



He'Brew Rejewvenator - Beer of the Week

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Joshua M. Bernstein, Gourmet.com's beer columnist, has written about brews, bars and booze for New York Magazine, Imbibe Magazine, Time Out New York, ForbesTraveler.com and The New York Times.

As a Jew who has glugged sickly sweet Manischewitz wine, I have little faith in the Chosen People's ability to concoct alcoholic beverages.

However, Jeremy Cowan's 13-year-old Shmaltz Brewing Company (the craftsmen helming He'Brew) makes Judaic-themed suds, such as the potent Origin pomegranate ale and rich, nutty Messiah Bold, that are more mitzvah than mistake. For his latest Rejewvenator (the last rendition featured figs), Cowan leans heavily on dates, a fruit that the Jew-enslaving Egyptians (boo!) once used to sweeten brews.

About 400 gallons of fresh-pressed, fiber-packed California date juice were incorporated into a hop-heavy fermentation (five varietals were employed) featuring not one, not two, but three yeast strains. "They were a total experiment," says Cowan of employing crisp lager yeast and sweeter, candied abbey and trappist yeasts. "The dryness of the lager is a wonderful balance to the richer, fruitier elements of the Belgian ale yeasts."

Confident words, but I still expected the Rejewvenator to be a flavor car wreck: sweet and savory should play separately, right? With my first taste of the sienna-tinted mash-up, I was pleased to be wrong. The nicely bubbled doppelbock-Belgian dubbel hybrid tastes of dark brown sugars and sun-baked raisins, of mouth-coating malt and ripe fruit, with a snappish finish that sends the deceptively strong (7.8 percent ABV) elixir sailing into my stomach.

Forget Manischewitz: I'm pouring Rejewvenator at my next Sabbath dinner.



Shmaltz Brewing Company