

Gipsy Hill - benefitting from an ex Piddle!

Walk into the yard at the Hamilton Road Industrial Estate, walk past the London Brewing Factory, and on the far side is the Gipsy Hill Brewery. Set up in 2014, the Brewery originated as an idea from Charlie Shaw, who started his love affair with beer by home brewing and paid for it as a business journalist. Charlie got together with Sam, whose background in Development Funds in West Africa brought in a money acumen. The third person to get involved was Simon Wood, who was head brewer at Piddle Brewery in Dorset. He was interested in a move because 'Dorset was pretty conservative in its beer tastes and wanted to experiment a bit more'.



Getting the plans right is key to the future success of any venture. With Gipsy Hill, there was nearly ten months of planning, with the money coming from some self funding and some private. It was enough to buy a 15 barrel mash tun and 7 fermenters (four 15 barrel and three 35 barrel). The brewery premises are, at the moment, relatively airy and uncluttered aided by the large roll doors opening onto the large courtyard outside and a separate storage facility, a few doors down. This is where they store the casks, bottles and kegs and there is also an off sales (open weekdays).

Gipsy Hill is currently brew four times a week and produce cask, bottled conditioned and keg. None of the beer is pasteurised and the keg and bottle are unfiltered. 'We think this aids the flavour profile. However, we fine the cask beer because that is what our outlets say they want. Many of their customers are still a bit confused about hazy cask beer'.

To ensure there is not too much haze, after fermentation, the keg beer is matured just above zero degrees for 3 weeks, which allows the sediment to drop. Some beers, such as their Bock, is kept for 2 months, 'to get the flavour right'. The conditioning tanks are enclosed, allowing the natural carbon dioxide to be retained but there is a blanket pressure put on the beer. All of the yeasts used are ale yeasts and the water is treated except the dark beers.

Much of what Gipsy Hill does is traditional, including hand filling their bottles but that does not mean that they ignore new production methods. Instead of a traditional kettle for boiling the hops, they have an 'external' hop kettle instead. This cylindrical piece of kit is surrounded by a steam jacket and the wort¹ is passed through the centre to warm it up. The benefit of this is 'so it doesn't get a chance for the oddities to get in. It affects when we add the hops in comparison to the usual kettle method'.



There are four regular beers: Beatnik, Southpaw, Hepcat and Dissident. In addition, they do seasonal beers and one offs. These can be repeated if they are particularly successful. The London Tasting Panel were taken through a selection of their beers by Assistant Brewer, Richard Davie, and was joined by Kevin Sutton, who described himself as 'a general dogsbody with a background in growing beards!' The beers tried included regulars: Southpaw, Beatnik and Hepcat and Hinterweltler, a Bock style beer.

The brewery has a number of regular outlets for its draught such as the Westow, Grape & Grain, Waverly Arms and Hagen & Hyde whilst their bottled can be found in The Beer Shop London, Hop Burns & Black and Bob's Wines. But you can always pop along to the Brewery itself and visit their Brewery Tap, which is open every Saturday from 1 to 6pm. The neighbour, Roast Hog, provides the food. Visit <http://gipsyhillbrew.com/> to find out more.

Gipsy Hill want to stay in the area and their focus will remain on 'interesting but drinking beer - ones you can have a few without falling over!' Richard also said 'We want the freedom to experiment but beer is

¹ The brewer's term for the liquid, which is water into which malt has been soaked to extract the sugars.

all about accessibility, not using words that no one can understand'. No words such as *Pediococcus*, *Brettanomyces* or Farnesene mentioned here then!



The London Tasting Panel tasted a number of their beers and here are their tasting notes.

Beatnik 3.8% ABV (cask, keg, bottle) - A yellow coloured beer with an aroma of sweet grapefruit and tropical fruit, which are also present in the taste where a biscuit flavour balances the growing bitterness. There is a little hop throughout. The finish is bitter and dry. Malts are Pale and Caragold; hops are Amarillo and Cascade.

Southpaw 4.2% ABV (cask, keg, bottle) - Amber coloured best bitter. The nose is of perfumed hops, a little fruit and caramel. A hoppy flavour and aftertaste, which becomes spicier in character in the aftertaste. There is a sweetness with a dry aftertaste with a hint of kiwi. Grapefruit, figs and pineapple are also present. Hops are Maris Otter Extra Pale and light crystal; hops are Simcoe and Cascade.

Hepcat 4.6% ABV (keg, bottle) - Balanced golden ale with a smooth rich mouthfeel. Sweet honey on the palate and grapefruit, pineapple and passionfruit that fades in the finish. Earthy hops and grapefruit on the nose. Finish is spicy hops. Hops are Citra, Mosaic and Equinox. Malts include Maris Otter low colour and Cara Munich

Hinterweltler 7% ABV (keg) - A dark gold Bock style beer brewed with ale yeast. A tart aroma with melon, grapefruit and a touch of caramelised pineapple. Flavour is of melon, pineapple and molasses. This fades in the finish which is dry with some peppery hops. Malts include Abbey Malt and Cara Pils. Hops include Magnum, Huell Melon and Hersbrucker