

# Label Art: The Iconic Art of Flying Dog

By Don Tse

As a beer fan, you are probably familiar with the beers of Flying Dog Brewery, founded in 1990 in Aspen, CO, but brewed exclusively in Maryland since 2008. Flying Dog features some of the most distinctive label art in the beer industry.

The work is that of British artist Ralph Steadman (b. 1936) who is most famous for illustrating the literary work of Hunter S. Thompson, though his work has actually appeared in many magazines and books. It was Steadman's illustration of Thompson's coverage of the Kentucky Derby in 1969 that helped launch the pair to fame. Indeed, Steadman is as much credited with founding gonzo journalism as Thompson is.

Steadman has been drawing professionally since 1956 and has been doing label art for Flying Dog since the mid-1990s, when he was introduced to Flying Dog by Thompson himself, who had become

there is no doubt of the skill with which Steadman executes his trade. It is Steadman's unique style that makes Flying Dog's beers stand out on a shelf full of craft beers.

If you are a fan of Flying Dog, Steadman and their label art, Flying Dog is offering a limited number (only 100 have been



friends with the owners. Even Flying Dog's logo, created in 1995, was designed by Steadman, helping the logo to tie nicely into the label designs.

Despite being extremely prolific, Steadman remains highly sought as an illustrator due to his distinctive style. While many may not have heard his name, almost all can identify his work. Steadman has a distinguishing style featuring cartoonish and grossly exaggerated caricatures of his subjects. Splashes of ink give the works a hurried, messy appearance, though

produced) of double-magnum-sized bottles of barrel-aged Gonzo Imperial Porter with labels signed by Steadman. A numbered certificate of authenticity comes with each \$500 bottle, along with two goblets and a wooden crate, available at the brewery gift shop in Frederick, MD. Proceeds from the sale of these double-magnums go to The Gonzo Foundation, a non-profit organization honoring the legacy of Hunter S. Thompson, who passed away in 2005, and promoting literature, journalism, and political activism.

Three litres of 9.5% beer? You can't get more gonzo than that! ♦♦♦