



Dear Jim,

I'm so happy to hear that beer is your beverage of choice. During a segment on CBS' "Sunday Morning" [you asked](#) how American beer lovers had lost their way. I'm writing to assure you that's not the case. In fact, it's quite the opposite, and that should excite you as a beer lover!

The innovation and choice in today's beer landscape is something to celebrate. For years, all beer tasted exactly the same. The U.S. beer scene had lost its way. Why? Because the industry had been consolidated and commoditized and there were only a handful of breweries producing almost the exact same thing. Thankfully, independent craft brewers brought beer back to a local and flavor-filled place! America is a beer destination -- a great melting pot for amazing beer and amazing variety. That's good for us beer lovers who are rewarded with everything from your (and many people's) beloved American lager to fuller flavored options like [American IPA](#), Baltic-style porter, German-style Kolsch and more.

If your palate is pleased by something traditional — awesome. *But come on, Jim. To say that all other beers are bad, well, it's simply not true.*

As you say: "A beer preference is personal." For millions of beer lovers, we want something unique. And for thousands of brewers, they want to brew with something unique. You wouldn't stifle what ingredients a chef uses or the jokes a comedian tells or the roles an actor plays. Why should brewers be limited to water, yeast, malt and hops? And why should beer lovers only have to drink light [American lager](#)?

This week kicks off the 37th annual [Great American Beer Festival](#), one of the largest beer celebrations and competitions in the world. With more than 4,000 beers being poured, there's something for everyone to enjoy. I want to invite you to come out to Denver and give something new a swirl. Meet the small business owners making craft beers in the cities, towns and hamlets you visit. I can't promise you won't get asked if you like hoppy beer, but I guarantee we'll find you flavor and fun amidst 62,000 beer-loving adults of all ages (including their 40s!) who have *found their beer way* beyond just one specific beer style.

If you can't make it to Denver – and we sincerely hope you join us – we're sending a taste of American beer to you. Enclosed you'll find beers from small and independent craft brewers we think you'll enjoy.

Cheers!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Herz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julia Herz
Publisher, CraftBeer.com and Craft Beer Program Director, Brewers Association