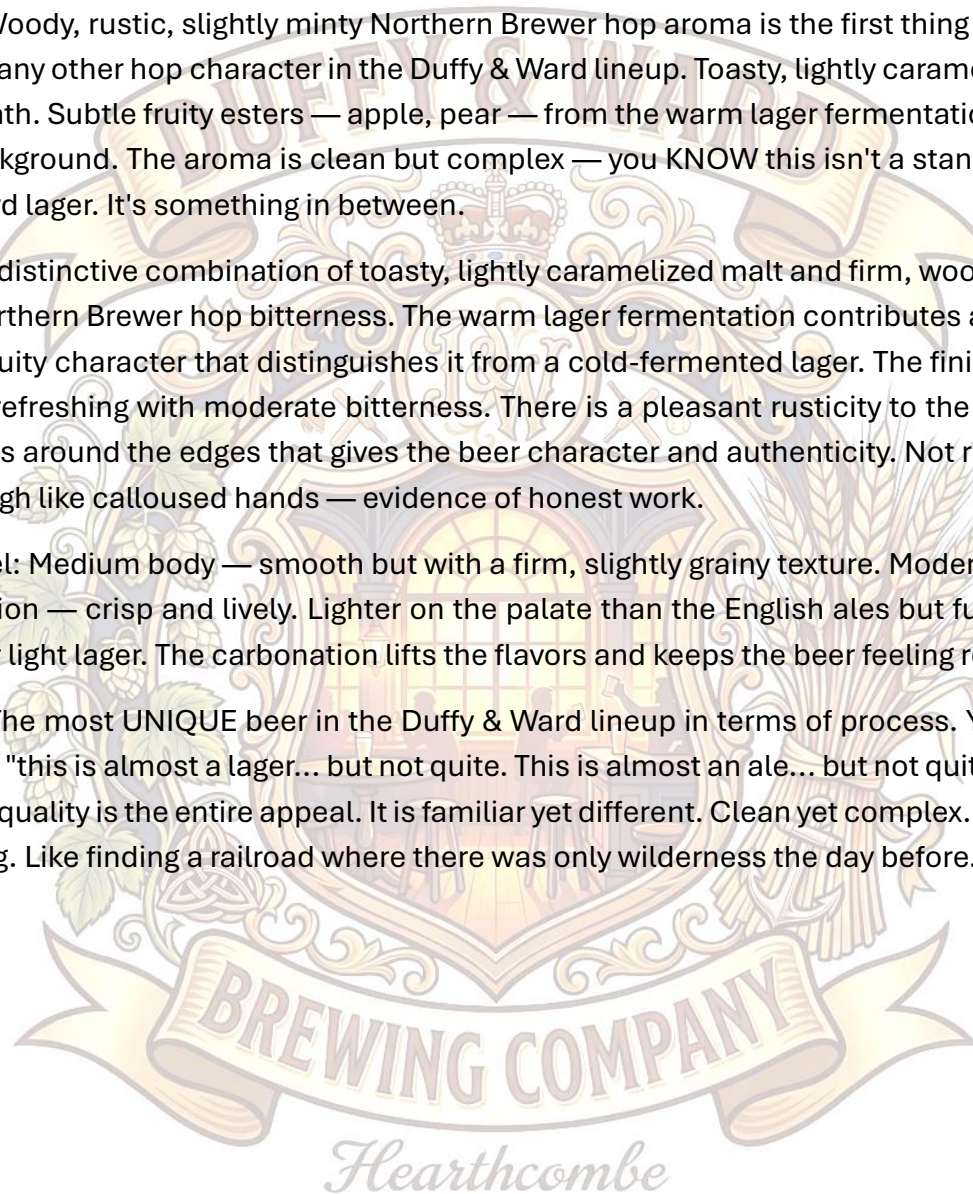
Appearance: Light amber to medium amber — like burnished copper. Clear to brilliant. White head with moderate retention and some lacing. Looks like an amber ale or a dark lager. The visual doesn't prepare you for how unique the flavor is.

Aroma: Woody, rustic, slightly minty Northern Brewer hop aroma is the first thing you notice — unlike any other hop character in the Duffy & Ward lineup. Toasty, lightly caramelized malt underneath. Subtle fruity esters — apple, pear — from the warm lager fermentation. A clean lager background. The aroma is clean but complex — you KNOW this isn't a standard ale or a standard lager. It's something in between.

Flavor: A distinctive combination of toasty, lightly caramelized malt and firm, woody, slightly minty Northern Brewer hop bitterness. The warm lager fermentation contributes a clean but slightly fruity character that distinguishes it from a cold-fermented lager. The finish is crisp, dry, and refreshing with moderate bitterness. There is a pleasant rusticity to the flavor — a roughness around the edges that gives the beer character and authenticity. Not rough like a flaw. Rough like calloused hands — evidence of honest work.

Mouthfeel: Medium body — smooth but with a firm, slightly grainy texture. Moderate to high carbonation — crisp and lively. Lighter on the palate than the English ales but fuller than a pilsner or light lager. The carbonation lifts the flavors and keeps the beer feeling refreshing.

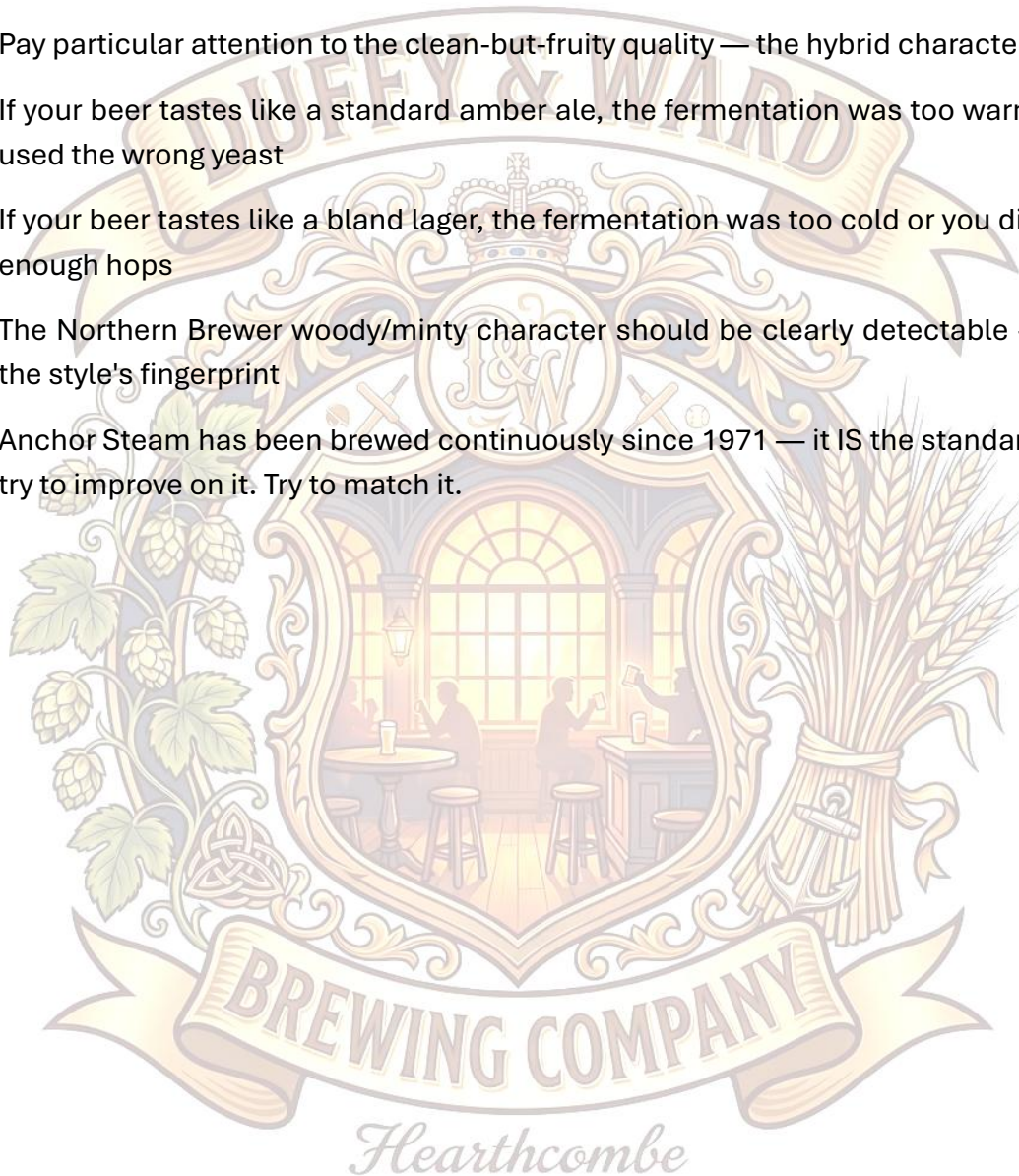
Overall: The most UNIQUE beer in the Duffy & Ward lineup in terms of process. You taste it and think "this is almost a lager... but not quite. This is almost an ale... but not quite." That in-between quality is the entire appeal. It is familiar yet different. Clean yet complex. Simple yet surprising. Like finding a railroad where there was only wilderness the day before.



Commercial Benchmark:

Taste alongside Anchor Steam Beer — the definitive example

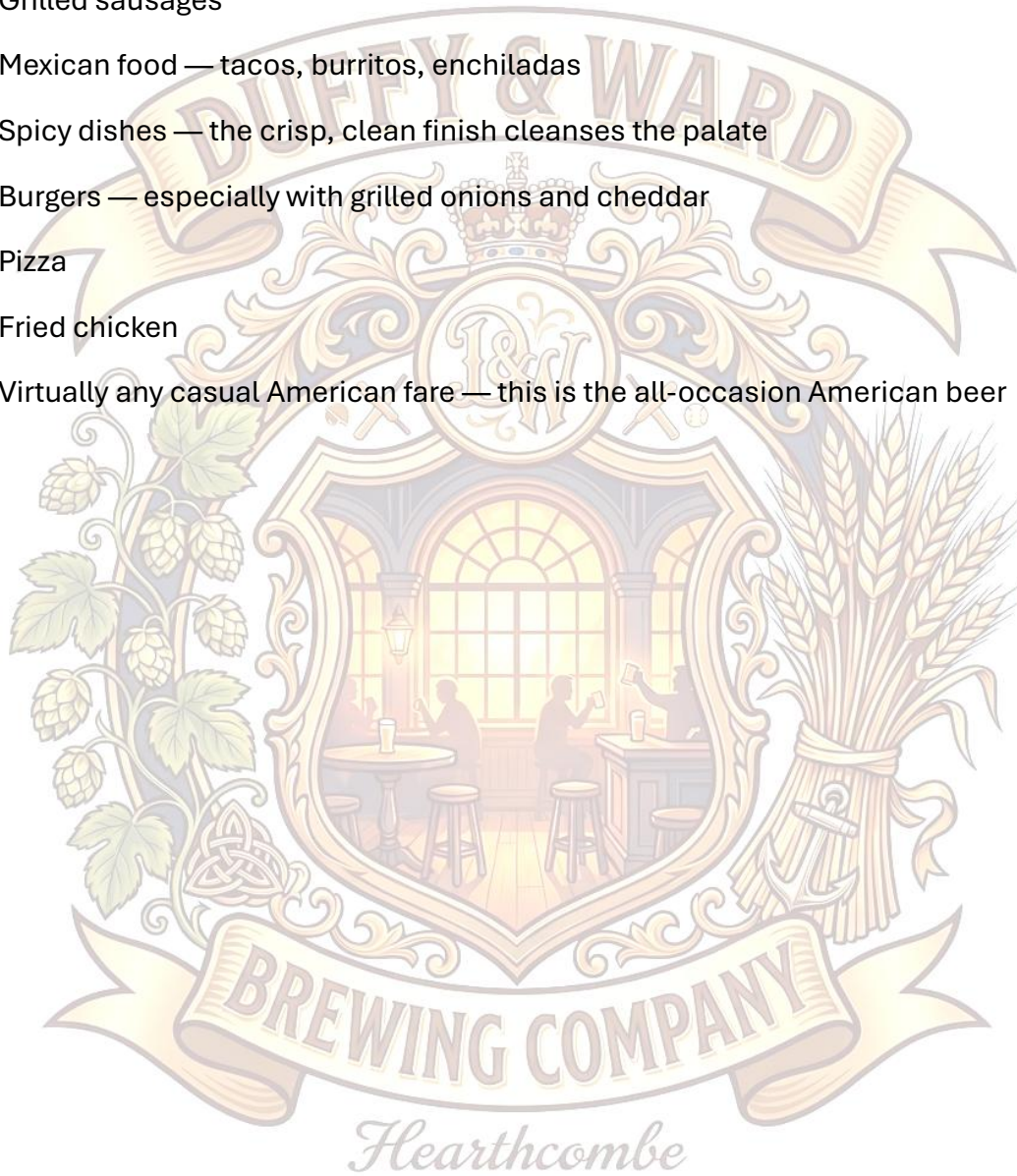
- Your version should have similar color, similar Northern Brewer character, similar balance
- Pay particular attention to the clean-but-fruity quality — the hybrid character
- If your beer tastes like a standard amber ale, the fermentation was too warm or you used the wrong yeast
- If your beer tastes like a bland lager, the fermentation was too cold or you didn't use enough hops
- The Northern Brewer woody/minty character should be clearly detectable — that's the style's fingerprint
- Anchor Steam has been brewed continuously since 1971 — it IS the standard. Don't try to improve on it. Try to match it.



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FOOD PAIRINGS

- Pulled pork sandwich — the signature D&W pairing
- Barbecue — the crisp finish cuts through smoked meat richness
- Grilled sausages
- Mexican food — tacos, burritos, enchiladas
- Spicy dishes — the crisp, clean finish cleanses the palate
- Burgers — especially with grilled onions and cheddar
- Pizza
- Fried chicken
- Virtually any casual American fare — this is the all-occasion American beer



TROUBLESHOOTING

- Tastes like a generic amber ale: Wrong yeast (you used ale yeast) or fermentation temperature too warm (above 65°F). The lager yeast fermented warm is what creates the hybrid character. Without it, you just have amber ale.
- Tastes like a bland lager: Fermentation temperature too cold (below 58°F) or insufficient hop additions. The beer should have noticeable Northern Brewer character and SOME fruity complexity from the warm fermentation. If it's too clean, ferment a few degrees warmer next time.
- No woody/minty hop character: Wrong hop variety. Northern Brewer is essential. No substitute produces the same character. If you used EKG, Cascade, or any other variety, you brewed a different beer.
- Butterscotch or artificial butter flavor (diacetyl): Insufficient diacetyl rest. Raise temperature to 65-68°F for 3-5 more days. The yeast needs warmth to clean up diacetyl. This is the most common off-flavor in beers made with lager yeast.
- Green apple flavor (acetaldehyde): Beer packaged too early. Let fermentation complete fully. Lager yeast is slower to finish — make sure gravity is stable over THREE consecutive readings.
- Sulfury / rotten egg aroma: Normal in YOUNG lager beer — lager yeast produces sulfur compounds during fermentation. These dissipate during conditioning. Extended cold conditioning (2 weeks) should resolve this. If it persists, the yeast was stressed — likely from temperature swings or under-oxygenation.
- Too bitter: Reduce 60-minute Northern Brewer to 1.25 oz. Or check water — too much sulfate amplifies perceived bitterness.
- Too sweet / malty: Mash temperature too high. Next time mash at 150°F. Or fermentation didn't finish — check final gravity.
- Too thin / watery: Increase Crystal 40L to 1.25 lb. Or increase Munich malt to 1.0 lb.

- Fruity esters too strong: Fermentation temperature too warm. Pull back to 58-60°F for a cleaner profile.
- Hazy: Cold crash longer (2 weeks). Add gelatin finings. Lager yeast should flocculate well at cold temperatures — if the beer is still hazy after 2 weeks of cold conditioning, the problem is probably chill haze from protein. Use Whirlfloc at 10 minutes in the boil next time.
- Slow or sluggish fermentation: Under-pitched or under-oxygenated. Lager yeast needs MORE oxygen and MORE yeast cells than ale yeast at the same gravity. Make a proper starter. Aerate aggressively.



NOTES

California Common is the blue-collar beer.

It wasn't born in a monastery. It wasn't brewed for a queen. It wasn't crafted in a centuries-old tradition passed down by monks or aristocrats. It was born in a dirty, chaotic, gold-fever city by German immigrants who couldn't afford ice.

They improvised. They took lager yeast — a yeast that demands cold temperatures — and said "we don't have cold." They fermented it warm. On rooftops. In the fog. And something new was born. Something that wasn't quite lager and wasn't quite ale. Something that was uniquely American. Something that worked.

That's Virgil Stone. He didn't wait for perfect conditions. He didn't complain about what he didn't have. He built the railroad with what was in front of him — his hands, his tools, his stubbornness, and the unyielding conviction that if something needed to be done, he was the man to do it.

California Common is the beer of doing what needs to be done with what you've got. No excuses. No apologies. No waiting for someone else to build it for you.

Ask yourself: does this beer taste like it was built by hand? Does it taste like determination? Does it taste like a man who shakes your hand once and you never forget the grip?

Crisp. Clean. Firm. Woody. Just a little rough around the edges. Not polished. Not elegant. Not refined. Just RIGHT.

If yes — you've brewed Virgil's beer.

STEAM DRIVEN. IRON WILLED.

