

Hashigo Zake's Best of 2011 Survey Results

The country's most dedicated, thoughtful and, let's face it, good-looking beer judges have had their say and it's time to announce the results of Hashigo Zake's annual survey of what was good in the year that's been. We unashamedly grouped beers into arbitrary categories and asked participants to name their favourite in that category, and we followed up with some more diverse or open questions.

One Horse Races

Some categories turned out to be no-contests. A single answer dominated.

Favourite Amber or Brown Beer

8 Wired Tall Poppy. There were encouraging returns for ParrotDog Bloodhound, Emerson's Brownville and 8 Wired Double Brown (of which only 50 litres were made!), but Tall Poppy was out on its own in participants' estimation.

Favourite Imperial IPA

Liberty Citra. Clearly this beer has made a profound impact on lovers of big strong IPAs. It won many friends at Beervana and at the Pacific Beer Expo was voted favourite beer at both sessions. Honourable mention too to Epic's Hop Zombie.

Favourite Wheat Beer

Three Boys Wheat. In spite of solid support for Tuatara Hefe and Coronado's Orange Avenue Wit, Three Boys Wheat remains the favourite of our drinkers. (But we already knew this by how quickly it sells.)

Favourite Garage Project Beer

Trip Hop. Garage Project's 24/24 programme was so engrossing and popular that it seemed fitting to give them a category of their own. The winner turned out to be the first beer that they re-brewed on a large scale, which is a great endorsement for Trip Hop, but suggests that some of the great beers in the 24/24 programme didn't live in the memory as long as we hoped.

Favourite Beer In No Other Category

Renaissance Stonecutter. Rather than test the patience of our voluntary respondents by having as many categories as there are recognised styles, we cut corners. And a pretty diverse range of beers got lumped here. We apologise for any disservice done as a result, but it's interesting that the same beer won the equivalent category last year, so clearly Stonecutter has a status that deserves recognition. Kudos too to Yeastie Boys for coming a clear second with (what else but) Rex Attitude and for picking up quite a few votes for Hud-a-wa and Red Rackham. Mussel Inn Captain Cooker and Invercargill Men'snskurts featured highly too.

Two Horse Races

A couple turned out to be cliff-hangers.

Favourite Lager

1st **Croucher Pils**, 2nd **Emerson's Pilsner**. Two of the most respected and awarded local pilsners divided our respondents and Croucher took the decision by a few votes. Fighting it out for third were Three Boys Pils, Sprig & Fern Harvest Pils, Tuatara Pils and Harrington's Rogue Hop.

Favourite Porter or Stout

1st Equal **Renalsance Craftsman Chocolate Oatmeal Stout** and **Three Boys Oyster Stout**. New Zealand has two truly great winter stouts that still evoke strong feelings in the middle of summer. Honourable mentions go to Yeastie Boys PKB and Liberty Darkest Day Stout.

Favourite Pale Ale

1st **Tuatara American Pale Ale**, 2nd **Tuatara Aotearoa Pale Ale**. Clearly Tuatara are onto a good thing with these beers and customers have appreciated their honest response to the Great American Hop Shortage, which was to switch to a reinterpretation of the same beer using local hops. Some great beers were back in the pack – Epic Pale Ale, Epic Mashup, the Liberty Summer Blonde series, 666 Gabriel B, Baird Rising Sun Pale Ale and Liberty Taranaki Session Beer.

Favourite Hand-pumped Beer

1st **Twisted Hop IPA**, 2nd **Cassel and Sons' Milk Stout**. For a brewery whose premises have been out of bounds since February 22nd, the Twisted Hop have remained in people's thoughts, and when they've had batches of their beer produced at other breweries those were snapped up. Meanwhile relative newcomer Cassel and Sons have a cult following for their Milk Stout, and in spite of being rare it nearly won over our voters. We should also point out that all six Townshend beers that were listed in this category picked up a lot of votes.

Three Horse Races

In some categories the competition was even closer.

Favourite Imperial Stout

1st **Ballast Point Victory at Sea**, 2nd **Liberty Never Go Back**, 3rd **Nøgne Ø Imperial Stout**. We are well aware of our customers' affection for Victory at Sea and the quality of Nøgne Ø Imperial Stout, so for Liberty's Never Go Back to mix it with these giants is a triumph.

Favourite IPA

1st **ParrotDog Bitterbitch**, 2nd **8 Wired Hopwired**, 3rd **Liberty/Mikes Taranaki Pale Ale**. ParrotDog, the upstarts of Wellington brewing, have been demonstrating their popularity since that famous night back in August when Hashigo Zake poured 120 litres of the first incarnation of BitterBitch in 96 minutes. To come out ahead of the beer of 2010, Hopwired, is some feat.

Some Purely Self-centred Questions

Favourite Pie – 1st **Pork and Chorizo**, 2nd **Beef Rendang**, 3rd **Venison Vindaloo**. While there's no shame in coming second to the venerable pork and chorizo pie, all those associated with the release in 2011 of the beef rendang pie are devastated at the result.

Favourite Hashigo Zake Event. 1st the **Pacific Beer Expo**, 2nd **Garage Project Launch and 24/24 Programme**.

Opinions

We asked voters what “the story” of 2011 was. Take a bow Monteiths/DB/Heineken and IPONZ because the winner was the **Radler Debacle**. Not all that far behind was **The Explosion of Wellington Beer Bars**. Did the first contribute to the second and does this forecast a grim year ahead for the industrial brewer? We sincerely hope so.

We also asked voters what the story of 2012 will be. The future must be bright for Wellington brewers and drinkers because the most popular answer was **Wellington Craft Brewing**. Equal second were **The Further Erosion of Lion and DB's Dominance** and, ominously, **The Sale of one of New Zealand's Best Craft Breweries to Lion or DB**.

Overall Winners

We asked four other questions. Five if you count “what’s your name”.

What was your beer of 2011?

For this category we invited participants to write in their answers with no pre-defined options. It made collating the answers difficult and drew responses that were diverse and, at times, poorly spelled and surprisingly detailed. The winner by a single vote was **Liberty Citra** (already the winner of the Imperial IPA category). Next was **8 Wired Batch 18**.

What is the Most Promising New or Emerging New Zealand Brewer?

Liberty was the big winner ahead of Wellington’s own **ParrotDog** and **Garage Project**.

What was your favourite overseas brewery of 2011?

For all the quiet compliments given out to Coronado, the hype over Green Flash, the visit to New Zealand by Nøgne Ø’s Kjetil Jikuin and the impact of Australia’s Feral when we finally got our hands on some, it was Northern Californian mainstay **Bear Republic** that topped the voting.

What was your favourite New Zealand brewery of 2011?

Watching answers to this question trickle in was fascinating. Again, this was an open question, with no suggestions offered. But responses were far less diverse than for the Beer of 2011 question and two breweries were dominating – **8 Wired** and **Liberty**. A win for 8 Wired would make a lot of sense for a brewery that has been over-achieving for two years, developing a stellar reputation locally and overseas, and that in 2011 was named Champion Brewer at the BrewNZ awards. And yet Liberty Brewing, a nano-brewery with only one regular outlet (Hashigo Zake), one BrewNZ medal and no full-time staff somehow kept pace with the “established” 8 Wired. In the end they both won – tied for first.

Summary

Favourite Wheat Beer	Three Boys Wheat
Favourite Lager	Croucher Pils
Favourite Hand-pumped Beer	Twisted Hop IPA
Favourite Pale Ale	Tuatara American Pale Ale
Favourite Amber or Brown Beer	8 Wired Tall Poppy
Favourite IPA	ParrotDog Bitterbitch
Favourite Imperial IPA	Liberty C!tra
Favourite Beer in No Other Category	Renaissance Stonecutter
Favourite Porter or Stout	Renaissance Craftsman / Three Boys Oyster Stout
Favourite Imperial Stout	Ballast Point Victory at Sea
Favourite Garage Project Beer	Trip Hop
Favourite Pie	Pork and Chorizo
Favourite Hashigo Zake Event	Pacific Beer Expo
Story of 2011	The Radler Debacle
Story of 2012	Wellington Craft Brewing
Most Promising New or Emerging New Zealand Brewer	Liberty
Favourite Overseas Brewery	Bear Republic
Beer of 2011	Liberty C!tra
Brewer of 2011	Liberty / 8 Wired

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