



MEMBERS' BOTTLE SHARE

I always look forward to travelling to a different city for the Beer52 bottle shares; a new place to explore, new breweries to try, and a change of scene. This month's, however, was in one of my favourite bars in the city I live in, but it was just as much fun. Our editor Richard was there to take photos, and a couple of the Beer52/Ferment staff attended as well, so the evening had a slightly different vibe to usual, but it was an absolutely lovely time.

This time round we were at Fierce Bar in Edinburgh's city centre, run by Aberdeen's Fierce Beer, it's one of the best taprooms in the area, both because of its beer selection and because of its friendly staff. We started the evening with a half of 'Dealer's Choice' from Fierce's core range, while we all got settled and

FIERCE BAR 167 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4LS

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PHOTOS: Richard Croasdale

introduced ourselves. Since some of us already knew each other the conversation flowed very easily, and I had to pinch myself to remind myself I was supposed to be hosting!

I swiftly excused myself to get the first proper beer of the evening - the delicious Lucy Goes North hazy pale ale, which is brewed for South African brewery Devil's Peak at Fierce in Aberdeen. This partnership came to be in autumn 2021, as Devil's Peak wanted

to bring its beers to the UK and Europe but didn't want to compromise on freshness or quality. The brewery chose a select few of its best beers to brew at Fierce, which I tried when they were released and absolutely loved them. So, I thought the NEIPA-style juicy and hoppy Lucy Goes North would be a great beer to officially start the evening with. It went down very well with the group, with some divide on the perceived bitterness of the beer - Iain said he thought it was quite bitter, but because it's hazy and juicy and a bit dry, he actually really enjoyed it, despite not usually being a fan of the style. Duncan commented that the bitterness put him off a bit, but Robyn didn't find it particularly bitter at all (and neither did I, but I could see where they were coming from).

Lucy Goes North was very quaffable so we swiftly moved on to Fierce's BIPA - one of my favourite styles of beer, but which is fairly inconsistent in my experience. Some beers seem more like a hoppy porter, and some seem more like a slightly roasty IPA, so it's a style I like to try whenever I get the chance because it varies so much, and I thought it would be a good choice to incite discussion among the group. We all had loads of great chat about this BIPA and the style in general, which if I catalogued here would take up the rest of my word count, so I will summarise. Iain and Duncan were surprised by how hoppy and easy-drinking it was, considering how rich and dark it looked and how roasty and berryish it smelled. Adele thought it tasted like hoppy cold-brew coffee, and that it was

the perfect middle ground between a dark beer and an IPA since she doesn't often like dark beers. I loved hearing everyone's different take on it, and also loved the beer myself, since the dark malts give the classic IPA a more warming feel perfect for winter.

Next up we had local brewery Moonwake's collaboration with Fierce - a lovely, spicy, hoppy Rye IPA which I am not ashamed to admit I sank quite a few pints of in a row when it was released last month. Robyn got cherry and almond notes on the nose initially, and said she really enjoyed it, and Iain said that as someone who doesn't usually like IPAs and prefers darker beers he thought it was really good and would drink it again. A win all-round!

The penultimate beer was from one of the most exciting breweries in →



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Scotland right now, Holy Goat, whose focus is on mixed and spontaneously-fermented beers and barrel-aging. I chose Blood Eagle as our next drink for a couple of reasons - one, I love the brewery and I think everything they've made so far since they launched at the beginning of 2021 has been phenomenal, and also because it would be a great segue between the previous beer and the final beer (nay spoilers). Blood Eagle is a cross between a Flanders Red-style ale and British strong ale, blended with a portion of two-year-old sour amber ale which was aged in Rye whisky barrels, and left to rest on a huge load of plums that were harvested near the brewery, some of which were smoked using red wine oak staves. What a whopper of a beer! Unsurprisingly, it went down very well with the whole group, with a few people commenting that it was their favourite beer of the

evening, and excitedly asking to see the bottle. Even Duncan, who as a rule doesn't like sour beer, enjoyed it, and a few people agreed that it was a good palate cleanser from the previous hop-forward, fuller-bodied beers.

And then we came to our final beer of the evening, and would it really be a Beer52 bottle share if I didn't pick something special, dark, heavy-going, and full of oomph? The second I got to the Fierce bar I noticed they had the brewery's new Heavy on the Bourbon, a barrel-aged Wee Heavy brewed in collaboration with Fallen Brewery in Stirling, on draught - and who am I to say

no to a traditional Scottish beer style? This one, in my opinion, was fantastic as the bourbon notes from the barrel-aging come through really strongly, making it slightly sharp and quite boozy, in contrast to the beer's natural maltness and richness. Most of the group enjoyed the beer, but a couple of people unfortunately didn't like bourbon, so this was not the beer for them. Those of us who liked it appreciated its warming, toffee, nutty, fruit cake notes, and sipped it slowly as we finished our conversations and got ready to head off into the cold, rainy streets of Edinburgh to make our way home.

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