

Dish Tasting Panel

OUR FIRST 15 PALE ALES



THE JUDGES

(clockwise from top left)

Michael Donaldson – author of *Beer Nation*

Cameron Douglas – Senior Lecturer (AUT) and Master Sommelier

Yvonne Lorkin – *Dish Drinks* Writer

Shane Morley – brewer, Steam Brewing Company

Stephen Plowman – brewer, Hallertau Brewing

RATING SYSTEM

GOLD ★★★★★

An outstanding beer. Superb, strongly recommended.

SILVER ★★★★

A lovely drink and a cut above the rest where quality's concerned.

BRONZE ★★★

A good quality beer that will please the crowds.

With thanks to Janet Blackman and her assistant Minnie Gao from the Professional Wine Studies Department and the AUT School of Hospitality and Tourism. For more information about the programmes offered in hospitality, food and beverage, and hotel management visit www.aut.ac.nz



TOP BEER OF THE TASTING

1. TUATARA BREWING

Double Trouble Extra Dimensional APA (\$11.99, 650ml) (★★★★★)

A unanimous “yum!” erupted from all of our judges at the tasting table as soon as they’d sipped. With passionfruit and citrus dancing out of the glass it was, as Michael said, “a thumping good double IPA that caters to an expanding market of big beer drinkers who want hops and alcohol ramped up. A whopper of a beer, an olfactory treat offset with rich, syrupy malt.” Whopper aside, this became the captain of our team. What really impressed our judges was how impeccably balanced the beer was, and Yvonne commented on its hop-driven nose, grip in the mid-palate and long, lingering persistence on the finish. “Outstanding stuff,” she added, “and best of all, each bottle comes with a complimentary pair of 3D glasses to help you decipher the label – and here at *Dish* we love a challenge!”

2. LIBERTY BREWING COMPANY

Yakima Monster Pale Ale (\$9, 500ml) (★★★★★)

Our judges loved the clean, focussed hop notes combined with quirky, slightly woody characters and a clean, finely tuned finish. “There’s a herbaceous note with a lovely, creamy texture,” said Cameron, “plus there was an almost minty character in the mid-palate followed by a hint of sweetness.” This beer was beautifully balanced and had real X-factor in terms of drinkability.

3. 8 WIRED BREWING COMPANY

Hopwired IPA (\$10, 500ml) (★★★★★)

Ultra-tropical and oozing passionfruity hops and lime notes, this beer boasted an impressive, fluffy head, a booming hop kick and robust, palate-stretching bitterness. According to Shane, it also struck “a really nice hop/malt balance.” It was a beer that our judges immediately began talking about food matches for – which is always a good thing.

4. EPIC BREWING COMPANY

Epic Armageddon IPA (\$8.99, 500ml) (★★★★½)

Showing a bright straw colour and a whack of classic piney-peachy characters, this beer impressed our judges with its clean, crisp drinkability and intense aromatics. The texture of the alcohol was quite pronounced but didn’t interfere with the key elements of this fantastic example.

5. PARROTD OG

BitterBitch IPA (\$4.99, 330ml) (★★★★½)

“Attractive burnt orange/caramel colour and boasts great head retention and balance,” commented Michael. But flavour-wise, the overwhelming impression our judges were left with (despite the name) was an elegant, mouth-filling, well-structured beer that will definitely win friends and influence people.

6. 8 WIRED BREWING COMPANY

Superconductor Double IPA (\$12, 500ml) (★★★★)

"This would be delicious with a huge bowl of steamed clams in garlic, parsley and white wine," remarked Yvonne. The peachy aromatics combined with clean, herbaceous, hop-driven layers and a lipsmackingly bitter finish definitely make this IPA a must-sip for summer.

7. TUATARA BREWING

Aotearoa Pale Ale (\$7.99, 500ml) (★★★★)

This wee sip was one of the most refreshing, gum-tingling styles of the tasting. "Light, fresh, full-bodied and easy to drink," commented one of our judges. The others agreed that its citrus-forward hops and a nice malty vein made it a top pick of the day.

8. MIKE'S ORGANIC BREWERY

Mike's Single American IPA (SAIPA) (\$8.99, 500ml) (★★★★)

This beer has a pretty topaz colour and some interesting, complex, aged characters showing through. Defined hop and herbaceous elements add to the citrus oil and caramel flavours, which develop in the glass and make it one to remember.

9. GOLDEN EAGLE BREWERY

South Island Pale Ale (\$8, 500ml) (★★★★½)

Bright coppery colour and an exotic toasty, roasted nutty aroma leads the way to grilled fruit and barley notes in a beer that will definitely have crowd-appeal.

10. PARROTD OG BREWING

DeadCanary Pale Ale (\$4.49, 330ml) (★★★★½)

While its noticeably red colour caused some consternation, one sniff confirmed its place as a flavoursome, caramel-forward brew, with nutty notes and a dry, full finish.

11. SPEIGHTS BREWING COMPANY

Speights Golden Pale Ale (\$30.99 per 330ml 12 pack) (★★★★½)

"A good level of malt and hop makes this a great 'sip at the pub on a Sunday afternoon' beer," said Cameron. Crisp, but with some sweet malt and nicely balanced bitterness, it's an easy-drinking style with personality.

12. THE EMERSON BREWING COMPANY

Bird Dog IPA (\$7, 500ml) (★★★★½)

The Bird Dog is a cloudy, richly aromatic IPA with "a nice lick of bitterness across the palate," according to Michael. It hit that sweet spot between malt and hoppy notes and proved itself well for sippability factor.

13. TWISTED HOP BREWING COMPANY

Hop Back IPA (\$8, 500ml) (★★★★½)

The lifted piney hops, nice estery notes and crisp, cleansing mid-palate presence made this worthy of our top 15. A lightly structured ale with a cleansing character and nice balance.

14. EPIC BREWING COMPANY

Epic Zythos IPA (\$8.99, 500ml) (★★★★½)

A bright bronzy colour with earthy, orchard-floor aromatics and plenty of bitterness across the palate and funk on the finish. Shane commented on the nice use of malt and the balanced length of flavour.

15. 8 WIRED BREWING COMPANY

Tall Poppy India Red Ale (\$10, 500ml) (★★★★½)

This was an extremely complex beer with deep, mahogany colours and malty, Christmas cake aromas. Big, hop-forward and hefty in terms of bitterness, it's nicely balanced and has a creamy texture. ●

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Special mention must be made of two beers that polarised our panel because they represent just how far the Pale Ale spectrum can be pushed. The **Yeastie Boys Rex Attitude (Golden Ale)** and the **Yeastie Boys Gunnamata (IPA)** both scored well, but they also sparked debate and at *Dish* we like that.

That they were even entered into a Pale Ale contest was cause for much rolling of eyes and wringing of hands because the Rex Attitude, with its intense peat-smoke, single malt, tar and singed-hay characters was about as far removed from your garden variety Pale Ale as you can get; while the gloriously crisp, floral Gunnamatta was made using Earl Grey tea instead of hops, and hops are pretty much compulsory according to Pale Ale purists.