

WHO KNEW BEER AND PODCASTS GO TOGETHER?



By Mike Pound

Go Beer Guy

It wasn't hard to find Douglas Derda and Brad Brown at the Steel City Big Pour — even if I didn't already recognize them from a previous meeting, the microphone, digital recorder and camera would have been a dead giveaway.

The three of us were attending the Construction Junction beer festival for purely professional reasons — I was prepping a review for GO, obviously, and Derda and Brown, much better known as Father Spoon and Sickpuppy, were doing the same for their Should I Drink That podcast.

SIDT isn't the only beer podcast out there — it isn't even the only one based in Pittsburgh — but it does offer a refreshing change of pace for those want to enjoy craft beer without lapsing into something resembling winespeak. They come by their expertise honestly — both Spoon, 31, an Erie native, and Sickpuppy, 38, a lifelong Burgher, have long resumes with good beer — Sickpuppy as a home brewer, and Spoon, well, as a drinker.



Father Spoon (Douglas Derda) is on the left and Sickpuppy (Brad Brown) is on the right. The beer is cask-conditioned Black Strap Stout from East End Brewing. Yum.

“I was in Valhalla (the now-defunct Strip District brewpub) for the first time, and I think I ordered a Rolling Rock,” Spoon said. “The guy at the bar talked me into trying something else, I think their red ale. It was the best thing I had ever tasted.”

Spoon and Sickpuppy stay true to the show's motto — “Even if it's crap, we drink it so you don't have to” — by chugging whatever samples that turn out to be less than palatable. This occasionally leads to gagging and retching, and usually leads to a little extra silliness as the show progresses.

It also led to the Dogfishhead 120 Minute Chugging Challenge, a video featuring Spoon downing a bottle of the Delaware brewery's luscious double IPA that features a 21 percent ABV. There had been past chugging challenges — the first was an attempt to down a 7-year-

old can of Brahma, a challenge that was derailed when Sickpuppy found that the can's contents more closely resembled gelatin instead of any kind of liquid — but chugging a prized beer like a 120 Minute was something else entirely, even if there was a little humor buried in there somewhere.

“The users at Ratebeer.com flamed us with pages and pages of stuff,” Spoon said. “It was funny to see how many people just didn't get the joke.”

And that's kind of the point of SIDT — fostering an appreciation of craft beers without all the trappings that make beer snobs such dull people to hang around with.

“I'm a beer snob in my own head, and I go through all that stuff when I'm tasting a beer for the first time,” Sickpuppy said. “But the important thing is whether you like the beer or not — it's good, or it's crap, and that's what we try to do with the show.”

There was one question I told Spoon and Sickpuppy they would have to answer at the end of our interview at the big pour — what's the best beer Pittsburgh has to offer? I told them I was wavering a bit — I lean toward thick, dark beers, and we have some excellent choices here, such as the Upper Cut Porter I had at the new Rivertowne Pour House a month ago ... or East End Brewing's Black Strap Stout. Scott Smith ended that debate at the festival, when he

tapped the cask-conditioned Black Strap, which, in my mind, is the city's hands-down winner. Spoon also was leaning toward East End, and after we met at the East End booth — and downed a couple glasses of the oily stout — he proclaimed Black Strap to be the winner. Sickpuppy doesn't seem to mind admitting he's a little different — but only a little. He stuck with East End as well, but said their Big Hop IPA was the best beer in town. You can find all the old Should I Drink That podcasts — including Episode 26, in which I make a guest appearance — at [shouldidrinkthat.com](http://shouldidrinkthat.com) .

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