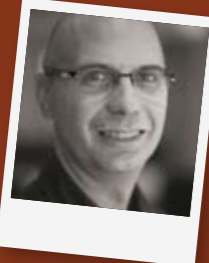


a match made in pilsen

After the pressure of the Bartenders v Sommeliers Challenge, our thirsty teams headed off for a relaxed evening of beer and food matching. **Nigel Huddleston** reports on an event that stimulated creative juices as well as tastebuds

Following the heat and stress of *Imbibe's* first Bartenders v Sommelier Challenge, it was felt that the teams needed something a bit different to allow them to relax, away from the world of Brandy Blazers and errant corkscrews. So off they went to a dinner at the famous beer buff's pub the White Horse in Parson's Green, west London.

The event was hosted by Different World Drinks, the specialist division set up by Molson Coors to generate the same passion for beer that bar staff and sommeliers already have for spirits and wine. The dishes were all classic, contemporary fare and the beers taken from Molson Coors' portfolio of world and speciality brands.



'It's something I've been looking at doing for some time – it would be nice to get a boutique beer on to our eight-course tasting menu. I was particularly impressed by the aged version of the White Shield, which had very complex flavours with a lot of dried figs, and was closest in style to a wine – but more like some of the flavours from sweet wine or fortified rather than a dry red. If I'd had my eyes closed and not seen the glass I could have mistaken it for a wine. It was quite an eye-opener. We do Peroni, Stella Artois and Leffe which people usually have as an aperitif, but it would be good to get something that was more crafted and we could suggest as a specific food match.'

Roberto della Pietra, sommelier, Roussillon

CHEESE STRAWS

KASTEEL CRU

To kick off the night, nibbles made with Cheddar cheese from the renowned Somerset cheesemaker Keen's were paired with the light, moussey Kasteel Cru, produced in the elite Alsace winemaking region using champagne yeast. The blonde beer's brioche character and delicate body helped the cheese's gentle flavours linger on the palate.

SMOKED SALMON TART

KASTEEL CRU

The champagne beer stayed on the table to demonstrate its versatility in food matching. This time it cut through the

smokiness of the salmon and mirrored the tart's biscuity base.

CRAB AND SALMON MOUSSE ON GRANARY TOAST

GROLSCH WEIZEN

BLUE MOON

This course offered the chance for our tasters to compare two different styles of beer: the softly spicy and banana-fruit flavoured wheat beer from Grolsch, and the orange citrus and coriander-spiced Blue Moon. Both contenders came out of the challenge well, bringing a little bit of acidity and complementary flavour to the sweetness of the fish, without ever being too overpowering.



'It was very interesting, though some matches worked better than others. The crab and salmon mousse with Blue Moon was very good. The beer's got a good spicy

nose and coriander and lemon zest notes and it was a good match for the richness of the crab, with the citrus cutting through the spices. The Zatec had bitterness and citrus and worked well with the slight tartness of the lime and lemongrass in the tiger prawns. It's interesting to educate people in the idea of beer and food matching. It's definitely an area to which people should give more thought.'

Nigel Lister, ex-sommelier, Asia de Cuba

TIGER PRAWNS, CHILLI, LIME AND LEMONGRASS

ZATEC

This Czech pilsner's sweeter-than-average profile works well with the fleshy sweetness of the prawns, while its spiced hoppiness gives it enough body to stand up to the power of the chilli and lime dressing.

FILLET OF BEEF, MASH, SHALLOTS, AND RED WINE REDUCTION

WORKINGTON WHITE SHIELD

A robust beer for a rich and flavoursome main course, with the molasses and dried fruit flavours of this world-beating IPA working with, not against, the sweetness of the shallots and the sauce. The tangy hops carry the savoury flavours of the beef. The diners were treated to two 'vintages' of White Shield, with opinion divided on whether aged or young beer worked best.

LEMON AND ORANGE ZEST TART

BLUE MOON

The orange and spice notes of the Belgian abbey-style Blue Moon picked up the citrus in the dish, while its rolled oats content helped enhance the biscuit flavours of the pastry base.

COLSTON BASSETT BLUE STILTON

P2 STOUT

This was a rare treat for our tasters: the

chance to taste a code-named imperial stout from the White Shield Brewery vaults. A beer that's not available commercially, its sweet roasted malt flavours contrasted really well with the savoury Colston Basset Blue Stilton.

This match was a good demonstration of the important role of carbonation in repeatedly cleansing the palate with every sip ready for the next mouthful of challenging foods. 🍷

