

# Forked & Corked

## The Draft: Non-Wussy Wheat Beer

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Last week, I wrote about the strongest beers in the world. This week, it's the wimpiest: wheat beers. Bubbly, sweet, smooth, the go-to pint for beer drinkers who don't like beer—extra lemon slices please. Of course, there are some exceptions, made by brewers who use the style's extra-low hoppiness to emphasize other flavors, particularly from funky, unconventional yeasts. Leelanau's Whaleback White is one of the best.

Leelanau, a side project by Ron Jeffries, the brewmaster at Dexter, Michigan's Jolly Pumpkin brewery (try their Oro de Calabaza golden ale), focuses more on yeast than on spice. Whaleback White is fermented out in the open with wild yeast, like a Lambic, which gives it a really sour taste from lactic acid bacteria that gets into the beer while it sits. It's aged in new, French oak barrels, smoothing out the flavors, and then carbonated naturally (with more yeast) in the bottles, amping the sour, fruity notes. The beer is cidery, fruity, tart, and really dry. Man up: No lemon necessary.

— [William Bostwick](#) photo: William Bostwick