

Anspach & Hobday, a pigeon and a railway arch

Tucked away at the southern end of the Bermondsey mile, is Anspach & Hobday, another London railway arch brewery!



Paul Anspach set up the brewery with Jack Hobday in 2013, sharing the premises for the first year with Bullfinch Brewery; each had a tiny 100 litres kit (0.6 barrels), each with a 200 litre fermenter. At that time, most of the production was sold through the tap room. After just six months, Anspach & Hobday expanded to 450 litres and subsequently to 14 hecto litres (8.6 barrels) with 8 conical fermenters, which also double as conditioning tanks.

The kit is designed to use hop pellets and, like most small brewers, they bring in malt already crushed. The spent malt is picked up by a farmer. The yeast varies. Paul said 'If it is blonde or a core beer, we use wet yeast, otherwise, it can be dried'.

Their approach to fining also varies. They tank-fine some of their beers using Irish Moss finings and some cellulose finings. However, they don't tend to fine the cask beers, which they will only supply to 'pubs that we know can handle cask well' said Paul. Regular cask outlets include Marquis of Wellington, 3 Johns, Understudy and Priory Arms. However, 75% of the beer is now keg and then bottles are the next biggest sellers. These are done by hand, mostly for experimental brew. Outlets for these are independent bottle shops, Oddbins and a few restaurants. 'In due course, we'll need to decide whether to invest in a bottling kit' reflected Paul.

Paul started home brewing when he finished university and started working in a wine shop, where he gave away samples of his brew to get feedback. He then worked for Cave Direct. Paul commented 'In the role, I worked a lot with Fullers and this gave me some very useful retail experience'. Jack's background was in book retailing.

Nowadays, Jack doesn't work at the brewery full time but the pair were joined by Patrick who does the backroom stuff and sales, leaving Paul free to do the production. He is assisted by Dylan, who was assistant manager of the Victoria in Paddington, and Dan, who worked for Real Ale in Twickenham. Both volunteered at the brewery before joining it and were both home brewers.



Anspach & Hobday's logo is a London pigeon; 'Just a bit of fun' said Paul. But the theme of the labelling is two figures representing the old and the new with some links to the history of the beer.



Being part of the Bermondsey Mile, the tap room at the brewery opens each weekend (Friday 5-9pm; Saturday 10.30am-6pm and Sunday 12-5pm) but this isn't without its problems. Paul commented 'We are going to have to recruit someone to run the

bar for us. It's pretty demanding. As part of our licence we have to restrict our hours and have a maximum number of people we can allow outside and they have to all be in by 6pm. This, of course, is more of an issue in the summer!'

They have an extensive range of beers with their core beers including Pale (4.4%), India Pale Ale (6%), Smoked Brown (6%), Porter (6.7%) and Cream Ale (5.2%) The latter is an unusual American style pale beer

using corn. Below are the London Tasting Panel notes for the beers we tried but why not take a visit to the Tap Room yourself?

La Petite Saison 3.9%

Banana and fruity sour nose that carries into the flavour and the dry aftertaste. There is some green grassy notes and a biscuity sweetness on the palate. It uses a Saison yeast and Sorachi Ace.

Passionfruit Berliner Weiss 3.6%

Created using 50% wheat, passionfruit juice and lactobacillus, this hazy beer is refreshing. There is a lemony nose with some passionfruit notes that are more present in the aroma than the flavour. The sourness is balanced by a little sweetness but the sourness lingers in the very dry finish.

India Pale Ale 6%

American style smooth beer using three American hops (Centennial, Summit, Simcoe) leading to grapefruit, orange and lemon zest notes with a spicy hoppiness. The sweet biscuity flavour provides a balance to the increasing bitterness which are also present in the aftertaste. This is the brewery's second best seller.

Cream Ale 5.2%

The recipe started as an American cream Ale but this beer has more hops than traditional (100% Sorachi Ace). Complex and smooth, this yellow coloured beer has a distinct Kellogg's cornflake character

throughout overlaid with cantaloupe melon, some green grassy notes and some earthy hops that become more peppery in the dry finish.

Smoked Brown 6%

Smoked nose with a trace of coffee. The flavour has damsons, toffee fudge and dark chocolate with an underlying smoked character which gives way to a lasting dry roastiness. Hops are Willamette and Bramling Cross and the malts are 30% Rauch malt,

dark crystal and crystal Special B. (Rauch is a German smoked beer).

Coffee Porter 6.3%

This was an experimental beer using both English and American yeasts, seven different malts and Willamette hops. The crushed coffee beans (from Taylor Street) are added post fermentation. The result is a complex porter with a sweet brown sugar sweetness, dark and raisins overlaid with dark coffee notes that are present in the dry, roasty bitter finish. The aroma is of coffee with a trace of fruit.

Three Threads

This beer is named after the Victorian habit of mixing three beers of different ages. It uses a third each of brown, smoked and special B malts with East Kent Golding hops. It is an aged bottled ruby brown beer with hints of sweet Sherry and dry roasted malts. It is balanced by a gentle growing bitterness.

