

Brixton, a serious approach to ingredients

If the ingredients you use in a beer aren't up to scratch, then neither will your beer. So what do you do?

Brixton Brewery was set up in 2013 by Jez and Mike after escaping from IT and accounting respectively. Jez takes a really serious approach to his ingredients, smelling and examining every single batch of malt and hop that enters the brewery and woe betide if it doesn't come up to scratch. Jez has an ethos of switching suppliers or ingredients to ensure that Brixton's beers are of the quality he wants.

The quality ethos isn't just around the ingredients, they swab the tanks after cleaning to ensure all organic matter has been removed and, like a lot of Brewers, they will keep back a sample of each batch of their bottled beer to ensure its okay, sending a sample off for external analysis every so often.

Brixton yet is another brewery in a railway archway. It was funded by Jez and Mike with help from family and friends. Jez said 'We saw an opportunity and thought if we didn't (do it) somebody else would'.

Their brew length is 6.5 barrels and they started with 2 fermenters, which have now expanded to eleven, three of which are eleven barrels in size. There is also a small automatic bottler from Mehenn, to cope with the growth in the demand for bottles after they realised that they couldn't keep up with demand by bottling by hand. This, and the new fermenters, were funded by retaining and reinvesting the brewery's profits. Brewing is now up to five days a week and they are contemplating starting double brewing. The growth has meant more staff and there are now four brewers, one driver and one office person, who is Jez's wife Libby, who also looks after product development and sales.

The brewery and small bar takes up one arch but Brixton has a further two arches for storage. Jez feels that it is likely to be space that will be the limiting factor in the future. There are five beers in their core range, which the London Tasting Panel tried. The beers are named after local landmarks and the



designs on the bottles reflect the local Caribbean influence, all brightly coloured. Effra (% ABV golden ale) is named after the underground river; Reliance after the smallest of Brixton's covered markets, Atlantic is the local street market. The beers (except the stout) uses American dried yeast; the stout uses a dried English ale yeast. The water for the stout is adjusted to pH 7 and the rest to pH 6. The spent malt is picked up by pig farmers and local allotment owners use some of the used hops.

The beers are heavily influenced by the States, mostly golden and refreshing. Tasting notes for the beers tried are below. But why not pop along and try the beers yourself at the brewery? They open their bar on Saturday afternoons; see their website for details (www.brixtonbrewery.com).



Tasting notes

Reliance Pale Ale 4.2%

Tropical notes and a little malt are noticeable in this amber coloured beer. The tropical notes are also present in the favour alongside some spicy hop. There is a gentle bitterness that grows on drinking balanced by a touch of sweetness. The name comes from the nearby Reliance Arcade, built in the 1920's.

Low Voltage 4.3%

This beer is the little sister to the Electric IPA. It's a golden ale with tangerine and grapefruit in the aroma and flavour. There are earthy, spicy hop notes present that linger with some dry character and a touch of marmalade. Magnum, Columbus, Simcoe and Mosaic hops. Maris Otter Low Colour Pale, Carapils and Oats.

Effra 4.5%

Effra is the name of a river, now completely underground in Brixton. Copper coloured best bitter with fruit and caramel malt on nose and palate with hints of chocolate and peppery hops that are also there in the dry aftertaste. Maris Otter Pale, CRapils, Caraaroma, Vienna and Caramalt malts. Hops are complex blend of Northdown, Pilgrim, Aurora, Bobek, Ahtanum and Summit.



Atlantic 5.4%

An American pale with strong aroma of flowery hops, melon and citrus. Flavour is of sweet biscuit, grapefruit and melon, with a touch of bitterness. The finish is dry and complex. Hops are Citra, Simcoe, Galaxy and Vic Secret. The latter is similar to Galaxy but is less intense. The malts are low colour Maris Otter and Carapils. Named after Brixton's street market.

Wind rush Stout 5%

Ruby black beer with Ribena and smoky roast aroma. The flavour is of sweet chocolate, black currant and a hint of liquorice. The aftertaste is dry, dark roast with faint sweet caramelised fruit. Maris Otter Pale, Crystal, Roasted Barley and oats with brambling Cross hops. MV Empire Windrush was the ship that brought the first wave of West Indian immigrants to South London in 1948.

Electric IPA 6.5%

This is the strongest beer in the core range and inspired by Electric Avenue. The sweet biscuit balances the bitterness in this golden ale. Strong citrus, passion fruit and melon alongside some spicy hop. Nose is of grapefruit and hops. Finish is dry and hoppy. Maris Otter Pale, Torrefied Wheat, Caripils. Hops are Amarillo, Cascade, Centennial and Mosaic