

Spice 'n everything nice

Village Brewery debuts seasonal beer program

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Village Brewery hit the Calgary beer scene earlier this year with two brews, Village Blonde and Village Blacksmith. Shortly afterward, a third product, Village Wit, joined the lineup.

While the beers were originally only available on draft and in growlers (1.89-litre reusable glass containers), Village has begun bottling them. They're also now kicking off a seasonal beer program, which will feature a new limited-production beer every three or four months.

The first of these is Village Monk Chai Winter Porter, made in collaboration with Silk Road Spice Merchant. Launching the new beer at the Inglewood-based spice shop, Jim Button, Village partner in charge of community affairs, explained, "This is exactly why we started Village Brewery. It's neat to do something meaningful, small, local and fun."

In a press release, brewmaster Larry Kerwin said, "As a brewery that was built to gather people around community we were excited to get our

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team together with local spicers to create this unique beer."

In keeping with that community theme, the beer was a collaborative effort, with all four of Village's brewers sitting down with Kelci Hind and Colin Leach of Silk Road to create the recipe.


The base is a porter made in part with chocolate and caramel malts. Such malts, as their names imply, add a gentle sweetness and a touch of dark, bitter, chocolate flavour (though no actual chocolate or caramel is involved). A blend of ginger, cardamom, clove, peppercorn, fennel, cinnamon and mint was then steeped in the brewing kettle, adding a complex array of flavours.

I was able to identify the cardamom and cinnamon at the start and the peppercorn in the finish. While it was obvious to me that there was a lot more going on, the other spices were not individually identifiable, but I'm no spice expert. As a beer lover, I like the beer, and I like that the spices provide complexity without overpowering the porter base. This is the best beer Village has produced to date. Unfortunately, only 700 growlers of Village Monk will be sold, with the rest being kegged for sale on draft at

local beer establishments. Once it's gone, it's gone forever.

Going forward, Village's seasonal beer program will provide the beer lover with something new to look forward to every few months. It will also provide the brewing staff a chance to flex their collective creative brewing muscle, with the team working together to choose what beer to make and to formulate the recipe.

Whatever is made next, the plan is to continue to support local businesses, because as Village Brewery likes to say, "It takes a village."

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