

THE BEER DEMYSTIFIER *NEW YORK CITY FILES* 2009-2010

BREWERY PROFILE

Greene King

HQ: U.K. (England)

Greene King is a British wannabe global player, though one with a solid commitment to traditional cask-conditioned ale - which has intermittently been seen in New York City. Greene King's reputation in its home country has latterly been a little tarnished for taking over and closing rival regional breweries (recently: Morland, Ridley's, Hardy's and Hanson's) and unsympathetically putting their own beers on in the pubs they acquire as a result. In many parts of the UK, Greene King has a monopoly in pubs at the expense of local variety and choice. Belhaven Brewery in Scotland is part of the Greene King empire; located 30 miles from Edinburgh, Belhaven was the oldest independent brewery in Scotland until being bought a couple of years ago. Unlike other regional brewers that Greene King has devoured, Belhaven thankfully remains open.

On the plus side for the company, they are committed to bottle conditioning Hen's Tooth which is admirable - though the use of cheap clear bottles somewhat defeats the object when the beers become skunked. Greene King also gets points for attempting to put a beer on the market which is designed to pair with food.

Belhaven

Dunbar, U.K. (Scotland)

Importer: [Belukus Marketing](#)

Distributor:



Greene King

Bury St. Edmunds, U.K. (England)

Importer:

Distributor: S.K.I. Beer Distributors, tel. 1 718 821 7200.



Ratings

Each beer has been given a rating from one to five which should be interpreted as follows.

* Bland, one-dimensional, or tasting of cheap adjuncts – unenjoyable. Not recommended.

** Nothing special but may be worth trying if nothing better is available.

*** Good, recommended.

**** Great, highly recommended.

***** Exceptionally good, very highly recommended.

Ratings are based on personal taste although, in certain instances, outside evaluations have been used when a particular beer has not been sampled by the author/webmaster.

{S} after the beer name denotes seasonal availability.

- **Belhaven**

Belhaven Best Draught (3.9%) *** < - ENGLISH BEST BITTER - > – Golden session beer.

Belhaven St. Andrew's Ale (4.6%) **** < - SCOTTISH HEAVY 70/- - > – Clean, quite sweet copper colored ale.

Belhaven Scottish Ale (5.2%) **** < - SCOTTISH EXPORT 80/- - > – Reddish amber and malty Scottish ale.

Twisted Thistle IPA (6.1%) * * * < - ENGLISH IPA - > – Moderately hoppy light golden English-style IPA.

Belhaven Wee Heavy (6.5%) * * * * < - WEE HEAVY STRONG SCOTCH - > – Dark ruby beer, a little smoky and peaty with subtle notes of fruit and molasses.

- **Greene King:**

Greene King IPA (3.6%) * * * < - ENGLISH BITTER - > – Not a traditional IPA by style. Unremarkable though pleasant English session ale, pale and subtly hopped.

The Tanner's Jack (4.4%) * * * < - ENGLISH BEST BITTER - > – Originally a Morland beer, copper-hued, inoffensive and a little bready.

Old Speckled Hen (4.5% & 5.2% variants) * * * < - ENGLISH BEST BITTER - > – Overrated beer originally created as a strong cask ale by Morland – who were closed down by Greene King. Old Speckled Hen blandly dispensed on nitrogen is a million miles away from the fresh, naturally-carbonated mouthfeel of the former 5.2% Morland Old Speckled Hen cask brand. The bottled version, however, is superior to the keg version and is quite enjoyable although it can be a little metallic.

Ruddles County (4.7%) * * * < - ENGLISH BEST BITTER - > – An adequate copper colored ale bearing the name of another victim of rationalization in the UK. Hopped with Bramling Cross.

Abbot Ale (5.0%) * * * < - ENGLISH BEST BITTER - > – Best bitter, good when fresh in cask form but tends to be bland on nitrogen dispense.

Hop (aka The Beer To Dine For) (5.0%) * * * < - LIGHT MILD - > – Brewed with west coast Tettnang hops, this light, inoffensive, slightly sweet beer is designed to be paired with spicy food. Beware the clear bottles though, skunk may be on the menu (beer in clear glass bottles is very susceptible to damage by light).

Wexford Irish Cream Ale (5.0%) * * < - CREAM ALE - > – Thin, processed beer with a location crisis.

Olde Suffolk (aka Strong Suffolk) {S} (6.0%) * * * * < - OLD ALE / WINTER WARMER - > – Rich, warming, dark ale that proves Greene King can brew good beer when they want to.

Hen's Tooth (6.5%) * * * < - EXTRA SPECIAL BITTER (ESB) - > – Malty pale beer, bottle-conditioned. When fresh, this is an enjoyable brew. However, beware of light struck 'skunked' bottles.

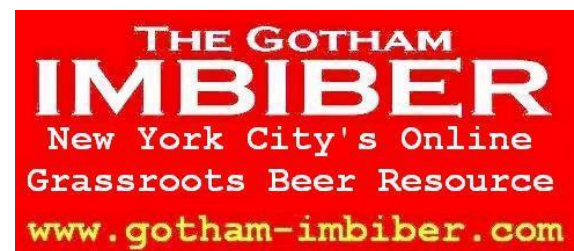
SEE BEER MENUS FOR AVAILABILITY (EXTERNAL LINK)

<http://www.beermenus.com/breweries/belhaven-greene-king->

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Ratings and tasting notes are taken from Beer Demystifier New York City 2008-2009 by Alex Hall (published June 2008).

This page is written by Alex Hall, and is updated to June 2008.



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