

Craft beer lovers get stuck

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BEER enthusiasts packed The Old Market in Hove over the weekend for the venue's first craft beer festival

The main hall, which usually hosts live music and theatre, was cleared away for traders to set up stalls and pumps with colourful merchandise.

Ten local breweries, including Holler Brewery, Brighton Bierhaus and Abyss Brewing, set out their stalls and were rammed with visitors keen to try their wares.

Andy O'Connor, marketing manager at The Old Market said: "This is the first time we've put on a beer festival – we wanted to take the venue back to its roots as a market and pay tribute to that."

"If the event is successful, we'll think about food festivals in the future."

Festival glasses were handed out on the way in and a free first drink included in the ticket price.

Guests sampled the likes of Abyss's Totally Tropical Juicy IPA Mango and Mad Squirrel's Sumo American Pale.

Leon Orien, a graphic designer from Hove, was in the crowd. He said: "I'm surprised how busy it is, there's a nice atmosphere. My only criticism is it would be nice if there were more seating areas."

Visitor Grace Power and her father Ryan Power were trying The Bear Baltic Porter by Holler Brewery.

She said: "I was looking for something different and had a taster of this earlier. I do like a porter, nice and chocolatey, I usually drink a classic IPA."

Over the other side of the room, Brighton Bierhaus was serving Downtown Charlie Brown and Old Skool IPA "the IPA your dad drank."

Brighton Bier founder Gary Sillence said: "When you come to an event like this you're going to put your showstoppers on the bar."

"My favourite is Downtown Charlie Brown, American brown stout in the sweet English style."

He was also selling "growlers" a spin on the American tradition of "growlers" using refillable, pressurised cans to take your beer home at the end of the night.

Mr Sillence said: "It's a way of taking your beer home after last orders. The cans are only made by one company in the US, we have to import them."

Dominique Lucas, a jewellery designer from Hove, was attending the event with a group of friends.

She said: "I'm drinking the rhubarb IPA. I've just been doing dry January, so I was looking for something light."

One of the most experimental beers on offer by Tiny



Revellers packed The old Market for its first beer festival and a good time was had by all, also right

Rebel was Pump Up The Jam Doughnut Pale Ale.

But the festival was not about gimmicks.

Traders were passionate about the craft beer community, wandering over to try beers from other stalls and recommending each other's breweries.

Steve Keegan, founder of Holler Brewery in Brighton has worked in pubs since his

first shift in his dad's local in Middlesbrough. He said: "Ever since the explosion of craft beers six years ago, people assume micro breweries are in competition with each other."

We're not. We want there to be more confidence in it. Events like this encourage people into the room."

Holler brewery started out on a farm in Uckfield in 2016

in partnership with farmer Anthony Becvar who provided cold storage for the brewery's grain.

In September 2018 it opened a taproom in Elder Place, London Road.

The beer is brewed on site and customers can drink straight from the tap.

Since it no longer has a cold storage facility, the brewery has been looking

at ways to recycle leftover grain.

Mr Keegan said: "After the long hot summer, farmers are struggling to feed their animals as they're running out of silage."

"We get through a ton of grain a week and are working with a farmer in Hurstpierpoint who is taking 300 kilos of leftover grain three or four times a week now to

feed his animals."

Aaron Kemp, of Holler, said: "This whole event has been really personal."

"Craft beer is about interacting with the community and seeing what they want – we listen to them."

"We don't want to sell to the world, leave that to mass produced lagers."

"We want to serve our local community."