

## Wine & Cheese by TCC's December 2008 Beer Club

### Merry Christmas!

Christmas is just around the corner and that means holiday seasonal beers are here. This month we are featuring seasonal brews with an Imperial theme. To give you some background information, the word Imperial originally referred to the Russian Imperial Stout style of beer, a highly-hopped, high gravity stout with alcohol typically in the range of 8 to 12 percent by volume. Today, Imperial beers have a lot more hops and malts than average leading to more flavor and higher alcohol levels. Balancing this into a drinkable beverage can be tricky but the following two beers are an excellent example of this balance.

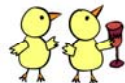
The first selection is Two Brothers Brewery Northwind Imperial Stout. Mmm...Imperial Stout - two words that together equal black coffee, dark chocolate, and smoke. A great big beer yet it is surprisingly balanced, smooth, and easy drinking.

The second selection is Mendocino Brewery's winter seasonal release, Imperial IPA. IPA fans will certainly be marking the last week in November on their calendars every year after tasting this one!

In the following pages, there is some information regarding your beer club selections. You'll find a description of each beer and some technical information on the beers, including some cheese pairing suggestions.

As always, your feedback is greatly encouraged! Please call us or stop by with your comments regarding our selections.

Have a great month!  
The Gang at TCC



Wine & Cheese by TCC



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## Two Brothers Brewery North Wind Imperial Stout

Type:	Imperial Stout
Brewery location:	Warrenville, Illinois
Country:	U.S.A.
Availability:	Late November to early January
Alcohol:	8.5%

### Interesting Fact:

Imperial stout, also known as "Russian Imperial Stout" is a strong dark beer or stout that was originally brewed by Thrale's Brewery in London, England. It was brewed for export to the court of Catherine II of Russia as "Thrale's Entire Porter". Imperial Stout has a high alcohol content; nine or ten percent alcohol by volume is common. Imperial Stout exhibits very strong malt flavors, hints of dark fruits, and is often quite rich, resembling a chocolate dessert.

### Tasting notes:

The nose on this beer is predominantly coffee and dark chocolate malt. The flavors are very friendly and a lot less aggressive than the nose indicates. However, this is not a wimpy beer. The flavors are full, dark, rich and malty and balanced with a generous amount of hops. The finish lingers with palate pleasing dark chocolate.

### Food pairing:

This rich brew is a great match with French onion soup, blackened steak, oysters, and a flourless chocolate tort with dark berries.

### Cheese Club Pairing:

The rich earthiness of truffles in this month's Truffle Tomini is a perfect complement for the sweetness of this Imperial Stout.

## Mendocino Brewery Imperial IPA

Type:	Imperial IPA
Brewery location:	Mendocino, California
Country:	U.S.A
Availability:	Late November to early January
Alcohol:	7.5%

### Interesting Fact:

The "International Bitterness Units" scale, or simply IBU scale, provides a measure of the bitterness of beer caused by the hops used during brewing. An IBU is measured through the use of a spectrophotometer and solvent extraction. This is "the result of an empirical formula whose development was based on tasting beer samples and correlating the perceived bitterness to a measured value which represented the total concentration of bitter compounds in the beer." Still awake? Here are the cliff notes: The more hops added to the brew, the more bitter a beer will be and the higher the IBU's (except in the case where you balance the hop bitterness with malts).

### Tasting Notes:

The nose has aromas of caramel and citrus. The mid palate is loaded with malt and hops and grapefruit with complements of brown sugar. The finish is almost coffee with a perfect citrus rind bite that slowly fades into molasses.

### Food Pairing:

This would be a great beer for jerked anything! (chicken, pork, beef, lamb, goat). And don't forget dessert - yes dessert! Try apple pie or lemon squares with this tasty brew.

### Cheese Club Pairing:

IPA's of this caliber love aggressive cheeses. Pair this IPA with the Caciocavallo. With its full flavored tang and slight pungency, the Caciocavallo will stand up to this Imperial IPA.

Enjoy!