

# Fruity Summer Refreshers

Notes from the tasting panel for *Modern Brewery Age*, by Peter V.K. Reid, editor of *Modern Brewery Age*; with Gregg Glaser, editor of *Modern Distillery Age* and *Yankee Brew News*, and Tom Conti and Robert Lachman of the YBN tasting panel. Joining us each week is a rotating cast of tasters, to include Dr. Steve Victor; economist Ernie Adamo; home brewer Phil Simpson; Greg Zannella, field sales director for Northeast Beverage; Tess Szamatulski, co-founder of the Maltose Express Homebrew Shop; engineer Mark Szamatulski; Brewers Damian Brown and Frank Fermino; Marty Juliano, Northeast rep for Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Renzo Kian-Kubota, artisanal beer buyer for Harry's of Fairfield, CT, and David Talbot of the Ultimate Beverage Challenge. **Every month we sample 30-40 beers or ciders. We write up the best; Five-mug rating denotes "Superb."**

*This week, we taste some of the early crop of summer refreshers.*



## Samuel Smith's Apricot Ale Melbourn Bros. Brewery Lincolnshire, England

A startlingly good fruit beer from Samuel Smith of Yorkshire, brewed at their Melbourn Brothers Brewery in Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Melbourn Bros. is a small organic-certified brewery, restored by Sam Smith's in the 1990s, where beer is brewed as the Victorian-era brewers did it, with steam power, a belt-driven grist mill, and copper vessels.

Melbourn Bros. ferments their fruit beers with multiple yeast strains, including some wild strains, which give the beers a lambic-like lineage. The base beer is a wheat ale made with malted wheat; The beer is hopped, pitched with yeast and then aged for a year. The beers are then blended with organic fruit juice, conditioned and packaged at Samuel Smith's.

The company makes a full line of these organic fruit beers, including strawberry, raspberry, cherry, and apricot. The Apricot version is a bright, fresh, fruity beer, sweet and full bodied, but not cloying. After trying the apricot, we'd like to sample them all.

"Great apricot nose!" said taster Tom Conti. "Lots of apricot flavor up front."

"Nice and cloudy, and holy mackerel! there is big apricot in this," said Gregg Glaser. "A nice apricot, not too sweet, and beer character to back it up."

"Not like some of these fruity wheat beers that taste like cough medicine," said Ernie Adamo. "This is a little sweet, but there is tremendous apricot flavor, and it's not offputting."

"Reminds me a little of a Radler," commented Phil Simpson. "Tastes of real fruit, not artificial."

"Beautiful apricot nose, the ladies would love this one," said Robert Lachman. "Has a dried apricot character that I like."

"A nice beer," Ernie said. "This would be a great summer drink, for an aperitif or with a salad on a hot day."

## Apple Ale New Glarus Brewing Co. New Glarus, WI

An intriguing exercise from New Glarus, an apple ale with so much apple character that the uninitiated might assume they are drinking a cider/beer blend. But this is a beer, with a brown ale base that nicely balances the blend of six apple varieties. Our tasters enjoyed this refreshing summery brew.

"Apple nose, but not cidery, it's a whole different kind of apple character," said taster Gregg Glaser.

"The nose is mild apple," said Tom Conti, "and good apple flavor right up front. Bright apple character, fruity and it finishes nice and clean."

"Like an apple cider mixed with Calvados, with an apple must, or unfermented apple aspect to it," said Ernie Adamo. "Would be nice with cheese or salad."

"Very grainy, crystalline grainy flavor, with sweet applesauce," said Phil Simpson, "and a little note of pepper. I wasn't sure about this, but I like it."

"Delicious apple sweetness, a nice clean fruit beer for summer," said Robert Lachman.

## Golden Road Hefeweizen Golden Road Brewing Co. Los Angeles, CA

A hefeweizen from a brand new canning micro in Los Angeles, co-founded by an Oskar Blues alumni. This hefe is somewhat non-traditional, flavored with orange and lemon, but the added flavor essences are fairly muted, and

it's the yeast character that really pops.

"Fruity and chalky nose, a little banana at first, then a good amount of banana comes in," said Tom Conti.

"Nice orangey color, I like the way this looks," said Gregg Glaser. "Tastes like a traditional hefe, on the light-bodied side of the style."

"Flavor is more orange than lemon," said Ernie Adamo. "Citrus in the finish, dries it out nicely."

"Aroma a bit like a Hoegaarden," said Phil Simpson. "Funny thing about it, it smells Belgian and drinks German. Citrus finish, a fairly intense pithy citrus, and that fruit dries it out totally."



## Stiegl Grapefruit Radler Stieglbrauerei zu Salzburg Austria

Radlers are popular in Germany and Austria as summer refreshers for athletes—light-bodied beer blends that are low in alcohol and highly refreshing. In this vein, Stiegl's Radler is a 50/50 blend of Stiegl-Goldbrau Lager and grapefruit soda. Our tasters were surprised and delighted by this Radler. Some said the grapefruit character even reminded them of fresh, grapefruity American hops!

"Big grapefruit nose, very fresh tasting, with a ginger ale character," said taster Phil Simpson.

"A great summer beer," said Ernie Adamo. "Crisp, not sweet at all, nice lemony grapefruity beer, grapefruit fits in well with this, just like those grapefruity hops we're so used to."

"Not too sweet, well carbonated, I like this a lot," said Tom Conti.

"Cleansing grapefruit," said Ernie. "Very dry, flavors are nice, they aren't artificial. The level of carbonation makes it crisp and refreshing."

"I would happily drink this all summer," said Gregg Glaser.