



California malting barley accepted by craft brewers

December 27, 2020

This Scottish export style ale is the 2020 champion of the Iron Brew competition where University of California–Davis brewing science student teams go head to head with unique recipes. Butta 12 malting barley is one of the ingredients. Photo courtesy of Patrick McGuire.

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With the new millennium, there was a major increase in small, craft breweries in California accompanied by talk of a new malt house in the San Francisco Bay Area. It took 20 years of labor for breeders to create a new malting barley variety adapted for dryland farming in the Central Valley of California, which is described in a recent article in the *Journal of Plant Registrations*.

Five fungi and two viruses prevented direct introduction of malting barleys from northern states and Canada for use in California. In the late 1990s, researchers used conventional breeding to exploit germplasm from Oregon State University for malting quality and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT/ICARDA)

in Mexico for better disease resistance.

Each year, 100 samples were sent for malt quality evaluation to the USDA Malt Lab (Madison, WI). The most valued of 13 characteristics were low protein percentage, high malt extract, enzymes, low fiber, and plumpness. Plant-scale production of malt followed, and brewer and consumer acceptability of the barley was assessed. In 2020, the new variety, 'Butta 12', was commercialized.

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Gallagher, L.W., Silberstein, R., Prato, L., & Vogt, H. (2020). 'Butta 12', a two-rowed malting barley adapted to the California central valley with proven floor-malting success and craft brewer acceptance. *Journal of Plant Registrations*, 14, 250–265.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/plr2.20067>

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