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BrewCats: Peanut butter lacks in 'Jesus'

Stephanie L. Smith | Staff Reporter | Posted: Thursday, January 14, 2016 2:37 am

College students struggle to make ends meet living off their loan refunds and making minimum wage at part time jobs. They have to get creative and think outside the box about income opportunities. How about opening a home brewery in your dorm room?

That is how Baltimore-based DuClaw Brewing Company got its start in 1996.

Twenty years later, DuClaw has a handful of brewpubs in the Baltimore area, distribution throughout the mid-Atlantic region (entering the Cincinnati market last October), and are known for offering twists on standard brews such as their popular chocolate peanut butter porter named Sweet Baby Jesus and its imperial twin, For Pete's Sake.

Sweet Baby Jesus weighs in at 6.2 percent alcohol by volume. Hit with a mouth-watering peanut butter aroma when pouring the deep mahogany brew, this promises to be a liquid Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.

But in reality, it is a disappointment. The peanut butter vanished instantly. Instead, burnt toast flavor dominates with a twinge of bittersweet baking chocolate and a bitter espresso finish.

Savoring the beer, letting it sit on the roof of your mouth, is the only way to pick up any trace of peanut butter flavor. It is there, but it is subtle. You almost have to trick yourself into believing it is there.

I expected redemption for Sweet Baby Jesus with For Pete's Sake. Not only because of its 9 percent ABV, but because an imperial version of any beer is automatically better. Imperial equals hefty and meaty, with a bite.



Brew

DuClaw Brewing Company's Sweet Baby Jesus and For Pete's Sake porters are nothing to be impressed by.

The peanut butter aroma is not strong in For Pete's Sake. It is more coffee than chocolate or peanut butter. The only way I can pick up on any chocolate is by breathing in while drinking. Toast is replaced with a strong smokiness, followed by a faint alcohol bite at the finish.

Don't get me wrong: neither beer is an absolute disappointment. It is just not what I expected. Perhaps my taste buds are messed up. Maybe it is because my expectations are set too high when I find beers inspired by my favorite desserts and candies.

But, if you like regular porters, both Sweet Baby Jesus and For Pete's Sake are enjoyable. If you are looking for that elusive liquid Reese's Peanut Butter cup, though, turn away from DuClaw and head over to Listermann Brewing Company in Evanston for a pint of Nutcase.