

Ethics can pay off!

Although a number of London breweries have been set up by people escaping the financial sector, one partner in Clarkshaws Brewery has got to have a historic first! Lucy Grimshaw is an archaeologist by training (the Shaw bit) who combined with Ian Clark (the financial background) to create Clarkshaws two years ago in Dulwich.

Since then, they have gone from strength to strength, outgrowing their original premises and moving to Loughborough Junction in February to share a 5 barrel plant with London Brew Lab. They are brewing four days a week but still needed more capacity so they recently increased their number of fermenters and now have two of 5 barrels in size and one of 10 barrels. Nevertheless, this is not the end of their growth plans. Clarkshaws is another brewery based in a railway arch and their next step, they hope, is to expand into yet another arch but just next door.



Most breweries are looking to be something different. For Clarkshaws, it is their ethical stance that is beyond just the lip service. Take travel miles. They hand bottle all of their bottled beers rather than transporting their beers across the country to be bottled elsewhere. Labour intensive it might be (and a bit boring as well we were told) but the pair look to see how this might help the community and are just about to employ some local people who are on work experience to help. Similarly, with just a few exceptions, their beers are brewed entirely from British ingredients, including using the more delicate British Cascade hop rather than the American version and they use floor malts from Warminster Malts. All of their beers are vegan friendly and unfiltered. The beers are put straight from the fermenters into casks, which are hand cleaned, except the beer that is to be used for bottling, where they put it into 1000 litre bag in boxes first. Currently, the split is 50% cask and the rest is bottled with a little key keg, which is mostly lager.

So what made them want to start a brewery in the first place? It all began when they started making wine at home. From there they progressed to sloe gin and then into brewing beer. These days, besides Lucy and Ian, there is Patrick, who is now the head brewer and joined them originally



through an apprentice scheme. They also have two sales people. Lucy does the marketing and Ian does the deliveries and fixing things!

Like many other London breweries, Clarkshaws open up to the public each Saturday from noon until dark. The seating is all outside so they may well move into a community space during the winter so better check if you'd like to visit.

Their ethos regarding their beer, can be summed up by Ian, 'We are probably an unfashionable brewery; we don't crazily over hop but our beers are in a 'craft' style. We brew beers I want to drink'. They must be doing something right as they were runners up at the Vegan Festival that took place recently in London; Brasscastle from Yorkshire, were the winners.

The London Tasting panel tasted four of their real ales, all of which were of a 'sensible' alcohol content. There were three best bitters at 4% ABV:

Gorgon's Alive: The malts are Pale, Crystal and Torrified Wheat with a blend of four British hops: Challenger, Pioneer, Brambling Cross and Goldings. The result is a golden coloured beer with spicy hops throughout with a touch of flowery hops on the nose. The flavour has some hints of orange and peach with a dry bitterness, which develops in the finish.

Phoenix Rising: Tawny coloured smooth beer with a creamy toffee nose. Bananas and pineapple on the palate with a little hop and caramel. Dryish, short fruity biscuit finish. The malts used are the same as Gorgon's Alive but with Challenger and Phoenix hops.

Strange Brew No. 1: An easy drinking yellow coloured 'pale ale' with a 'fruit cocktail' aroma. The flavour is of peppery hops, tropical fruits and biscuit sweetness balanced by a trace of bitterness. The aftertaste is light and of fruit and bitterness. This beer uses the same malt mix as the previous two beers and the hops are Challenger and UK Cascade.

Then Clarkshaw's wheat beer, **Archer (4.2% ABV)**, was also tried. This beer uses Pilsner malt as well as wheat and Archer (thus the name) and Progress hops. The result is a beer with a little clove, lemon and banana in the aroma. The cloves and lemon are also present in the flavour with a bitterness that develops in the finish. It has a dry character throughout.



Unfortunately their popular , **Hellhound IPA, at 5.6% ABV** had sold out at the time of the visit but we did try a key keg beer and if you can be tempted to try such a beer, then Clarkshaws collaborative brew with London Brew Lab is worth a try. **This 5.3% ABV Coldharbour Lager** is a good example of the beer style. The beer is lagered for 5 weeks, which helps develop the full flavour. There are flowery hops, lemon and mango on the nose and palate. The finish has a hint of creamy vanilla alongside lemon and peppery hop with a trace of bitterness. It uses Lager and Carapils malt with Mosaic and Progress hops.



Maybe you'd like to do your own tasting? You can buy the bottles online at:
<http://www.clarkshaws.co.uk/index.html>, where you can also find details of their open days and the opportunity to spend a day brewing with Clarkshaws. Enjoy!