

Roggen's Heroes

Wild Rose Brewery's latest twist on a classic brew ▶ DON TSE

HOGAN'S HEROES WAS a sitcom set in a German prisoner-of-war camp during the Second World War. While captive, the American prisoners in the camp were secretly helping the allied movement through clandestine operations, which they had to keep hidden from their German captors. It was a hilarious premise. Really.

Allusions to outsmarting the Germans makes "Roggen's Heroes" the perfect (punny) name for Wild Rose Brewery's latest seasonal offering. The beer is loosely in the style of a German Oktoberfest beer, but Wild Rose has outsmarted the Germans, beating them at their own game and improving upon tradition by adding rye to the recipe and using a variety of hops from New Zealand rather than traditional German hops.

Brian Smith, director of brewery operations, says Wild Rose used the usual malts for an Oktoberfest beer — pale, Munich and Vienna — but added 20 per cent malted rye, and used German yeast. "We brought in a special German yeast blend as we found in test batches the European yeast gave us a rich, maltier flavour than our house lager [yeast] strain."

Roggen's Heroes, then, is a blend of two traditional beer styles: Oktoberfest and roggenbier. Oktoberfest is traditionally brewed in the spring and served in the fall at Munich's famous beer festival. Despite using amber-coloured malts that add some toasty flavours to the beer, the long period of aging from spring to fall softens its edges and results in a very flavourful but quaffable brew.

Roggenbier is another historically Bavarian beer style made with malted rye ("roggen" is German for rye). Traditionally a rye ale, although today it may be brewed as either an ale or a lager, roggenbier features a noticeable spiciness coming from the malted rye, which is used alongside barley malts. As with rye or pumpernickel bread, even a small amount of the grain can add a lot of flavour, emphasizing spiciness — many people say that rye is the most flavourful grain used in brewing.

Lastly, the Wakatu hops Wild Rose chose for Roggen's Heroes is a variety that originates in New Zealand, but was bred from the traditional German Hallertau hop. Where Hallertau hops are known for a mild spiciness, Wakatu not only has a stronger spice flavour, but citrus notes as well.

As a result, Roggen's Heroes will be richly malty with notes of toast and a pronounced rye spiciness. Built upon this malt foundation will be additional spiciness and some fruitiness from the Wakatu hops. The yeast used to ferment the beer will emphasize the malt without adding much of its own character. In German beer, yeast plays nothing more than a supporting role.

Roggen's Heroes will be released Friday, September 26, just in time to be showcased at Calgary Oktoberfest (calgaryoktoberfest.com) being held September 26 and 27 at the BMO Centre on the Stampede grounds. Time to break out the lederhosen! ▶▶



Wild Rose Brewery's latest is a play on TV's *Hogan's Heroes*.

BOOZE