

Ullage and Spillage

by J.Random

“I thought I didn’t like beer.” That was the wife of a colleague of mine after trying the range of tasters at DIX Barbecue and Brewpub. Yet another soul saved. Somebody previously fooled into thinking that beer is pale, bland, fizzy, and tastes the same whatever the artwork on the can, bottle or pump clip; beer that tastes awful when it warms up. At that time, DIX had on tap not only their entry-level lager and red ale but also a stout, an IPA and (pause for fanfare) a mild ale. Derek not only had the courage to brew and serve a mild. He and Mark also had the courage to call it a mild. It sold out faster than any other seasonal.

Two interesting points arise from her comment. First, it is more likely a person will find a craft beer style they like than a wine style they like, all things being equal in their alcoholic education. That’s because beer has a much greater range of possible flavours than wine. It stands to reason when you think beer has not two but three

major flavour-influencing ingredients, yeast, hops and barley, various degrees of malting and roasting, a range of adjuncts (the Reinheitsgebot is for Germans), plus the many processes involved in brewing, and the art of the brewer. CAMRA Vancouver’s Rick Green never tires of stating that is why food is better paired with beer than wine (see front page article in this edition).

The second point is that brewpubs clearly play an important role in educating the broader population on the merits of craft-brewed beer. While many other types of pub, bars and restaurants pride themselves in their range of microbrews, their serving staff is rarely well educated about beer styles. It makes economic sense for brewpubs to involve their staff in promoting their own ales and lagers and they generally provide taster sets. This allows people to try a small amount of a variety of beers and find one they like, rather than ordering something that sounds good and finding they are stuck with a sleeve of something they don’t enjoy. Pouring, setting up and explaining taster sets takes a lot more time than just slinging a



CAMRA Vancouver President, Warren Boyer in his commemorative T shirt, with Jill and Timmy of Mission Springs Brewing Company, Crannog’s Brian MacIsaac in back. Photo courtesy of Brian K. Smith Photography

pint but it has the potential to bring back a repeat customer that might otherwise have been put off craft beer forever. It also might prompt people to try different craft beers when they go to the liquor store. Of course that is now made more difficult by the new BCL policy of not selling individual bottles or cans.

Another major contribution to consumer education by a brewpub is CAMRA Vancouver's annual Mission to Mission. This year we had an almost full bus due to Brian K Smith advertising the event among the members of the Inside Edge. Perhaps because of the good deal on bus trip plus membership, we recruited four new members and ensured five renewals. This trip yet again proved one of the highlights of CAMRA Vancouver's year. Timmy launched his winter ale, this year with more vanilla and a hint of pumpkin with the spices and signature orange peel. Jill laid out a superb feast to go with the jugs of winter ale, blonde, pale ale, IPA and stout. The bacon-wrapped scallops, cheese plate and cheesecake were highly memorable. Jill's mushrooms marinated in a reduction of Smashing Pumpkin ale and balsamic vinegar was stunningly good. Tours were available for those that had not seen Timmy's set up. It was also great to see Tony and Andie for those of us that have not got out to Big Ridge since Tony took over there.

Mission Springs Brewing Company is on the western outskirts of Mission but Chuck has conclusively proven taking Highway 7 is a heck of a lot slower than taking Highway 1 and turning north on Highway 11 at Abbotsford. Cheers! §

