

International Beer Challenge



Swirling, sniffing, spitting, arguing: it's all in a day's work for an IBC judge. Nicola Collenette reports

A host of beer aficionados, drinks journalists and other category experts judged this year's International Beer Challenge, organised by Off Licence News.

A total of 25 gold medals, 64 silvers and 127 bronzes were awarded to a diverse array of beers from around the world.

Seven tables of five to six judges blind-tasted around 60 beers and scored them according to appearance, aroma and taste. Each panel discussed the results and debated whether the beers were of a standard worthy of a medal.

The best beers were re-tasted by a smaller group of judges, led by chairman Jeff Evans, and the trophy winners and overall winner will be revealed at an awards ceremony in London on September 12. The judging for the design and packaging of 48 international beers will take place on August 1 and winners will appear in OLN's August 19 issue.

Judge Alan Dunn, who runs convenience store Open All Hours in Keswick, Cumbria, said: "It was a tough job. But someone had to do it."

The list of medal winners includes breweries in Australia, the US and a wide range from the UK.

James Delap, director of Fyne Ales in Scotland, told OLN: "I'm delighted to have won two golds for the third year running. There are a lot of people discovering that modern British beer offers a lot more in terms of taste and flavour."

"Winning the IBC helps to draw people's attention to the quality of beers, which are worth venturing out of their way for."

Herefordshire-based brewery Wye Valley won a gold for its Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale. Managing director Vernon Amor said: "We are delighted to have won a gold medal at the IBC. It is a big pat on the back to our brewers and marketing team who combine their talents perfectly with our Dorothy Goodbody range."

Tim Hampson, chairman of the British Guild of Beer Writers, praised the diversity of beers he judged on the day.

He said: "Overall, I thought the standard of entries was very high, reflecting the huge variety of beers which consumers can choose between. Long gone are the days



Going for gold

Contrary to what people may think, judging beer is a tough job

when retailers only thought about stocking a continental lager, a British ale and an Irish stout. The market is now much more diverse and exciting. The spectrum of beer styles, tastes, flavours, colours and strengths make it a highly attractive and dynamic sector.

"For a beer to stand out in a series of blind tastings it has to be very, very good."

Judges also had some constructive advice for producers. Ben McFarland, director of dwink.com, said: "Producers should concentrate on the beer. The liquid is key. Tasting these beers blind means there is no marketing influence."

Blogger Steve Williams said he was a little

disappointed with the golden ale category but "generally other categories were strong". He encouraged more gluten-free beers to enter and suggested all producers state a temperature at which the beer should be served.

Beer writer Mark Dredge said: "We had some excellent beers this year. Very few were awful but many were too forgettable. The best beers stand out as being very good and there was an excellent mix of beers - but producers should only put beer forward if they are very confident of its taste and quality."

Technical sensory expert Kamini Dickie said: "Contrary to what people may think judging beer is a tough job - trying to balance the objective with the subjective. But the high standard of quality beers entered in the competition made it a little easier."

"Beer awards generate great interest in the beer category among customers and enhance UK trade for import and export markets. I commend OLN and Jeff Evans for supporting the IBC and making it happen."



Beer marketing consultant and judge Jeff Pickthall said: "It was a pleasure to participate, the broad range of styles covered makes the IBC the most interesting UK competition."

Winning beers by category



Gold

Adnams Southwold Bitter
Baltika No 8 Wheat
Brasserie des Sources Belle Rose
Brewster's Pale Ale
Doppio Malto Brass Weiss
Endeavour 2010 Reserve Pale Ale
Estrella Damm Daura
Fuller's Golden Pride
Fyne Jarl
Fyne Vital Spark
Harveys Imperial Extra Double Stout
Keler 18
Kernel Export Stout
Krusovice Cerne
M&S Summer Ale
McLaren Vale Dry
Oakham Citra
Rechitskoe Svetloe
Rechitskoe Zolotistoe
Samuel Adams Boston Lager
Samuel Adams Honey Porter
Samuel Adams Stony Brook Red
Stewart Hollyrood
Weißenstephaner Vitus
Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale



Silver

Adnams Innovation
Affligem Dubbel
Amarcord Riserva Speciale
Anchor Ice
Baltika No 4 Original
Black Sheep Riggwelter
Brains Dark
Brains SA Gold
Bridge Road Beechworth Pale Ale
Bridge Road Robust Porter
Cisk Export
Clausthaler Amber
Clausthaler Classic
Cobra
Collesi Fiat Lux
Curious Brew Brut
Curious Brew Admiral Porter
Degrees Dubbel
Ducato Bia Oatmeal Stout
Durham Bede's Chalice
Fuller's Bengal Lancer
Fuller's Organic Honey Dew



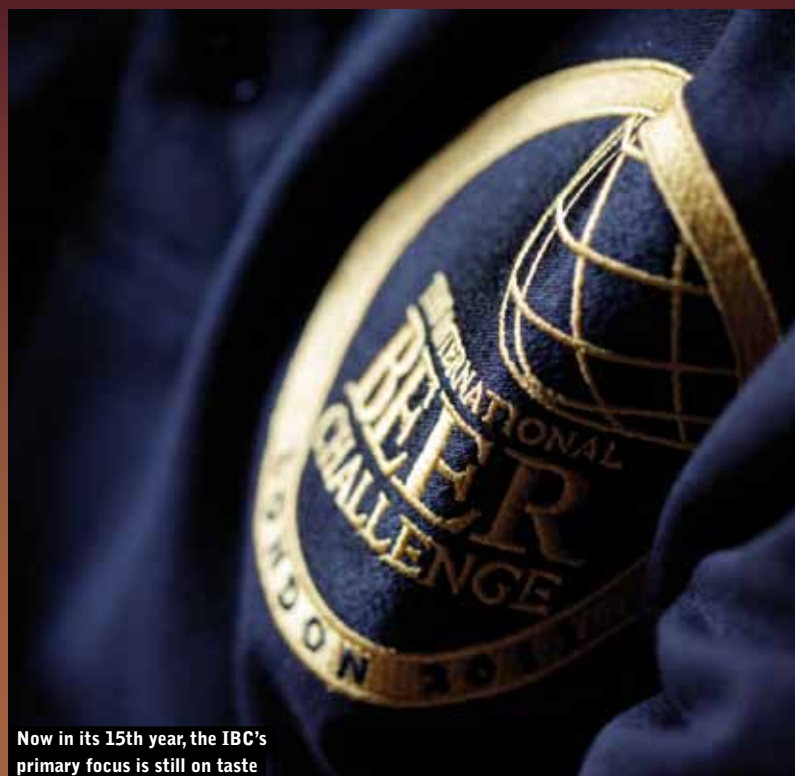
The judges singled out interesting new beers

Harveys Lewes Castle Brown
Harveys Royal Nuptial Ale
Hawthorn Pale Ale
Hogs Back TEA
Holt Sixex
Hook Norton Hooky Bitter
Hook Norton Twelve Days
Kross Lupulus
Krusovice Imperial
Lion Stout
M&S Belgian Wheat Beer
M&S Cherry Wheat Beer
M&S Cornish IPA
M&S Norfolk Bitter
Manns Brown Ale
Moorhouse's Black Cat
Mort Subite Kriek
Murray's Punch & Judy
Negro Modelo
Okells 1907
Radeberger Pilsner
Redoak Special Strong Bitter
Robinson's Unicorn
Sagres
Samuel Adams Double Bock
Samuel Adams Imperial Stout
Samuel Adams Lemon Pepper Saison
Samuel Adams Longshot Blackened IPA
Samuel Adams Longshot Friar Hop Ale
Samuel Adams Octoberfest
Samuel Adams Scotch Ale
Samuel Adams Utopias 2011
Samuel Adams Wee Heavy
Samuel Adams Winter Lager
Schöfferhofer Hefeweizen Alkoholfrei
Starberg
Thornbridge Kipling
Voll-Damm
Wadworth The Bishop's Tipple
Waldhaus Jubilaeums Dunkel
Whitewater Copperhead
Wychwood Hobgoblin



Bronze

Adnams Broadside
Affligem Blond
Affligem Tripel
Anchor Smooth
Archipelago Hickory Smoked IPA
Arran Blonde
Banks's Mild
Black Sheep Ale
Black Sheep Golden Sheep
Blue Moon
Bock Damm
Brains SA
Brains The Rev James
Brakspear Oxford Gold
Butcombe Gold
Carling
Cateau Vivat Blonde
Cateau Vivat Triple
Collesi Maior
Collesi Ubi
Cubano Fuerte
Delirium Tremens
Doppio Malto Bitterland
Doppio Malto Mahogany IPA
Doppio Malto Old Jack
Doppio Malto Rust Ale
Endeavour 2010 Reserve Amber Ale
Estrella Damm Barrelena
Everards Original
Florís Framboise
Freedom Organic Lager
Freedom Stout
Fuller's 1845
Fuller's Discovery
Fuller's ESB
Fuller's London Porter
Fuller's London Pride
Fyne Hurricane Jack
Fyne Sublime Stout
Hansa Pilsner
Harveys Blue Label
Harveys Christmas Ale
Harveys Tom Paine
Hawthorn Amber Ale
Holgate Double Trouble
Holt Humdinger
Holt Manchester Brown Ale
Hook Norton Copper Ale
Hook Norton Flagship
Hook Norton Old Hooky
Hovels
Huyghe La Guillotine
Innis & Gunn Rum Cask Oak Aged Beer
Jennings Sneek Lifter
Jersey Mary Ann Best Bitter
Krombacher Pils
Krombacher Weizen
Kross Curaca Abby Ale
Kross 5
Kross Golden Ale
Kross Maibock
Kross Pilsner
Kross Stout
Liberation Ale
Lomza Export
Lomza Export
M&S Cheshire Brown Ale
M&S Ginger Ale
M&S Irish Stout
M&S Scottish Ale
Marston's Oyster Stout
Marston's VSOP
Medalla Light
Melville's Raspberry Fruit Beer
Moorhouse's Blond Witch
Moorhouse's Pendle Witches Brew
Moorhouse's Premier
Moorhouse's Pride Of Pendle
Mountain Goat Double Hightail
Mountain Goat Surefoot Stout



Now in its 15th year, the IBC's primary focus is still on taste

Nail Brown Ale
Okells Aile
Okells Mac Lir
Perla
Purple Moose Dark Side of the Moose
Quantock Stout
Redoak Porter
Robinson's Ginger Tom
Sagres Bohemia
Samuel Adams American Kriek
Samuel Adams Brown Ale
Samuel Adams Chocolate Bock
Samuel Adams Cream Stout
Samuel Adams Holiday Porter
Samuel Adams Imperial White
Samuel Adams Irish Red
Samuel Adams Latitude 48
Samuel Adams Latitude 48 Ahtanum
Samuel Adams Latitude 48 Hallertau
Mittelfruh
Samuel Adams Latitude 48 Zeus
Samuel Adams Old Fezziwig Ale
Samuel Adams Pale Ale
Samuel Adams Rustic Saison
Samuel Adams Summer Ale
Samuel Adams Triple Bock
Samuel Adams White Ale
Schöfferhofer Hefeweizen
Sharp's Doom Bar
Sharp's Monsieur Rock
Shepherd Neame Bishops Finger
Statalenove Kristal
Statalenove Miss Kartola
Statalenove Ponente
Stoke Dark
Super Bock Classic
Thornbridge Bracia
Thornbridge Jaipur
Tongerlo Prior
Turbacci Super
Valscura Fich
Valscura Matrimoniale
Virus
Waldhaus Diplom Pils
Waldhaus Special Gold
Weißenstephaner Hefeweiss
Williams Seven Giraffes
Williams Ceilidh
Worthington's White Shield