

International Beer Challenge



Swirling, sniffing, spitting, arguing: it's all in a day's work for an IBC judge. Nicola Collenette reports

A host of beer aficionados, drinks journalists and other category experts judged this year's International Beer Challenge, organised by Off Licence News.

A total of 25 gold medals, 64 silvers and 127 bronzes were awarded to a diverse array of beers from around the world.

Seven tables of five to six judges blind-tasted around 60 beers and scored them according to appearance, aroma and taste. Each panel discussed the results and debated whether the beers were of a standard worthy of a medal.

The best beers were re-tasted by a smaller group of judges, led by chairman Jeff Evans, and the trophy winners and overall winner will be revealed at an awards ceremony in London on September 12. The judging for the design and packaging of 48 international beers will take place on August 1 and winners will appear in OLN's August 19 issue.

Judge Alan Dunn, who runs convenience store Open All Hours in Keswick, Cumbria, said: "It was a tough job. But someone had to do it."

The list of medal winners includes breweries in Australia, the US and a wide range from the UK.

James Delap, director of Fyne Ales in Scotland, told OLN: "I'm delighted to have won two golds for the third year running. There are a lot of people discovering that modern British beer offers a lot more in terms of taste and flavour.

"Winning the IBC helps to draw people's attention to the quality of beers, which are worth venturing out of their way for."

Herefordshire-based brewery Wye Valley won a gold for its Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale. Managing director Vernon Amor said: "We are delighted to have won a gold medal at the IBC. It is a big pat on the back to our brewers and marketing team who combine their talents perfectly with our Dorothy Goodbody range."

Tim Hampson, chairman of the British Guild of Beer Writers, praised the diversity of beers he judged on the day.

He said: "Overall, I thought the standard of entries was very high, reflecting the huge variety of beers which consumers can choose between. Long gone are the days



Going for gold

Contrary to what people may think, judging beer is a tough job

when retailers only thought about stocking a continental lager, a British ale and an Irish stout. The market is now much more diverse and exciting. The spectrum of beer styles, tastes, flavours, colours and strengths make it a highly attractive and dynamic sector.

"For a beer to stand out in a series of blind tastings it has to be very, very good."

Judges also had some constructive advice for producers. Ben McFarland, director of dwink.com, said: "Producers should concentrate on the beer. The liquid is key. Tasting these beers blind means there is no marketing influence."

Blogger Steve Williams said he was a little

disappointed with the golden ale category but "generally other categories were strong". He encouraged more gluten-free beers to enter and suggested all producers state a temperature at which the beer should be served.

Beer writer Mark Dredge said: "We had some excellent beers this year. Very few were awful but many were too forgettable. The best beers stand out as being very good and there was an excellent mix of beers - but producers should only put beer forward if they are very confident of its taste and quality."

Technical sensory expert Kamini Dickie said: "Contrary to what people may think judging beer is a tough job - trying to balance the objective with the subjective. But the high standard of quality beers entered in the competition made it a little easier."

"Beer awards generate great interest in the beer category among customers and enhance UK trade for import and export markets. I commend OLN and Jeff Evans for supporting the IBC and making it happen."



Beer marketing consultant and judge Jeff Pickthall said: "It was a pleasure to participate, the broad range of styles covered makes the IBC the most interesting UK competition."

Winning beers by category



Gold

Adnams Southwold Bitter
 Baltika No 8 Wheat
 Brasserie des Sources Belle Rose
 Brewster's Pale Ale
 Doppio Malto Brass Weiss
 Endeavour 2010 Reserve Pale Ale
 Estrella Damm Daura
 Fuller's Golden Pride
 Fyne Jarl
 Fyne Vital Spark
 Harveys Imperial Extra Double Stout
 Keler 18
 Kernel Export Stout
 Krusovice Cerne
 M&S Summer Ale
 McLaren Vale Dry
 Oakham Citra
 Rechitskoe Svetloe
 Rechitskoe Zolotistoe
 Samuel Adams Boston Lager
 Samuel Adams Honey Porter
 Samuel Adams Stony Brook Red
 Stewart Hollyrood
 Weihenstephaner Vitus
 Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale

Harveys Lewes Castle Brown
 Harveys Royal Nuptial Ale
 Hawthorn Pale Ale
 Hogs Back TEA
 Holt Sixex
 Hook Norton Hooky Bitter
 Hook Norton Twelve Days
 Kross Lupulus
 Krusovice Imperial
 Lion Stout
 M&S Belgian Wheat Beer
 M&S Cherry Wheat Beer
 M&S Cornish IPA
 M&S Norfolk Bitter
 Manns Brown Ale
 Moorhouse's Black Cat
 Mort Subite Kriek
 Murray's Punch & Judy
 Negro Modelo
 Okells 1907
 Radeberger Pilsner
 Redoak Special Strong Bitter
 Robinson's Unicorn
 Sagres
 Samuel Adams Double Bock
 Samuel Adams Imperial Stout
 Samuel Adams Lemon Pepper Saison
 Samuel Adams Longshot Blackened IPA
 Samuel Adams Longshot Friar Hop Ale
 Samuel Adams Octoberfest
 Samuel Adams Scotch Ale
 Samuel Adams Utopias 2011
 Samuel Adams Wee Heavy
 Samuel Adams Winter Lager
 Schöfferhofer Hefeweizen Alkoholfrei
 Starberg
 Thornbridge Kipling
 Voll-Damm
 Wadsworth The Bishop's Tipple
 Waldhaus Jubilaeums Dunkel
 Whitewater Copperhead
 Wychwood Hobgoblin



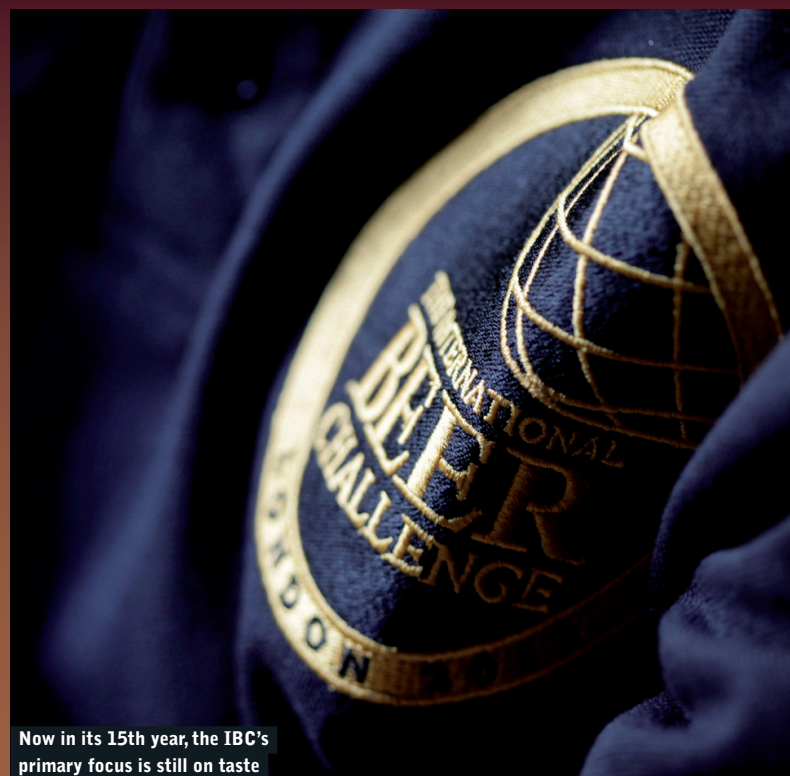
Silver

Adnams Innovation
 Affligem Dubbel
 Amarcord Riserva Speciale
 Anchor Ice
 Baltika No 4 Original
 Black Sheep Riggwelter
 Brains Dark
 Brains SA Gold
 Bridge Road Beechworth Pale Ale
 Bridge Road Robust Porter
 Cisk Export
 Clausthaler Amber
 Clausthaler Classic
 Cobra
 Collesi Fiat Lux
 Curious Brew Brut
 Curious Brew Admiral Porter
 Degrees Dubbel
 Ducato Bia Oatmeal Stout
 Durham Bede's Chalice
 Fuller's Bengal Lancer
 Fuller's Organic Honey Dew



Bronze

Adnams Broadside
 Affligem Blond
 Affligem Tripel
 Anchor Smooth
 Archipelago Hickory Smoked IPA
 Arran Blonde
 Banks's Mild
 Black Sheep Ale
 Black Sheep Golden Sheep
 Blue Moon
 Bock Damm
 Brains SA
 Brains The Rev James
 Brakspear Oxford Gold
 Butcombe Gold
 Carling
 Cateau Vivat Blonde
 Cateau Vivat Triple
 Collesi Maior
 Collesi Ubi
 Cubanero Fuerte
 Delirium Tremens
 Doppio Malto Bitterland
 Doppio Malto Mahogany IPA
 Doppio Malto Old Jack
 Doppio Malto Rust Ale
 Endeavour 2010 Reserve Amber Ale
 Estrella Damm Barcelona
 Everards Original
 Floris Framboise



Now in its 15th year, the IBC's primary focus is still on taste

Freedom Organic Lager
 Freedom Stout
 Fuller's 1845
 Fuller's Discovery
 Fuller's ESB
 Fuller's London Porter
 Fuller's London Pride
 Fyne Hurricane Jack
 Fyne Sublime Stout
 Hansa Pilsner
 Harveys Blue Label
 Harveys Christmas Ale
 Harveys Tom Paine
 Hawthorn Amber Ale
 Holgate Double Trouble
 Holt Humdinger
 Holt Manchester Brown Ale
 Hook Norton Copper Ale
 Hook Norton Flagship
 Hook Norton Old Hooky
 Hovels
 Huyghe La Guillotine
 Innis & Gunn Rum Cask Oak Aged Beer
 Jennings Sneek Lifter
 Jersey Mary Ann Best Bitter
 Krombacher Pils
 Krombacher Weizen
 Kross Curaca Abby Ale
 Kross 5
 Kross Golden Ale
 Kross Maibock
 Kross Pilsner
 Kross Stout
 Liberation Ale
 Lomza Export
 M&S Cheshire Brown Ale
 M&S Ginger Ale
 M&S Irish Stout
 M&S Scottish Ale
 Marston's Oyster Stout
 Marston's VSOP
 Medalla Light
 Melville's Raspberry Fruit Beer
 Moorhouse's Blond Witch
 Moorhouse's Pendle Witches Brew
 Moorhouse's Premier
 Moorhouse's Pride Of Pendle
 Mountain Goat Double Hightail
 Mountain Goat Surefoot Stout

Nail Brown Ale
 Okells Aile
 Okells Mac Lir
 Perla
 Purple Moose Dark Side of the Moose
 Quantock Stout
 Redoak Porter
 Robinson's Ginger Tom
 Sagres Bohemia
 Samuel Adams American Kriek
 Samuel Adams Brown Ale
 Samuel Adams Chocolate Bock
 Samuel Adams Cream Stout
 Samuel Adams Holiday Porter
 Samuel Adams Imperial White
 Samuel Adams Irish Red
 Samuel Adams Latitude 48
 Samuel Adams Latitude 48 Ahtanum
 Samuel Adams Latitude 48 Hallertau
 Mittelfruh
 Samuel Adams Latitude 48 Zeus
 Samuel Adams Old Fezziwig Ale
 Samuel Adams Pale Ale
 Samuel Adams Rustic Saison
 Samuel Adams Summer Ale
 Samuel Adams Triple Bock
 Samuel Adams White Ale
 Schöfferhofer Hefeweizen
 Sharp's Doom Bar
 Sharp's Monsieur Rock
 Shepherd Neame Bishops Finger
 Statalenove Kristal
 Statalenove Miss Kartola
 Statalenove Ponente
 Stoke Dark
 Super Bock Classic
 Thornbridge Bracia
 Thornbridge Jaipur
 Tongerlo Prior
 Turbacci Super
 Valscura Fich
 Valscura Matrimoniale
 Viru
 Waldhaus Diplom Pils
 Waldhaus Special Gold
 Weihenstephaner Hefeweiss
 Williams Seven Giraffes
 Williams Ceilidh
 Worthington's White Shield



The judges singled out interesting new beers