

## Beervana

If you'd been reading this last semester, you would have seen me shamelessly plugging something called Beervana. And if you listened to me you would have been there on 28 and 29 August to attain your own Beervana.

Beervana is the culmination of BrewNZ, a week-long celebration of good beer. With hundreds more beers entered than last year and around 3000 attendees, this year's Beervana was the largest yet.

It all starts with the BrewNZ awards, where beers of different styles are judged against each other. This year there were many worthy recipients and Emerson's Brewery took out top honours, being crowned Champion Brewery.

...There were so many great beers there, I won't let one black mark block all the shining stars. Here are my picks:

- Emerson's wheat beer festive brew: BeWITched was dangerous 8.5% and very drinkable. Tastes like a Belgian Witbier, just bigger. Look for the leftovers of this at Regional Wines.
- Hallertau 'Mystery Hoppy Pale Ale' (7.1%). This unmarked keg contained the best NZ brewed pale ale I've ever tasted. A perfect balance of bitter, citrusy hops and sweet malt.
- Stone & Wood Draught Ale (4%). This Australian wheat beer freaked me out. Fruit salad aromas with a grapey sour flavour surprisingly make a highly refreshing beer.
- Kaimai Brewing Co. Rye Beer. This new brewery has pulled off a rarely seen style very well. The flavour is dominated by an odd mintyness imparted by the rye. Look out for these guys in the near future.
- Epic Armageddon—Oaked (6.6%). The result of weeks in oak and hundreds of days at sea were a little disappointing, but interesting. The flavours of oak certainly permeate the beer, and round out the bitterness with vanilla. But unoaked Armageddon tastes better.

There were so many amazing beers worth mentioning, but it'd take a feature-length column to get through them all.

After a hard week of rigorous 'sampling', meeting brewing legends and nerding out, I have a hangover. I think I'll sleep it off until next year's Beervana, see you there.