

# The RARE BEER CLUB

## ZIPLINE BREWING COMPANY SPECIAL OFFER

### BALTIC PORTER (W/ HARBOUR BREWING CO. IN THE UK)

Style: Baltic-style / Imperial Porter

ABV: 8% Serving Temperature: 52–58° F Suggested Glassware: Snifter, Tulip, Teku, or Small Nonic Glass



For our latest Rare Beer Club special offer, we've managed to secure four of our favorite big beers from the folks at Zipline Brewing Co. in Lincoln, Nebraska. Some RBC members may recall Zipline's delicious MAAANG-O, an American IPA with mango that we featured early in 2019, and we wanted to circle back with Zipline for a deeper dive into what they're up to.

The smallest of the four delicious Zipline beers in this special offer (which gives you a sense of what's ahead...), their Baltic Porter is an 8% imperial porter created in collaboration with Harbour Brewing Co. from Cornwall in the United Kingdom. This cross-continental project is brewed as a classic Baltic-style porter: it's a black lager (as Baltic porters often are), and it's cold fermented for two months for extra smoothness. This style has gotten particularly hard to come by in recent years—which makes finding a standout version even more satisfying.

Zipline's Baltic Porter pours a dense, chocolate-brown color, capped by a creamy tan head with significant retention and lacing left behind. From that initial pour, we find rich, malty, chocolaty aromatics in abundance—a generously rendered chocolate and roast focus that expands a whole lot as this beer warms up. There are dense, dried dark fruits alongside the baker's and milk chocolate, while a slightly bitter edge from cocoa and spice helps balance. As the aroma suggests, there's rich core maltiness throughout that never oversteps. Caramel undertones, plus hints of cherry, raisin, brown sugar... Rounded, complementary edges.

There's lively carbonation in this beer, which offsets the malt focus and gives this a vibrant texture overall. Nicely creamy, with only a touch of warmth apparent from the alcohol. The solid core structure of roasted malts, dense chocolates, coffee, and a touch of licorice gives a magnificent Baltic porter impact from the start: savory, satisfying, well detailed. While this is nicely in line with expectations given the style, there are exceptional secondary notes present that ratchet everything up a notch: roasted nuts, cola, white pepper, nougat, hints of clove... This porter's a perfect match of robust savoriness and a super-smooth, pinpoint mouthfeel.

**Aging & Pairing Notes:** Zipline's Baltic Porter should continue to develop in the bottle with a bit of cellaring time. It is ready to enjoy as is, although some additional caramelization should work nicely here. For food pairings, we'd look to BBQ ribs, brisket, a fluffy chocolate cake, or decadent brownies.

### MAPLE BOURBON BARREL-AGED BARLEYWINE ALE

Style: English-style Barleywine aged in Maple Bourbon Barrels

ABV: 12.8% Serving Temperature: 54–60° F Suggested Glassware: Snifter, Tulip, or Teku glass



We wanted to include a barleywine from Zipline, and we were thrilled to be able to secure enough of their Maple Bourbon Barrel-Aged Barleywine for the club. This hefty barleywine is 12.8% ABV—definitely a good one for sharing. It's brewed in the English style, and then gets aged in bourbon barrels that previously held maple syrup. The net result is a super-lush barleywine that gets plump, satisfying maple-bourbon secondary notes from its barrel time.

Zipline's Maple Bourbon Barrel-Aged Barleywine pours a dense, coppery orange color with modest off-white foam. It's golden and honeyed in the glass, such that the edges glow. From the initial pour come generous aromatics of caramel and crème brûlée, lux maple syrup, plus a subtle toast from those underlying bourbon barrels. This is incredibly generous barleywine that's clearly picking up significant influence from its barrel time—and that maple-bourbon combo has us wishing for a fresh-off-the-grill Belgian waffle to go alongside it. Lots of well-developed caramelization throughout, plus touches of cotton candy and vinous warmth.

(Continued on reverse)

## MAPLE BOURBON BARREL-AGED BARLEYWINE ALE (CONT'D)

We're really impressed by how this barleywine comes together as a whole. There's a relaxed carbonation adding some lift, while that warmth from the high ABV also helps keep things feeling lean. Zipline's maple-bourbon barleywine leads with deep red fruits, some decadent caramelization, and crème brûlée's torched sugar. There's a nice balance between the intense maltiness and those counterpoints of warming bourbon, barrel toast, and subtle bubbles. It's a nuanced, massive barleywine that feels super good to drink and brings a lot of extra nuance from its barrel contact. This performs at its best when given some time to warm (this will be true for all four of these beers), and secondary notes of honey and a ginger-like spice appear to complement the maple-bourbon core. One of the best barleywines we've tried in a while.

**Aging & Pairing Notes:** The caramelization is already pretty pronounced here, such that we'd be inclined to go easy on further cellaring time. Definitely sturdy enough for a little more time, but ready to pop as is. For food pairings, this maple-bourbon barleywine should go nicely alongside some brisket burnt ends, salted-caramel ice cream, or (as imagined earlier...) a piping-hot Belgian waffle.

## CHERRY QUAD

**Style:** Belgian-style Quadrupel ale w/ Balaton Cherries

**ABV:** 10.7% **Serving Temperature:** 50–57° F **Suggested Glassware:** Tulip, Chalice, Teku, or Pinot glass



Zipline's Cherry Quad is a variant of the brewery's Abbey-style ale, St. Boden. This bigger, Belgian-style quadrupel also sees the addition of Balaton cherries—which provide a fresh, juicy cherry counterpoint to the caramel and deep dark fruit of the core beer. This is a deftly sculpted, surprisingly streamlined quad with great secondary character courtesy its cherries.

Cherry Quad pours a honeyed, golden-caramel color with scarlet hues. A well-formed, well-retained foam leaves nice lacing around the perimeter of the glass. Generous degrees of tart cherry and honeyed malt land first in the aroma, followed by chewy caramels and toffee and ripe dark fruit. Overall, there's a generous quad focus of caramelization and dark fruit at the core of this beer, offering up additional notes of dates and toffee and hints of burnt sugar.

There's a reasonable degree of carbonation, lightening the feel, as Cherry Quad leads with a generous impact of caramel and red fruits. While the caramelization is a key component, the delicate backdrop of clove and white pepper provides a bitter phenolic balance here. Lots of delicious dark fruits, dates, raisins, figs and brown sugar throughout this beer. The full focus of this Belgian-style quad rolls out over time, adding the peppery yeast and clove, along with subtle fig and orange peel, as this warms up in one's glass. The Balaton cherries provide key vibrancy, a touch of welcome acidity, and the net result is arguably the easiest drinking of the four Zipline beers in this special offer. A rich quad with cherries that accentuate it perfectly.

**Aging & Pairing Notes:** There's already a modest degree of caramelization present, such that we'd be inclined to go easy on additional aging. For pairings, the emphasis on cherry and caramel have us wanting a chargrilled bacon burger or juicy pork tenderloin. Alternatively: cherry cheesecake/ice cream.

## BARREL-AGED THE STOUT

**Style:** Imperial Stout aged in Bourbon Barrels

**ABV:** 13.8% **Serving Temperature:** 52–59° F **Suggested Glassware:** Snifter, Tulip, or Teku Glass



Closing out this special offer is Zipline's Barrel-Aged The Stout. As Zipline put it: this is the one; this is the beer they were waiting to brew... This is THE Stout. And this particular take on The Stout—a massive imperial stout in its own right, packed with milk chocolate, roast, and licorice—spends some time aging inside of bourbon barrels for a little added oomph.

Barrel-Aged The Stout pours a super dark chocolate-brown color, with a little light coming through at the edges. This is especially dark and dense, with some nice viscosity in the glass. A medium-tan foam shows excellent retention and lacing. Generous aromatics from the get-go, leading with cocoa and dark fruits. There's layered chocolates here, caramel and nougat, with a luxurious sweet-savory focus overall. The bourbon-barrel influence contributes some welcome warmth, nicely rounded bourbon, and hints of charred oak.

Overall, Barrel-Aged The Stout is an impeccably layered impy stout with deep vinous notes, layered chocolate, and a generous barrage of dried and dark fruits: dates, raisins, ripe figs... Secondary notes of cocoa, roasted malts, and baker's chocolate fill things out further, while fruity notes paralleling cherry and strawberry manifest as this warms. Lots of dense heat and roast throughout. A brilliant core imperial stout, with delicious barrel accents that make this the ideal beer to conclude a showcase of Zipline's work. Finishes with figs and chocolate.

**Aging & Pairing Notes:** Appropriately sized for some additional cellaring time, and some extra caramelization and sherry character will work perfectly in this framework. We'd be inclined to pair this stout with grilled beef or lamb kebabs, or a creamy vanilla dessert.