

'Southwark Brewery' - sounded like good idea at the time!

'Is that really another brewery under a railway arch' might be the impression as you approach the Southwark Brewery walking south from London Bridge. But don't be fooled. Cramped it might be with a slightly chaotic look but this brewery has got its head firmly screwed on when it comes to delivering quality beer.



Examining why, the picture becomes much clearer. The brewery was set up by Andy Nichol, with a business and accountancy background, and Peter Jackson, who has worked in the brewing and pub industry for many years, starting with Scottish & Newcastle, finishing with Marstons with a few in between. It was his goal to run his own brewery before he retired and so two years ago decided to take the plunge and contacted Sean Franklin, ex of Roosters Brewery, to make the dream a reality.

But as always when it comes to setting up a brewery, from the idea being formed by Andy and Peter outside the George in Southwark, things did not go to plan. The inspiration to set up the

'London Bridge Brewery' was Pete Brown's book on the George but trademarks prevented that so the pair decided on the Southwark Brewery 'in SE1'. Peter said 'It sounded a good idea at the time but we didn't anticipate the problems with trying to find suitable premises so close to the City'.

They tendered for three sites and didn't get any. But then they had a bit of luck. The owners of the railway arches were looking for something to add to the community and 'not another' gym. As a consequence, the price was only part of the consideration.

So they finally they were ready to go in December 2013 but then found out that there had been no application for change of use; the building was previously a fish warehouse. They then realised if they waited another 2 months a local tax would disappear so that put on some more time. And things continued to frustrate them. The planning permission should have taken 12 weeks but the council managed to consult using the wrong address so they had to start again. As a consequence, they missed the slot for brewery installation and finally started in October 2014 - the end of a very long journey.



The brewer was funded by Andy and Peter with help from friends. It's a 10 barrel plant with three 10 barrel fermenters. They purchased a hop back specifically so that they could produce their APA. Another fermenter is being planned with a possible second in due course. Peter said 'We don't want to be huge - what we want is to carry on enjoying ourselves. We'd like to be a bit bigger but the purpose of the venture was to get out of the rat race and onto the gerbil wheel'. The head brewer, Kieran Leeks, has an engineering background. This is his first job in a brewery. Although he says he is

completely exhausted and his girlfriend hates him, it is clear that he is revelling in the whole brewing experience.



The beers are currently all cask and bottle conditioned, which are filled and labelled by hand, all using dried yeast. The London Tasting Panel tried seven beers ranging from the 3.8% ABV, Bankside Blonde to the Imperial IPA at 5.7% ABV.

If you'd like to pop along to see a brewery that is near to the site of two of London's once famous, now vanished breweries, Barclay Perkins and Thrales, Southwark Brewery is open five days a week: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings and during the day on Saturday and Sunday. The brewery is also available for private hire and will do tailor-made bottled beer for those special occasions such as landmark birthdays, that many of us what to forget! . If you'd like to find out more, visit: www.southwarkbrewing.co.uk.



Bankside Blonde 3.8% ABV

A refreshing fruity golden ale using 100% Mosaic hops with a grapefruit aroma and flavour that fades in the finish, which is dry with a lingering bitterness. Some peppery hops. Malts are pale and low colour pale.

LPA (London Pale Ale) 4% ABV

This pale golden coloured beer has a smooth mouthfeel . The sweet biscuity malt is balanced by some pineapple and citrus pithy fruit/ The finish is dry with a building bitterness. The hops are First Gold and Citra and it uses only pale malt.

Potters Field Porter 4% ABV

A dark brown beer using a blend of dark malts and two British hops, East Kent Goldings and Fuggles. There is cocoa in the flavour and aroma, which fades in the aftertaste. There is some spicy hop and a little burnt roast dry bitterness balanced by a fruitiness of raisins and prunes, The name comes from Potters Fields which is outside the City Hall.

Bermondsey Best Bitter 4.4% ABV

Roasted nutty notes in the aroma, flavour and finish. A spiciness develop in the flavour, lingering in aftertaste that is slightly dry. The beer is balanced by a little honey sweetness. Two British hops are used (Target and East Kent Goldings) plus Maris Otter and Crystal malts.

Gold 5.2% ABV

This smooth yellow coloured beer uses pale malt with First Gold and Citra hops. There is a pleasant earthy hop on the nose and palate becoming peppery in the finish. The flavour has some sweet pink grapefruit with a little orange pith.

Harvard American Pale Ale 5.5% ABV

Sweet honey flavour with sweet orange and grapefruit marmalade character are present in this pale brown beer. Dry bitter finish and a rich, smooth mouthfeel. A complex blend of hops including Chinook, Citra, Cascade Northern Brewer and Summit. The malts are simpler with Maris Otter, Pale and Crystal. The beer is names after John Harvard (of the American university fame) who came from the area.



Imperial IPA 5.7% ABV

A light brown creamy beer with tropical and citrus fruit, flowery hops and a touch of caramelised toffee. The finish is initially sweet becoming bitter with a trace of dryness. The malts are Maris Otter pale and Crystal. The hops are East Kent Golding and Fuggles, with the latter being used to dry hop the beer contributing to an aroma of fruit and grassy hops.