BROWN BALTIC RYE PORTER
– GUEST BREWED AT NØRREBRO BRYGHUS WITH JENS EIKEN

When we at Nørrebro Bryghus heard the news that Jens Eiken was to leave his job as Head Brewer of the Jacobsen Brewhouse to take up an executive job with the Coors organisation in Burton-on-Trent in the UK, we immediately contacted Jens and persuaded him to honour us with an appearance as guest brewer before fleeing the country!

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Jens' proposal for which beer to brew was a black beer with a Nordic (of course!) inspiration. In the inspiring dialogue that followed between Jens on the guest side, and Shaun E. Hill, our brilliant American Head Brewer in Ryesgade, and myself on the host side, we had a multitude of ideas in play: From using caramelised sugar beet, in-house roasted rye, Swedish chocolate rye malt to the addition of bock myrtle and

extract of sloe/blackthorn berries. This underlines that one of the most gratifying aspects of collaborative brewing is the creative exchange of ideas which, according to my experience, always ends up as an equation where one plus one gives much more than two. I had recently tried a beautiful black, bottom-fermented beer, 'TerraRyesed' from Left Hand Brewing in Colorado, with 40 per cent rye in the grist, so my input was to push the recipe in that direction. Leaving out the remainder of the geeky dialogue, suffice to say that all three of us were happy with the following end result as the recipe:

Black Strong Rye Lager: 16.5% P, RDF 60%, 6.5% ABV, 30 BU and colour 130 EBC.

Malt grist, in order of quantity: Munich Malt, Lager Malt, Pale Rye Malt, Crystal Rye Malt, Low Colour Chocolate Malt and Chocolate Rye Malt.

Mashing (with $CaCl_2$ treated hard water): 50 °C – 64 °C – 70 °C – 76 °C.

Hopping: Bittering to 30 BU with Northern Brewer at start boil and Perle as aroma hop addition after boil.

Fermentation and lagering: Cooling to 10 °C, pitching with house lager strain (Budvar), fermentation at 11 °C for 10 days, cooled to 0–2 °C and lagered for 35 days. Unfiltered and carbonated to 5.0 g/L.

The brew day was 25 November, as usual in Nørrebro Bryghus, organised as a Brewing Workshop with a number of brewer colleagues, media people and beer enthusiasts present. This did, as always, create an inspiring and entertaining atmosphere surrounding the actual work with technical explanations, anecdotes, tips, hints, brewing philosophies and small talk – both geeky and plain – buzzing in the air throughout the day.

That it is never a good idea to decide on the name for a collaborative brew in advance was, yet again, proven in this case. Although having aimed for a genuine Schwarzbier colour of 130 EBC, the finished beer was closer to half of this (we do not analytically measure beer colour), meaning that it looks more like a dark brown Munich Lager/brown ale than a Schwarzbier. This, in turn, gave us the opportunity to play with the relationship to the newly internationally recognised category for our local bottom-fermented stouts, Baltic Porters, as our beer can be seen as a lighter bodied and paler version of this style. And as a lighter bodied and paler porter is named brown porter, the name of our beer was easy: **Brown Baltic Rye Porter**. Voila! – An entirely new beer category has been created!

It ought to be quite unnecessary to point out that the resulting beer is outstanding, but it is! The long lagering has resulted in an almost bright, dark brown beer with a classical low key lager aroma with discreet roast notes of coffee, chocolate and a slight spicy note from the Perle hops. The flavour is crisp and dry, malty but well balanced, with pleasant complex rye tartness blending in with the hop bitterness. The body is rich and full in spite of the dryness, resulting in a beer with both high drinkability and complexity, ending in a short, spicy and bitter aftertaste.

The **Brown Baltic Rye Porter** will only be available on draught at Nørrebro Bryghus, Ryesgade 3, DK-2200 Copenhagen N, for a limited period of time, beginning mid-January and until the tank is empty. ⬙