



tasting panel

*Picaroons - Yippee IPA



The low carbonation, off-dry, floral aroma and golden hue of this obviously hand-bottled sample puts me in mind of one of the modern breed of golden cask-conditioned bitters that are increasingly common in the UK. The flavour is not that far off either, gently sweet and honey-ish on the front end, more dryly malty, lightly bitter and slightly melony in the middle with a dry and nutty-bitter finish. I think this would be a quite different beer on a conventional draught tap, but absent that experience I'm willing to say that it's a decent enough golden ale, deserving of consideration even though neither overly crisp nor complex.

- Roger Mittag

Pours an enticing deep burnt orange and leaves a nice bulging white head of foam. This staunchly English-style IPA leads with a subdued aromatic blend of both peppery & flowery hops, a touch of caramel malt and a little honey. As you bite into your first mouthful you're greeted with a big malt punch. The initial wave of malt is followed by a powerful bitter blow that lingers deep into the finish. The first sips are daunting and slightly overpowering, but as you mellow into the pint they become much more enjoyable. This would be great paired with a hearty stew, a nice aged cheddar or alone with your thoughts at the end of a perfectly dank bar rail.

- Sam Corbell

* Available: Year round. On tap at many bars/restaurants around New Brunswick. In all NB liquor locations throughout New Brunswick. It is also on tap in Halifax at Maxwell's Plum.

OG: 1.065 / ABV: 6.5% / IBU: 65-70 / SRM: 10

*Hogtown Brewers - Hogtown Ale

* Available: 25 bars downtown Toronto such as Hemmingway's, Cold Tea, Morgan's, Shangri-La Hotel, Crooked Star, Opera Bob's and 473 ml cans are available in select LCBOs.

It's been said that to truly understand the nuances and characteristics of a proper Kölsch, one must visit the style's birthplace of Cologne, Germany, and drink it fresh from the brewery and in the proper environment. Having never done so, I can't say if the description from Hogtown Brewers of their flagship brand being a 'Kölsch-style lagered ale' is completely accurate. However I can say that it's a pleasant enough beer with a clear straw-gold hue, bright white head, aromas of honey cereal and fresh hay, and a clean and balanced flavour that starts with sweet toasted grain and ends with cut grass and light lemon oil notes. Not sure if it would cut it in Cologne, but here in Toronto, it's just fine.

- Greg Clow



ABV: 5.2% / IBU: 28 / SRM: 6.0

*Fernie Brewing Co. - Big Caboose Red Ale

Pours to a creamy beige head that holds on well. The aroma definitely leans to the malty side, with enticing toasty aromas balanced with a touch of spicy hop. Big Caboose is not particularly big, actually, but it has good body, and clean roasted malt flavours. The finish is fairly dry, with very little perceived bitterness, although it has 25 IBUs. The trend these days is mostly to extreme beers, including super hoppy ales, but there will always be a market for red ales like this that are extremely drinkable (and no, that is not Big Brewery marketing speak), especially if they are this well made. This would be really good with roast pork, medium spicy curry or chili.

- Craig Pinhey

Canada needs more classic examples of red ale, and Fernie Brewing Company in the interior of BC has answered the call. Big Caboose Red Ale is named after a train that travels through Fernie, sounding its horn as it goes. Its growing popularity amongst BC's outdoor crowd comes as no surprise, as who can resist a flavourful and drinkable canned ale. It pours a dark brown with ruby hues, almost hazy until you shine a light through it. The aroma is packed with sweet, grainy esters, reminiscent of strawberries and cherry, yet is quite clean. Earthy nuttiness and caramel come through on the palate, with hints of buttered bread and floral hops. The clean aftertaste on this creamy, medium-bodied ale has a refreshing sharpness. I'd gladly wash down a burger or soft cheese with this beer, and I hope you'll do the same.

- Tracy Phillippi



OG: 11.9 / ABV: 5% / IBU: 20-25 / SRM: 15

* The Big Caboose is available throughout BC and Alberta as a 6-pack, is in our Winter Sampler (available October to March), and is available on tap throughout the Kootenays.