

## Time Out Chicago

### *Drink this Now: Milwaukee Brewing Company's Sasquash Pumpkin Porter*



October, 2013

One of my happier drinking accidents of the past few months was stumbling into the Milwaukee Ale House in our northernmost suburb's Historic Third Ward. The riverside bar and restaurant is the birthplace of the Milwaukee Brewing Company (a.k.a. MKE Brewing), which opened in 1997 and expanded 10 years later from the brewpub to another 50 barrel production facility.

I can't quite explain why MKE doesn't have more awareness in Chicago—they have a good sense of humor (see the explanation for why they named their stout Polish Moon), they've got some great *South Park*-style cartoony branding, and most importantly, they make some good beer, including a variety of year-round and seasonal offerings like the tea-infused wit O-Gii that will kick your summer-drinking ass with a 9.2% ABV.

We're also in a moment where everyone is either enamored or repelled by pumpkin beers. Whether you swear an oath to the deity Pumpkin or abhor any ale spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg, I do suggest you seek out MKE's Sasquash Porter.

<http://www.timeout.com/chicago/food-drink/drink-this-now-milwaukee-brewing-companys-sasquash-pumpkin-porter>

Very few pumpkin beers veer away from the straightforward ale, so this porter version is notable for style points alone. Similarly, MKE's nearby compatriots at Lakefront also make a unique pumpkin lager, which sets them apart as well. Maybe there's something going on north of the cheddar curtain that makes one gravitate toward weirder types of gourd beers. If so, I'm not complaining.

Brewed with both pumpkins and sweet potatoes, this beer is heartier than your usual pumpkin ale, and isn't anywhere close to as cloyingly sweet as some can be. If you're hunting for whipped cream and pumpkin pie crust, look elsewhere—with the dark, roasty malts you're probably closer comparing this to pumpkin coffee.

Sasquash pours a near-opaque deep brown with just a hint of ruby; the mocha head has decent retention and lacing on the glass but it's not too pillowy. Instead of smelling like pure pie spices, the aroma is savory and rich, like opening a can of pumpkin preserves. The sweet potatoes add a buttery ribbon that pops in and out as the beer warms, but for the most part this is a subtle, easy-drinking porter first, pumpkin beer second.

The body isn't too hefty, and the finish is smooth and satisfying with a slight lingering bitterness. At 5% ABV it's easy to polish off a few of these while sitting on a stoop enjoying the waning days of moderate temperatures. The army of gourd-based-beer detractors can talk shit about pumpkin beers all they want, but I defy you to try this and not find something redeeming about it.

Sasquash can be found at Binny's and is also available by the bottle at Lillie's Q, so it probably goes well with beans. MKE's other beers can also be occasionally found on tap handles scattered around the city.