

## Ullage and Spillage

by J.Random

Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Company ([www.howesound.com](http://www.howesound.com)) played host to CAMRA Vancouver's latest field trip on the first day of a summer that has been a long time coming. Nineteen CAMRA members rode a school bus up the scenic Sea to Sky Highway to sunny Squamish. The road works were at their peak, so this was a 1½ hour trip, at construction zone speed most of the way. Fortunately, it should not be long before this massive project achieves its primary goal of cutting down the trip time to the Howe Sound Inn

for us. Owners Dave and Leslie Fenn had really pulled out all the stops to make us welcome.

Chef Foster had created a superb portion-controlled lunch, each of the five courses made with beer ingredients and paired with a sampler of the same beer. Possibly the most innovative was the appetizer of chicken wings encrusted with seasoned spent grain, paired with Pilsner Plunge. This was followed with a cheddar ale soup made with, and paired with, Garibaldi honey pale ale. Devil's Elbow IPA did an excellent job of cleansing our palate with a salad and dressing using IPA wort. The entrée was a very tasty breaded pork Schnitzel accompanied by an apple compote made with a



*Dave Fenn and Paul Foster (centre left and right) with our three guests from CAMRA Victoria.  
Photo courtesy of Brian K. Smith Photography*

to an easy half hour. Your provincial government taking care of your drinking needs.

Several more of our members and a trio from CAMRA Victoria joined us at the pub. Scottie McLellan, Howe Sound's marketing man, was MC for the event. Brewer Frank Carno dropped in to talk about the beers and Chef Paul Foster outlined the beer-inspired dishes he had prepared especially

reduction of Hangdog Hefeweizen. For dessert we were treated to a layered chocolate brownie cake with a light milk chocolate mouse and stout reduction paired with Diamond Head oatmeal stout. The stout is really on top form right now with a gorgeous molasses-like complexity.

After lunch, brewery manager John Ohler gave us the tour of the facilities where brewer



*Scottie in signature waistcoat presents John Mitchell with his Lifetime Achievement Award. Various CAMRA Vancouver members are in the background. Photo courtesy*

Fab Specht was working on the latest batch of Hefeweizen. They have recently expanded the number of fermenters to a capacity of 10 hectolitres to meet their expanded sales of bottled beers. Up to now they have been hand bottling but they will shortly be installing an automated bottling line. Every brewery has its unique innovation and Howe Sound is no exception. Look out for their brand new combi-cap bottles with a crown cap for automated bottling and a Grolsch-style flip top for convenient re-sealing. The idea is to go head to head with wine by making it easier to share their 1-litre bottles over the course of a meal while keeping a decent level of carbonation. Dave Fenn says his concept is all about “putting beer on the table with food and people.”

An added bonus was Scottie’s trivia quiz for prizes consisting of bottles of Howe Sound brewery excellent beers and a bathrobe from the Howe Sound Inn. Needless to say, the bottles did not make it back to Vancouver in a full condition. The winner of the bathrobe assures me it reached home safely.

Two pieces of really good news are that bottles of Devil’s Elbow IPA will soon be available in liquor stores and they will be producing double the

amount of Father John’s Christmas ale next year. Two pieces of bad news for regular visitors were the beer bread was not available and Baldwin and Coopers bitter was not on tap. Chef Foster assured us he is bringing back the beer bread and Dave Fenn was kind enough to crack a few bottles of bitter for the diehard fans of this classic beer. We finished off with a vertical tasting of 2007- and 2008-bottled Mettleman copper ale and some six-month aged Father John’s. This last is named after John Mitchell, the man that started the

microbrewery and brewpub revolution in Canada and we were privileged to have the presence of the legend himself. John was a key consultant in the construction of the brewery at Howe Sound back in 1996, and provided the early beer recipes. I was particularly pleased to shake his hand because he is one of the reasons I live here. When I flew over from London for the interview in 1985, my prospective boss knew a fair bit about me so he took me out to the Troller at Horseshoe Bay just to prove there was good beer to be found in B.C. We have come a long way since then.

It is a rare thrill in B.C. to walk into a pub with a row of handpumps. These are the real thing, drawing beer from conditioning tanks with just a light CO2 supply to fill the head space. CAMRA UK would not approve but I believe a little technology helps a traditional product stay alive. The impressive decor at Howe Sound reflects the local outdoors pursuits such as rock climbing, windsurfing, skiing and kayaking. Two other beers on tap that day were Rail Ale nut brown and Timberline ale from the total of 16 types of beer that rotate through over the year.

It was a great pleasure to be able to try so many of the Howe Sound beers in a single sitting.

Normally I am driving and I only get to have one beer. I usually make the turn off Highway 99 at Squamhenge on the way back from skiing or hiking. Funny how my more environmentally conscious friends think an SUV is a great idea when it's snowing or the desired trail is at the far end of a gravel road. Having a designated bus driver was great but an even better way to enjoy the place is to stay at the inn necessitating only a climb up stairs to bed. There is even an elevator for those who just have to indulge till they are wide-eyed and laughing, star-shaped and legless. §



*Brad, Lundy, Gerry and Rick ready to return to Vancouver. School bus trips have never been so much fun.*

*Photo courtesy of Brian K. Smith Photography*