

product update: **beers & ciders**

Crack open one of the best bottles from this year's Great Taste Awards

**BOTTLED CIDERS**

**Jack Ratt Scrumpy – The Lyme Bay Winery**

East Devon's Lyme Bay Winery collected the Best Speciality from the South West title in last month's Great Taste Awards finals with this traditional, still, fruity cider. It's made with the freshly-pressed juice of locally grown cider apple varieties such as Dabinett, Kingston Black and Yarlington Mill. Jack Ratt is left on the lees to enable a secondary malolactic fermentation take place, giving a roundness that highlights the apple flavour.



**Vintage '06 oak-matured medium-dry cider – Gwynt y Ddraig Cider**

Gwynt y Ddraig, the Welsh Cider & Perry Company, has been making cider on its farm near Pontypridd since 2001. Its range includes single-variety Dabinett and Yarlington Mill ciders, but this three-star gold winning oak-matured medium dry (7.4%) is a blend of five varieties – Vilberry, Brown Snout, Yarlington Mill, Brown's and Bulmers Norman – harvested in Autumn 2006. They were fermented slowly and matured in oak for 12 months before bottling. RRP is £2.29–£2.49 for 500ml.



**Sparkling vintage cider – Ashridge Cider**

This south Devon producer's sparkling vintage cider took a three-star gold in 2007, two stars in 2008 and is back up to three stars this year. Described as a "wonderfully fresh, appley cider with a good, long finish showing great balance between acidity and fruit", it's produced using the traditional French méthode champenoise – although it can't legally use that term. The cider is fermented in oak casks for six months, then mixed with yeast and sugar before bottling in full-strength Champagne bottles where a secondary fermentation imparts the natural fizz. Wholesale prices is £4.75 + VAT per bottle (minimum order is 4 cases of 12 75cl bottles) and the cider sells for upwards of £7.65.



**Aspall Organic Suffolk Cyder – Aspall Cyder House Products**

Aspall Organic Suffolk Cyder (7%ABV) is described as "a homage to the founder of Aspall, Clement Chevalier". It has a higher bittersweet content than any of Aspall's

modern products, making it closer in style to Clement's cider of the 1700s. It's golden in colour, with the marked fruity aroma of traditional bittersweet cider apple, with floral and spicy overtones. Aspall's says: "The palate is rich, initially full and slightly sweet, with a good balancing acidity and a pronounced astringency followed by a very long dry finish."



RRP is £2.09 for 500ml. [www.aspall.co.uk](http://www.aspall.co.uk)

**Medium sparkling table cider – The Orchard Pig**

A three-star gold award winner in 2008 and a creditable two-star winner again this year, Orchard Pig's medium table cider is described by the Somerset maker as "a light, sparkling drink with a rich toffee colour, harmonious nose and fragrant apple flavours and a lovely softness on the palate". RRP is £3.25 for a 75cl bottle (case prices start at £20.30) or £2.30 for 50cl.



[www.orchardpig.co.uk](http://www.orchardpig.co.uk)

**BOTTLED BEERS**

**Arran Red Squirrel – Arran Brewery**

At 3.9%ABV, Red Squirrel is described by the Arran Brewery as "the perfect session beer" – a well balanced malty, hop blend with hints of liquorice and burnt toffee and a characteristic nutty aroma. A percentage of the proceeds from Red Squirrel is going to various charities that will help conserve red squirrels on the Isle of Arran, Scotland's most southerly island, and around the world.



[www.arranbrewery.com](http://www.arranbrewery.com)

**Gadds No 3 Pale Ale – Ramsgate Brewery**

Brewed in Broadstairs by Eddie Gadd and his team, this bottle-conditioned pale ale (5%ABV) is brewed entirely with local, east Kent hops. Gadd describes it as "gently bitter, generously hoppy and gorgeously refreshing".



01843 868453

**Riggwelter – Black Sheep Brewery**

The porter-style Riggwelter (5.9%ABV) from North Yorkshire's Black Sheep Brewery is a full-flavoured, strong, deep chestnut coloured ale with a powerfully refreshing

dry finish of hops and roasted barley malt. The nose is sweet and fruity with hints of pineapple and you'll be able to pick out flavours of liquorice, cherry and chocolate on the palate.



[www.blacksheepbrewery.com](http://www.blacksheepbrewery.com)

**Dark Side of the Moose dark bitter – Purple Moose Brewery**

One of four all-year-round beers from this Porthmadog micro-brewery (it makes a dozen or so seasonal lines too) Dark Side of the Moose (4.6%) is a dark ale with a deep malt flavour from roasted barley and a fruity bitterness from Bramling Cross hops. It wholesales at £18.75 + VAT for a case of 12.



[www.purplemoose.co.uk](http://www.purplemoose.co.uk)

**Organic Ale – Laverstoke Park Farm**

The first beer made using hops and barley from Jody Scheckter's biodynamic farm in Hampshire, Laverstoke Park's Organic Ale is a strong pale ale (5%) with the slight caramel sweetness of Crystal malt, balanced by the fresh aroma of Fuggle hops. The bottle-conditioned ale is produced by retired master brewer Derek Lowe, previously with Gales in Horndean, Hants.



[www.laverstokepark.co.uk](http://www.laverstokepark.co.uk)

**Hix Oyster Ale – Palmers Brewery (for Mark Hix Food Etc)**

Brewed exclusively at Palmers' site in Bridport, Dorset, for chef-of-the-moment Mark Hix, this strong, nutty, full-strength dark beer is selling for £4.95 at Hix's recently opened Oyster & Fish House in Lyme Regis. Palmers' head brewer, Darren Batten, describes the two-star ale as "the perfect compliment to seafood and traditional British seasonal dishes".



[www.palmersbrewery.com](http://www.palmersbrewery.com)

**Otter Head – Otter Brewery**

Described as a smooth tasting, mid-brown beer with a strong malty nose, with plenty of fruit and bitterness in the finish, Otter Head (5.8%ABV) works particularly well with the robust flavours of red meat and game dishes. It was named Reserve Supreme Champion in the 2008 Great Taste Awards.



[www.otterbrewery.com](http://www.otterbrewery.com)