

Warm Up With Some Spring Bocks

Spring is here, or at least that's what people keep telling me, though it's hard to imagine as I haven't felt my toes since October. It's time for the spring beers, which have taken an odd turn over the last few years. Once upon a time, spring beers were fairly traditional. Normally, a brewer worth his or her hops would produce a bock - the traditional malty spring lager with a rich history from the land of beer, Germanic Europe. It's a very nice style, if somewhat heavy for liteweights. But now, it seems, the new trend is a variation on white ales, which is a problem for me because I generally dislike white ales. It's not that I can't be objective - I can - but it means that instead of sipping on a tried and true style, I'm tasting a number of citrusy, light, coriander-flavored trendy beers. Call me that angry old codger that tells kids to stay off his lawn, but I believe beer should taste like beer and not a flower pot. So, here I salute a few of the bocks left on the shelves.

Berkshire Brewing Co. - Maibock Lager



If you like sweet beers, get your insulin ready. I kid, but this is definitely a brew for those with a sweet tooth. I love BBC's brews, from their Coffeehouse Porter, of which I keep a small shrine in my kitchen, to their Cabin Fever, which keeps me warm during those six months worth of chilly nights. The Maibock's sweetness covers a mild roasty flavor that works with the rather hefty body. This one's not for the faint of tongue, but it'll sure make you recognize the warmth it'll spread through you.

Breckenridge - Pandora's Bock



This beer gets points for a clever name, because who doesn't love a reference to classical mythology? This one is not as super-sweet, but it does have that trademark toasted malt character that's vital to a good bock. Moreover, the very light hint of hops gives it a little more balance and poise than you might find in other bocks. As always, Breckenridge knows what it's doing when it makes a beer... except for the Agave Wheat. I don't know what you guys were thinking there.

Otherwise, it's a flawless record.

Upcoming Events

On April 10, Hugh Sisson, the award-winning brewer of the famous Clipper City/Heavy Seas line of select suds, will be stopping by and commandeering the taps at Norey's Bar and Grill in Newport. He will be bringing some special samples to sip, including a bourbon-barrel brew that should not be missed. If you're unfamiliar with Heavy Seas, then you're missing out on some fine fermented fluid, particularly their unique Loose Cannon IPA.

On April 27, the Newport Craft Beer Festival descends upon the picturesque city of Newport once again, celebrating good beer produced by hard-working brewers who care about their craft. The Great Friends Meeting House hosts the soiree, which brings together brewers like Newport Storm, Old Burnside, Sebago, Cape Ann, Woodstock Inn, Stone, Trinity, Wachusett, and Cisco. If not one of those appeal to you, then there's something seriously wrong with you.