

Great Taste 3 Stars for Hive Mind Wye Valley Traditional Mead

Submitted by: Matt Appleby Consulting Ltd

Tuesday, 1 August 2023

Hive Mind Mead & Brew Co has been awarded the highest three-star Great Taste award rating for its Wye Valley Traditional Mead.

The Guild of Fine Food rates three star products as “extraordinarily tasty food and drink” and only 2% of the thousands of products submitted for Great Taste judging every year achieves three stars.

Hive Mind brews meads and beers at its meadery in Caldicot with natural ingredients and honey from its own local hives, where its beekeeping supports habitat conservation and important pollinator populations.

Hive Mind’s Traditional Mead reflects the flavours from the hills, meadows, hedgerows and woodlands of the Wye Valley through the honey that is harvested every season. To make the honey that goes into every bottle, the bees will have pollinated more than 1.7 million flowers and flown more than 70,000 miles.

The Great Taste accreditations celebrate the UK’s finest artisanal food and drink and are blind-tasted by a panel including celebrity chefs, Michelin-starred restaurateurs, food critics, buyers, retailers and writers. Three-star products go on to compete for Great Taste’s Golden Fork Awards, given to the best products in each nation and region in October

The judges’ comments described the Mead’ as: “Altogether beautifully crafted and thoroughly enjoyable...This is an absolute joy to imbibe and we love it.”

Judges’ tasting notes included: “A lovely complexity to this mead - well balanced throughout with woody and toasted notes and a soft sweetness rolling into a soft lemony acidity with a long finish”; “Smooth and silken on the palate with lingering floral notes on the finish. A really delightful and delicious mead with both fragrance and floral complexity”; and “A delightful, promising nose with a heady, blossomed fragrance to this gorgeous pale yellow mead. Softly sweet and nuanced, rounded and complex and deeply floral.”

This year, to help reduce food waste and prevent honey left over after the judging process being discarded, Hive Mind will be working with the Guild of Fine Food to collect the honey and brew a new ‘Great Taste’ mead.

Hive Mind’s tasting notes describe the Mead as sweet, rich and moreish with rich floral and heather notes. Hive Mind Traditional Mead is sold in classic cork-stopped 70cl bottles in numbered batches and is 14.5% ABV.

Hive Mind sells direct to consumers online and from its Caldicot tap house. It is available through independent delis, farm shops, bars and restaurants across the UK through specialist distributors including Pig’s Ears, Cotswold Fayre, Hammonds of Knutsford, Craft Drinks Co and Blas ar Fwyd.

The Traditional Mead, along with the whiskey barrel-aged version, has recently been added to the shelves

of Selfridges and is used by Michelin-starred restaurants including Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck and James Sommerin's Home, following an appearance earlier this year on a TV series with the Hairy Bikers focused on small artisan producers.

Hive Mind co-founder Kit Newell said:

"We describe our Traditional Mead as a distillation of the local landscape - it's a well-balanced flavour that showcases the seasonality and all the floral notes from our carefully selected local honey, not just its sweetness. It's a great example of how we're working to modernise the perception of what mead can offer and how well it works as an alternative to sweet wines, spirits or ciders. It is also a fantastic after-dinner drink and pairs beautifully with blue cheese."

"We've seen a huge surge in interest in mead in the US off the back of the growth in the craft beer market as people search out new and interesting flavours. And we're delighted to be growing the profile and availability of mead in the UK through recognition by the Great Taste judges and the growing number of specialist distributors, artisan retailers and high-profile chefs supporting Hive Mind," he said.

Hive Mind recently launched a range of flavoured session-strength Sparkling Mead (4%, 330ml cans). Other Hive Mind products include Oak Whiskey Barrel-Aged Traditional Mead (20%, 500ml) and honey beers including honey pilsner, Nectar (440ml 4.5%), smoked honey porter (750ml 7.0%), Citra IPA (330ml 5.7%) and golden ale (330ml 4.5%).

-ends-

Issued by: Matt Appleby Consulting Ltd

Email: matt@mattappleby.com

Phone: 07970 475479

Notes to editors - the Hive Mind story

Hive Mind brews its mead in a purpose built meadery in Caldicot with honey from its own bees in the Wye Valley, an area well known for its natural beauty and excellent biodiversity. Founded by beekeeping brothers Matt & Kit Newell, Hive Mind is pioneering modern mead-making and challenging perceptions of this versatile drink.

Matt is a geologist turned beekeeper and brewer. He began chasing bees when he was 16 and took a summer job working for a local commercial beekeeper in the Forest of Dean. Kit worked as a product designer for a tech company in Reading and spent every spare weekend heading back to the Wye Valley countryside.

Keen to create a job for him and his brother in the area they love he applied his product design skills to the honey that Matt's bees were bringing in, spotting a gap in the market for a modern honey mead.

The brothers wanted to make a mead that can be enjoyed in the same way as a beer, cider or sparkling wine so they brew to a lower alcohol level than a typical mead. And as

beekeepers, they also wanted to create a business which protects nature, supports pollinators and is part of its local community.

In May 2023, Hive Mind launched its Sparkling Mead range in 33cl aluminium cans. The cans feature a new contemporary Hive Mind design and the company's mission to 'help the honeybees through our mead and honey beer revolution'.

Modern mead is a versatile drink which can be served straight or over ice, paired with food or an aperitif or digestif, or mixed in cocktails. Hive Mind sparkling meads are perfect for summer get-togethers, festivals and events, while its traditional wine-style meads work well paired with cheeses or desserts and are great to bring friends together as the nights draw in.

Hive Mind products are 100% natural and made with British honey, including the honey from their own hives in the beautiful Wye Valley.

-ends-