

## Black Gold is Champion Winter Beer of Britain



Cairngorm Brewery's Black Gold has been named Champion Winter Beer of Britain at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival Winter, being staged in Rotherham.

Judging panel organiser Christine Cryne described the beer as having "roasted coffee nose with dark fruits and earthy hops. The flavour is of refreshing coffee with sweet malt, orange, and dark fruits, leading to a satisfying dry, chocolatey finish. Very easy drinking."

Cairngorm Brewery's sales director, Merlin Sandbach, said: "After winning Champion Beer of Scotland two years consecutively, and four years in total, the team is ecstatic. Our head brewer, Liam, Gemma from production, and I are absolutely over the moon!"

Runners-up in the competition were Sarah Hughes' Snowflake (8% ABV),

which took silver, and Grain's Slate (6% ABV), claiming bronze.

"Massive congratulations to Cairngorm for their fantastic win, plus all the amazing category winners in this year's competition," said CAMRA awards director Gary Timmins. "Black Gold is a cracking pint, and even in such an incredibly competitive shortlist, it is a worthy winner.

"Every year our judges find it harder and harder to pick a winner, which speaks volumes of the brewing talent in the UK. Despite their evident quality, our brewers struggle to find a place at the bar of our locals. Soulless global conglomerates have a greedy stranglehold on the industry, restricting true customer choice and our independent brewers' access to market.

"Everyone should get out to their pub, social club or taproom and look out for one of

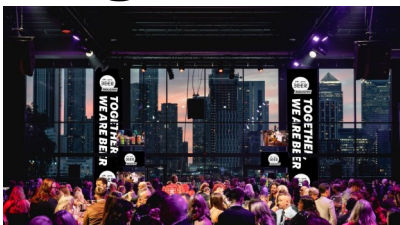
### IN BRIEF

- Nova Lode is a new alcohol-free (0.5% ABV) pale ale from Stannary. Inspired by tin miners' relentless pursuit of hidden treasures, it's hopped with Citra and Citra Spectrum for a vibrant taste and a crisp finish. It's gluten free and vegan.
- Hammerton's annual brew of Día De Los Muertos Mexican cake stout is here. The 5.8% ABV brew has aromas of chocolate, caramel, and vanilla, balanced by a light roasted character from dark malts, and a nice level of spice and heat from brewing with Ancho Grande chillies.



- Brew York has launched a new series of beers, Duality, which sees two hop varieties combined. First out of the gates are Mosaic and Citra, together in a 4.6% ABV brew. "Expect bursts of juicy mango and papaya from Mosaic, perfectly balanced with zesty lime and grapefruit from Citra," says the brewer.
- NZ Pale (4.8% ABV) is the latest in Wild Horse's Elements series. It has been brewed to showcase the elegant and complex character of New Zealand-grown hops. Expect citrus, tropical, and stonefruit flavours with complementary floral notes.
- Junkyard (4% ABV) is a new British-hopped pale from Oakham. "The spicy, aromatic, blackcurrant and lemon notes of Bramling Cross work brilliantly with the intense tropical and citrus flavours and complex bitterness of Jester and Olicana."
- Black Forest is a 4.9% ABV porter from Vibrant Forest. "Expect rich roasted notes of coffee and chocolate along the way, with a perfectly balanced bitterness waiting at the trail's end."

## Inaugural We Are Beer Industry Expo & Conference set for July



We Are Beer, behind the London, Bristol, and Manchester Craft Beer Festivals, has unveiled the first wave of speakers for the inaugural We Are Beer Industry Expo & Conference.

The landmark event, at Magazine, London, on 16th and 17th July, will bring together industry leaders to chart the future of the UK beer sector, driving growth and innovation.

Following a strong 2024 for pub operators, experts see 2025 as the moment to seize opportunities. The Industry Expo & Conference will precede this year's London Craft Beer Festival. Attendees will gain insight into evolving business models, shifting consumer preferences, sustainability and innovation, and the future of retail over the next five years.

## WHAT'S ON HIGHLIGHTS

### 19th-21st February

Ale in the Orangery, London beers at The Imperial, Exeter.

### 20th-23rd February

Darkside Craft Beer Festival at Wigan Central, Wigan.

### 20th-24th February

Beer Festival at the Gardener's Arms, Lewes.

### 21st and 22nd February

Beer Festival at the Lord Leicester, Warwick.

### 21st-23rd February

Darlington Beer Festival at Hopetown Railway Museum, Darlington.

Acle Festival at Acle Academy, Norwich.

### 22nd February

Dark Matter at Villages Brewery, Deptford, London.

## PLAN AHEAD ...

### 27th February-1st March

Bradford Beer and Cider Festival at Victoria Hall, Saltaire

Chappel Beer Festival at the East Anglian Railway Museum, Wakes Colne.

Wigan Beer Festival at the Robin Park Sports Centre, Wigan.

### 28th February-1st March

Gosport Winterfest at Thorngate Halls, Gosport.

Neepsend Craft Beer Festival at the Peddler Warehouse, Sheffield.

### 6th-8th March

Loughborough Beer Festival at the Polish Club, Loughborough.

**There are more — many more — listings, with maps, at [beertoday.co.uk/events](https://beertoday.co.uk/events)**  
**The biggest beery events guide in the UK? Could be...**

# Keystone Brewing Group acquires another big brand



Keystone Brewing Group has announced the acquisition of Yorkshire's North Brewing Co brands. Brewing will continue at Springwell, under the stewardship of Kirkstall.

Founded in 2015, North Brewing Co has built a reputation for innovative hop-forward beers, hazy IPAs, and triple fruited goses.

"We are delighted the North Brewing brand and beers will join the Keystone family," said Mark Williams, of Keystone Brew-

ing Group. It is a true icon with a compelling reputation for innovation and high-quality beers, and we see enormous potential to build on its success to date, growing it nationally while preserving its original Yorkshire identity.

"We are also delighted to announce that Steve Holt will be working with us, as a special advisor to our group in future. These are exciting times for Keystone, and we're not finished yet."

## Bays Brewery reveals its charity beer line-up



Bays Brewery, in Paignton, is giving back to the Devon community it calls home in 2025 with the launch of four new limited-edition charity brews.

This year, the brewery will help to raise funds for: Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, with Evergreen session IPA; Paignton Zoo, with Claw pale ale; Torbay Lifeboats with Ahoy golden ale; and Children's Hospice South West, with Christmas brew Jingle Ale.

## Rooster's refresh canned beers

Harrogate-based Rooster's Brewing Co are marking a decade of canning their beers with a refreshed look for the year-round range.

In late 2014, the brewery became the first of its size, outside of London, and the first in Yorkshire, to install a canning line. Three beers were the first to come off the line, launched into the market shortly after. One of these was Baby-Faced Assassin, Rooster's flagship IPA, which has gone on to become a bestseller.

Rooster's has unveiled a new look for its core range of beers, covering cask pumpclips, keg badges. This includes updated four-packs of Baby-Faced Assassin, available in ASDA. With a 'modern classic' approach at the heart of the rebrand, the new artwork features a bold new typeface, and block colouring.

## Award winners create fusion IPA

Thornbridge brewer Dominic Driscoll and Ruvani de Silva have collaborated on a limited edition cask ale in recognition of their joint recognition at the 2024 British Guild of Beer Writers Awards.

The beer, which will be released on 3rd March, is a nod to Ruvani's Sri Lankan heritage and Thornbridge's ongoing commitment to quality and innovation. It combines classic modern IPA flavours of Amarillo and Citra hops with a Maris Otter-forward malt blend and two traditional Sri Lankan spices.

Ruvani is the first woman of colour and the first queer person of colour to win the Michael Jackson Beer Writer of the Year award, and the first writer to win in five categories in the same year. Her work tells stories of beer culture, history, and community.