



Nerdiest Beer

Of the hundreds of bottles of beer on the wall, only one provides a history lesson in every pour. And for that, you can thank brewmaster Sam Calagione and molecular archaeologist Patrick McGovern. For the past decade, these Indiana Joneses of the brewing community have dedicated themselves to whipping up the tastiest beers in history—all of history—and they've got the archaeological evidence to back it up.

The story starts in 1997, when McGovern began investigating crockery samples from the tomb of King Mita, the Turkish royal who inspired the King Midas myths. After running a chemical analysis on some of the king's cups, McGovern realized that the man with the golden touch liked his ale. Determined to figure out what the king's beer tasted like, he took the analysis to Sam Calagione of Delaware's Dogfish Head Brewery. Together, the pair sought to reconstruct the 2,700-year-old beverage using authentic ingredients such as Muscat grapes, saffron, and honey. The result?

An ancient ale they dubbed Midas Touch Golden Elixir.

Incredibly, this old-fashioned beverage has become a modern-day hit. Dogfish Head describes the drink as "somewhere between wine and mead." But the beverage isn't just popular at bars; it's also a hit with critics. The drink nabbed a silver medal at the 2005 Great American Beer Festival and a bronze at the 2008 World Beer Cup. The success has also inspired Calagione and McGovern to dig deeper for historical recipes. Today, Dogfish Head offers an entire Ancient Ales series. The line includes Chateau Jiahu, based on a spiced beer found in 9,000-year-old crockery from northern China, and an Aztec beer called Theobroma, which was recreated using residue from 3,000-year-old pottery in Honduras. The former contains rice flakes and chrysanthemum flowers; the latter boasts notes of cocoa, chili, and annatto. And while we have no idea what annatto is, we're not questioning it. Each sip just makes us happy that history is repeating itself.

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