

## **A rock & rolling brewery**

Orbit is one of London's newest breweries and it all started when Robert Middleton moved into a double railway arch in February 2014, mid way between Walworth and Kennington. The first job was to get in a food grade floor and good drainage that Robert said, although costly, has been worth it.

So why did he do it? Robert was originally in occupational pensions. He then thought he wanted to do something different, bought a camper van, called Brian, and toured around Scotland, where he discovered 'beer in the land of whisky' and got hooked. As a consequence, Robert decided that he wanted to do European beers, rather than 'the usual American beers that many breweries are doing'. His aim was to have beer as natural as possible 'as natural as vinyl records'. And Robert's love of music explains the name of the brewery and the beers.

It's a 10 barrel brewery, designed by Johnson and uses lots of state of the art technology. There are two conditioning tanks and three fermenters, two of which can also be used as fermenters. Orbit's Pale Ale is fermented and then matured for 2 weeks but all of the other beers are matured for longer. Priming sugar is added to the tanks, mixed and then racked. None of the beer is filtered and the gas used in the key kegs does not the beer. Brewing currently takes place two to three times a week. A farmer picks up the spent grain.

Robert soon realised he couldn't do it all on his own and Mario Canestrelli joined him in the May. Mario had worked at a number of pubs including the White Horse at Parsons Green and then brewed at both Brew Wharf and Howling Hops.

Orbit does both bottled conditioned beer (in-house) and key kegs. There are three regular bottled conditioned beers, Kolsch, Nico and Neu, which is an Altbier. The following are the beers tasted by the London Tasting Panel.

### **Nico 4.8% ABV 1045**

A regular brew, this is a Kolsch style beer named after Nico, famous for her involvement with the Velvet Underground. She was German by birth and so a German beer style was thought appropriate. This type of beer comes from the Cologne area and the water of Cologne and London is similar. It uses lager yeast but is fermented at higher temperatures but, like a lager, it is lagered i.e. allowed to mature for weeks to develop the flavour. Nico is stored for at least four weeks at freezing temperatures.

The beer's flavour is in keeping with the style. Slightly earthy, with a touch of banana on the nose. The flavour is sweetish complemented by some fruit and spiced hop. These flavours fade in the finish, which is dry with a hint of bitterness. The hops are German, Spalt Select and Perle.

### **Ivo 5.3% ABV 1048**

Another of Orbit's regular beers, named after Ivo Watts-Russell, of the 4AD record label, which was famous in the 1980's and 1990's including bands such as the Pixies.

It is a golden coloured refreshing easy drinking strong pale ale. Citrus and spicy hops on the palate. Dryness and bitterness grows on drinking and lingers in the finish with some hoppy character.

The hops used are Styrian Goldings, Simcoe and Amarillo.

### **Leaf 6.2% ABV 1060**

This beer is a seasonal named after the Black Sabbath's Sweet Leaf. It is a Rauch Alt using Munich and Vienna Malts and Spalt hops.

This brown beer has smoky notes that are in the aroma but more prominent (but not dominating) on the initial taste, fading in the finish, which is clean and dry. It has a rich malt character with sweet

caramelised fruit and a touch of honey giving a smoothness to the beer. A good beer for a hot beer sandwich and ideal for colder days.

**Seven 7% ABV 1069**

Another musical beer; this type named after the seven inch single. Seven is a double brown stout loosely based on a 19th century recipe and uses black and brown malts and Whitbread yeast. It used two British hops Brambling Cross and Northdown. The result is a ruby black beer with a grainy but rich mouthfeel and an aroma of pears and toasted malt. Black treacle is present on the palate balanced by some sweet caramelised fruit. The aftertaste has a dry dark roasted bitterness.