



GUEST BREWING AT NØRREBRO BRYGHUS

Nørrebro Bryghus opened in September, 2003, as an innovation on the Danish brewing scene, mainly because our ambitions were big. We wanted to be the spearhead of the burgeoning Danish craft beer revolution, both in terms of quality and innovation. And we wanted to be a practical inspiration for other brewers by opening our doors and invite everybody to partake in the sharing of knowledge and experience that I had seen in the much more mature American craft beer industry.

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As the American scene was also our inspiration in terms of beer philosophy and beer styles, it was unavoidable that we felt very alone and isolated back then in 2003, and this fact was a very important motivator for what has later become by far the most extensive guest brewing venue in Denmark (...and, most likely, far beyond). Thus, it was no coincidence that our first guest brewer in the spring of 2004 was Garrett Oliver from Brooklyn Brewery. Garret is still – and had already been for a while, back then – a good friend of and invaluable support to me and Nørrebro Bryghus, and Garrett is still the only guest brewer to have appeared twice, helping us create the very successful beers King's County Brown and Pacific Summer Ale.

In the beginning, there were no other people present during the actual guest brewing than the guest brewer and ourselves. The knowledge sharing initially only took place at so-called Master Classes where the guest brewer gave a presentation

on a relevant subject to brewer colleagues and beer media. We still always combine international guest brewings with Master Classes, which are normally combined beer tastings and presentations, lasting two to three hours, to an invited audience.

For the first three years, our guests (see the list at the end of this article) were exclusively international. A Nordic focus started in 2006 with the concept we call 'Nordic Days'. In short: the idea with 'Nordic Days' is to present different Nordic beer and food cultures, represented by some of the best local pioneers of these cultures. As travel to and from Copenhagen is neither too expensive nor time consuming for our Nordic colleagues, we can combine the guest brewing with a beer dinner when the guest beer is ready. At this dinner, to which of course both the guest brewer and media from the guest brewer's country are invited, not just the guest beer itself is presented, but the

brewer also presents him or herself, his brewery and some of their beers.

In 2007, two more developments of the guest brewing concept at Nørrebro Bryghus were introduced. The first development was when we started also having Danish guest brewers, with Mikkel from Mikkeller being the first. Then we further added to the concept, when we changed the guest brewing brew days into so-called Brewing Workshops, which means that we invite a small group of media people, colleagues from other Danish craft breweries, and very close friends of the house to attend. These people look on, discuss with us and help where they can, and we always end the day with a dinner, for those interested, in our restaurant.

These developments have further anchored the guest brewing concept as a pivotal element in the 'soul' of Nørrebro Bryghus, and that it is not only of benefit to ourselves is clearly proven by the willingness of some of the finest brewers in this world to visit us as guest brewers. To prove this point, I have enclosed the list of international guest brewers for 2009 at the end of the article.

Why do we put so much emphasis on this guest brewing concept? Well, to answer this, let us look at some of the results beyond the knowledge sharing I have already mentioned.

Creating new, unique and innovative beers: Collaboration beers will very often not only reflect the best of both brewers' and breweries' talents and beer philosophies. More often than not, one plus one equals more than two in this context. It is as if the bringing together of two individually distinct approaches to brewing creates an additional and fascinating quality to the beers. This is illustrated by the fact that out of the 15 Nørrebro Bryghus beers currently bottled, no less than six are the results of guest brewing projects.

What are the direct benefits of guest brewing to the brewers and their breweries? First of all, the creation of unique beers that neither of the collaborating breweries or brewers could have created on their own. Secondly, regardless of which brewers collaborate – be one ever as talented and experienced as you can imagine and the other a novice – both will always learn something from the joint venture. Thirdly, collaboration events often offer opportunities for media coverage, being a very cheap and positive way to create good PR. And last but definitely not least, it is great fun to work together with colleagues from other breweries – sometimes we even share a beer or two during and after the hard brewing work... →



PREVIOUS GUEST BREWERS AT NØRREBRO BRYGHUS

- Garrett Oliver, Brooklyn Brewery, NY, US – 2004 and 2005
- Kjetil Jikiun, Nøgne Ø, Grimstad, NO – 2006 ('Nordic Days')
- Lasse Ericsson, Nynäshamns Ångbryggeri, Nynäshamn, SE, – 2006 ('Nordic Days')
- George Philliskirk, The Beer Academy, UK – 2006
- Patrick Holmquist, Nils Oscar, Stockholm, SE – 2007 ('Nordic Days')
- Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head, DE, US – 2007
- Will Meyers, Cambridge Brewing Co., US – 2007
- Mikkel Bjergsøe, Mikkeller, DK – 2007
- Shaun E. Hill, Trout River Brewing Co., US – 2008
- 'Five Brewers for a good cause': Gunnhild Kolvereid, Carlsberg; Martin Jensen, Raasted Bryghus; Jan Paul, Svaneke Bryghus (a charity project) – March 2008
- Grady Hull, New Belgium Brewing Co., Colorado, US – June 2008
- Christian Skovdal Andersen (ex. Ølfabrikken) – August 2008
- Per Kølster, Fuglebjerggaard (Nordic Malting Project) – August 2008
- Jens Eiken, Carlsberg/The Jacobsen Brewhouse (now Coors Brewers Ltd.) – November 2008
- 'The SEVEN project': Mikkel Bjergsøe, Mikkeller; Mike Murphy, GB; Christian Skovdal Andersen, Beer Here; Rune Lindgreen, Djævlebyg; Jacob Storm, Amager Bryghus; Peter Sonne, NB/Halsnæs Bryggeri – November 2008

PLANNED GUEST BREWERS 2009, NØRREBRO BRYGHUS

- Ben Millstein, Kodiak Island Brewing Co., AK, US – January 2009
- Tomme Arthur, Lost Abbey/Port Brewing, CA, US
- Yvan de Baets, Brasserie de la Senne, BE
- Hans-Peter Drexler, Schneider & Sohn, DE
- John Keeling, Fuller's London, UK





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