



Jon interviews: The Brewsters (Ian and Carol)

Jon: What is it we're drinking here?

Ian: It's a TPA, so it's a Tollen Pale Ale.

Jon: I'll have a sip and tell you what I think.

Ian: Yep.

Jon: (Slurping and lip-smacking) It's ... it tastes the same to me as Indian Pale Ale. It's very nice. So there's no difference?

Ian: Oh yeah. It's unique. All pale ales are unique, so ...

Jon: What makes it unique?

Ian: The recipe. The hops that's in it. Each IPA is a different hop I'd have thought.

Jon: Now I am driving back after this. I should have asked you first 'What is the strength?'

Ian: It's six and a half per cent.

Jon: Where do you get your ingredients from? The hops, for example.

Ian: So, the malt mainly, it's all grown in Brittany, it's transformed into malt at the malthouse in Vannes, it's also Bio, and the hops we'll buy them off several sources on the internet. A lot come from Italy.

Jon: If someone mentions France, you normally think of wine. If you mention Brittany, you think of cider, but beer's getting quite popular.

Ian: There's three within five kilometres of here, three brasseries. One's just opened up in Malguénac, and then there's Jerome at St George at Guen ...

Carol: St Guen ...

Ian: He's been going a bit longer than us. I've brewed all my life.

Jon: I would hope so with your name, that's right.

Ian: Yeah. My dad worked in a brewery as well in Bradford – Hays Brewery, which is long gone now. So I remember going ... going to work with my dad at about seven years old and sitting on the conveyor belt, the bottling conveyor belt and having a ride.

Jon: I was reading the other day in the Elizabethan period when ale was a lot safer than water, I think the kids, I think were allowed up to eight pints a day or something ridiculous. I mean it couldn't have been very strong, but it's a hell of a quantity. They must have been big kids. So this is ... did you say 6 or 6.5?

Ian: 6.5. So we actually do eight.

Carol: Varieties.

Ian: The highest one is a seven per cent which is a porter, which is a black beer. So there's me and my daughter. And she basically wanted to work and she didn't have the French. So me and Carol had just been to the first St Malo Beer Festival, and we actually met, didn't we, this brewer. And he said how well he was doing. And everybody had always said to me, well why don't you sell your beer? And I said, no it's just for me it's just a hobby. And Vick's going, Yeah! Yeah, let's do it.

Jon: Is she the one with the marketing drive?

Ian: Vicky actually does the more modern beers and I stick to my traditional beers.

Jon: What would be the difference then between a modern beer and a traditional beer?

Ian: It's just the taste. So we do a lager and lime, actually in the bottle so you don't have to add the lime. We do a beer called Brexit Beer, and the only reason it was 'Brexit' beer is because the recipe was ...

Carol: Created.

Ian: ... evolved on the day of Brexit.

Carol: It gets a lot of French people laughing.

Ian: But that's actually a Belgic blonde with saffron from Finistere.

Jon: Saffron?

Ian: Saffron.

Jon: Now you wouldn't imagine that would grow in great quantities in Finistere.

Ian: Yeah. It's quite big.

Carol: They have their farms, don't they.

Ian: Because they ... we get the saffron from them, that's all Bio. She came and tasted a few beers and she took ten away with her, and within a couple of days she'd ordered a full batch. And now she's taking 200 every two months.

Jon: 200 bottles.

Carol: Yeah.

Ian: Bottles.

Jon: What's the saffron one called again?



Both: Brexit.

Jon: Well maybe I will try it.

Ian: And another one that Vicky does is ginger beer, but it's actually beer.

Carol: That's quite popular isn't it?

Jon: So if anybody wanted to buy these, in a shop, for example, where would they go?

Ian: We sell in the local village ??? in Malguénac. We sell at a few markets – we go to Noyal Pontivy, but then we sell in the B??? that's a restaurant. We sell in the restaurant/longere in ...

Carol: Malguénac.

Ian: The bar in Malguénac. We actually designed a beer for him, so that's his beer that we produce. It's a blond, a very light but highly hopped, more like a lager a bit lighter. That goes down quite well.

Jon: Do you go as far as putting labels on bottles as well?

Ian: Yeah.

Jon: Nice label. Who designed that?

Ian: It's actually part of our coat of arms, believe it or not, which incredibly is so similar to the Breton flag.

Jon: So they actually have these ermine?

Carol: Yeah.

Jon: Ahh ... you must have Breton ancestry, you'd think, somewhere. So cheers everyone (chinking of glasses). Ian and Carol, thank you very much.