

## Some partnerships last!

When the London Tasting Panel arrived at Hackney Brewery's new location, Jon Swain (one half of Hackney's owners) was up a ladder against the outside front wall. "I'm fixing a hole" he said. And that probably explains the ethos of Hackney Brewery, for both Jon and his partner, Pete Hills, are definitely a roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-stuck-in pair. This is reflected in the way that their new venture was set up. "We did most of it ourselves over about 6 months. With the aid of friends, we demolished the interior of the two story building and we ended up filling five 40ft skips" said Pete.

The building had to be rewired and a new floor laid but as so often happens with brewery floors, that didn't go smoothly. Pete explained, "We didn't finish paying until it was all sorted". The brewery was paid for by crowd funding and loans and opened in May 2021 in time for their tenth birthday. The extra space has allowed for expansion, increasing capacity to ten tanks; two for packaging and eight fermenters. They also have installed a centrifuge, which they use on most of their beers. "It helps us turn our beer over faster. Before the centrifuge, we used to drop the finished beer in the tanks" explained Jon. "But this change has meant we had to adjust our recipes".



Centrifuging isn't the only change; Jon added, "We now do the mashing at a slightly higher temperature and a shorter mash. This means we have more unfermentable sugars in the beer, which improves the mouthfeel".

Two other key installations have been a small microlab and the cold store. "Our beer is hop forward" said Pete, "So keeping the beer cold is important and it's very much beer in, and beer out to keep it all fresh".

Needless to say, the move resulted in a very busy time. "We had a mad six months, working six days a week and moving between the two premises<sup>1</sup>. And we were terrified as to what the industry was going to

look like post Covid. We were trying to guess our future brewing" Pete elucidated. "But now we have an opportunity to help develop 'The Black Horse Mile'<sup>2</sup> and Waltham Forest Council has been really supportive".

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<sup>1</sup> Their other premises were in railway arches in Haggerston

<sup>2</sup> Mirroring the Bermondsey Mile

But it isn't just Waltham Forest that came in for Pete's praises: "We have brilliant staff. We believe in supporting everyone. We pay London Living Wage and fund the Institute of Brewing and Distilling exams. In the future, we are looking at the possibility of participating in the apprentice scheme".

The Hackney team now consists of two drivers, two sales people (Dan and Tom), a marketing person (Cal, ex Five Points), two brewers in addition to Jon: Evan, ex Beavertown and Ross ex Fourpure, and Pete, who looks after the finances!

Another team look after the Tap Room, headed by Kelly. Pete said "This is the first time we have had space for a tap room. The team have been really flexible and seem to cope with everything including the move to table service. On the bar, alongside the Hackney beers, we decided to do something different and stock other beers from outside London".

Although Hackney started as a real ale brewer, these beers are now done only occasionally. Jon said "Roughly, 97% of our beer is draught keg and the rest is cans. We use the mobile canner, Them Who Can. We did try some mini kegs but we had mixed results so dropped them".

The core range is brewed every week and consists of Boogie Van, an American hopped IPA (5.5% ABV), Kapow (4.4% ABV), an easy drinking fruity golden ale and a 4% ABV lager, described as a cross between Pils and a Helles. Peaches, a kettle sour at 4% ABV using peach puree, is brewed fortnightly and Mysterious Spectre, a newish 5% ABV beer, is brewed monthly and uses Mosaic hops and TNT (a secret blend of hops from Germany).

Sales are predominantly Central London rather than in the East. With cans it is bottle shops and independents. "We don't supply supermarkets" said Jon.

So what for the future? Jon would like to begin beer ageing again – there are still a couple of wooden barrels that came from the old brewery. And it is clear that the Tap Room will play an

important part of Hackney's prospects. But whatever happens, Jon and Peter, who met whilst working at the Eagle, Farringdon Road, over ten years ago, look set for their partnership to continue for another ten years.

For more details on Hackney Brewery and their High Hill Tap Room, see: [www.hackneybrewery.com](http://www.hackneybrewery.com).

### **Tasting notes**

#### Lager 4% ABV

This beer is described as a cross between a Pils and a Helles and takes 4 weeks to produce. It's an easy drinking gold coloured beer with bready aroma, a little ester



and traces of vanilla. The flavour is biscuity sweet and some slight citrus hints in the background leading to a dry, spicy character in the light bitter finish. Saaz hops; Lager Malt and uses a lager yeast, initially fermenting at 17 degrees and then 1 degree.

#### Kapow 4.4% ABV

Described as a pale ale, this smooth golden ale has a pronounced hoppy aroma alongside some citrus and pineapple, which are also on the palate where the grapefruit is more dominant. There is a growing bitterness over sweet malty notes. Bitter lemon dry aftertaste with earthy hops.

Equinox, Chinook and Centennial hops; Best Ale Malt and Dextrin for the mouthfeel.

#### Boogie Van 5.5% ABV

Gold coloured New World IPA that has tropical fruits and resinous piney hops on the nose and flavour, which is sweet and smooth with a hint of caramel. There is a gentle bitterness which is noticeable in the fairly short, refreshing aftertaste.

Mosaic, Azacca, Equinox hops; Munich malt; USA 5 yeast.

#### Mysterious Spectre 5% ABV

Smooth, full bodied hazy straw coloured beer with tropical fruit and grapefruit flavours and aromas.

The palate and finish is sweet with a light bitterness. The hops start earthy becoming spicy in the long aftertaste.

Mosaic hops and a German hop blend called TNT with Dextrin, Wheat and Oats and using three yeasts.

#### High Hill 5% ABV

Very hazy pale yellow beer, which has a creamy mouthfeel. Soft grapefruit and sweet biscuit on the nose, which are joined by tropical fruit and melon on the palate. The aftertaste becomes dry and bitter and lingers with some spiciness.

Galaxy and Citra hops; Wheat and Oats.

#### Millions of Peaches 4%

A hazy yellow kettle sour with peach notes throughout. There are salty, tart flavours and a touch of peach becoming bitter and slightly earthy on drinking. Fairly short astringent finish.

Refreshing and easy drinking.

The beer contains peach pulp, fresh basil, Wheat and Lager Malts.

