

Doing it by numbers

Although arches maybe the common thread amongst a lot of London Brewers, it is always a delight to see how different they all can be and a visit to Brew by Numbers did not disappoint.

Although many brewers produce a number of recipes under one beer style, Brew by Numbers have made it into an art and a transparent one. The concept of numbering the beers started when Tom Hutchins and Dave Seymour wanted a way of keeping track of recipes. The mash would be made and then split into four, using different hops and yeast so they could improve their understanding of the impact of different brewing ingredients. The pair originally met while rock climbing in China. Dave was a home brewer and Tom gained an interest when his friend worked for Kernel Brewery.



And then the story really began. In December 2012, Tom and Dave started brewing in a basement with a tiny 300 litre kit, moving into their current premises the following year and beginning brewing in December 2013. Further expansion happened in 2017, with the purchase of additional premises. The brewery length is now 2040 litres and six fermenters (three 2000 litres and three 4000 litres) and the additional space gave the room for the installation of an automated bottling plant.



Each beer has two numbers. The first relates to the beer style and the second to the recipe. Only a selected few are allowed the accolade of repeat brews. Chris Hall, who greeted us on the evening, said 'we only keep repeat recipes when it is obvious that our drinkers think it has worked'. A quick look on the website shows that they are at least up to XX different beer styles, saisons, pales, IPAs xxx are all brewed. None of them are pasteurised or filtered.

The influence of American beers is noticeable and they have been playing around with ageing beer in barrels. The Tasting Panel tasting notes on the beers tried are below. To try the beers yourself, their tap room is open Fridays 6pm-10pm and Saturdays 11am-8pm.

TASTING NOTES

Session IPA 4.2% Number: 11.03

This is one of the recipes that have been repeated. It is a pale gold beer. Strong fruity nose with green notes in the aroma and palate. Hops, fruit (mango, citrus) and some pine character in the biscuity sweet flavour with an underlying bitterness that lingers in the long astringent finish. The malt is Maris Otter Pale and the hops, just Mosaic.

Saison 4.2% Number: 01.31

Sweet banana and bubblegum with a trace of farmyard on the nose, which are also in the flavours overlaid with sour lemon notes. Aftertaste is bitterish, slightly spicy and dry. It uses a

combination of French and Wallonian yeasts, wheat and oats with New Zealand and Australian hops (Motueka, Victoria Secret and Wai-iti).

Cranberry Witbier 5% Number: 07.10

Pink in colour from the cranberries, this beer is a mix of barley and wheat and uses a Belgian yeast, which produces a tart sour character with lemon and berry overtones. The finish is dry and lingering but the aroma is slightly sweet and earthy.

Cuvee 6.2% Number 22.01

A blend of three beers of which 50% is a barrel aged beer. The result is a golden beer with noticeable Brett characteristics. The nose is cider-like with a touch of farmhouse. The latter is also on the palate with a lemon tartness and a biscuity sweetness, which develops into honey and almonds/vanilla. Dryish finish with a little vanilla and some sour notes.

IPA 6.3% Number: 05.27

Highly hopped smooth yellow beer with biscuit, pepper, resin and mango flavours. There is a developing dry bitter character that lingers in the long finish. Aroma is of fruity hops. Malts are Maris Otter, Oatmeal (which contributed to the smooth mouthfeel), wheat malt. Hops are both American (Mosaic and Belma).

Coffee Porter 10% Number: 10/10

A powerful, strong, warming dark beer. Strong coffee dominates the nose with some hazelnuts. The taste is a complex mix of sweet treacle, black cherries and coffee. The finish is long, becoming bitter but at the same time retaining some dark fruit sweetness.

