

# Weird Soda Review

Dedicated to unearthing and quaffing unusual, independent, and fascinating non-alcoholic beverages.

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Friday, December 24, 2010

### Virgil's Cream Soda

I've been saving this one for a special occasion.

It was really cream soda which led me to become the Quaffmaster. In the days of my youth, my parents made soda choices which shaped my future development. They did permit soda in the house, although it was not in enormously plentiful supply, and so I did develop a taste for it. However, more important than its availability was its nature. At least in my youngest days, we weren't a Coke/Pepsi household. Instead, my parents opted for Shasta.

Shasta stood out among the choices available to a family in Topeka for one main reason: it came in a wide variety of flavors. I clearly remember rows of multicolored Shasta cans in our refrigerator, each one a separate incipient taste experience. Only later in life did I come to realize that, for many children I knew, soda came in exactly three varieties: cola, lemon-lime, and root beer. While these are all worthy flavors, it was my days with Shasta which opened my eyes to the existence of soda...well, maybe not Weirdness, exactly, but at least relatively exotic things like strawberry, orange, and the intriguingly named "Dr. Diego".

And, of course...cream soda.

I think it came in a can which bore a tan color scheme. I don't remember the flavor clearly; it may have been of the tart, acid-laden cream soda family, or maybe a slightly mellower vanilla. Such distinctions are lost in the ever-shifting mists of memory. What I do clearly remember, though, is that cream soda was my favorite. Whenever my parents came home, bearing a variety pack of Shasta triumphantly upon their shoulders like early human hunters with a hunk of steaming mastodon carcass\*, I would leap upon it and rip a can of cream soda from its cardboard viscera like a small, Lego-furred wolverine.

Thus, it was in my Kansan youth that I developed my taste for soda Weirdness in general, and cream soda in particular\*\*.

I've had many a fine cream soda since then, but I've been hearing legends of this one. Those who speak of it do so in very respectful, hushed voices, as if they expected that a bottle might happen to be nearby and overhear them. It's not particularly hard to find, although it isn't usually at the regular grocery store. Thus, I'm not sure this fully qualifies as Weird. However, in the interest of exploring all facets of



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#### Guide to Reviews

Each review will include where and when the soda was purchased, and a description of the scent, color, and taste. Each soda will be rated on two scales; the Quaff rating reflects the enjoyability of the drinking experience, whereas the Cough rating indicates how likely one would be to throw it up after "enjoying" it (believe me, some sodas might rank high on both scales). Both scales are points out of 5.

Hover your mouse (place it there and leave it for a couple of seconds) over each rating to see a more thorough explanation.

----Quaff ratings guide----

- 1: Somebody Else's Problem.
- 2: Uninspired.
- 3: Tasty.
- 4: Excellent.
- 5: Transcendent.

soda, the reputed pinnacles of excellence should not be neglected.

Given that we are in the thick of the holiday season today, this seems like an auspicious occasion. So whether you celebrate Christmas, Festivus, Chanukah, or Talk Like a Pirate Solstice Day, allow me to raise a glass of cream soda wassail to you, my generous and loyal readers.

**Where and when:** Purchased December 2010 at Frazier Farms, Vista, CA

**Color:** A fairly rich medium brown. Darker than many cream sodas.

**Scent:** Sweet, very vanilla-y. Maybe even maple-y. The vanilla has depth and darkness; it's a sweeter version of vanilla extract. Promising.

Long Rod McBean: "Smells very slightly of beer. Or maybe that's just my upper lip." I think I see what he means; the darker side of the vanilla has some complexity which is like that of a lager.

K-i-C: "Eww. Does not go well with cilantro."

The Kibbitzer-in-Chief has been making salsa for Christmas Eve dinner.

K-i-C: "Actually, it's not unlike the Marsala."

She's right. The Marsala is heady, creamy and amaretto-y, and there is something a little like that in the Virgil's. The more I smell this, the more I like it.

Wyvern: "Good. But I want to change my name. I'm Nazgul now."

So noted.

#### **Taste:**

Wow. WOW. This is outstanding. It's got a very strong vanilla, with the depth of real vanilla, but without most of the bitterness. Behind that, it's got some of the lighter french vanilla found in most of the cream sodas. It's a lovely balance, holding the main options in vanilla in concordant opposition\*\*\*.

The aftertaste continues the balance, although the french vanilla does turn slightly more acid, taking a bigger role in the balance.

The balance and complexity are remarkable.

LRMB: "Light, yet...almost champagne-like."

Me: "Is that good?"

LRMB: "I wouldn't say it's the heartiest cream soda I've ever had. I'd call it a light cream soda. Maybe...a cream soda to go with a fruit tray and some cheese, rather than a hearty stew. You might want a darker, heavier cream soda on a cold day. Might be good with Mexican food with a squeeze of lime."

The rest of us gaze open-mouthed at Long Rod McBean's unsuspected culinary depths.

Nazgul (nee Wyvern): "Maple-y."

LAT: "Balrogs are awesome!"

K-i-C: "That's not very relevant."

LAT: "Yeah, but they are!"

K-i-C: "Yes, but would they like this cream soda?"

LAT: "Probably."

LRMB: "This cream soda would go well with prosciutto. Or else grapes, green grapes."

The funny thing is, he's right. This soda has enough character that it *would* go better with some foods.

----Cough ratings guide----

- 1: The Raised Eyebrow.
- 2: Startling.
- 3: Icky.
- 4: Actively hostile.
- 5: Vomitocious.

In addition, the overall Weird Soda Review Index is determined by subtracting the Cough Rating from the Quaff Rating. It can thus vary between +5 and -5.

We're very scientific people, here at the Lab!

### **The Quaffiest Weird Sodas (WSR Index +3.0 or better)**

[Virgil's Cream Soda \(WSR Index +4.5\)](#)

[Vernor's \(WSR Index +4.5\)](#)

[Sweet Blossom Elderflower Soda \(WSR Index +4.0\)](#)

[Dry Soda Co. Soda: Vanilla Bean \(WSR Index +4.0\)](#)

[Ooba Hibiscus \(WSR Index +4.0\)](#)

[Stewart's Cherries 'n Cream \(WSR Index +4.0\)](#)

[Moxie Cherry Cola \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Oogave Esteban's Root Beer \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Oogave Grapefruit \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Oogave Ginger Ale \(WSR Review +3.5\)](#)

[Ironbeer Soft Drink \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Americana Black Cherry \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Mr. Q. Cumber \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Red Ribbon Original Cherry Supreme \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)


What a lovely holiday treat. Bravo!

Quaff rating: 4.5. Among the most enjoyable sodas I've had.  
Cough rating: 0. I can't think of any reason I'd be unhappy with this.

\* Note: This was NOT one of the available Shasta flavors. I think Jones may be working on it, though.

\*\* Plus, I still have a fondness for certain cardboard varietals.

\*\*\* Which is, if I remember, the outer alignment plane of true neutrals in 2nd edition AD&D.

Posted by Quaffmaster at 2:57 PM 

Labels: [cream](#), [reviews](#), [vanilla](#), [Virgil's](#)

Your Reactions:  Yay! (0)  Boo! (0)  Huh? (0)

0 comments:

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[Ooba Hibiscus and Orange \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Henry Weinhardt's Vanilla Cream \(WSR Index +3.5\)](#)

[Natural Brew Vanilla Creme \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Quench \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Natural Brew Ginseng Cola \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Fentiman's Full-Bodied Shandy \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Materva Yerba Mate \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Mundet Manzana Verde \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Jarritos Lima-Limon \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Gokuri Miracle of Grapefruit \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Dry Soda Co.: Kumquat \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Sidral Mundet \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Faygo Vanilla Creme \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Looks Like Orange, Tastes Like Grape \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

[Sioux City Sarsaparilla \(WSR Index +3.0\)](#)

**Weird In A Bad Way (WSR Index 0 or lower)**

[Abali Original Flavor Yogurt Soda \(WSR Index -3.5\)](#)

[Biotta Digestive Drink \(WSR Index -3.5\)](#)

[Arvand Sparkling Yogurt Beverage, Mint Flavor \(WSR Index -3.0\)](#)

[Arvand Sparkling Yogurt Beverage, Tart Flavor \(WSR Index -2.5\)](#)

[Kombucha Wonder Drink \(WSR Index -2.0\)](#)

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- [Jones Soda Tofurky and Gravy \(WSR Index -1.0\)](#)
- [Jeff's Chocolate Soda \(WSR Index -1.0\)](#)
- [Pocari Sweat Ion Water \(WSR Index -1.0\)](#)
- [Journey Caribbean Creme \(WSR Index -1.0\)](#)
- [Tango Cherry \(WSR Index -0.5\)](#)
- [Dr. Brown's Cel-Ray \(WSR Index -0.5\)](#)
- [Abbondio Chinotto \(WSR Index -0.5\)](#)
- [Big Wave Strawberry 101 \(WSR Index 0\)](#)
- [Chin Chin Grass Jelly Drink \(Honey Flavour\) \(WSR Index 0.0\)](#)
- [Malta India \(WSR Index 0\)](#)
- [Malta Hatuey \(WSR Index 0\)](#)
- [Sprecher Ravin' Red \(WSR Index 0\)](#)
- [Kirin Ururu Cha \(WSR Index 0\)](#)

### Meet the Weird Soda Review staff!

**Richard** (Quaffmaster): Lead Tester  
**Kieran**: Lead Assistant Tester, Keeper of the Collective Cool  
**Xavier** (Wyvern): Junior Assistant Tester, Resident Bubblophobe  
**Ellen** (Kibbitzer-In-Chief): Staff Conscience

and the Official **Mysterious Stranger** (gracias!)

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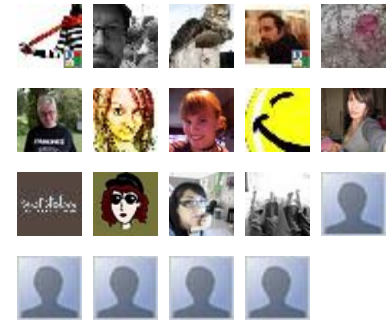


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### Weird Soda Sources

[Don Has That! Hard-To-Find Sodas \(a few\)](#)

[Mitsuwa Marketplace \(Japanese soda!\)](#)

[Soda Finder \(has some really rare ones\)](#)

[The Really Weird Beverage Co. Galco's Soda Pop Stop \(in Los](#)

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[BevMo \(look under More/Old Time Sodas\)](#)

### Other Soda Reviews

 **Anthony's Root Beer Barrel**

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Review: Jones Soda Bacon Soda  
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 **Soft Drink Reviews, Exotic and Non**

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**Nice Guy Online - New Soda Reviews**

### Soda Info, and Other Links

[Obscure Soda Lovers Organization \(OSLO\)](#)

[Glass Bottle Soda--info on small soda bottlers](#)

[Delicious Sparkling Temperance Drinks--from the Minnesota Museum of the Mississippi](#)

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