



Oregon brews put to test

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First, a warning concerning men and beer tasting: it is common for men in a group, while drinking, to act strangely. Some may even venture far enough to say absurdly. But never is there a loss of self-dignity, self-respect or common courtesy. Even while intoxicated, men remain of the highest sophistication, on the verge of innovative intellect and with the sharpest of wit. All this is natural, and as with everything natural there is a cycle, a pattern.

The few first drinks leave men excited, maybe even a bit giddy. Stories are then told, ones of great humor or important morals. Remembrances of good times and beloved memories are shared. Next come the jokes. Clean, humorous tales with exaggerated punch-lines are acted out. That launches them into the semi-dirty, sex jokes, and then the filthy, x-rated jokes follow.

Pointless arguments, arm wrestling and belching contests are participated in. Insults are hurled. Some don't even make sense, but all are horribly offensive. Drunken sons become the avenging angels for their mothers honor. Shirts are taken off, beer bottles are broken into hand weapons, and chairs fly. But before any actual damage occurs, someone reminds them of how good of friends they are. Long meaningful apologies pass

between them.

When that is over, "I love you, man," is spoken, followed by "No, I love you, man." Handshakes are passed around, maybe a quick hug, a pat on the back.

The staff that participated in this Oregon beer tasting were no exception to this cycle, it must be said, though there was always one clear goal in mind: to partake of the best beer Oregon has to offer, and report accurately.

Fred - Hair of the Dog: 4/5

Hair of the Dog's Fred is very strong, sweet and syrupy. It was the beer we started with at our tasting session, mainly because it's 10 percent alcohol.

"Definitely a beer you wouldn't wanna buy for a party," Copy Editor E. E. West said after sipping the deep golden brew.

"This is the beer you drink after you've gotten drunk," Feature Editor C. J. Ciaramella responded after taking his first sip.

Even though the beer is harsh at first, it's still very flavorful and has a great after-taste. This is the kind of beer that perfectly compliments a steak dinner.

I think Editor-In-Chief Ben Maras spoke for us all when he said, "Hair of the dog my ass, this is the whole canine."

Broken Halo IPA - Widmer: 4/5

Broken Halo India Pale Ale is Widmer's latest beer that's smoother than most IPAs. It doesn't have a heavy ale taste and it goes down smooth.

"Excellent IPA. It's a beer that I could drink 10 of," said staff writer N.P. Delzell quickly taking another swig.

Staff writer Mike Kimberling called Broken Halo "good for a new entry IPA."

For people that don't usually enjoy IPAs, Broken Halo is definitely worth a shot.

Hazelnut Brown Ale - Rogue: 3/5

Rogue Brewery's Hazelnut Brown Ale was given mixed reviews at the tasting.

"It's a really good beer, it's sweet, and I could drink it all night," said Delzell.

Photo Editor Jeff Sorenson felt differently.

"It tastes like I'm munching on something I stepped on," he said.

If Starbucks made a beer, this would be it. It's a very earthy beer that hazelnut lovers and casual beer drinkers would love. Ale and stout drinkers should probably keep a safe distance.

Buzzsaw Brown Ale - Deschutes: 2/5

Buzzsaw Brown Ale is a flavorless, sorry excuse for a seasonal brew.

"This smells like something that's been in my fridge too long," West said after sniffing it.

"Thank God it's only seasonal," Kimberling said after he drank some of the muddy brown liquid.

Seasonal beers are typically something to look forward to, but Buzzsaw fails to impress. Avoid this beer at all costs and be happy that it's not sold year-round.

Dead Guy Ale - Rogue: 4/5

Rogue's Dead Guy Ale is their most popular beer and is one that can be enjoyed at any time. Most of us agreed that it was definitely one of the better beers we've tried and we would more than likely buy a six pack of it. I even said that it's one of Oregon's best beers. Maras disagreed.

"It's good at being nice and average," he said.

Dead Guy is a true ale drinker's ale. It's smooth and not too thick. One could drink it all day.

Supris Big Beautiful Blond Ale - Bridgeport: 3/5

Bridgeport's Supris was another beer that drew mixed reactions.

Upon receiving his cup of the blond ale, Ciaramella pointed out the obvious and said "It looks like urine."

Maras nodded in agreement and added "I don't like any beer that's lighter going in than it is going out, and that's no exception."

"I liked it. I think Bridgeport's the best," said Kimberling after finishing his cup.

"That's a beer drinkers beer," responded Delzell.

Bridgeport's Supris isn't anything new, but for the beer connoisseur it's a damn fine blond.

Oregon Honey Beer - MacTarnahan's: 3/5

Mac's Oregon Honey Beer is smooth and refreshing, if you can get past the smell.

"It smells funny but tastes great," panelist James Tombe said.

"Really smooth... I gotta give [it] some credit," Kimberling agreed.

However, there was some disagreement among the panel.

"It tastes like the carbonated water that comes out of soft serve machines when they run out of syrup," Ciaramella said.

"It tastes like the lemon was pre-squeezed into it," said Sorenson.

Honey Beer may be too sweet for some people but it does make a nice afternoon treat.

Summer Wheat Ale - Henry Weinhard's: 5/5

Weinhard's seasonal Summer Wheat Ale was hands-down our favorite. It has a smooth texture with a fruity taste, yet it still has that kick that beer should have.

"This is a beer that I could put on my breakfast cereal," said Tombe after he finished his cup.

"That's a beer for sitting on your porch when it's really hot and you don't want to do anything," said West.

Weinhard's Summer Wheat is a surprisingly good seasonal beer that even casual beer drinkers can enjoy. Delzell thought the beer was excellent, even though he hasn't opted for Weinhard's in years.

"That makes me want to buy Weinhard's again," he said.

Festive Ale - Rogue: 1.5/5

Rogue's Festive Ale is possibly

the worst beer we have ever and smelled it, we could tell weren't going to like it.

"It's real tart when it starts. West, after he recoiled from the sip.

Kimberling agreed and said "kinda like drinkin' foam."

I said that I'd give it a 1.5 rating, but that's pushing it.

Kimberling took another cringed.

"It has a specific flavor either like or you don't," he said.

Rogue's Festive Ale is from various herbs and spices, it a very "festive" flavor. It's a natural creation, but it's not for me. Heck, it's possibly not for anyone.

Ropewalk Amber Deschutes: 3.5/5

Ropewalk from Deschutes Brewery is easy to drink, and fun. However, it doesn't bring anything new to the world of amber.

"It's okay," Kimberling said after he took a sip.

Sorenson drank some and said "cup an odd look."

"It has a Fat Tire taste to it, but it's a little weaker," he said.

Fans of amber ale will love it with Ropewalk, but don't convert anyone to the amber.

Fire Boat Amber - Firestone: 3.5/5

Portland's Firestation 5 Fireboat Amber is comparable to Deschutes Ropewalk Amber. Belgium's Fat Tire, Fire Boat is a little better than Ropewalk, but not by much.

Delzell seemed to enjoy it, saying "It goes down smooth, drink that all night."

"I think it has a bad aftertaste, but I don't know what that is," Kimberling said as he rolled his tongue a little.

Tombe felt a little giddy after drinking it and said, "It's gotta get good to dance to it."

Blackwatch - Porters: 3.5/5

MacTarnahan's Blackwatch Porter is different than most and was given moderate respect by our panel.

"It's kinda light for a porter," West, referring to the brewer's name.

"A little too dark for my taste," Sorenson upon receiving his cup.

Delzell didn't even want to try it, exclaiming, "Down with dark beer!"

"I'm down with it," said Tombe.

Mac's Blackwatch Porter is better than the average porter, both in taste and flavor. People that don't like dark beers should give it a try.

Shakespeare Stout - Rogue: 3.5/5

Rogue's Shakespeare Stout is very strong, full bodied beer, those willing to try it enjoy it, but it's definitely not for the weak.

One drinks enough they're talking themselves speaking Elizabethan.

Stout, cast off by the colors," Tombe said after he took his cup.

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