

The Sweet Taste of Italian Beer

Although better known for its wines, Italy is also home to many small artisanal breweries producing high quality beers. One of these, the Foglie d'Erba brewery in Forni, Friuli Dolomites, has chosen to use only PEFC-certified raw materials and fair trade spices in its beers as part of efforts to combine quality and taste with environmental protection and human rights.

Situated on the border between Friuli and Alto Adige in the Dolomites, the Foglie d'Erba brewery is a small artisanal operation producing high quality, home brewed beers. It has an annual production of about 6,000 bottles of four different beers: Babel, Haraban, Hopfelia, and Ulysses. What sets these beers apart from others is that all are made from ingredients sourced from the Friulian Dolomites Natural Park and its certified forests.



By relying on locally-sourced ingredients, the owners of the brewery seek to combine a high-quality niche business with sustainable development. Commenting on his product, the owner of the Foglie d'Erba brewery, Gino Perissutti notes, "The products we use are strictly sourced locally. With this beer, I want to demonstrate that quality products, environmental protection and social awareness can go hand-in-hand." It is this which motivated the beer producer to use only resins and pine needles from two PEFC-certified forests. The certification provides assurances that the forests are sustainably managed.

"In my industry, this choice alone has no immediate commercial impact. But it creates curiosity among customers, and increases their desire to taste the product and to assess its quality. While we still need to explain the unique ingredients and philosophy of our beer, it helps people understand that it is possible to make good use of the land and resources that nature has given us," Mr. Perissutti explains.

In addition to taking on-board environmental concerns, the brewer has also considered social issues: the sugar and spices used in the beers come from fair trade sources. This has earned the brewery a special mention in the recently published 2011 Slow Food guide dedicated to the best Italian artisanal beers where its beers were singled out as products that "get closest to the concepts of good, clean and right". And it was awarded "Best Anglo-American origin hoppy beers" in early 2011.

Further Information

Foglie d'Erba Brewery - www.birrificiofogliederba.it