Tasted recently on a wintry visit to Sweden

- An "American-style" reddish-brown lager called Ross Creek (alcohol by volume, 5.0), from the national brewer Pripps. Slightly toffeeish, but lacking in hop. From the same brewery, a surprisingly dry, slightly grainy, Extra Strong (7.2) Premium Lager. Less estery and candyish than similar Scandinavian products such as Carlsberg Elephant or Special Brew.

- Two from the Nordsjš brewery, run by a husband and wife in the dairy of a farm 170 miles south-west of Stockholm, at Motala, near Linkšping, in the mainland province of East Gotland. One, at 5.0 per cent, is called …stgota …rt …l (East Gotland Herb Beer). It is made with herbs which translate from Swedish as "marsh tea" (botanically, Ledum palustra) and "southernwood" (Artemisia abrotanum). This golden, hazy, brew has a talc-like aroma and a very drying, lemony, palate. A second, at the same strength, is called Bl'bärs (a pun on berries and beer). It is made with forest-picked blueberries. It has a lovely cerise colour, a Pinot Noir aroma, and a beautiful balance of sweetness and fruit-skin tartness.

- Two from Zeunerts, acquired and closed by Sweden's second biggest brewer, Spendrups, and reopened by members of its staff. An Export type, at 5.6, is malt-led, but well-balanced, with some vanilla notes. An Alt I found caramel-ish, with a slightly burnt astringency. The brewery is in the north, at Sollefte'.

- M'rten Trotzig's …l is a ginger-spiced lager from the Sofiero brewery, in Laholm, in the far south. This bright, pale copper, brew, at 5.6, is lightly chewy and rounded, with orange-skin flavours.

- Ahlafors Ljusa (the second word means "pale"). This brewery takes its name from its home village, more usually spelled Alafors, north of Gothenburg. The Ljusa is light-bodied, dry, Pilsner-style (5.0). It is produced by Patrick Holmquist, 1992 Swedish Homewbrewer of the Year.

- Falcon Lagrad Gammel Brygd ("Old Reserve"). This was the 1992 edition of a winter special (5.5) from a major brewery in Falkenberg, in the west. A burgundy-coloured brew, with well-combined aromas and flavours of malt and chocolate, and a warming finish. The brewery is jointly owned by Carlsberg and the Finnish company Sinerbrychoff.

- Gellivare Stark. From a revived brewery, the northernmost in Sweden, at Gällivare. The 5.3 Stark ("strong") lager, I found clean, soft, light, but unexceptional.

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