

# Romancing the Foam No. 107



## Godzilla – Bear shit them pipe!



I have a rope tied around my waist so people can find me if the walls cave in. They do every once in a while. I'm in the bottom of a 20' or so deep trench with a shovel and a power tamper packing sand around some sewer pipe when I hear a deep growl "Godzilla – Bear shit them pipe" It is Vito yelling at me to get into his Cadillac while he drives me to the far end of the trench where the new sections of pipe lay waiting their turn to be placed in the pit. I clamber out of the trench. I am covered in sand, mud and tar and Vito's Cadillac has

leather seats but when I balk at fouling the seats he barks – "get in." When Vito barks, you act. Vito likes calling me Godzilla and I assume it is because of my size. For what he is paying me – it is the early 70's and I am a hundred dollar a day man – he can call me whatever he wants. Vito is a big, burly, gruff man of Italian descent who oozes physical and social power. Paramount studios somehow overlooked Vito when casting the Godfather movies. A corona, as often unlit as lit, hangs permanently out of the right corner of his mouth and causes his right eye to squint a little when he talks. Vito owns Vito Construction out of Detroit (pronounced Dee-troit) and we are in Bay City laying 12' diameter storm sewer pipe. Vito has a Cadillac for each day of the week and he drives them bouncing around the job site trailing a cloud of dust like an ATV. Bear shitting the pipes involves getting a bucket of tar and smearing tar all over the lip on the end of the pipe where it fits into the next pipe. Vito drops me off at the construction trailer, I pick up a bucket of tar (bear shit), a brush and a ladder. Bear shitting pipes leaves me so filthy that I keep an old blanket in my 59 Chevy rag top to cover the seat while I drive the 50 miles back home and strip to my underwear on the front porch when I get there and put my clothes in a garbage bag before entering the house. Sometimes I have to use gasoline from the lawn mower to get the tar off my skin and out of my hair.





On good days – after I have bear shitted enough pipe – I work with the crane operator. It is a job that the older and perhaps wiser guys on the site avoid but I think it is fun. While I am bear shitting pipe, the crane operator is digging trench. When we have enough trench dug to lay new pipe, I help the crane operator take the shovel off the crane and replace it with a Y-cable that has two caps on the end. I then stand on

the caps and the crane operator takes me soaring through the air to get a new piece of pipe. He deposits me on the top of the pipe and then we guide the cable to a co-worker below who takes the caps off. Then the crane operator returns the cables to me and I feed them through two holes on the top of the pipe, the guy below puts the caps on the cables and then I ride the 20-ton pipe down into the pit. I use hand signals and my booming voice to help guide the pipe into the trench. After we have set the pipe, a guy in the pipe takes the caps off the cables, I guide the cables out of the pipe, send them back down to the front of the pipe, the guy in the pipe puts the caps back on and then I ride the cable back to get a new section of pipe. We do this until we fill the trench with pipe. Then we replace the shovel on the crane and I go back to packing sand around the pipe with a shovel and a power tamper with a rope tied around my waist until I hear “Godzilla – Bear shit them pipe” and the cycle continues.

After I finished my gig with Vito, I took my clothes out to the back yard, sat in a lawn chair in my boxer shorts, cracked open a cold beer (probably a Strohs), lit up a Crooks Rum Soaked Cigar, tossed the match on the tar covered clothes and watched them burn. This issue, I celebrate “Godzilla bear shit them pipe” beer.

The first “Godzilla bear shit them pipe” beer that comes to mind is Toppling Goliath Brewing Company’s PseudoSue and not just because of the Godzilla like dinosaur on the label. It is an American Pale Ale and the alcohol level is no big deal - 5.8% alcohol by volume, but the beer is packed with flavor. My current bottle is a month old. A lively pour fills the Spiegelau glass with a hazy gold liquid that clears to brilliant as the beer warms. It produces a 2” finely bubbled white foam collar that takes 2 minutes to recede to a thick, clingy film. The smell tells you this beer is special. Tropical fruit, melon, citrus, piney resin and herbal



June 29, 2017



aromas rise from the glass. The attack begins with tropical fruit laced with citrus over a light malt backbone with a surprisingly tart, juicy finish. It is very creamy with a medium to medium light body and medium carbonation. This beer is packed with so much flavor and aroma that it is hard to believe that it is only 5.8% alcohol by volume. I rate 198.



New Holland Brewing Company's Dragon's Milk has the color of black tar and supports a rich deep tan foam collar with good retention. The color is close enough to the bear shit I used to smear on the pipe to provide an excuse to go out and buy a bottle. I buy at least one every year and whenever I find them on tap. I have had them on tap, in the 12-ounce bottle and the 22-ounce bottle. New Holland has aged Dragon's Milk, an imperial stout, in oak barrels and in bourbon barrels. This one is aged in bourbon barrels and packs 11.0% alcohol by volume and comes in a 22-ounce bottle. The bourbon aromas are a little bigger in this year's version (2016) than in the past two vintages and there is also more vanilla and chocolate laced with prune and a hint of tartness. This beer brings to the palate all the flavors you would want with bourbon and beer - rich, creamy bourbon, alcohol, chocolate, vanilla, fruit and prune. The roast is there, it provides a nice accent but it is not harsh or burnt.

The malt, a little grain, and yeast flavors balance the bourbon and it finishes off with a deft touch of oaky tannic astringency. Dragon's Milk has a seductive creamy full body with mild warming and a very fine bead. I rate it 90.

Akron Ohio's Hoppin Frog Brewery makes big bold beers. The closest thing in their lineup to a Miller Lite is a robust porter weighing in at 6.2% alcohol by volume. Right now I am paying homage to Vito by drinking a Gangster Frog IPA which has 7.5% alcohol by volume and 55 International Bittering Units. Gangster Frog is gold with a slight haze under a white to cream colored foam cap that is moderately persistent and lacy. The beer entices you with bread crumb, earthy resin and tropical fruit aromas. The palate starts with big malt and runs through a range of flavors – in the middle citrus orange, topical fruit and then a bracing yet refreshing bitter. The bitter is fruit based. There is some caramel back there and some hop based astringency in the finish. The hops are big and bold. The malt is medium to medium high and



June 29, 2017

provides balance but the beer is definitely hop forward. The finish is spicy orange and lingering bitter. Gangster Frog has a medium body and medium high carbonation. As I savor this monster, I really wish I had this beer some 45 years ago when I set fire to my tar covered clothes. Gangster Frog is very nice, full flavored and hoppy. A bit gangster but classy and not too over bearing. This is a beer, like Vito, that pushes some edges but it grows on you. I give it 95.



When I sat watching my clothes burn all those years ago, I took inventory. Bear shitting pipe for Vito paid a year's rent, upkeep on the car, paid for some new clothes from the Sally Ann, bought some books and helped with food and beer. The school provided tuition and kicked in a few more bucks for essentials. It was a good year. "Godzilla bear shit them pipe" beer reminds me of the growls, and the tar and the roast smells of the burning clothes and the sense of doing something few other people would do and sitting by the fire in the warm sun looking forward to a good year.