

The RARE BEER CLUB

SOUTH STREET BREWERY
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

SOFT-SERV (BOURBON BARREL AGED) (RARE BEER CLUB EXCLUSIVE)

The Rare Beer Club is pleased to feature one of our favorite breweries, South Street Brewery in Charlottesville, Virginia. South Street Brewery holds an extensive tradition as Charlottesville’s longest-running brewery and

pub, and they had new life breathed into the operation when the brewery was purchased in 2014 by Blue Mountain Brewery. Blue Mountain will likely be a more familiar name, as we’ve featured any number of their delicious barrel-aged beers over the



years, and two of the brewery’s founders—Mandi and Taylor Smack—had worked for South Street a decade earlier, with Taylor serving as brewer from 2001 to 2007. The owners are committed to revitalizing this downtown Charlottesville landmark—and their beer releases have just been getting better and better.

Blue Mountain Brewery in Virginia has already made quite a name for itself within Virginia’s craft beer scene, including bringing home eight Great American Beer Festival medals since opening up in 2007. Many breweries

would (and do) take the obvious route from there in terms of expansion: invest in a production facility, focus on pumping out as much of their best-selling offerings as possible, and settle in for the long haul. With the opening in 2011 of their second location, Blue

Mountain Barrel House, Master Brewer Taylor Smack and fellow partners gave a pretty clear indication that they are decidedly not like most breweries.

Taylor’s brewing experience extends back long before Blue Mountain’s first location opened 17 years ago. As an enthusiast of

world-class beer, you’ve likely heard of Bourbon County Stout from Chicago’s Goose Island—one of the very first bourbon-barrel-aged beers in the U.S. It’s still often considered one of the best examples out there, even long after everyone’s jumped on the barrel-aging bandwagon. For over a year, Taylor was the only person in the world producing that stout, after he’d taken over brewing responsibilities at Goose Island during 2000 and 2001. That one-of-a-kind brewing experience has certainly informed the direction Blue Mountain and South Street Brewery have been taking with their Barrel House projects.

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SPECIFICATIONS

<p>Style Imperial Porter aged in Bourbon Barrels w/ Madagascan Vanilla Beans and Ghanaian Cacao Nibs</p> <p>Alcohol By Volume 9.05%</p> <p>Serving Temperature 48–55° F</p> <p>Suggested Glassware Tulip, Small Nonic, Snifter, or Goblet</p>

Blue Mountain Barrel House, overlooking 4,000-foot mountains along the border of the George Washington National Forest, incorporates a wide range of lessons-learned over the years. The “rural brewpub” model at Blue Mountains’ original location encouraged them to go off-grid with their water, drilling a well to ensure more consistent and pristine supplies than they’d likely get from conventional city water. Hundreds of barrels currently occupy the Barrel House—like Maker’s Mark, Wild Turkey, Four Roses, and (Virginia to the core) Elijah Craig—allowing them to pursue a wide variety of experimental beers and blending programs.

This month we’re pleased to offer RBC members one of our favorite releases we’ve tried from South Street Brewery so far: their bourbon-barrel-aged version of their imperial porter, Soft-Serv. This is a bourbon barrel-aged version of one of Virginia’s favorite beers, Soft-Serv, but aged in freshly emptied bourbon barrels with lactose, Madagascan vanilla beans and Ghanaian cacao nibs. Bourbon Barrel Aged Soft-Serv is only available at the brewery, but this lot was brewed and packaged exclusively for the Rare Beer Club in 750ml bottles.

For the latest info regarding South Street’s draft lists, upcoming events, and operating hours, head to southstreetbrewery.com. And for all the latest details about Blue Mountain Brewery and Blue Mountain Barrel House & Smokin’ Barrel Restaurant (in Arrington, Virginia, about 45 minutes southeast of South Street Brewery) visit them at bluemountainbarrel.com.

SOFT-SERV (BOURBON BARREL AGED)

South Street’s Bourbon Barrel Soft-Serv is a bourbon-barrel-aged imperial porter coming in at 9.05% ABV. This imperial porter gets into “pastry porter” territory with rich vanilla and chocolate notes lifted by bourbon barrel aging culminating in a standout beer worth savoring and sharing.

The South Street Soft-Serv barrel-aged imperial porter pours a deep opaque black, has a thick tan head, and drops lots of sticky lacing. Generous aromatics of the bourbon barrels are lifted in the air as we swirled our glasses and brought them to our noses. Right away we were treated to classic twist-cone soft serve we would get as kids at any number of drive-thru burger joints across the country (my personal favorite in Southern California was Tastee Freeze), but with a grown-up twist. Getting deeper into the aromas we get the individual elements of the Madagascan vanilla beans, Ghanaian cacao nibs, with notes of dark caramel, toasted marshmallows, and hints of toasted coconut. The more often we went back to the glass to take in aromas, the more we discovered, such as notes of toasted brown sugar, hints of dark molasses, milk chocolate. We even experienced dried dark fruit aromas such as dates, raisins, and figs.

On the palate, the South Street Soft-Serv has lots of pronounced deep cacao nib flavors very well complemented by vanilla bean. The nuanced bourbon barrel flavors mingle

well with the cacao and vanilla and add velvety caramel and toasted oak richness. The rich dark malts bring in hints of charred bitterness and, paired with the great bittering qualities of Simcoe hops, this porter is well balanced and drinks very smoothly. The aforementioned bourbon presence never overwhelms the base beer, but allows all the components to make a lasting impression.

This is an exceptionally smooth porter, emphasizing a robust, toasty, and dark core and the impact of its time spent in bourbon barrels with cacao nibs and vanilla beans. Moderate carbonation is ideally tuned for this rich, deeply malty offering, while hints of a subtle, warming alcohol presence keep it all feeling light. This is such a pleasure to drink, and as it warms we find more and more layers to dig into. We unpacked enormous amounts of core maltiness overall, with pinpoint texture and effortless drinkability.

The South Street Soft-Serv is full bodied with a rich and creamy mousse. The finish is silky smooth and lingers on with a bit of bourbon warmth. It is an outstanding creation by masters at their craft.

AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

Soft-Serv is suitable for some modest aging, say 2-4 years, though we always recommend have lots around now as a tasty treat and some for later to enjoy its maturity. In terms of pairings: core notes of cacao and vanilla have us looking to smoked pulled pork dishes or a rich triple chocolate cake for dessert. Cheers!

The RARE BEER CLUB

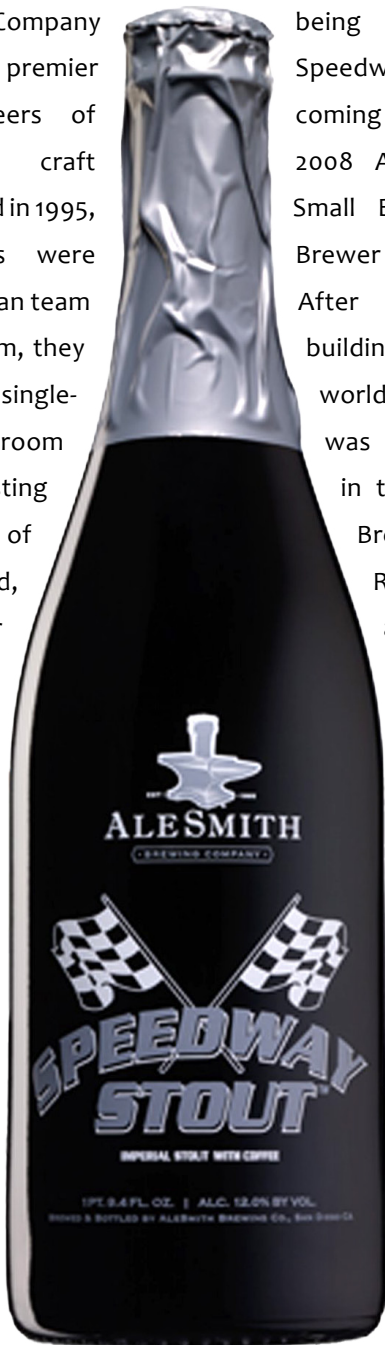


ALESMITH BREWING COMPANY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

SPEEDWAY STOUT

AleSmith Brewing Company is one of San Diego’s premier breweries and pioneers of Southern California’s craft brewing scene. Founded in 1995, AleSmith’s beginnings were humble. With a three-man team and a 15bbl brew system, they made the most of their single-unit space with enough room for an office and a tasting bar. After a few years of getting well established, AleSmith earned a Silver Medal for their Horny Devil Belgian Golden Strong Ale at the 1998 Great American Beer Festival.

In 2002, Peter Zien, a Grand Master Judge and decorated home brewer, took ownership of AleSmith and soon introduced their barrel-aging program with the first release



being the epic Barrel-Aged Speedway Stout. The hits kept coming as time went on and in 2008 AleSmith was awarded Small Brewing Company and Brewer of the Year at GABF. After almost 20 years of building the brewery into a world class brand, AleSmith was rated #1 Best Brewery in the World and rated #1 Brewery in California on RateBeer.com in 2014, and consistently ranks among the 10 best breweries in the world to this day.

Between 2015 and now AleSmith has grown in capacity, stature, and production, while still maintaining the highest quality standards and continuing to innovate. They’ve even added a creamery,

ChesseSmith, that produces artisan cheeses to pair with their fine brews. AleSmith Brewing Company is also the home of the Tony Gwynn Museum, the San Diego Padres’ legend who played his entire 20 season career for them and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2007. The museum raises funds to benefit the Tony and Alicia Gwynn Foundation, which is a philanthropic organization that enhances educational, athletic, and housing prospects for youth and families in underprivileged communities.

Anvil of Hope is another charitable organization associated with AleSmith and is headed up by AleSmith’s owners,

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SPECIFICATIONS

Style
Imperial Stout with Coffee
Alcohol By Volume
12%
Serving Temperature
50–55° F
Suggested Glassware
Globe Snifter, Tulip, or Small Nonic

Peter and Vicky Zien. Anvil of Hope is deeply committed to strengthening the surrounding community. Check out their mission at anvilofhope.org.

We are very honored to feature AleSmith Brewing Company in the Rare Beer Club and hope to do so again and again in the future. The AleSmith Speedway Stout featured this month has very limited distribution throughout the US, especially in 750ml bottles, being available mostly in major markets in Southern and Central California. The Rare Beer Club is proud to be able to offer this outstanding imperial stout to our nation-wide members.

SPEEDWAY STOUT

The AleSmith Speedway Stout, their flagship imperial stout made with locally roasted coffee, is at long last featured in the Rare Beer Club. AleSmith Speedway Stout pours opaque black, with a black rim around the edges. Dark tan foam with tiny bubbles caps this black elixir, showing very good retention and lacing. The first aromas that waft from the glass are of deeply roasted malts and dark roast coffee. Rich, earthy, and inviting, the aromas of dark chocolate, cocoa powder,

and molasses emerge to complement the initial aromatics. As we lean in to further investigate, our noses are treated to aromas of dark toasty toffee, rich caramel, and plump dark fruit. There's a lightly charred vanilla bean note as well, with accompanying aromas of toasted marshmallow and bruleed brown sugar.

The AleSmith Speedway Stout is massively impactful from the first sip. The deeply roasted coffee notes make their presence known as do dark and toasty malt flavors. This is an immensely decadent imperial stout with layers of flavor in every sip. Touches of char, dark caramel, and dark chocolate abound, as do dried black fruits such as raisins and blackberries. Speedway Stout then rewards us with darker specialty malt flavors and toffee-like hints of sweetness. The more we taste, the more we discover, with notes of black pepper and toasted walnuts making a brief appearance. The deep roast of the coffee and malts, along with a generous amount of bittering hops, provides an ample 70 IBUs of lean bitterness to minimize the perceived sweetness of such a huge stout.

The AleSmith Speedway Stout is rich

and full-bodied, with a creamy mousse made up of fine carbonation and tightly packed bubbles. It has a well balanced and round mouthfeel for an exquisite tasting experience, with a long, layered finish. The 12% abv never gets in the way of the flavors, but gives an uplifting feel to the liquid, keeping it from overwhelming our palates. We see why it is decorated with a silver and two gold medals, and is a winner in our glasses!

AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

The AleSmith Speedway Stout is ready to drink now and ages very well. Its high-ABV and dense construction gives it longevity, and should remain smooth and engaging for years to come. With the Rare Beer Club's limited allocation, we suggest stocking up your cellar as our supply will be depleted very quickly.

For food pairing we refer to AleSmith's suggestions of rich char-grilled beef dishes, chocolate and vanilla desserts, salty Stilton blue cheeses, or hard nutty cheese such as Gouda and cloth-bound cheddars.

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