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Reed's Ginger Brews

Reed's Ginger Brews

I should preface this review with the statement that I am not a soda drinker. Water and wine make up 99% of my beverage menu, although there was a time when I did drink Canada Dry Ginger Ale on a regular basis. So when my long-time friend Jim Linesch asked me to evaluate the Reed products like I would a typical wine I thought "what the heck, I do have a reference for my evaluation, so here we go!"

The packaging is very nice, 4-packs of clear lime-green bottles with a tropical island look to the label, presumably representing the Jamaican heritage of the Original Ginger Brew. I like the twist-off caps that are color-coded to distinguish the three different ginger brews.

Looking at the back label for the ingredients list provides some insight into the intent at Reed's: "Freshly brewed from: sparkling filtered water (sweetened by a blend of fructose, pineapple juice from concentrate and honey, fresh ginger root, lemon and lime juices from concentrate and spices. No preservatives or artificial anything!" At 37.4 g of sugar per 12 oz. bottle it comes in a little lower than your average soda (Coke is 39 g), but that's still a lot of sugar. All of the Ginger Brews are 25% fruit juice.

First up: Reed's Original Ginger Brew – The first sip was sweet to be sure, but not overly so and the distinctive flavor of ginger kicked right in. Now I like ginger and I cook with fresh ginger on a regular basis so this had a familiar spiciness to it and after my palate adjusted to the sweetness I liked this drink. The yin & yang of the sweetness vs. the ginger bite reminds me of a good German Riesling where residual sugar plays against bright natural acidity to provide harmony and balance.

I thought I observed some sediment kicked up from the bottom of the bottle when I first opened it so I poured some into a glass and sure enough there is some particulate material. This is a good thing in my opinion and reflects the desire to have a naturally brewed product in the bottle, not some pristine filter-out-all-the-good-stuff beverage, much akin to unfiltered wines. If I were rating this on a 100 point scale I would give it 88 Pts.

Next up: Reed's Premium Ginger Brew – This is basically the same as the Original but is sweetened with Canadian white water clover honey, raw cane sugar and pineapple juice from concentrate (no fructose). The sweetness here is mellower and seems less pronounced and the honey component is easily identified here. Rating: 89 Pts.

Reed's Extra Ginger Brew – This brew has 25 grams of fresh ginger compared to 17 grams for the Original & Premium labels and this is evident on the first sip. I like spicy foods and this is definitely more my style. The ginger bite is more prominent and for my palate brings more balance to the overall impression. Rating: 91 Pts.

Overall I liked these drinks and they would be a good foil for spicy barbeque, Thai and other similar fare where a little sweetness helps to balance the fire from capsaicin (chiles). As I said at the beginning I am not a soda drinker and for me these are too sweet for everyday drinking but the ginger element really is a nice departure from purely sweet soda pop. If you see these, give them a try. I mentioned that I previously drank Canada Dry Ginger Ale and I wanted a fresh perspective on that beverage so I bought one and there is no comparison to the Reed's products. Even though there is slightly less sugar (33 g vs 37.4 g) it tasted very sweet and had no balance to the sweet component like in the Reed's Extra Ginger.

Posted by Eric Bean at [6/25/2009 1:41 PM](#) | [Add Comment](#)

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Eric Bean



I grew up in West Los Angeles in the 50's and moved to San Diego with my wife Linda in 1981 after graduating from UCLA with a PhD in biochemistry.

