



WIL WHEATON & NEWCASTLE SCOTCH ALE

Making Beer That Doesn't Suck

*By Mike Gerrard
Images Courtesy of Heineken, USA*



NEWCASTLE BROWN ALE

IS ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN BRANDS IN THE UK, WHERE IT'S TRADITIONALLY BEEN KNOWN AS A WORKING MAN'S DRINK EVER SINCE IT WAS LAUNCHED IN 1927. ORIGINALLY BREWED IN THE GRITTY INDUSTRIAL NORTHERN CITY OF NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, IT'S NOW MADE BY HEINEKEN THOUGH STILL IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND, AT THE 19TH-CENTURY JOHN SMITH'S BREWERY IN THE TOWN OF TADCASTER, 90 MILES SOUTH OF NEWCASTLE.

More recently, however, Newcastle Brown Ale has been seen around the world as a cool guy's drink, and it now sells more in the USA than in its original UK market. To build on that success, Newcastle is launching a new series of collaborative brews, beginning with Newcastle Scotch Ale, promoted by actor Wil Wheaton. Wheaton is famous for his roles in movies like *Stand By Me* and *Toy Soldiers*, and in TV series including *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *The Big Bang Theory*, where he plays himself.

But Wheaton has another role that's not so well-known to the public: as a home brewer. He both brews and blogs as the Devil's Gate Brewing Company. He's even developed his own home brewing kit, sold through Northern Brewer, to produce a VandalEyes Pale Ale. It's received 5-star rave ratings from home brewers on the Northern Brewer website, one saying it's the best beer he's ever made. Safe to say, when it comes to beer Wil Wheaton knows what he's talking about.



Newcastle Scotch Ale is brewed in collaboration with Newcastle's sister brewery, Caledonian, the oldest brewery in Edinburgh. Newcastle's idea is to work in cooperation with some of Europe's oldest and finest breweries to produce brews that stay true to the Brown Ale roots but bring in a freshness to the traditional recipe.

So what does Wheaton think of the English-Scottish collaboration that has produced Newcastle Scotch Ale? "It's a well-balanced, malt-forward brew with a delightful velvety finish," he says, before adding in a less technical manner: "Basically, Newcastle and Caledonian make a kick-ass beer that does not suck."

The Caledonian Brewery was founded in 1869 and the new Scotch Ale is brewed in those original 1869 copper kettles, heated with open flames, and using whole-flower hops. It's a new brew that's as traditionally British as you can get, with rich and complex flavors, and packing a punch at a strength of 6.4% ABV.

The Newcastle Brown Ale Brand Manager, Brett Steen, is naturally delighted to get beer aficionado Wil Wheaton behind the new ale.

"One of our dreams," says Steen, "is to get rid of the 'intimidation' factor that prevents so many people from foregoing boring 'yellow beer' and enjoying more interesting brews. Wil is an inviting and knowledgeable guy, and we're stoked that he's taking this herculean effort of humor and wisdom onto himself so we don't have to."

Newcastle Scotch Ale is a limited-time offering and will be followed by other Newcastle-Europe collaborative brews throughout 2015.