

A musical brewery from a titanic heritage



It was the rubbish beer at gigs that made Sam fed up. Sam was/is a musician (a saxophonist) and also a tour manager, having worked with household names from Simple Minds to New York Dolls. One of his claims to fame, is Chrissie Hyne telling him to 'F*** Off@. Sam became tired of having nothing decent to drink and so came up with the idea of making beer with musicians and selling it to the fans. So he swapped a sax for hops and composed Signature Brewery with his cousin, Tom.

Tom is the son of David Bott, one of the two brothers who set up the Titanic Brewery in Stafford. Titanic has won numerous awards over the years, including winning the speciality category of the Champion Beer of Britain with its Plum Porter at the Great British Beer Festival this year. So Tom had the right sort of heritage and had been working at Titanic Brewery since he was 12.

The first venue to buy into the idea of 'musical brews' was the Kentish Town Forum, just four years ago. Since then, the pair have done numerous collaborations and brewed at around nine different breweries across England. In addition to Titanic, London Fields, Red Squirrel and Truefitt have hosted their brewing. Sam described Signature as a 'gipsy brewery' but the intention was always to find a permanent home of their own one day.

Sam and Tom found some premises in Leyton and generated cash through Crowdfunding to buy the old 5 Points brewery kit, a 10 gallon plant. They started brewing in June 2015 and although they still do some collaborative brews (usually unusual recipes), they have begun to build up their own portfolio of regular beer. This is currently six beers, ranging from a bitter (called Session) and an IPA (Backstage IPA) to an unfiltered Vienna lager and a stout (Black Vinyl). Like many of the London brewers, they produce both real ale and keg alongside a range of bottled beers, which they outsource; the beer is produced at the brewery and then tanked to be bottled. They do change their hops from time to time depending on availability but declare what they are on both pumpclips and labels - a great initiative in educating people about hop varieties - there is more to hops than just Cascade and Citra!

The London Tasting Panel was fortunate to be invited into their tasting room on a mezzanine overlooking the brewery to try a range of their beers. Here are some of the ones that were sampled.

Session 4% ABV - Refreshing bitter with spicy hop on the nose and palate balanced by a malty sweetness and a lingering bitterness. There is some roasted, nutty character.



Pale 4.1% ABV - A gold coloured beer using pale and pale crystal malts with a little wheat. The hops are all American (Cascade, Chinook and Magnum) giving the beer its fruity character.

Unfiltered Vienna Lager 5.2% ABV - The use of Vienna and Munich malts , plus the Saaz hops, gives this beer characteristic lager flavours, from the malty sweetness to the slightly earthy hop notes. The dark crystal malt adds depth to the colour.

Black Vinyl Stout 4.2% ABV - Dark Crystal and Black malts, coupled with the roast barley, produces a beer where the rich roasted notes predominate with a cocoa character on the palate that is nicely balanced by some sweetness. The American Willamette and Columbus hops give a little lightness to the flavours. The finish is lingering and dry with a little bitterness. Very drinkable.

Backstage IPA 5.6% ABV - Bitterness and fruity hops dominate this amber coloured, unfiltered IPA, overlaid with some banana and biscuity malty notes. Long lingering dry finish. The hops are Centennial, Cascade and Summit.

Beautiful Shambles 6.2% ABV - A golden coloured key keg beer with a variety of fruity notes coming from the seven hops that were used varying from spice to mandarin and greengage

Hospital Porter 7.0% ABV - Sultanas on the nose and flavour with a roasted malty bitterness that develops on drinking. There is black treacle throughout and a rich mouthfeel. The finish is dry and bitter from the roast with still some sweet fruit character. This was a bottled beer using Magnum, Northern Brewer and Cascade hops. Best described as an Imperial Porter!