

Ullage and Spillage

by J. Random

Winner of the Golden Bung for his vanilla stout at Caskival 2004 and brewer of my favourite winter ale at Xmas Xtreme Cask Festival, Tim Brown of Mission Springs Brewing Company not only brews great beer but is a great supporter of real ale events in Vancouver. Since it was about time we returned the honour, Mrs. Random and I headed out to Mission one wet weekend in March to take a look at Timmy's base of operations. And very impressive it is too with pub, restaurant, liquor store and brewery all within the same complex. With six hundred seats and a staff ranging around a hundred, this place serves a lot of good beer to a lot of bad people – including us.

The décor is classic pub bric-a-brac; but accumulated over years rather than the “imported instant pub” we see so much of these days. Look for the picture of the original building circa 1932. The core of the current building dates back to 1986 and brewing began in 1996. The restaurant was also added in 1996 and the liquor store was extended dramatically in 2003. Their brick oven produces just the sort of superb pizza you would anticipate. The staff has real appreciation for the house beers – all new staff brew with Timmy shortly after hiring. The place was doing a roaring trade the Saturday we were there and it must do very well in summer with plenty of outdoor seating and, curiously, a beach volleyball court.

Located on the second floor, the brewery windows give Tim a divine view of his devotees in the restaurant below. It also permits him to take advantage of gravity in much the same way as Hook Norton and other historic breweries in the UK. Fourteen conditioning tanks means Tim can keep six of his draft beers on tap at any one time. Do take advantage of the samplers, either to figure out your beer of choice or plan your approach to the full slate.

While designed as a transition beer for drinkers of standard Canadian product, Timmy's blonde is a beer he is justifiably proud of. His cream ale is elegantly simple in nature, but would

certainly qualify as a session beer. Timmy's seasonal special he calls Energy Ale since it is unfiltered (something about B vitamins) and contains energizing herbs and spices. Nut brown ale is a style that I often find disappointing in B.C. but this one steps outside the norm to really deliver on flavour. Moving up in intensity, the IPA not only satisfies the taste buds, it is also a delight to the eye with an indefinable iridescent aspect. Timmy puts this down to one of the malts he uses, not one that you would normally expect in an IPA. The black and tan you will get in the sample pack is a mixture of the IPA and the stout. The Stout. What can I say? So smooth and complex. One of the top three in B.C. Don't ask me to choose between them. If B.C. has a beer style our brewers do uniquely well in North America, it has to be stout.



You can get there via Highway 7, looking for the sign and galvanized tank on the right hand side just before the built up area of Mission. You can also get there via Highway 1 turning North at Abbotsford to cross the Mission Bridge then turning left and heading out of Mission looking for the sign on the left just before you leave the built up area. The most scenic route if you have time is to turn off Highway 7 on Dewdney trunk road and wig-nag (like zig-zag but with right angles) your way to Mission. If you have never taken that road, take a look at a map and you will understand what I mean. If you do make it there, you are not going to want to have a quick one for the road. Do as we did and stay overnight in the nearby Best Western Mission Lodge. However, it is worth noting that the integral liquor store sells Tim's beer in bottles of admirable dimensions so you can always stock up on the way home. ☘

For notification of the AGM or other upcoming meetings of the Vancouver Chapter, e-mail camravancouver@yahoo.ca or check out <http://members.shaw.ca/homebrewboy> for more information.