

Mild Maketh the Brewery!

Tap East Brewery has been around for 8 years but probably doesn't come to mind when one is thinking of award winning London breweries and yet this 2.5 barrel operation punches well above its weight.



As well as winning SIBA's South East IPA category this year, this tiny brewery scooped the award for the best Speciality beer and best Mild in CAMRA's Champion Beer of London awards this year at Ealing. It also secured silver overall (to Five Points' Railway Porter's gold).

So what makes this brewery special? The pub brewery was set up in 2011 in the Westfield Centre, Stratford. It may be an unlikely venture in a place dominated by the big names of the high street but that is why they are there. Westfield wanted some smaller, local outlets alongside likes of Waitrose, Boots

and Costa Coffee and so Tap East came into being, a venture set up by Mike and Richard of the Rake in Borough Market fame.

Since the early days, there have been four brewers but the ethos of each appears to have been the same: to keep the best and tweak the rest! Josh, the current brewer, explained 'There are certain beers within the portfolio that are loved and it's important that the regulars continue to be satisfied'. Despite this, each brewer brings in their own flair and Josh said 'Richard and Mike are happy for experimentation as long as the beer sells!'



An example of the experimentation was the hosting of a home brew competition with the winner having the chance of brewing their beer at Tap East. 'It wasn't quite what we expected as the winner lives overseas and so we ended up doing a 'virtual' brew via the internet!' It turns out they will be coming over shortly for the launch of the beer.

Josh started as a brewer at Highgate Brewhouse & Kitchen at the Angel before moving onto Camden Brewery. Each has provided a unique experience from creativity to efficient brewing, lessons that Josh is fully aware of but the latter can't really be applied to Tap East. 'It's the weirdest brewery I have ever brewed at. It's been designed to occupy as small a space as possible. It messes with my head a bit but unlike at Camden, efficiency is not the name of the game' he quipped. Take the mash tun and kettle; they are stacked on top of each other as are the four fermenters so in total it looks like just three vessels and the kettle doubles as a hot liquor tank as well.



Space has impact on the storage of ingredients too. They keep the hops on site and some smaller ingredient but the rest is stored with Five Points. Cask and keg storage is at a premium too (60% is cask and the rest is keg) and the kegs are key kegs so the beer is still live and there is a shortish shelf life. This is no problem with most of the beer being sold in the Tap East pub and a little in the Rake.



So what of the future? With Josh's energy and commitment to quality, more awards might be likely and, if nothing else, try their East End Mild and Coffee in the Morning; their gongs are well earned.

TASTING NOTES

From CAMRA London Tasting Panel.

Tonic 3%

Hazy pale yellow easy drinking beer with lemony aroma and taste. Some hoppy notes developing in the slightly dry finish.

Pale and Wheat malts; Simcoe and Citra hops.

East End Mild 3.5%

Ruby dark brown mild. Roasty chocolate notes throughout. The palate has treacle toffee and damson fruits fading in the cocoa finish.

Dark crystal, Pale, Chocolate and Cara 30; Admiral hops

Boleyn Bitter 3.8%

A coloured light bitter with caramelised orange in the aroma with some sweet biscuit that is follow through into the flavour. A gentle spiciness and bitterness develops in the finish. Quaffable.

Pale, Crystal, Munich, Cara 30; Endeavour and Admiral hops

APA 4.3%

Smooth, hoppy gold beer. Aroma, flavour and finish are of citrus and tropical fruit and hops overlaid with some sweet biscuit. There is a developing bitterness, which fades a little in the aftertaste where a spiciness takes over.

Pale, Munich, Caramalt; Amarillo, Centennial, Simcoe and Citra hops.

IPA 6%

Full bodied warming strong bitter with tropical and citrus notes. The sweet biscuit provides balance to the slowly growing dry bitterness that lingers in the dry spicy finish.

Pale, Munich, Dark Crystal, Caramalt; Mosaic, Chinook, HBC 431. Latter is an experimental hop that has not yet been named.

500th 7.1%

One off spiced milk stout celebrating the 500th brew.

Well balanced, complex milk stout. Spicy notes dominate the aroma and taste initially becoming rich, chocolately and fruity. Notes of vanilla. Lingering bitter sweet finish.

Added Cinnamon and Cardamom spices; Cherry and Boysenberry concentrates. Admiral hops

