

Wicked Weed's Divisive Deed

IT'S ALIVE! Bottle Conditioned Beer

The Beer Connoisseur®

www.BeerConnoisseur.com

AMERICA'S
5 BEST
TAPROOMS

REAL ALE
IN ROCK & METAL



Advertisement

BEER CAP MAPSTM
.com

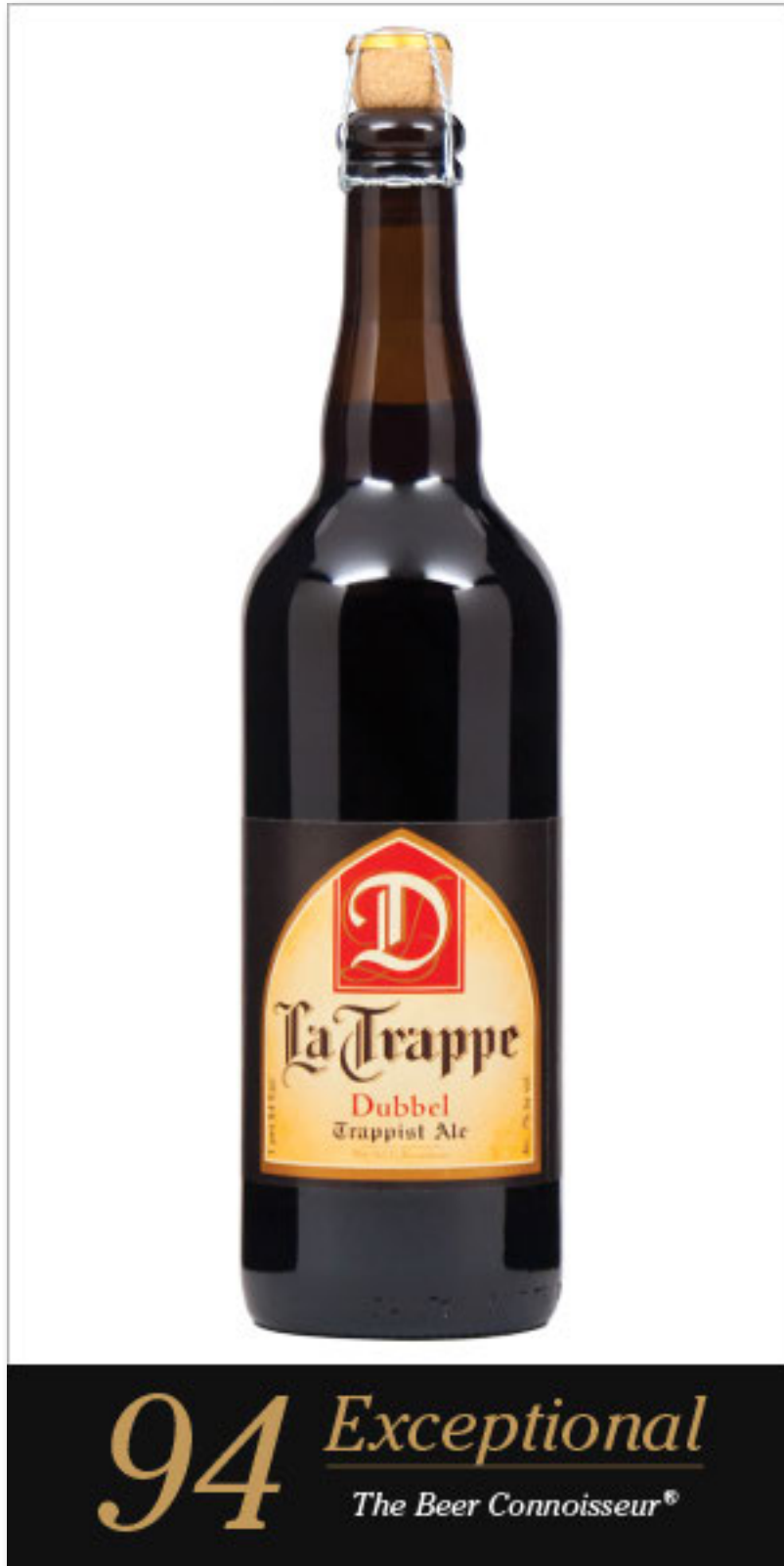


MAP YOUR BEER EXPERIENCE

50 states
11 countries
and so much more

www.BeerCapsMaps.com

Advertisement



www.latrappetrappist.com

The Beer Connoisseur[®]
is operated by On Tap Publishing, LLC.

Lynn Davis | FOUNDER, EDITOR & PUBLISHER
Chris Miller | FOUNDING PARTNER

Jim Dykstra | EDITOR
Chris Guest | EDITOR

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT
Owen Ogletree | Associate Editor
Bob Townsend | Associate Editor

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT
Lynn Davis | Creative Director

FOUNDING BEER REVIEW COORDINATOR
Charlie Gow (1960 – 2014)

WEB DEVELOPMENT
IMG FX Design - www.imgfxdesign.com

ADVERTISING & TRADE SALES
Lynn Davis | Publisher
ldavis@ontappublishing.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
We welcome feedback from readers. Please e-mail
editorial@beerconnoisseur.com, or mail your letter to:
Attention: Editorial
The Beer Connoisseur[®]
P.O. Box 420903, Atlanta, GA 30342

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES
Freelance inquiries are welcome. E-mail story ideas, along with
writing samples and complete contact information to:
editorial@beerconnoisseur.com

THE BEER CONNOISSEUR[®]
Summer 2017, Issue 31 (ISSN 2151-4356) is published bi-monthly
solely online for \$15.00 per year by On Tap Publishing, LLC,
P.O. Box 420903, Atlanta, Ga. 30342.

Permissions: You may not reproduce any part of *The Beer
Connoisseur*[®] without first obtaining written consent
from On Tap Publishing, LLC and its authorized manager(s).



PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION

Options available on a monthly, yearly and 2 year basis.
Enjoy 6-issues annually of the Premium Web Magazine with back
issues, Beer School, Expert Reviews, Popular Reviews, Members
Forum, BC Network Offers and more.
www.BeerConnoisseur.com/Premium-Subscription

DIGITAL MAGAZINE EDITIONS

Subscriptions, single copies and back issues are offered by 3rd
party digital providers including;
Amazon, Apple Newstand, Barnes & Noble, Flipster, Google Play,
Magzter, Readly and Zinio.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook | facebook.com/BeerConnoisseur
Google Plus | <https://plus.google.com/+Beerconnoisseur>
Instagram | instagram.com/BeerConnoisseurMag
Twitter | twitter.com/BeerConnoisseur

READER SERVICES

PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP

If you have a question about your Premium Membership or the
web or digital magazine you may submit a support ticket at:
<https://beerconnoisseur.com/subscriber-services> or e-mail us at
customerservice@beerconnoisseur.com.

You may also write to us at: *The Beer Connoisseur*[®]
Attention: Member Services, P.O. Box 420903, Atlanta, GA 30342.

In order to provide the best customer service possible,
we handle all customer service related requests in-house.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Beer Connoisseur[®] is the ideal gift!
The easiest way to give *The Beer Connoisseur*[®] is to
order online at www.BeerConnoisseur.com/Premium-Membership

Advertisement



Kölsch
The Kölsch wine which is made from the finest hops and malted barley in the city of Cologne, Germany. It is a unique beer with a special character, pale straw color, and a fine, grainy texture. It is the oldest brewery in Cologne and operated for over 180 years.

SÜNNER
KÖLSCH

BREWED AND BOTTLED BY
GEBR. SÜNNER GMBH & CO. KG
COLOGNE, GERMANY

Est. 1830

12 FL. OZ. ALC. 5.5% BY VOL.

96 *World Class*
The Beer Connoisseur®

www.suenner-brauerei.de

The Beer Connoisseur®

Summer 2017, Issue 31

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Editor (p.8)

FIRST RUNNINGS

Real Ale In Rock & Metal (p.10)

Join us as we explore the symbiotic relationship between the two artforms with help from some of rock and metal's "O.G.'s".

Little Innovations in Brewing (p.18)

Even minor innovations can make a mammoth difference in today's exciting and rapidly evolving craft beer landscape.

Sterling Tradition and
Rebirth at Elgood's Brewery (p.24)

One of the U.K.'s most venerated family-owned breweries finds gold in both old and new.

FEATURES

It's Alive! Bottle Conditioned Beer (pg.30)

BJCP-certified beer judge Josh Weikert checks in to see what condition your bottle condition is in.

Wicked Weed's Divisive Deed (p.34)

Jonathan Ingram illuminates the "Divisive Deed" of Wicked Weed, and its implications for craft.

TRAVEL & TRENDS

Top of the Taps:

America's Five Best Taprooms (p.36)

Emily Hutto returns to tackle an impossible task: whittling America's thousands of breweries and their taprooms down to the top five.

Settling Ashe:

Small Brewing in North Carolina (p.42)

Chris Gigley surveys the small beer scene in N.C. to see how the "Ashe" has settled.

Summer Beer Recommendations (p.48)

Chris Guest compiles a list of summer sippers that will have your craft-loving friends green with envy.

REVIEWS

Beer Review (p.52)

Single-blind reviews from our panel of experts. Featuring Cape May Brewing Co.'s The Topsail, Breckenridge's Barrel-Aged Imperial Cherry Stout and many more!

Brewer Q & A (p.64)

Brewers share secrets of their highest-scoring beers.

GOOD PEOPLE DRINK

GOOD BEER

GET THE FINEST CRAFT BEERS FROM AMERICA'S BEST MICRO BREWERIES... DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR!



\$42 12 BEERS PER MONTH

The Original **CRAFT BEER CLUB** JOIN NOW >>
FREE SHIPPING + BONUS GIFTS!

From the Editor

Jim Dykstra - Editor



In these wild times, we here at *The Beer Connoisseur* do our best to remain as informed and consistent as possible. Amidst thousands of breweries and tens of thousands of beers, that's not always an easy task. The reward is getting to share everything we learn with you, our readers.

By looking to us as a source of information and hopefully, insight, you allow us to perform a very fulfilling role, and we hope that our magazine and site can contribute to whatever sort of fulfillment and happiness you seek. Consider us your BEER vitamin.

On the note of seeking out what makes you happy, our cover story this issue, Real Ale in Rock and Metal, takes a look at the parallels between two very common dream jobs: musician and brewer, with the help of some of rock and metal's biggest names. Having chased down one dream, they're now blazing their own trails in the world of beer.

Beer, as we have often stated, is meant to act as a bit of spice on the pastry of your life. Too much cinnamon and you'll be sputtering, but when it's just right, the world is sublime. As you peruse this issue, which features multiple takes on the post-Wicked Weed world,

a painstakingly thought out and wholly subjective list of America's Top 5 Taprooms and a lot more content we're proud to share, we hope you also consider what passions you might not have explored.

Time is meant to be filled, and while beer is great by itself, it's even better when paired with friends and activities. The true connoisseur is one who can pair a beer style not just with meal, but an extracurricular activity. Take it from me: sours and sessions go great with frisbee golf!

Also, you may have noticed we're back to one editor – Chris has moved on to pursue other interests of his own. Never fear, he's still drinking and writing as much as ever in his uniquely alliterative manner, and will still be contributing to the 'pub'.

So, enjoy Summer 2017, Issue 31 of *The Beer Connoisseur*, and when you chase down your dreams, share a beer with them!

Cheers!

Jim

Advertisement



A bottle of St-Feuillien Grand Cru beer. The bottle is dark brown with a gold cap. The neck label is gold with the St-Feuillien logo and the year 1873. The main label is white with gold text and features a crest. The text on the main label includes "GRAND CRU", "Bière caramélisée de légèreté", "Cerve bière de légèreté", "BRASSERIE DE BROUWERIE", and "St-Feuillien".

94 *Exceptional*
The Beer Connoisseur®

<http://www.st-feuillien.com>



Metal icon and beer connoisseur Bruce Dickinson eyes a TROOPER ale.

REAL ALE IN ROCK & METAL

STORY BY: JIM DYKSTRA

Rock music has been associated with excess since its inception. Along with its companion activities, sex and drugs, the genre's hallmark characteristics have been about going big, bold, and beyond societal expectations. But it's made to be enjoyed by all, and much of it takes considerable technical ability, often discernable only to the trained ear.

In many ways, American craft beer has followed a similar trajectory. Bucking the trend of the mass-produced lager, brewers began to question what they valued in a beer, and what it means to drink one. The result has been a revolution of significant cultural impact that is still unfolding, both an expansion and liberation of tastes.

No one wants a soulless product shoved down their throats. People crave authenticity, and they thirst for

what truly speaks to them. Enter the artists to give voice to those who have not been heard, and to reanimate an integral part of life that has been bastardized and commoditized by those who value the dollar above all. Are we talking about brewers or musicians now? Are they really any different?

Music and beer come from living organisms, then take on a life of their own as vehicles of expression. Join us as we explore the symbiotic relationship between the two art-forms with help from some of rock and metal's "O.G.'s".

THE NUMBER OF THE YEAST

Iron Maiden is to the metal genre what Sierra Nevada is to craft beer – others came before, but few have done

After successfully “auditioning” for Robinsons by identifying beers by brand and style in a blind taste test, Dickinson chose the hops and malts he wanted to use with Robinsons’ head brewer Martyn Weeks (pictured front right), who went to work on what would become TROOPER.

(Photos courtesy Iron Maiden Beer)

more to define their respective areas of expertise, and both have done so on their terms, without alienating those who helped them etch their names in history.

This is a rare feat, given that both metal and craft beer fans can sniff out inauthenticity in the single-digit parts per million. The slightest hint of ‘selling out’ snuffs out loyalty that may have taken years to earn.

How do these megaliths still command respect from hardcore fans decades later? They make decisions that align with their values on both a personal and business level, and they retain full creative control over what they produce.

If you’re not familiar with Iron Maiden frontman Bruce Dickinson and his band’s collaborative effort with Robinsons Brewery, TROOPER, then you might assume it’s just a name slapped on a label. However, the collaboration was born from Dickinson’s passion for beer, specifically English cask ale.

“I went to school in the countryside,” Dickinson said, “and we had loads of great beers in Northhamptonshire. I was brought up on beer when it was still made in wooden casks and gravity fed – low carbonation, but it was a subtle mix of flavors – flowers or nuts. Brewing is a gentle, organic process, and the flavors don’t need to be overamped.”

When asked what he would tell the aspiring drinker and brewer, Dickinson emphasized the importance of seeking to drink and brew beers with subtlety, a philosophy honed in his youth and applied to his collaboration brews. “Let’s make interesting beer, which as a by-product may make you cheerful and happy, but the initial rush is one of ‘Wow, what a great taste. What a great flavor.’ To me that’s what’s most important.”

After turning down offers to associate with wine brands,



Dickinson, who grew up sought out a brewery which would allow him to take part in the creative process.

“I had to audition for them,” said Dickinson of Robinsons Brewery, “which I thought was excellent, because they were as passionate about the quality of their beer as I would be if I were going to play with a new musician. You want to make sure that he or she can really cut the mustard.”

After successfully “auditioning” for Robinsons by identifying beers by brand and style in a blind taste test, Dickinson chose the hops and malts he wanted to use with Robinsons’ head brewer Martyn Weeks, who came back with two test brews. To Dickinson, the choice was clear – a subtle, sessionable beer that works in cask and keg and can.

“I don’t drink to get drunk,” Dickinson says. “It might be a nice after-effect, but I drink because I love beer. So we tried to come up with an ‘everyman’s beer’ that’s not bland – one that you could drink and say ‘Hey, that’s gonna be my beer. I’ll take it any day, because it’s like an old friend.’ You may wander, but you’ll always come back to it. And that’s actually a really difficult thing to do.”

There’s a reason certain artists can maintain decades-long careers while others burn fast and bright. Those who live to express themselves value their creative journey above all else. For Dickinson, crafting beer is another creative pathway to explore, and a gateway to a yet-unconquered arena. With over 15 million pints sold, Trooper may yet give Iron Maiden’s album sales a run for its money, but the real pride comes from building something from the ground up.

The Trooper journey continues with the latest entry in the series, the just-announced “Hallowed”, a Belgian-inspired ale with a British twist due in October.

BREWERIES SELL... BUT WHO'S BUYING?

Megadeth and its outspoken frontman Dave Mustaine built an empire atop complicated, touchy subject matter like politics and religion, presenting it in an uncompromising fashion. By not backing down and caving in to the paradigms and powers that dictate the masses, the band amassed a dedicated following.

Handing over the reins to a third party for a big payout would spell imminent destruction. This is a huge, valuable lesson for craft brewers.

As a brewer, what is your ethos? Are you brewing to make it big, or are you brewing because you love making beer and the people around it? If you know from the start, you will never run the risk of leaving those who helped you succeed feeling betrayed.

In his own words, Mustaine is “just out of the gate” in the craft beer world. So you may be surprised to learn that his and Megadeth’s entrance into the beer market is a 4.5% ABV dry-hopped saison produced by Unibroue. À Tout Le Monde is a “Belgian style dry hopped golden saison with hoppy and spicy notes, topped with an unctuous head and a crisp, dry finish,” crafted according to Mustaine’s tastes by close friend and Unibroue Brewmaster Jerry Vietz.

The beer draws its title from the eponymous Megadeth song released in 1995, regarded as one of the band’s most personal, and translating to “to all the world” or “to everyone.”

Coupled together, the song and beer are a study in defying expectation. Both are structured surprisingly, and can be thought of as “power ballads,” – something crafted with a softer hand than previous experience would lead you to believe. Less can be more. Again, in music and beer, sometimes the sessionable ale says more than the syrupy stout with the ‘gain’ cranked to eleven.

For Mustaine, who also owns a vineyard, the journey into the beer and wine industry is one of personal significance, and the chance to pass on a lasting legacy for his family.

“When I was a teenager, my mom and I were very poor. We lived in an apartment and had food stamps, state as-

sistance and so on. I’d come home from school, open the fridge and there was a six-pack of white cans with blue letters on them that said ‘Beer,’ and I would drink them. I didn’t realize as a kid how much you want that beer after work, how important it is after a long day.”

In À Tout Le Monde, Mustaine recognizes the sacrifices his family made to help him, and aims to pass them on to future generations.

“I love this business. I want to do it until I can hand it off to my grandkids, and they can hand it off to theirs.”

No matter what you think of Megadeth and Mustaine, keeping business independently owned is a hallmark of true craft beer, and a way to guarantee more jobs for more people, and more soul in your work.



(right) Mustaine and Unibroue Brewmaster Jerry Vietz share a pint of À Tout Le Monde.

(Photos courtesy Unibroue)

INTRODUCING UNIBROUE'S NEW FACE

WELCOME TO THE TEAM VIC!



UNIBROUE

MEGADETHBEER.COM

(Photos courtesy Unibroue)

BANDS AS BRANDS

Say what you want about KISS, but when it comes to marketing, they are an undeniable force. It may come as no surprise then, that since 2010 they have been operating Rock & Brews, a chain of rock themed brewpubs which has since grown to 20 locations nationwide.

You may scoff, but there are many direct parallels between KISS's success and a brewer's path to growth in the beer business.

For one, KISS married their art with their business, and dedicated themselves wholly to both. They associated their brand with a specific look (which they applied themselves, night after night), and associated their sound with a specific vibe.

Consistent art direction in beer packaging can be a huge selling point, as can the 'feel' of the brewery. Look at TRVE Brewing and Three Floyds, whose Dark Lord's Day is as much about music as it is about beer. They are known as metal breweries, and by committing to that vibe have tapped into a subculture within a subculture.

Breweries which pick a path and feel, give themselves and their fans direction, and a common cause. You might identify with a "working man's brewery" or a "punk" or "golden oldies" brewery... The brewery which can embody the ethos of its look and feel will resonate on a deeper level with the consumer.

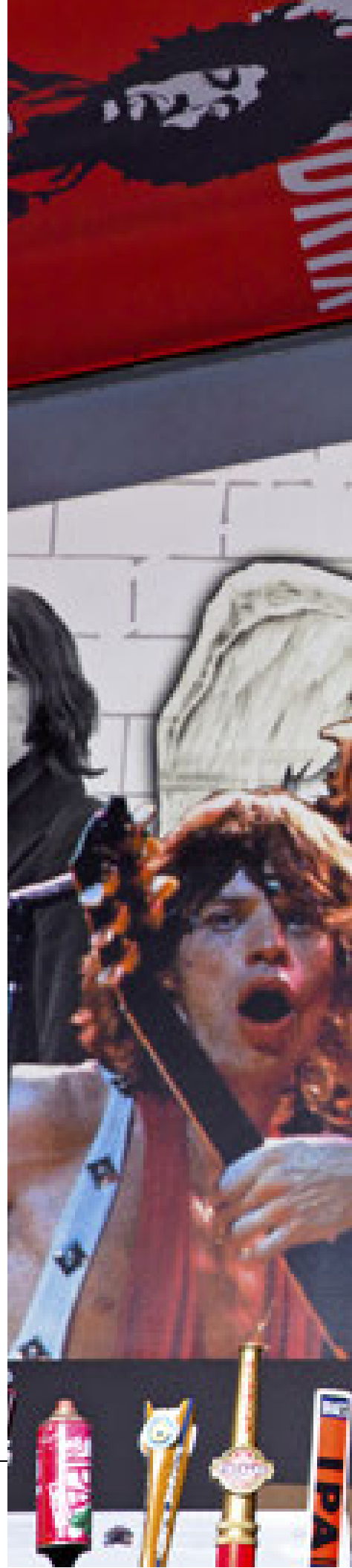
That goes for musicians too. Take it from Paul Stanley: "I only wish that some rock bands put as much care and quality into their music as countless craft and microbreweries do."

Stanley's philosophy for Rock & Brews is informed by his early days as a musician – he remembers what it's like to be just starting out.

"We try to make sure that we have a broad enough variety that everyone's tastes can be satisfied and the adventurers can find something new to excite them beyond all of the national brews that we carry. We also try to make sure we champion local breweries and small producers. In that way, we help the small, and dedicated brewers compete on some level with the more established."

Both breweries and bands start small, and DIY, leaving their careers to build a grassroots following, one beer or music festival at a time. Overextending production and distribution is a classic pitfall. Only after the bootstrapped early days will success come, and when it does, you'll be there like KISS to "Lick It Up."

(Photo courtesy Rock & Brews / KISS)



KISS married their art with their business, and dedicated themselves wholly to both.





I WANNA BOCK! (Becoming a Rockstar Brewer)

There's a fascinating element of escapism in the craft beer universe. The act of drinking is itself an escape from "the daily grind", as is the enjoyment of music, but it extends further.

For those who enjoy beer, the brewer takes on somewhat of a mystical role, unbound by the plight of the common man. Who hasn't dreamed of shucking the shackles of the 9 to 5 in exchange for a life on one's own terms?

For most, it's just risky and impractical, if not impossible. Many have tried and most have failed, but for the few who make it, glory awaits. Thus, we gaze with admiration, and sometimes jealousy upon those who have chosen to leap into the void and lived to tell the tale. And then we ask for their autograph.

Beer is the everyman's drink, but it's made by a select few, and in the world of craft, the beer has personality. It's a reflection of its creator, and if we dig the reflection, we want a piece of the real thing.

We become curious about the creators of the things we love, and we delve deeper into their lives – reading interviews, following them on social media, and hopefully getting the chance to know them.

Chances are, if they're fearless enough to become a career brewer and talented enough to make great beer, they're natural leaders with strong personalities and opinions, and a wealth of experience to share. They're out of the garage and in the public eye. As their creations become more widely produced, the lives they touch increase exponentially. Through their beer, they have spoken, and we're listening.

Craft beer is a state of mind, and a lifestyle. You choose to seek it out, and to seek out others who like it. And there was a single beer which set you on that path, with a brewer behind it. While they may be an overweight baby-boomer with a mound of Nordic face-fuzz, they also changed your life.

Just as Bruce Dickinson doesn't drink to get drunk, those who pursue their passions do so regardless of whether money awaits. Their willingness to do so is what attracts the fame and fortune, and allows them to attach their name to a beer without completely abandoning their values.

What passion is brewing within you?



Flying Saucer

DRAUGHT EMPORIUM



SERVING GOOD BEER
TO GOOD PEOPLE
SINCE 1995

BEERKNURD.COM



The Sierra Nevada Beer Camp packaging is one of the brewery's many smaller-scale innovations.

(Photos courtesy Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.)

Little Innovations in Brewing

STORY BY: OWEN OGLETREE

While large-scale advancements in brewing and packaging usually get noticed by craft beer aficionados, smaller innovations like improved pop-top rings for cans, scanners on bottling lines to check for low-fills, and more durable linings for beer transfer hoses usually fall under the radar. All innovations push craft brewing forward, and lesser advancements can add up to increased profits for brewers and better craft beer for consumers.

Sometimes, small innovations come together to improve the entire brewing process at a facility. A little over a year ago, Back Forty Beer Company in Alabama implemented the lean manufacturing philosophies of “Kaizen,” a Japanese business strategy of continuous improvement in regard to working practices, personal efficiency and organization that’s been used in

automotive manufacturing for years. Back Forty’s CEO Jason Wilson explains, “The principle is simple. Success comes from thousands of small changes along the way. After about six months of Kaizen, we started seeing real results at the brewery. We weren’t really able to identify any one improvement that was driving these results, and that’s exactly the point. It’s a fundamental change to the culture of an operation that leads to exciting innovations. It’s amazing what you can accomplish when you aren’t digging around a messy shop looking for a screwdriver.”

An Eye on Innovation

Constant innovation is central to the way of life at the Sierra Nevada Brewing facilities in California and North Carolina. Sierra Nevada founder/owner

Sierra Nevada founder/owner Ken Grossman sees continual, small innovations as an exciting, interesting and fun part of the brewing business.



Ken Grossman sees continual, small innovations as an exciting, interesting and fun part of the brewing business. “Take for instance our Beer Camp Across the World 12-pack,” notes Grossman. “The pack includes nine 12-ounce bottles and three 16-ounce cans, brewed with collaborators around the world for a one-of-a-kind variety pack of flavors, styles and packaging. When we first brewed Beer Camp back in 2014, we were the first to mix it up like that, and this year we’re doing it again with beers brewed with some of the most innovative craft brewers out there.”

If there’s an innovative process, machine or environmentally responsible procedure to improve a brewery, Sierra Nevada most likely has given it a go. “On the production side and in all areas of our operation, we’re always looking at ways to reduce water consumption,” says Ken Grossman. “In packaging, our team came up with a plan to reduce water usage in our Chico brewery by more than 750,000 gallons a year by replacing the keg conveyor system with a waterless solution that operates dry with no lubrication needed. The lines run cleaner with less noise, providing our employees with a better working environment. We hope that our continued investment in people and technology helps raise industry awareness of sustainable business practices, encouraging more brewers to employ solar

energy collection and storage solutions as well as carbon-reducing microturbines and other zero-waste initiatives. Today is a great time for craft brewing, but it’s our obligation to do so responsibly.”

Navigating New Recipes

On a much smaller scale than Sierra Nevada, Bathtub Brewhouse, a Georgia brewery-in-planning, recently acquired a Blichmann Cornical keg and conical fermenter combination. A conical bottom clamps onto the keg and converts it into a pressure-capable fermenter with a yeast collection reservoir at the bottom. “To be able to ferment, carbonate and serve beer from the same vessel has saved Bathtub Brewhouse countless hours in formulating our test batches,” notes co-owner Jonathan Duncan. “By not having to transfer beer from one vessel to another, we also don’t have to worry as much about oxidation and contamination.”

Most craft brewers agree that recipe innovation starts on a small pilot system. Atlanta’s Three Taverns Craft Brewery embraces this model with the recent installation of an experimental pilot system called Genesis II - a 1.5 barrel brew kit that serves as the “launching pad” for Three Tavern’s new recipes. Owner Brian Purcell muses, “In 2015, we started our Imaginarium Project - brewing innovative,



Bathtub Brewhouse, a Georgia brewery-in-planning, recently acquired a Blichmann Cornical keg and conical fermenter combination.

(Photo courtesy Jonathan Duncan)

the precarious bacteria but preserving the desired acidity that carries through the regular fermentation into the finished beer. Kettle souring doesn't produce the depth and complexity of fermenting and aging beer for a long period with a variety of "wild" and/or acid-producing microorganisms, but kettle souring provides a safer pathway for making acidic beers like Gose and Berliner Weisse.

High Tech Malt & Hops

Not just confined to breweries, small innovations take place in various industries related to craft brewing. Along with a proposed expansion of its Asheville malting facility, the guys at Riverbend Malt House constantly experiment with fresh procedures and methods to streamline the malting process. Riverbend's expansion plans will create 15 new jobs and invest \$9.5 million over the next few years in the latest malting gear. "The growth of a home-grown, sustainably-oriented industry supplier like Riverbend Malt is important to Asheville and Buncombe County and offers significant competitive advantage to our local brewers," notes Buncombe County Chairman, Brownie Newman.

As the country's major innovators in hop processing and packaging, Yakima Chief - Hopunion produces

experimental beers on my old homebrew system known as Genesis, and serving these extremely limited beers in our tasting room. Our newly installed pilot system and new three-barrel fermenters will allow us to produce larger batches for testing more often in the taproom and for sending to the market in limited quantities."

Sour Power

Craft beer geeks across the globe now crave beer styles that offer noticeable acidity, but acid producing microbes like Lactobacillus bacteria can run rampant through a brewery, propagating in unwanted places and spoiling classic beer styles. As an answer to this problem, many craft brewers have adopted the innovative process known as "kettle souring." Sweet liquid from the mash is transferred to the brew kettle near the end of the day, but instead of cranking up the heat and starting the boil, brewers add a culture of Lactobacillus directly to the cool wort in the kettle. The lid is sealed, and the bacteria partially ferment the beer overnight, producing a clean, crisp lactic acid presence. Brewers then boil the wort, killing



NEW HOLLAND BREWING

HOP TRONIX

DOUBLE IPA

HOP UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH THE EYE-POPPING FLAVOR OF MOSAIC HOPS!

NEWHOLLANDBREW.COM

The advertisement features a central Pac-Man style maze. The maze is composed of hop icons. The hop icons are arranged in a grid. The top row has 6 hop icons. The second row has 6 hop icons. The third row has 6 hop icons, with the middle two replaced by a starburst icon. The fourth row has 4 hop icons. The fifth row has 4 hop icons. The sixth row has 4 hop icons. The seventh row has 4 hop icons. The eighth row has 4 hop icons. The ninth row has 4 hop icons. The tenth row has 4 hop icons. The eleventh row has 4 hop icons. The twelfth row has 4 hop icons. The thirteenth row has 4 hop icons. The fourteenth row has 4 hop icons. The fifteenth row has 4 hop icons. The sixteenth row has 4 hop icons. The seventeenth row has 4 hop icons. The eighteenth row has 4 hop icons. The nineteenth row has 4 hop icons. The twentieth row has 4 hop icons. The maze is set against a dark background with a green and yellow glow. Two bottles of Hop Tronix Double IPA are positioned at the top, flanking a large green hop icon. The text 'NEW HOLLAND BREWING' is at the top left, and 'HOP TRONIX' is in large, stylized letters across the middle. Below that, 'DOUBLE IPA' is written in purple. A tagline 'HOP UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH THE EYE-POPPING FLAVOR OF MOSAIC HOPS!' is centered below the title. At the bottom, the website 'NEWHOLLANDBREW.COM' is displayed.



(Photo courtesy Claire Nicolas)

Red Hare Brewing Company of Marietta, Georgia just introduced a new summer variety 12-pack that incorporates an attractive box design with openings in the front that allow the individual cans inside to show through.

potent hop resin extracts concentrated from soft hop pellets by clean, efficient carbon dioxide extraction. Brewers love the hop extract because of its clean bitterness and aroma and superior foam stability. The concentrated extract also means lower shipping costs, smaller storage space requirements and no vegetal hop leaf particle residue during the brewing process.

Yakima Chief - Hopunion has also announced an

exciting line of Cryo Hops that makes use of an innovative cryogenic technology where whole hop cones are processed into concentrated lupulin hop powder by way of exposure to extremely cold temperatures. The process takes place in a nitrogen atmosphere, reducing oxidation in the delicate hop oils. Cryo Hops provide deep hop flavor and aroma, allowing craft brewers to produce extremely hoppy beers without astringency or grassy hop leaf

flavors. Yakima Chief reports, “During early R&D trials, brewers reported that our product noticeably enhances hop aroma and flavor contributions, specifically citing ‘juicy’ and ‘resinous’ characteristics. Brewers also reported an average three to five percent increase in yields due to reduced brew kettle and fermenter hop sediment.”

Great Things Come In Eye-Catching Packages

Cans, bottles, six-pack holders and case boxes serve a wider purpose than simply holding and protecting beer. Packaging must be streamlined, functional and eye-catching. Compare a colorful, modern six-pack of craft beer with the packaging of an antiquated American lager from the 1960s or ‘70s, and a multitude of small innovations become apparent.

Widely known for its distinctive, eye-catching packaging, Atlanta’s SweetWater Brewing utilizes six-pack holders with a characteristic “die cut wave” that breaks up the straight and narrow on retail shelves. The cardboard walls of the six-pack are higher than most other six packs, keeping light away from the bottles and providing a larger canvas for logos and information. SweetWater’s bottle labels match the wave flow design of the six-pack holder, creating continuity and an appealing visual effect.

Now on its third can design, Gate City Brewing in Roswell, Georgia enjoys testing an array of cans from different manufacturers and trying out various labeling techniques, designs and colors. Gate City’s Lucy Doughty adds, “Our can design combines a minimal typographic aesthetic and simplistic vintage color palette to create a distinctive pack design that communicates the strong, no-nonsense approach to Gate City’s classic craft beer range. The result is a strong, eye-catching identity for our brewery.”

Red Hare Brewing Company of Marietta, Georgia just introduced a new summer variety 12-pack that incorporates an attractive box design with openings in the front that allow the individual cans inside to show through. Response to the interesting pack design has proven remarkable, with sales breaking all goals upon initial release.

Small innovations also come in the form of marketing and communication. The idea for #TakeTerrapin started in 2016, as Terrapin Beer Company in Athens, Georgia discussed ideas for a creative social media campaign for summer. “The goal of the message was to focus on fun events and activities that involved our beer,” notes Terrapin’s Leah Kuck. “Terrapin employs people with all sorts of interests and hobbies, from camping to mountain biking to attending every music festival possible. Terrapin employees take beer with them wherever they go, and so our social media promotion #TakeTerrapin was born. Each week, Terrapin reposts a fan photo and awards a prize. The giveaway runs May through August, featuring prizes from one of Terrapin’s merchandise partners each month. Last year, the campaign generated over 1,000 uses of the hashtag.”

American craft brewers, known around the world for creativity and artistic expression of new styles and flavors, now lead the way in constant investigation of innovative ingredients, strategies, processes and gadgets. Even minor innovations can make a mammoth difference in today’s exciting and rapidly evolving craft beer landscape. Great journeys begin with small steps.



Sterling Tradition and Rebirth at Elgood's Brewery

Finding Gold in Old and New

STORY BY: JIM DYKSTRA | PHOTOS COURTESY: ELGOOD'S BREWERY

As big, bold and experimental has become the norm, the rare brewer which crafts with subtlety acts a beacon of hope for the refined palate. One such brewer exists in Elgood's Brewery, a family-owned operation situated in the heart of 'Fen' country in Cambridgeshire, England. Established in 1795 as the North Brink Brewery, it is one of the first classic Georgian Breweries to be built outside London, and a shining example of a business which has adapted across generations without abandoning its values. As a result, it has witnessed many aspects of brewing come full circle over the course of centuries.

The Beer Connoisseur spoke with Alan Pateman, Head Brewer and Production Director at Elgood's about the values that led to the brewery's sterling tenure and its ability to evolve.

Advertisement



The advertisement features a central image of a tall glass of golden beer with a thick head of foam, set against a dark background. In the foreground, two luxury watches with metal bracelets and wood-grain accents are displayed. The watch on the left has a light-colored dial with a wood-grain pattern, while the watch on the right has a dark dial with two sub-dials. The scene is set on a wooden surface with scattered grains and a burlap sack in the background.

THE

BREWMASTER

A TRIBUTE TO THE CRAFT



<https://beerconnoisseur.com/network/products-services/original-grain-watch-co>

Tradition: Tied and True

The operation that would become Elgood's officially began brewing for local distribution back in 1795, supplying cask ale to local "tied-houses", or pubs which purchased its beer on a contract basis. Some of these tied houses, with wholly English names such as Hare & Hounds and Queen's Head are still in operation today.

In the early 19th century, the brewery supplied around six tied houses. By the time first-generation owner John Elgood came into sole ownership of the brewery in 1878, it was supplying more than 70.

"Originally the entire output of the brewery would have gone out through our own public houses," Pateman said.

Today, he describes this method of distribution as the "backbone" of Elgood's business, keeping it largely local and in touch with the community.

Pateman continues: "Elgood's has 37 tied pubs, and these are in a radius of around 30 miles from the brewery, often in very small village communities. The supply of our own beer into our own pubs is the 'baseline' for production – we carry out deliveries to all of our pubs on a weekly basis, supplying our own draught and bottled beers."

Over the decades, ale houses and the brewers they were tied to became increasingly consolidated (sound familiar?). By the late 1970's the majority of brewing was carried out by "The Big Six", which soon saw the U.K. government intervening for fear of monopoly. Now, in Pateman's words, things have come "full circle, and we are



seeing the boom of newer smaller scale brewers, many brewing for local consumption!"

Finding Stability Amidst Change

Much of Elgood's constancy can be attributed to its steadfast ownership, now in its fifth generation.

"The business is still solely private & family owned," said Pateman. "We imagine that John Elgood may not have foreseen that the fifth generation of his family to run the brewery would be all female! Our current directors are three sisters, a unique situation in the UK brewing industry. For the family [that leadership] is a source of pride reflected in their business and the people they employ, directly or indirectly throughout the pub estates."

Keeping a business in the family allows for a far deeper and more intimate understanding of how

it operates, and what it needs to change or keep the same.

While Elgood's core business has not changed for centuries, the need to grow has called for expanded product lines and distribution, and unconventional choices. Recently, this traditional British brewery launched the Elgood's Original Sour series, featuring 100 percent spontaneously fermented beers in copper coolships dating back to the early 20th century.

"We have seen changes in the way we can sell our beers to our customers," Pateman said, "for many years surviving on the 'tied house' system alone. Now we supply cask beer across the whole of the UK, filtered keg and bottled beers to the export market, and of course the sour beers in their many forms."



Currently, Elgood's supplies three different sour ales to the U.S. – Sour Pale Ale, Sour Dark Ale, and the newly introduced Sour Mango Ale, a "tart, 5% ABV, spontaneously-fermented ale blended with mango for a bright and fruity flavor mélange."

The Original Sour series beers begin by cooling overnight in the copper coolships, where the wort is imbued with a healthy mix of microbes.

BEAR
REPUBLIC BREWING CO.
INDEPENDENT FAMILY BREWERS

DOUBLE AUGHT PILSNER

CRISP AND REFRESHING...

AVAILABLE IN SIX-PACKS!

WWW.BEARREPUBLIC.COM



To learn more about Elgood's Brewery and its lineup of beers, visit www.elgoods-brewery.co.uk.

Lactobacilli gives the brews their bright sourness while Brettanomyces and other wild yeasts add earthy notes before saccharomyces cerevisiae, or brewer's yeast, finishes the fermentation.

This complex and symbiotic process gives Elgood's beers a "depth and complexity of flavor that is just not possible any other way," as described in a recent press release. "It takes between 9 and 12 months for Elgood's Sour Mango Ale to reach maturity, aging peacefully the whole while in stainless steel tanks to which oak and chestnut chips have been added."

The success of the Original Sour series means more are likely to be on their way from the U.K. The next likely candidate is Elgood's Coolship Fruit, a crisp sour ale blended with berry fruits which recently took home a gold medal as winner of the International Brewing Awards' International Specialty Beer Competition. Formed in 1886, the IBA is the oldest international beer competition in existence,

and considered the "Oscars of the brewing world."

Gold Standards

What does it take to win gold? For Elgood's, it comes down to the parts that make up the whole. Pateman states that Elgood's brewing philosophy is "always to source the best quality raw materials, to stick to the recipe and to get the flavor in the glass right!"

So what's the first step?

"To brew good beer we need good quality water," Pateman says.

Elgood's water is well-suited for ales, with a "high level of hardness, as the water sourced for the Wisbech area is taken from chalk aquifers in the neighbouring county of Norfolk. We treat each batch of liquor that is used for brewing to achieve the correct level of calcium hardness and acidity."

With brewing liquor checked off, next comes sourcing malt and hops, a process which starts with those who grow them.

"I have always maintained a strong relationship with our suppliers, particularly the farmers who grow the varieties of barley that are used for malting. We contract with the malting's to get named varieties of barley for the malt, and as the crops are different every year it is very important to have good understanding of any variation. We source our malt from the Eastern counties of the UK, the best area for growing malting quality barley, for us this means the majority of our malt is actually grown very close to us, in the north of the county of Norfolk."

Expanded offerings mean searching further afield for hops which suit Elgood's brewing needs. "For many years we relied solely on the UK hop growers," Pateman continues, "but now we have to look further afield for hop varieties from the USA and also the Southern Hemisphere.

Elgood's has remained a force in the brewing world by striving to keep what works constant, but remaining open to the possibilities presented by an ever-changing world.

In a testament to the brewery's flexibility, the decision to brew sour ales began with a casual remark from Artisanal Imports founder Bob Leggett, who commented on how well the brewery's then-out of use coolships would work for sours while touring the brewery. In Pateman's words: "As they say, the rest is history, and as a U.K. brewer with 40 years of experience I have had the pleasure of learning an entirely new brewing style producing our sour beers!"

GIVETHEMBEER.COM
Good People Give Good Beer!

GIVE THE GIFT OF BEER



SHOP NOW



IT'S ALIVE! BOTTLE CONDITIONED BEER

STORY BY: JOSH WEIKERT

“Leaving living yeast in the bottle means that the overall flavor of the beer can continue to evolve and change in subtle ways.”

BEER IS ALIVE.

Well, not all beer, and technically I suppose it isn't the beer that's alive but rather that there are living things in the beer, but there's no question that there's something going on in a lot of those bottles. That “something,” is often “bottle conditioning,” or the natural carbonation of beer in the package. Bottle conditioning

(as opposed to force-carbonation) comes along with some benefits and risks to both brewer and consumer, and is worth spending a few minutes on if only to answer the question, “Why is there sludge in the bottom of this bottle?”

We'll take a short trip down Beer Science Lane and then discuss what bottle conditioning means for us (as

brewers and/or drinkers) and the beer itself.

BOTTLE CONDITIONING: A PRIMER (PUN INTENDED)

Yeast makes beer. Before yeast is added, what you have is actually wort, and contains a variety of sugars derived from grain starch, hops and their oils, and water. Adding the fourth and final ingredient – a pitch



of millions of yeast cells – turns that wort into beer. As the yeast wake up, reproduce, and live out their short-but-happy lives they use the sugars in the beer to fuel their activity, and in the process, ferment those sugars into alcohol and a variety of byproducts. Once the sugar runs out, the yeast goes back to sleep, and we're left with flat, alcoholic beer.

One of those byproducts of fermentation is carbon dioxide. During fermentation, CO₂ is simply “off-gassed” up and out of the fermenter. However, if we take that same fermentation process and do it in a sealed space – a bottle – the CO₂ has nowhere to go and is absorbed into solution in the beer. Thus, brewers can take finished beer, bottle it up along with a small amount of easily-fermentable sugar (“priming sugar,” usually just dextrose), and let the yeast do what they do best. They conduct a “mini-fermentation” right

there in the bottle, which adds a negligible amount of alcohol and, more importantly, just the right amount of trapped CO₂. Voila: carbonation.

WHY BOTHER?

Admittedly, this isn't the only way to skin a cat. Brewers can also keg beer, put it under direct pressure by adding CO₂ to fill the headspace, and force carbon dioxide directly into solution before packaging. The biggest advantage of this method is that it's certain: the brewer knows exactly how carbonated the beer is when it goes into (and, for you, out of) the bottle. When paired with pasteurization, it also ensures that any potentially-contaminating microbiota are dead, increasing flavor stability. Bottle conditioning, though, is pretty reliable, too: we can calculate arithmetically just how much priming sugar to add to get the carbonation level we want, and yeast, it turns out, are hardy little buggers. I've never

had a beer fail to carbonate, no matter how long it's been since primary fermentation or how high the ABV is (alcohol creates a toxic environment for yeast, which can impede their functioning). Still, maybe the force-carbonators have a point.

The real advantage in bottle conditioning, though, comes from the activity of the yeast, not the CO₂ they produce.

First, in moving through their life cycle and fermenting sugar, the yeast also remove something else from their environment: oxygen. Oxygen is a real enemy of beer, accelerating staling and adding off-flavors, and bottle conditioned beers have a living advantage in the bottle that will take up small amounts of residual oxygen that may have been picked up in the packaging process (from the air in the tubing used to transfer into the bottle or oxygen in



the head space air within the bottle itself). Even if CO₂ is used to flush the bottles and lines at packaging, breweries still contain oxygen (otherwise the brewers would die), and knowing that my yeast will do one last “polish” on the beer is a great comfort to me.

Second, leaving living yeast in the bottle means that the overall flavor of the beer can continue to evolve and change in subtle ways. Beers that will be aged for some length of time can develop, with the help of live yeast, mature flavors that can’t otherwise form. Even with nothing more added once the initial priming sugar is consumed, the yeast will keep on hunting. It isn’t so much that the yeast can’t ferment, process, or consume the other things in beer, it’s just that some of those things take a lot longer to consume. Bottle conditioning means that there’s guaranteed to be a live culture of yeast in that beer that can keep making “home improvements” long after the cap is on, potentially to your benefit.

Last, yeast actually add flavor to the beer. Nutrients, too, but I’d never make the case for beer as a

health food (though there’s definitely an argument for it as being healthier than other alcoholic beverages!) Yeast add body, bready flavors, texture, and more to the beer you pour. Many beers actually rely on those textures to make them stylistically accurate, so go ahead and drink your yeast (within reason – see below!).

As we can see, there are distinct advantages to bottle conditioning that are harder to derive from force-carbonated beer that may also have its yeast filtered out, killed through pasteurization, or present but in too-small a quantity to make any contribution.

DRINKING BOTTLE CONDITIONED BEER

Before you head gleefully to the bottle shop to score yourself some naturally-carbonated, living beer, there are two quick caveats for us to address: pressure and digestion.

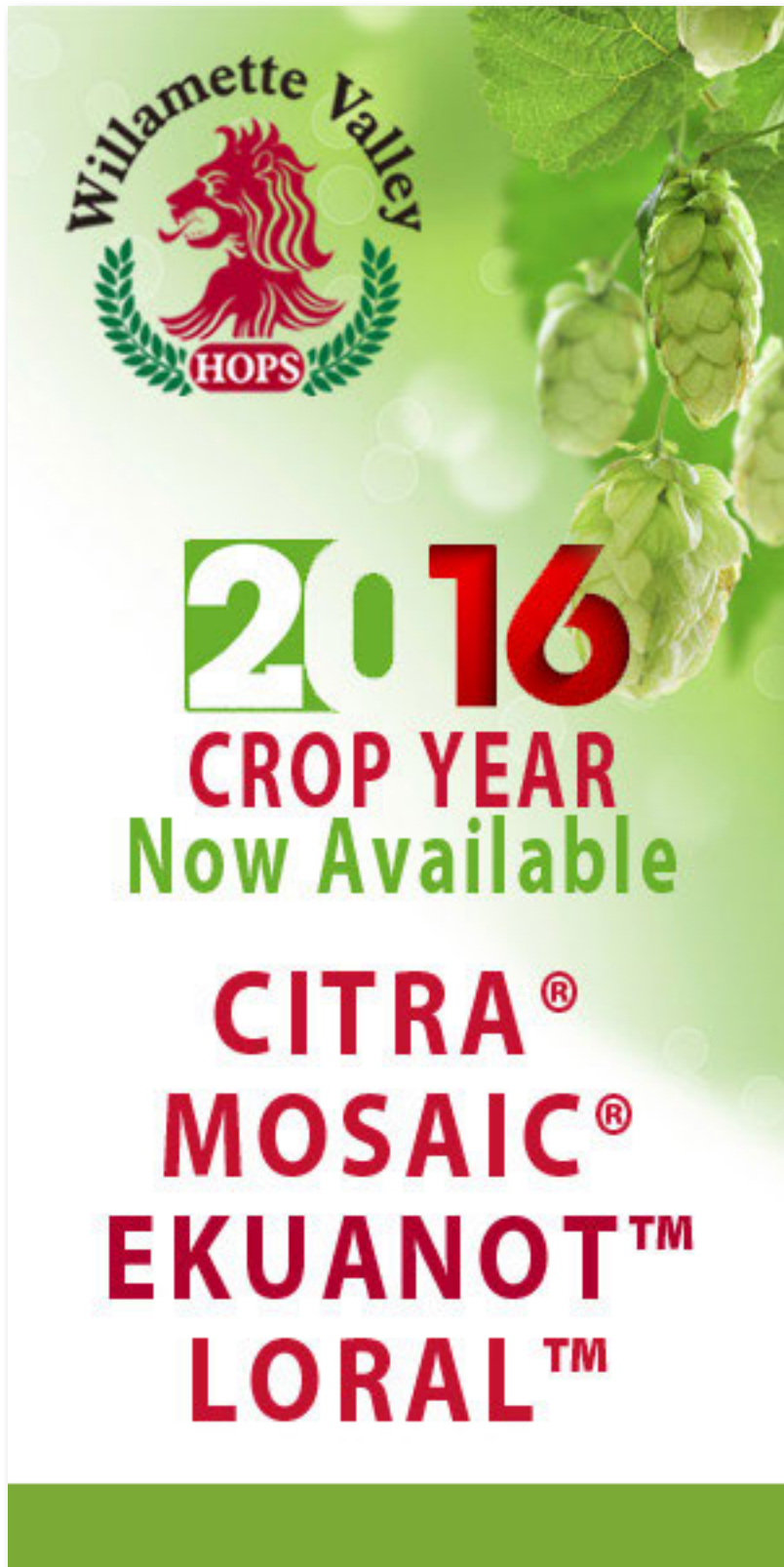
First, bottle conditioning is scientific, but that doesn’t mean mistakes can’t happen. If the brewery makes an error in calculating the priming needs of the beer (or if a contamination

gets into an unpasteurized bottle), you could end up with a “gusher” (an over-carbonated beer that sprays you, the dog, and the walls with beer shampoo when the CO₂ comes violently out of solution) or a “bottle bomb” (an over-pressured bottle that ruptures before the cap is even removed, hopefully safely within your refrigerator). Let me say, though, that these are pretty rare in the commercial beer world (a little less so among homebrewers, but even there they’re not common).

The second (and more-prevalent) issue comes from an excess of ingestion of live yeast. There’s no real danger, per se, but things can get... interesting. When pouring bottle conditioned beer, I’d recommend that you do so gently – that way, the slurry of live yeast at the bottom of the bottle stays there, or, if it moves up the bottle, tends to collect near the curve in the neck of the bottle, giving you a mostly-yeast-free pour of beer. If you don’t do so, and you consume a significant amount of yeast, you may experience a rather “energetic” level of intestinal activity in the hours that follow. That’s not to say you should avoid yeast entirely – many Belgian and German styles derive a flavor benefit from giving the bottle a swirl to bring the yeast up into suspension before pouring and drinking – but maybe limit yourself to just one or two “yeasted” pours!

CONDITIONED

Don’t let me tell you what or how to drink, though. Taste bottle conditioned and force-carbonated beers in the same style side-by-side. Try some with the yeast and without. See what you like. Every beer is different, and every beer drinker brings unique preferences to the table, so get to tasting and see what you prefer!

The advertisement features a green background with a blurred image of hop cones on the right side. In the top left corner, there is a circular logo with a red horse head in the center, surrounded by a green laurel wreath. The text "Willamette Valley" is arched over the top of the logo, and "HOPS" is written in a red box at the bottom. Below the logo, the year "2016" is displayed in large, bold letters, with "20" in white and "16" in red. Underneath the year, the text "CROP YEAR" is in red and "Now Available" is in green. At the bottom, four hop varieties are listed in red, bold, sans-serif font: "CITRA®", "MOSAIC®", "EKUANOT™", and "LORAL™". A solid green horizontal bar is at the very bottom of the advertisement.

Willamette Valley
HOPS

2016
CROP YEAR
Now Available

CITRA®
MOSAIC®
EKUANOT™
LORAL™



Wicked Weed's Divisive Deed

STORY BY: JONATHAN INGRAM | PHOTO COURTESY: WICKED WEED BREWING

I was always slightly amazed once marijuana for personal use became legal in Colorado that a certain beer from North Carolina whose name implied cannabis still sustained one of the longest lines each year at the Great American Beer Festival in Denver. A nod-and-a-wink excitement about the name surely couldn't have been the draw. It must have been the beer far more than the brand Wicked Weed that attracted such patience and relatively long lines – although perhaps it paired well with the newly legalized greenery.

It will be interesting to see if the popularity of this Asheville, N.C. brewery continues this year, given its recent sale to AB InBev and the more cacophonous fallout than usual when a beloved craft brewer crosses over to what many in the GABF community view as the dark side. Beyond the swearing

off and declarations that this beer brand would never be purchased again by those who are dedicated to craft, there was more than the usual castigation of the ownership for taking the money and the greater distribution that comes with being a member of the world's largest brewing operation.

If Portland, Ore., is Beervana, the city of Asheville is Beer Paradise. The town's longstanding charm as a mountainous retreat for those seeking alternate lifestyles and the allure of nature became a perfect fit for craft beer culture. In just five years, Wicked Weed became its best-known destination and export. And then it was gone or, more accurately, it crossed over. Perhaps Asheville's bohemian aura combined with the recent arrival of major craft expansions by New Belgium and Sierra Nevada led to a naïve belief this beloved place was beyond the allure

of cash – an estimated \$150 million.

For those following this ongoing battle between major brewers and independent craft brewers, the buyout of Wicked Weed appears to be a tipping point. But I predict the ongoing dialectic between bigger brewers and independent brewers will continue in a manner that produces better beer. The bigger brewers are now establishing a path away from their traditional premium lagers towards the styles championed by craft lovers. Craft will remain the resistance fighters with weapons that money can't buy: creativity.

The next phase is familiar in the case of Wicked Weed. To recoup the investment, a craft brand purchased by one of the macro brewers has its output increased along with wider distribution, which helps eat up more shelf space in significant outlets and further muddied the issue among the general populace of

which breweries are independent.

But wait, there's more bad news if you're on the side of craft. According to investment bankers who help make such deals happen, for every customer that opts out of purchasing an acquired brand, the company brings in two new customers. Whether that's typical palaver of financial types, there's probably some accuracy to it. In other words, protest and resistance have their limits. The key thing to remember is that this expansion generally results in a reduction of pricing.

To me, there's always been the vague notion among craft geeks that in order to change the world craft brewers have to somehow defeat so-called Big Beer. It's only fun if there's some sort of takedown involved along with the joy of watching those who created industrial beer steadily lose market share. The underbelly of that fantasy is a corresponding fear – the empire might strike back and drive craft into exile.

For those dedicated to independent craft breweries, it's a fight worth fighting, even if the big guys continue to pick off breweries as the seasons come and go. (The other worldwide brewing types are just as clever as AB InBev, and perhaps more so in that they let the Belgian-based behemoth take the heat for the assault on craft while waging their own deals.)

The key point of outrage for those committed to craft: a sale of this nature makes it harder for those in the beer-making community left behind to continue the fight for what they hold sacred.

The ecosystem of a worldwide corporation and its influences are vastly different than smaller, independent financial entities created by those focused on the communities in which they live. Craft brewers dedi-

cate themselves to a community's well-being through such undertakings as charitable events, support for environmentally beneficial practices, support for local growers and as places where people of different persuasions can enjoy conversations in an increasingly uncivil society. The fact it's all driven by broadening the adventure of imbibing by creating new taste horizons in beer is, well, just plain cool.

This wouldn't have happened unless major brewers had tried, let's be honest, to cheat consumers by eliminating competition and replacing it with a land awash in industrial beer in the name of money and power. The good news: this is what created the American craft movement.

For craft lovers, what can be done beyond continuing to support craft and not getting overly caught up in the illusion that not buying a certain brand will somehow topple big beer?

Call me crazy but I don't think the answer is complicated. Craft brewers need to make beer that its followers are willing to buy at relatively higher prices such as hop-laden IPAs in various styles, incredibly powerful stouts and extraordinary sours. In other words, keep making beer so damned good that beer lovers will pay more for it.

As recently outlined by Chris Herron, the CEO at Creature Comforts Brewing Company in Athens, Ga., the big brewers need to keep raising expectations and profits for its premium lagers by raising its price and lowering those of its own craft offerings. It's a bit of retail hocus pocus designed to persuade the average consumer. If you don't think it's working consider that AB InBev continues to be profitable in the U.S. despite declines in consumption of

its premium lagers. If you don't think that's the strategy, check the pricing on Goose Island IPA or the beers sold by Breckenridge, among other acquisitions.

Given the rise in the percentage of retail sales of six-packs in the \$12 to \$15 range in the past two years, craft is already headed in the upward direction. Aspirational pricing is working well beyond the \$15 per six-pack range, too. Craft doesn't need to be swimming in shelf whales to win the battle; quite the contrary. Just sustain what's already worked well. Keep making – and buying – better beer today with more and better ingredients than what was out there yesterday. And accept that it has to be priced accordingly.

This could make takeover targets out of even more craft breweries. But the craft community continues to be awash in talent, business smarts and options for financing that will continue to propagate more new, larger and innovative breweries – especially if the return on investment is, well, stout. It's been happening in places like Northern California, Texas, Massachusetts and Georgia simultaneously to the outbreak of acquisitions. Call me crazy, but I think for every craft brewery that gets bought out – and therefore brings more craft-style beer to the market – there's at least three, four or more independent start-ups that can make and sell beer as good if not better.

Editor's note: Jonathan Ingram currently works for the Scofflaw Brewing Company as The Media Relations Guy. A former editor of *The Beer Connoisseur*, he continues to occasionally contribute stories on beer to various websites and magazines.

Top of the Taps

America's Five Best Taprooms

STORY BY: EMILY HUTTO

What are the best brewery tasting rooms in the country? That's a question that has been plaguing me because my answer is long-winded, and possibly endless. I could write entire books, if not bibles, on the subject.

In effort to distill the list of America's 5000+ breweries down to only five of the very best, I needed qualifiers... and a big disclaimer. I established criteria for this daunting list, and I'll forewarn that this is a non-exhaustive collection of breweries based entirely and subjectively on my personal preferences.

First and foremost, it's all about the beer. World-class beer that's clean, balanced, and interesting, to be exact. My friend Tony Lawrence

who owns Bend's Boneyard Brewery calls this trifecta the "beer order of operations". He believes that beer should be free off off-flavors, balanced in flavor and aroma, and thought-provoking in order to write home about. Boneyard's beers are all of these things. Their brewpub is in the works but because they don't quite serve food—my next criterion—I'll save the brewery a well-deserved place on a future best-of list.

The only thing better than imbibing an amazing beer is pairing it with amazing food. I appreciate breweries that take as much care in crafting quality food as they do their beer, and have included establishments below that do just that.

If a beer pairing can be enjoyed in a space that's inviting, then the brewery experience is a home

run. Ambiance is thus the third yardstick for this best-of list.

When I visit a brewery, I often have a lot of questions. I want to know nitty gritty process details about any given beer, why the brewer chose to brew that style, and what on the menu might pair best with it. Friendly and knowledgeable staff is so important to the craft beer experience, and therefore the next qualifier. A big thanks to the servers at the breweries below for putting up with my endless inquiries.

So there you have it—world class beer, thoughtful food menus, welcoming spaces, and informed staff have inspired my choices for the best brewery tasting rooms in the United States. Without further ado, here they are.



(Photo Courtesy Taxman Brewing Co.)

Taxman Brewing Company

You'd never expect to find an Belgian-inspired gastropub in a farm town in an area of the country otherwise dominated by lagers and hoppy beer styles, and thus the appeal of Taxman Brewing. The owners of this three-year old company are former tax professionals who met in Belgium doing consulting work, and believe it or not they chose Bargersville, Indiana to open their brewery because it reminded them of some of the European towns they visited.

The only IPA to be found at Taxman is the Hop Collector IPA, brewed with candi sugar and fermented with Belgian yeast. The rest of the year-round canned lineup includes a Saison, a Tripel, a Quad, an Abbey-style Blond, and an Abbey-style Dubbel, and visitors can find a number of other European-inspired beer styles on draft in the tasting room. The beers complement the Indianan-meets-Belgian menu sourced from nearby farms— think mussels, frites, farm-fresh salads, and grass-fed burgers. You'll want to dip into all of the house-made sauces and stay on Taxman's cozy industrial-chic patio for even more tastes of the extensive beer list.



(Photo Courtesy Everybody's Brewing)

Everybody's Brewing

It's easy to linger at all of these breweries. At Everybody's Brewing in White Salmon, Washington, you might not be able to take your eyes off the epic view of Mt. Hood from the outdoor patio. Everybody's is just across the Columbia River and state border from beer town Hood River, and ironically enough the only brewery in the area with a clear view of the darling W'Yeast.

The mission here is to truly make something for everyone— from the clean, crisp Country Boy IPA and the balanced, refreshing Daily Bread Common Ale to the self-explanatory Hoppy AF Double IPA Sprinkles Hibiscus Sour Red Ale, and everything in between, Everybody's has done just that. The food menu is sure to impress, with inspired pub classics and burritos that strike the perfect balance of healthy and hearty for the many kiteboarders and mountain bikers who visit the brewery après.



(Photo Courtesy Jester King Brewery)

Jester King Brewery

Upon arrival at Jester King's farm property in the hills of Austin, Texas, you'll probably wonder why it's taken you so long to get here. As you leave, you'll likely be planning your next visit. This brewery is crafting some of the country's most sought-after farmhouse, sour and wild ales, as well as spontaneously fermented beers via coolship. Not to mention they're curating one of the region's best and longest bottle lists. Add the extensive beer selection to the wood-fired pizzas made to order onsite at Stanley's Farmhouse Pizza, throw in some yard games that are set up across the property, and savor the backdrop of Texas Hill Country's idyllic rolling hills. The Jester King experience is a truly remarkable nod to beer's historic farmhouse roots.

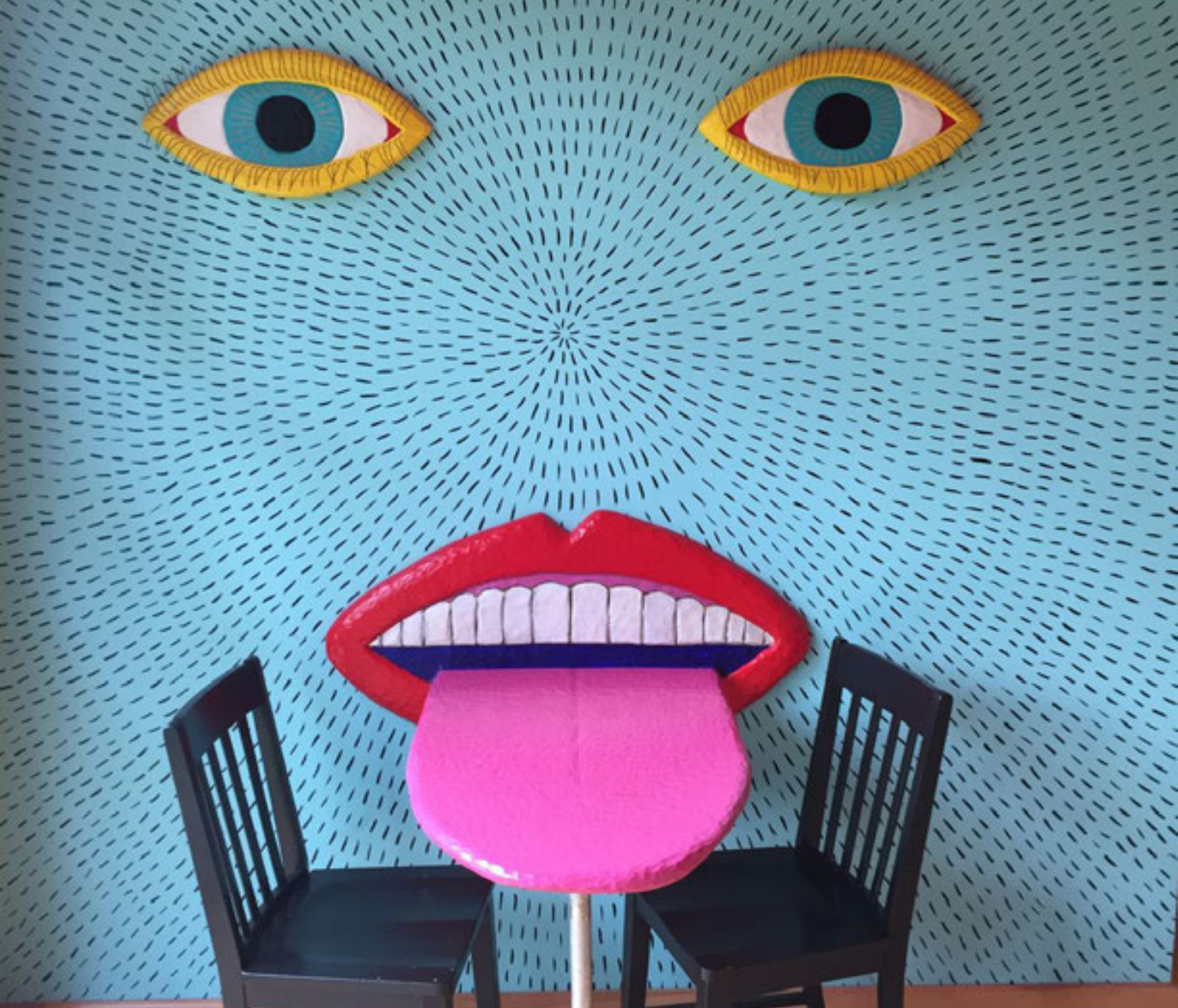


(Photo Courtesy Scratch Brewing)

Scratch Brewing

Another farmhouse brewery that guests travel great distances to visit is Scratch Brewing Company. Tucked into miles and miles of farmland in Southern Illinois, Scratch has become nationally recognized in its four short years as one of the most agriculture-centric craft breweries in the country. Scratch utilizes plants, fruit, herbs, hops, and other ingredients grown on the property (such as nettle, elderberry, ginger, dandelion, maple sap, hickory, lavender, juniper, and chanterelle mushrooms) to craft and inspire their curious beers. The brewery's food menu is sourced locally, and bread and pizza dough are baked in-house from scratch.

Visiting homebrewers shouldn't miss the newer book written by Scratch's owners, *The Homebrewer's Almanac*, which delves into brewing with farmed and foraged ingredients.



(Photo Courtesy Ponysaurus Brewing)

Ponysaurus Brewing

At Ponysaurus Brewing in Durham, North Carolina the staff is serious about the beer, but not much else. This eccentric company serves true-to-style beers out of taps that are made from sawed-in-half pony and dinosaur toys. One of the brewery's most popular offerings is the Don't Be Mean To People: Golden Rule Saison brewed with local malt and sorghum molasses. There's a "Pony Roar" station set up at the bar where you can write letters to US Senators, and a huge, two-story patio where you can grub from rotating, local food trucks or reserve one of the brewery's outdoor grills to cook your own beer-paired feast of house-made bratwursts and Southern-style sides.

What are your favorite taprooms in the United States? What criteria determine your list?



(Photo Courtesy Hi-Wire Brewing Co.)

Settling Ashe: Small Brewing in North Carolina

STORY BY: CHRISTOPHER GIGLEY

North Carolina's small breweries continue to have a positive effect on the communities they belong to. The recent acquisition of one of its own only underscores their success.

Mike Rangel of Asheville Brewing Co. sees progress all around him in the South Slope neighborhood of Asheville.

"It seems like every time another three breweries open a new hotel goes up or a new parking garage goes into the plan," says Rangel, who opened Asheville Brewing in 1995. "The city is moving hard to keep up the infrastructure."

The tourism trade is driving that growth.

"You can park in one place and hit eight or nine breweries, and that kind of thing continues to be main draw here," says Rangel. "There's no way you're going to hit every brewery when you visit Asheville, so you leave with the feeling of needing to come back. And most people do."

Asheville brewers aren't the only ones drawing tourist traffic.

“There’s no way you’re going to hit every brewery when you visit Asheville, so you leave with the feeling of needing to come back,” says Mike Rangel, Founder of Asheville Brewing Co.

“People who come into town for something else always have time to visit a local taproom and try a local beer,” says Chris Goulet, president of Birdsong Brewing Co. in Charlotte. “We get a lot of folks from outside the city, especially on weekends.”

Nicole Preyer of Preyer Brewing Co. in Greensboro says the Greensboro Sports Commission has done a great job branding the city, “Tournament Town,” drawing everything from Olympic swimming trials to NCAA basketball tournaments to state high school soccer championships to local arenas and stadiums.

“We get a lot of calls from the visitors bureau and event planners,” she says. “Having a group of breweries is something fun for people who are here for tournaments to go do.”

Preyer says the growing number of small breweries in Greensboro has also helped the local chamber of commerce draw new employers.

“When a company is looking at relocating their headquarters, they always look at the area to see if there is enough there for them to retain talent,” says Mark Gibb, who, with his wife, Sasha, owns and operates Gibbs Hundred Brewing Co. in downtown Greensboro. “Breweries are generally well-received by everyone.”

Goulet gauges the economic impact of small breweries on Charlotte from the informal meetings he and about 20 other small brewery owners there have every month.

“Altogether, we’re approaching 1,000 employees and basically none of those jobs existed six years ago,” says Goulet. “We’ve also created distributor jobs.”



Asheville brewers aren’t the only ones drawing tourist traffic. “People who come into town for something else always have time to visit a local taproom and try a local beer,” says Chris Goulet, president of Birdsong Brewing Co. in Charlotte.

Preyer says local farmers are also benefitting from the success of small brewers in North Carolina. Many of Preyer Brewing’s ingredients are locally sourced.

“We picked up 600 pounds of strawberries from Faucette Farms in Browns Summit for our strawberry wheat seasonal,” she says. “I buy the same strawberries to eat with my kids at home.”

Goulet said small breweries also do a lot to foster the culture of the communities they’re in. Birdsong, for instance, supports a number of non-profit organizations in Charlotte. Local musicians perform in its taproom, where local art is on display on a rotating basis. Goulet says Birdsong



(Photo Courtesy: Birdsong Brewing Co.)

“I don’t know if we’re driving culture, but I think we’re facilitating a lot of those small-scale grass roots connection points,” says Chris Goulet, President of Birdsong Brewing Co.

doesn’t take a commission so every dollar goes directly to the artists.

“I don’t know if we’re driving culture, but I think we’re facilitating a lot of those small-scale grass roots connection points,” he says.

In Greensboro, small breweries have helped create a neighborhood culture where there was none before.

“Where we are in the south end of downtown, we have seen a lot of development since we opened up,” says Gibb, whose brewery launched in 2014. “I think we’ve had six or seven new breweries open up in last few years, and it’s really changing the whole character of the neighborhood.”

Gibb remembers when he and his wife took their current space just off South Elm Street. The neighborhood is one of the oldest parts of town and back then hadn’t been touched by revitalization. Because rent was relatively low, many storefronts were occupied by sketchy businesses such as antique stores that were more or less junk shops.

“I do think there are certain types of businesses that are signs of what’s coming in a neighborhood,” says Gibb. “Breweries are one of those catalysts.”

Don’t take his word for it. Take a look at South Elm Street now. The junk shops are gone, replaced by art galleries, high-end specialty retailers and restaurants. More renovations are currently under way.

In Asheville, small breweries have gone beyond bolstering neighborhood culture. Collectively, they’ve helped define the culture of whole city.

“I think there are other North Carolina towns that have incredible breweries, but here breweries dominate all so-

cial aspects of Asheville,” says Rangel. “It’s what they do at night and where they go.”

North Carolina’s beer culture took a big hit in May, when Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world’s largest brewer with macro-brands such as Budweiser and Corona, announced its acquisition of a bastion of the Asheville beer scene, Wicked Weed.

Founded in 2011, Wicked Weed quickly established itself as one of Asheville’s best breweries with its West Coast and Belgian ales. It also had a knack for savvy marketing, releasing special batches in limited editions to create buzz for its brand. By the time AB InBev came calling, Wicked Weed had a passionate following all across the state.

“A lot of those people feel pretty solidly betrayed,” concedes Goulet. “Business-wise it’s just generally bad news. Now InBev is equipped to use [Wicked Weed] to dilute the meaning of ‘craft’ further and compete on price with their beer.”

Gibb says he’s spoken to other North Carolina brewers about it, and he says their feeling is, “good for them. They’re good business people who grew their brand and a big guy saw their potential to grow it further and bought them out.”

The animus over the deal, he adds, has more to do with Anheuser-Busch InBev.

“There have been multiple big companies that have bought craft breweries, but [Anheuser-Busch InBev] is a little different,” says Gibb. “They seem to use scorched earth competition tactics. They’ve put intense pressure on their distributors to sell only ABI craft brands and drop other craft brands.”

Anheuser-Busch InBev has also leveraged its considerable



(Photo Courtesy Preyer Brewing Co.)

“We picked up 600 pounds of strawberries from Faucette Farms in Browns Summit for our strawberry wheat seasonal,” says Nicole Preyer of Preyer Brewing Co. “I buy the same strawberries to eat with my kids at home.”

ad budget to run Super Bowl ads making fun of craft beer and the people who drink it. And then there was this video, a direct challenge to the Brewers Association’s creation of an independent craft brewer seal for bottle labels.

Rangel has mixed emotions about the acquisition. Wicked Weed’s facility is right around the corner from his brewery, and Rangel has worked with Wicked Weed co-owners Rick Guthy, Walt Dickinson and Luke Dickinson.

“You get to know these guys and know they’re quality guys,” says Rangel. “They’ve done things that have helped Asheville in countless ways. I think the hope is that they

will be able to change the monster from the inside out.” Besides, adds Rangel, “right now there are six new sour breweries in line to be the next Wicked Weed that no one has heard of yet.”

Hi-Wire Brewing Co. co-owner Chris Frosaker says he thinks the craft beer industry in North Carolina will head in one of two directions from here. For small breweries aiming to go toe-to-toe with InBev’s growing roster of craft beer labels in grocery stores and other retail channels, quality will begin to trump local as the main selling point for consumers.



(Photo Courtesy Preyer Brewing Co.)

“When a company is looking at relocating their headquarters, they always look at the area to see if there is enough there for them to retain talent. Breweries are generally well-received by everyone,” says Mark Gibb of Gibbs’s Hundred Brewing Co.

“You go to a lot of beer markets right now, and it’s all local all the time,” he says. “That’s great, but eventually local and quality will be neck and neck. Just being a local beer won’t be enough anymore.”

Another direction the small brewery scene could go in is what Frosaker calls “hyper-localized.” He cites what is currently happening on the west side of Asheville, where Oyster House Brewing Company and Up Country Brewing are located.

“Their business model to this point is to serve their neighborhood, and they do a great job,” says Frosaker.

“The beer is fantastic. They just want to make their neighborhood happy and be a pillar of the community.”

“One day,” Frosaker adds, “the neighborhood bar will be replaced by the neighborhood brewery as the place to go grab a beer.”

Regardless of how the industry evolves in North Carolina, small brewers will continue to be important. If nothing else, the Wicked Weed acquisition proves they’re doing plenty right.



Summer Beer Recommendations

Summers Sippers That Will Have Your Friends Green With Envy

STORY BY: CHRIS GUEST

IT'S SUMMERTIME! With this sun-dappled season sending spring showers skulking off into the upper reaches of the stratosphere, it's time to delve into some beer styles for your poolside (or sprinklerside) enjoyment.

Almost every style under the sun is being infused with exotic flavorings – most notably in IPA varieties – and the same holds true for popular summer beer styles.

Though lingonberry saisons and Italian plum goes certainly sound tempting, this year's summer beer recommendations are brought to you by the color green, as in the color of cucumbers and limes.

All of the beers below employ the chosen flavors to excellent effect – able to cool the most parched of throats in the sweltering summer heat.

Black Market Brewing Co. –

Tradecraft Cucumber Gose – This mildly tart and uber refreshing ale from Temecula, California’s Black Market Brewing mashes in green with real cucumber, but comes out a fresh straw-colored pale yellow. Equally at home as a singular quencher or paired with light fare such as a summer salad with a sweet vinaigrette, this one is a must try, if you can find it.



Key Lime Pie Gose – Westbrook Brewing Co. –

Want a dessert beer without the guilt of guzzling a sticky, heavy imperial stout? How about this eye-opening sour from Charleston’s Westbrook Brewing Company? Featuring a scintillating blend of lime puree, cinnamon and vanilla, this beer perks you up with its vast array of flavor and aroma combinations. Let this cool brew wash over you and let every sip touch your taste buds – you’ll pick up hints of a breadly, crusty character, which only furthers the illusion that you’re simply drinking a liquefied Key Lime Pie.

Key Lime Pie – Tallgrass Brewing Co. –

This recently canned summer seasonal features all of the thirst-quenching qualities of the Gose style – puckering tartness, light, palatable mouthfeel – coupled with a fragrant waft of Key limes in the aroma. Billed as an American Blonde Sour Ale, this beautiful brew debuted on draft in Tallgrass Brewing Company’s Manhattan, Kansas taproom during

the summer of 2016 and was a runaway smash. Brewed with the sultry Sorachi Ace hop varietal, this sour is sure to slake the thirst of those searching for citrusy sips.

Bright Ass Tank Top – The Unknown Brewing Co. –

Another brew that employs a barrel to enhance its flavors, this gose from Unknown Brewing Company was aged in 15-year-old Nicaraguan rum barrels. Featuring the joyful flavors of key limes (a favorite of breweries on this list), as well as a salty, slick and sweet barrel character from the rum, this sultry gose is perfect for any and all occasions that involve wearing an eponymous “bright ass tank top.”

Lime Pilsner – Uinta Brewing Co. –

Do you like Sprite? If so, this spritzly Pils is right up your alley. With the ebullient effervescence of its parent German Pilsner style, this Utah-born brew is even billed by its brewery as a “splash of summertime in a can.” Enough said.

Cool Breeze – Sweetwater Brewing Co. –

Saisons are not often discussed as summer styles, since they often feature spicy, tingly mouthfeels that better suit the autumn and winter months. Atlanta’s Sweetwater Brewing Co., never ones to “float the mainstream,” refuted this misnomer by combining the refreshing coolness of cucumbers in this blended saison recipe to excellent effect. With cucumber in the forefront, somehow the brewery managed to maintain the telltale banana and clove elements of the base saison, which somehow accentuate and complicate the cucumber notes beautifully.

Cucumber Saison – Mother’s Brewing –

A traditional Belgian-style saison with a gourd twist, Missouri’s Mother’s Brewing Co. orchestrated a masterwork in refreshment, with this ale’s dry and creamy mouthfeel and zesty Belgian yeast character being tied together by local cucumber from



Urban Roots Farm. Packaged in a 16-ounce container, you'll only need one or two, but chances are you'll end up having had many.

Cucumber Crush – 10 Barrel Brewing Co. – As its name would indicate, this crushable sour from Oregon's 10 Barrel Brewing is one of the easiest-drinking brews in this article. With an exceedingly mild mouthfeel and just a hint of tartness and bitterness, the cucumber flavor is highlighted. What's most exciting about these cucumber beers are the different ways in which the gourd is used by each brewery. In 10 Barrel's case, Crush brings cucumber's natural sweetness to the fore, again making this an excellent dessert beer, or, not unexpectedly a terrific choice for high-temperature glugging.

Cucumber Kolsch – Flat 12 Bierwerks – The smooth-drinking Kolsch style is already a favorite for the summer months, so Flat 12 Bierwerks asked a very important question: should we make an already refreshing style even more refreshing? The answer, of course, was a resounding 'yes', with its Cucumber Kolsch. A grainy, crispy smoothness comes courtesy of its base Kolsch style and the cucumber flavors make this a delightfully cool treat for sunsoaked summer days.



Key Lime Pie – Short's Brewing Co. – Since Key Lime Pie was a major inspiration behind many of the beers on this list, Short's Brewing in Michigan decided to truly up the ante by brewing a beer with an ingredient list that actually entails what a Key Lime Pie is made out of. Marshmallow fluff, limes, graham crackers and milk sugar all come together in this two-time GABF gold-medalist to form a syrupy sweet concoction that tastes just like a key lime pie in liquid form, with far more sweetness than many other brews on this list. That sounds like a success to me.

So whether you're on a boat, patio, deck, porch, pool float or any other summertime merrymaking environs, these cool and refreshing adjunct-filled brews will serve your tastebuds well and have you searching for more 'cuke and lime beers.

CRAFT BEER YOUR WAY.

Start brewing ›



PicoBrew

OFFICIAL REVIEW

The highest-scoring beers from our panel of judges.

Meet our judges at BeerConnoisseur.com/judges

Judging Process

Our reviews are conducted in a single-blind tasting format. This method provides the best opportunity to rely on facts and to avoid favoritism, ensuring a level playing field for all brewers. It serves both the industry and the consumer to have unbiased and objective scores from qualified experts. To best implement this approach, the Judges Review is open to those with established experience as a Master Cicerone® from the Cicerone® Certification Program or as a judge that has accomplished the rank of National or higher from the Beer Judge Certification Program. In the single blind tasting format, judges are presented with a chilled, properly poured beer and given its style category. Scoring is then done on the following basis using a 100-point scale:

Score Breakdown

- 100 to 96: World Class – You need this beer in your life.
- 95 to 91: Exceptional – Don't hesitate.
- 90 to 86: Very Good – A brew to savor.
- 85 to 75: Average – Somewhat unimpressive.
- 74 and below: Not Recommended – Just walk away.

98

by *Dan Martich*

The Topsail
Cape May Brewing Co.

Aroma:
24 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
40 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

Overall
Impression:
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

The Topsail by Cape May Brewing Company is being evaluated as a Mixed-Fermentation Sour Beer (Category 28B) from the 2015 BJCP guidelines.

The aroma of this beer is inviting with lots of ripe pineapple, green mangoes, red apples, ripe pear, and light citrus fruity esters. The grainy malt character is secondary. Sink your nose into the glass, and you'll find the straw and hay notes of this sour ale.

It pours light golden yellow with a firm haziness and thick foamy head that lasts and lasts.

The first sip reveals a medium-light ripe pineapple note, with a nearly imperceptible hop flavor. This beer is well attenuated with a very low fruity semi-dry finish. The balance is toward the tart/sour-

ness without overwhelming. The fruitiness keeps this beer active in the palate.

The med-light body and high carbonation accentuate its refreshing character. The astringent character from the sour/tartness *Brettanomyces* strain may at times come across as warming, it makes it hard to imagine that you're drinking a 9.9% ABV beer. This beer drinks more like a 4% beer in that it's very light, which is a difficult task given the actual ABV.

In closing, you'll want to seek this beer out. The refreshing fruity notes, makes this a summertime favorite. I can see you all enjoying this beer in your backyard, by the shore, lake or mountains with char-grilled veggies, fruit, or white meat fish to complement the fruity notes of this beer.



97

by *John C. Tull*

**Brewery Lane Series:
Barrel Aged Imperial
Cherry Stout**
Breckenridge Brewery

Aroma:
23 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
39 / 40
Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

29C – Specialty Fruit Beer

The cherry aroma is initially bold in this fruit-enhanced Russian Imperial Stout, but the complexity of a big, dark beer is still readily detected. In addition to the fruit aroma from additions, dark roast malt (both chocolaty and slightly coffee-like) and other fruit aromas from yeast, age and alcohol come through. Additionally, there is a nut-like aroma and a touch of vanilla that might be from cherry stones (pith), alcohol, wood or some combination therein. A little alcoholic heat is also found on the nose. The color is deep garnet, almost black. The beer also has a tan, persistent head that laces

the surface of the glass. A rich and velvety composition of malt, cherries, alcohol and a touch of woodiness hits the palate in a panoply of really enjoyable flavors, none dominating or outbalancing the others. The rich and complex character of this beer cannot be understated, nor can the impressive balance that has been achieved. The finish has some alcohol warmth that complements the creaminess of the dark malts and residual sweetness. The level of carbonation is good, contributing to the overall balance of this beer. This beer is clearly a work of brewing art! Need I say more?



95

by *Richard Wong*

Sesión Cerveza
Full Sail Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

This Full Sail Brewing Company's beer was judged as International Pale Lager (BJCP 2A).

The pour for this beer revealed a wonderful straw colored hue with very good clarity and carbonation. The aroma had hints of corn and no hops (okay for style). The flavor exemplified this beer style. It had a very nice light malt backbone and a slight touch of hop bitterness. A slight corn-based flavor that resulted in a light, crisp and dry beer. The mouthfeel for this beer was light, as well as the body. It had a really nice light "watery" component to it that is reflective of the style. It finished very nicely and can be very quenchable on a hot day. Light, crisp and dry

finish on its own and/or paired with Mexican cuisine. This is a nicely done beer that truly exemplifies the style profile.



95

by *Sal Mortillaro II*

Luau Krunkles Terrapin Beer Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Luau Krunkles by Terrapin Beer Company is being evaluated as a Fruit Beer (Category 29A) with a base style of an American IPA (Category 21A) from the 2015 BJCP guidelines.

This beer pours a deep gold color with hazy clarity and a white head which is fleeting, but leaves a white-colored ring around the glass. Tropical fruit aromas are high, with guava being the most noticeable. There is a sweetness to the fruits that is grounded out by a spicy hop aroma of moderate intensity. Citrusy and tropical hop aromas blend harmoniously and interweave with the added fruit. Hiding behind the intensity of the fruit and hop character is a very slight grainy malt note which becomes apparent as the beer warms but the yeast character is indistinguishable as any fruity esters are blended into the overall aroma. There is a light wisp of alcohol in the aroma as the

beer warms as well. Guava and passionfruit are high in the flavor and adds a perceived sweetness to this beer despite a moderately dry finish. Hop bitterness is moderately-low but a nice spicy note from the hop flavor and light ethyl alcohol help to ground this beer out and help keep the beer from tasting overly sweet. The fruits really cancel out the malt character of this beer and make it undetectable. The aftertaste is reminiscent of a Dole Tropical Fruit cocktail and is quite fun. Medium body with moderate carbonation and a very slight alcohol warmth compose the beer's mouthfeel. Overall, this is an interesting take on an IPA making it tropical and juicy through the use of fruit as opposed to purely hops. I found this beer quite enjoyable though the malt and fermentation characters get lost behind the use of fruit. I would definitely recommend this beer and purchase it if I saw it in a bar or store.



95

by *Richard Wong*

Kentucky Cream Barrel Aged Pale Ale Full Sail Brewing Co.

Aroma:
24 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

This Full Sail Brewing Co. beer was judged as a Specialty Wood-Aged Beer (BJCP 33B).

The beer featured a very light brown color with little or no carbonation. At first sniff the aroma was heavenly. I detected hints of vanilla, raisins/dried fruit, malt sweetness and oak notes and very little hop aromas. And the flavors did not disappoint. I had wonderful flavors of vanilla, dried fruit, raisins and caramel from the bourbon barrel along with roasted malts and a dominant malt bill balanced nicely with moderate hop bitterness. At first glance, I thought the hops might be too strong of a presence in this beer, but

it compliments it nicely. The mouthfeel and body was medium/heavy and the carbonation was just spot on. The aftertaste had a nice malt sweetness along with a lingering alcohol warmth associated with bigger beers like Old Ale and/or Barley Wine. The alcohol was a little heavy for this beer style (Pale Ale), mostly due to the residual bourbon left in the barrel. I mean, the alcohol clocks in at 10 percent! While somewhat perplexing, it was still an enjoyable beer best consumed in a small quantity.



95

by *Josh Weikert*

Grateful Pale Ale Starr Hill Brewery

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Grateful Pale Ale by Starr Hill Brewery is an American Pale Ale (BJCP category 18B) that hits on all cylinders: this is an excellent beer that you can drink for days.

It pours a brilliant gold with a low but persistent white head, and the initial aroma is of rich grain and grassy, piney hops. The nose is well-balanced, and doesn't surrender all of its ground to the hops. The flavor adds peach to the mix, and otherwise echoes the aroma: honey and biscuit, pine, grass, and medium-high bittering come together nicely before finishing dry. If there's a complaint here, it's that the bitterness is just a hair too harsh: I felt a light prickling

on the tongue that seemed to be caused by more than just carbonation.

I would note, though, that this is a very minor complaint in a very major beer. Easily one of the best pale ales I've had in a long while.



94

by *Michael McGuire*

Blackbeard's Breakfast Heavy Seas Beer

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Blackbeard's Breakfast by Heavy Seas is a Bourbon Barrel Aged Porter brewed with coffee and was judged as a Specialty Wood-Aged Beer (BJCP sub-style 33B). It poured very dark brown (opaque) into the glass, sporting a thick creamy tan head with moderate retention.

The nose featured dark roasty malt and bourbon sweetness up front, followed by a lesser coffee aroma. The flavor profile was dominated by roasty and bourbon notes throughout with hops only to balance and keep the sweeter elements from becoming cloying. The contribution of coffee to the profile was either muted or seamlessly

blended with the roast malt and bourbon flavors. A pervasive woody dryness also attests to the presumably significant barrel aging. This is a complex, intensely flavorful beer throughout its pleasant aftertaste.

Palate sensations included a full body, modest carbonation, noticeable alcohol warmth, and as noted above, woody dryness following an initial creamy texture. This beer finished with a satisfying richness best savored slowly.



93

by *Richard Wong*

Blood Orange

Wheat Ale

Full Sail Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

This Full Sail Brewing Company beer was judged as a Fruit Beer (BJCP 29A).

The pour resulted in a nice light golden hue with slight chill haze. The carbonation was light and moderate that resulted in good lacing on the side of the glass. The aroma had a very distinctive and nice citrus scent and little/no hops. The flavor of this beer was well balanced between the malt and the hops. It featured a very light malt base and a light hop bittering. The blood orange or citrus flavors really do come out of this beer and was noticeably picked up in the palate. The blood orange dominates the flavor of this beer while the malt and hops linger in the background. The

mouthfeel and body of this beer was light and refreshing. It had a light carbonation that was just right for the style, and the finish was crisp and dry along with a slight tartness (due to the blood oranges). A wonderful quenchable beer on a nice hot day.



92

by *Michael McGuire*

Strawberry Beards

Forever

Holy City Brewing

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Strawberry Beards Forever by Holy City Brewing is a strawberry-infused Berliner Weisse and was judged as a Fruit Beer (BJCP sub-style 29A). It poured pink and cloudy into the glass, with a fizzy white head with modest retention.

The aroma featured intense berry and more mild sour and caramel notes. The flavor profile was dominated by strawberry jam-like and lactic sour notes up front and high fizzy carbonation kept the palate lively throughout. There was a mild sour finish at the end.

Overall this light-bodied, low alcohol and well-balanced beer was highly drinkable especially on a warm spring or summer after-

noon. It is a worthy American addition to the Berliner Weisse family.



92

by *Jason Johnson*

Stone Ripper Stone Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

The beer pours a light orange color with a faint haze. The cream colored head is foamy and has excellent retention. It sticks around for a long time. The aroma is loaded with a strong hop aroma of mango and citrus hops and is backed up by bready and lightly toasty malt. There is a light sweet fruity aroma as well, so it has a slight estery edge to it. Bitterness is moderate and quite pleasant, not harsh or bracing in the least. There is a mildly sweet toasty malt presence, but the main star is the hop flavor. It's tropical and citrusy, and very pleasant. There is a light hint of pine on the back end. The balance is decidedly leaning on the hops,

as it should be. It finishes moderately bitter and dry, with a little resinous sticky hop flavor. It's medium bodied, moderately carbonated, and has a light creamy texture. For an American Pale Ale, I feel the beer is very well done and certainly worth picking up.



92

by *Randy Scorby*

Stone Mocha IPA Stone Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Mocha IPA by Stone Brewing is being evaluated as a Specialty IPA (Category 21B) from the 2015 BJCP Style Guidelines.

Mocha and IPA in the same sentence? Although one would think there has been a crossed circuit in styles, the ingredients play extremely well together in this specialty Double IPA. One look at the light amber color would certainly make one question the mocha aspect of this beer, but as soon as you take your first sniff you will understand. The drinker is greeted with light roast coffee and chocolate in the aroma, followed by an uppercut of fresh grapefruit citrus hop aroma that leaves no doubt that IPA is the proper category for this beer. Rounding out the aroma is a light floral alcohol character.

The hops take center stage in the flavor with mixed tropical fruit and grapefruit rind, with support from the roast coffee and chocolate that rise and fall in the flavor like a sine wave. The medium-high hop bitterness provides additional support and lingers into the dry finish that is typical of an IPA. This beer is an excellent example of how we sometimes need to look beyond the conventional expectations of a beer style and appreciate experimentation.



92

by *Sal Mortillaro II*

RecreationAle Terrapin Beer Co.

Aroma:
21 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20



Judge's Notes

RecreationAle by Terrapin Beer Company is being evaluated as a Mixed-Style Beer (Category 34B) from the 2015 BJCP guidelines as it combines traditional American IPA qualities (Category 21A) with a session strength 4.7% ABV noted in Specialty IPA guidelines (Category 21B).

This beer pours a gold color with very slight haze and a white head that quickly fade, but leaves a thin ring around the glass. The hop aroma takes the forefront in this beer with an evenly intertwined resinous pine and passion fruit/tropical aroma in moderate intensity. There is a very slight underlying note of leeks as well. The malt aroma is very low in intensity and only a brief and fleeting bread and biscuity note is noticeable. There is no yeast character perceived

in this beer due to the intensity of the hops. The hop flavor is dominant in this beer and the pine and leek characteristics are more prominent than in the aroma with the passion fruit/tropical flavors following close behind and hop bitterness is moderate and is quite pleasant and firm. The malt flavor is biscuity and low with a malt sweetness which is noticeably present but quickly overtaken by the decidedly bitter character. There is a very subtle, and not overly done, dry hop grassy character to this beer as well. The mouthfeel is comprised of a moderately thin body with appropriate carbonation, which slightly tickles the tongue. Overall, this is an easy-drinking and tasty sessionable IPA which is crisp and refreshing beer can be easily enjoyed as the hot days of summer approach us.

92

by *Brad Darnell*

Local's Stash Reserve Series: Rum Barrel-Aged Dark Ale w/ Ginger & Lime Crazy Mountain Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24
Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20



Judge's Notes

Local's Stash Rum Barrel Aged Dark Ale With Ginger And Lime by Crazy Mountain is being evaluated as a Specialty Wood-Aged Beer (2015 BJCP Category 33B) offering according to the BJCP guidelines. For this style, expect the barrel that is selected to impart its characteristics into the beer from the previous stated use. While the base beer remains apparent, this style allows for a wide range of flavors based on the barrel used and the aging time.

Fragrant, fresh-squeezed lime mixes immediately with a rich rum character. Dark fruits of raisin, dates and figs tailgate the initial aroma and lead the way for a moderate malt backbone. The malt is lightly toasted Graham crackers and warm bread. The ginger character is faint in nose while the fresh lime lingers throughout. Pouring clear dark mahogany, this stately ale supports a small, tight-bubbled beige head which dissipates to a cordon and a thin, spotty film on top. The flavor initially is lightly tart and then sweet

limes, as if the pulp is bursting in your mouth. A pithy and lightly tannic presence enters with some ginger notes while the warm, rich and sweet rum carries the dark fruits through. As with the aroma, a rich toasted Graham cracker malt supports this blended mixture. Hops are not readily apparent except for a spicy, grassy bitterness holding back the sweetness. A dry and peppery alcohol presence finishes off the flavor. Full bodied, this sipper provides a pleasant alcohol warmth over moderate carbonation.

As I sit and continue contemplating the beer, allowing it to slowly warm, I find the lime freshness quite pleasing and anticipate that allowing this bold, somewhat boozy beer to age would provide year-round enjoyment. The nose presents increasingly more alcohol presence as the beer warms, yet the lime remains intact, as do the other aromatics. This beer would complement a spicy Thai dish very well.

92

by *John C. Tull*

Juicy Watermelon

New Belgium Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

Overall Impression:
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

29A – Fruit Beer

A light bready malt aroma with a hint of yeast can be detected. The fruit is subtle, with only a little berry aroma, and indistinguishable from what may occur from yeast alone. Although lime is indicated, along with watermelon, as an addition, I did not notice it. The beer has a straw color and is very clear. Some bubbles continue to rise and replenish the thin head with a light, wispy layer that slowly draws to the glass's edge in a more pronounced ring. A watermelon flavor can be tasted, both fruity and pithy at the same time. The lime is used judiciously, and would not be detected by me if it was not a known

ingredient. The malt tastes full and wheat-like, suggesting sweetness, but not at all cloying. The fruit and malt characters blend nicely and are refreshing. Carbonation provides a little carbonic bite, and the water has a slightly mineral character. The finish has a suggestion of nuttiness, from carbonation, water chemistry, alcohol or some mix of them all. Overall, a very quaffable summer ale with only a touch of fruit character is found in this beer. If you prefer some lighter beer fare for your summer activities in the outdoors, this is a very good one to try, especially if you want to break away from the typical light lager or American wheat beer.



92

by *Lyn Howard*

Grevensteiner

Brauerei C & A Veltins

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
8 / 10

Overall Impression:
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

C. & A. Veltins Grevensteiner Original is a throwback to the brewery's origins and it was evaluated as a BJCP category 7E, Amber Kellerbier. The aroma of this beer is a rich with nutty, toasty, sweet malt notes up front and a very low level of grassy, hay-like hop accent in the rear. It pours with a beautiful deep amber color, that is mildly hazy and topped off with a small bubbled white head that persists around the edge of the glass. As is typical of an amber kellerbier, the flavor has a bold, toasty, sweet melanoidin (biscuit and honey) malt character with a slightly peppery, hop flavor and a moderately low hop bitterness. It is definitively malt-balanced, with a medium dry

finish and a light hop flavor that lingers to the end. The alcohol is smooth, yet apparent – the medium carbonation makes the mouthfeel a little prickly on the tongue, however there is no astringency and the medium-light body makes it an inviting beverage to sip and savor. It is easy drinking and would make a delicious accompaniment to richly flavored sausages and cheese.



92

by *Nelson Crowle*

Buffalo Bill's Strawberry Doppel Weizen Buffalo Bill's Brewery

Aroma:
22 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Evaluated as a BJCP 2015 29A Fruit Beer (Strawberry declared) with the underlying style of a somewhat hybrid 'imperial' 10A Weissbier (being declared as a Doppelweizen or Double Hefeweizen). Pours with a large ivory colored head of small and medium bubbles. The head is not as tight as a typical weizen, with less head retention than a typical weizen possibly because of a substantial alcohol note. The beer is a deep amber color, and very hazy (but typical for a weizen). Bready and slight toasty malt notes lead off the aroma, with slight black pepper phenolics, moderate fresh strawberry notes, and a medium level of overripe banana. The flavor brings out banana as fairly prominent, but nicely balanced by the strawberry, and a bready, almost doughy, malt

character that supports the fruity melange. There are some typical weizen-like phenolics in the flavor, but more leaning to freshly cracked white pepper than clove. A medium body and moderate carbonation (a bit low for a weissbier) work with the malt and fruit to tame the fairly substantial (8-ish percent?) alcohol warmth and slight heat. In the fairly dry but fruity finish, the strawberry lingers - just short of syrupy. This is a very enjoyable strong fruit wheat beer that should be treated with respect - it will sneak up on you! With overall strawberry and bready flavors of a strawberry shortcake, I'd pair this beer with bratwurst or ballpark hotdogs slathered with sauerkraut, and some healthy red-cabbage coleslaw.



91

by *Randy Scorby*

Stone Ghost Hammer IPA Stone Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
17 / 20

Judge's Notes

Ghost Hammer IPA by Stone Brewing is being evaluated as an American IPA (Category 21A) from the 2015 BJCP Style Guidelines.

In the world of American IPA, what sets one apart from another? Hops. Ghost Hammer IPA has a lovely blend of new-world style hop character that presents mixed tropical fruit with a slight emphasis on pineapple and mango. Following closely behind is a hit of citrus and light floral alcohol. The hops change somewhat in the flavor with the citrus being a little more in the forefront and the tropical fruit character lingering into the aftertaste. There is no detectable character from the yeast. The hop bitterness emerges

mid-palate and provides balance to a light residual malt sweetness, and unlike many of today's IPAs the bitterness is quite pleasant and complimentary rather than trying to steal the balance. The overall alcohol character is smooth provides a backbone to this beer. This is a very enjoyable IPA to be imbibed while the hops are fresh and bright.



91

by *Brad Darnell*

Local's Stash Reserve Series: Juniper Pale Ale Crazy Mountain Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24
Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Local's Stash Juniper Pale Ale by Crazy Mountain is brewed with grapefruit, juniper berries and lime and is being evaluated as a Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer (2015 BJCP Category 30A) offering according to the BJCP guidelines. For this style expect a blend of spice, herb and/or vegetables adding complexity to the base beer style.

Juicy grapefruit and limes present themselves early along with a pleasant dank and herbal hop character closely following. Lightly lactic and citric, this beer also marries a cereal malt backbone with light cracker malt notes and freshly dried juniper berries. Soft peach and apricot yeast esters provide complexity to

the aroma. A near opaque orange pour allows a small, frothy white head to sit atop for a brief moment and then yields a small cordon and spare top film. Lightly sweet cereal and cracker malt provide a wonderful backdrop for the fresh citrus of grapefruit and lime along with the peach and apricot esters. The beer is well-balanced with a lightly dry finish. Medium-light body and light carbonation with some alcohol warmth.

I really enjoyed this beer and the light juniper character, something which is often overdone. The juniper nicely complements the fresh grapefruit and lime. Age would not be kind to this beer, so enjoy it fresh alongside tropical fruit and roasted or grilled pork.



91

by *Michael Bury*

Freak Tractor (Model 14) Catskill Brewery

Aroma:
22 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
36 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Put your overalls on, Catskill's Freak Tractor, a "wild ale" is being evaluated as a Brett beer (2015 BJCP Category 28A) due to the nature of the flavors and aromas present without a lot of the characteristic funk that can come from a truly wild fermentation.

Freak Tractor hits the ground running with intense lemon and mandarin oranges, alongside zippy white pepper. Malt and hops are merely in the background and display themselves respectively as generic grain and floral notes. This ultimately allows the more complex Brett aromas to emerge. Like many Brett beers, this one is golden with a significant amount of haze and a thin cream-colored head.

Moderate sweet, honey-like malt is emphasized from the citrus fruit present from fermenta-

tion but is thankfully balanced mainly from peppery flavors. As the beer warms, hay and leather emerge but stay mainly in the background allowing the primary fermentation Brett characteristics to dominate.

Although Freak Tractor is quite clean for a Brett beer and doesn't display a whole lot of funkiness it is still none-the-less a well crafted beer. The range of fermentation related aspects provides intrigue and drinkability while steering clear of Saisons and other light Belgian styles.



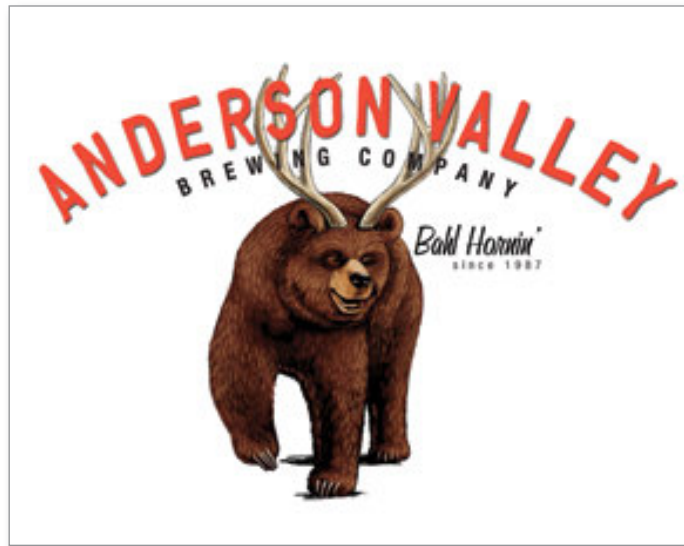
Very Good (90-86)

- 90 | Upland Wheat Ale, Upland Brewing Co. *by Jessica Sullivan*
- 90 | TailyPo Rum Barrel Aged, Granite Falls Brewing Co. *by Michael Bury*
- 90 | Korova Milk Porter, Gnarly Barley Brewing Co. *by Rick Franckhauser*
- 90 | St-Feuillien Blonde, Brasserie St-Feuillien *by Lyn Howard*
- 90 | Préaris Grand Cru 2015, Vliegende Paard Brouwers *by Tracy Hensley*
- 90 | Paradise City Session IPA, Birdsong Brewing Co. *by Dan Martish*
- 90 | Lawyers, Guns & Money, Crazy Mountain Brewing Co. *by Brad Darnell*
- 90 | Hop Shovel IPA, Bear Republic Brewing Co. *by John C. Tull*
- 90 | Holy City Saison Brett, Holy City Brewing Co. *by Michael McGuire*
- 87 | Veltins Pilsner, Brauerei C & A Veltins *by Lyn Howard*
- 87 | Stone Tangerine Express, Stone Brewing Co. *by Jason Johnson*
- 87 | Sommer Fling, Smartmouth Brewing Co. *by Michael McGuire*
- 87 | Radical Rye IPA, Gnarly Barley Brewing Co. *by Rick Franckhauser*
- 86 | Pfungstädter Hell, Pfungstädter Brewery *by Tracy Hensley*
- 86 | IV Chocolate Porter, Smartmouth Brewing Co. *by Michael McGuire*
- 86 | Abrikoos, pFriem Family Brewers *by David Sapsis*
- 86 | Mountain Calling IPA, Wise Man Brewing *by Michael Bury*

Average (85-75)

- 85 | Sound Czech, Terrapin Beer Co. *by Sal Mortillaro II*
- 85 | Indecision Pale Ale, Smartmouth Brewing Co. *by Michael McGuire*
- 84 | Sublime Citrus Wit, Starr Hill Brewery *by Josh Weikert*
- 84 | Pataskala Red X IPA, Stone Brewing Co. *by Jason Johnson*
- 84 | Hop Pursuit IPA, Full Sail Brewing Co. *by Richard Wong*
- 83 | Session Watermelon Wheat, Full Sail Brewing Co. *by Richard Wong*
- 82 | Doin' Thyme Witbier, Birdsong Brewing Co. *by Dan Martish*
- 82 | Buffalo Bill's Strawberry Blonde Ale, Buffalo Bill's Brewery *by Nelson Crowle*
- 82 | Ball Lightning, Catskill Brewery *by Michael Bury*
- 80 | The Hook Grapefruit Session IPA, Starr Hill Brewery *by Josh Weikert*
- 78 | Summer Catch, Cape May Brewing Co. *by Dan Preston*

Advertisement



<http://avbc.com>



www.breckbrewpub.com

Brewer Q & A

For beers that receive a score of “Excellent” or above (91+), we’ve asked the brewer a few questions regarding that beer’s origins.



Brian Hink, Cape May Brewing Company’s head brewer and “Barrel Wrangler”.

Brewer Q & A

The Topsail – Cape May Brewing Co. – 98 Rating

Responses from head brewer and “Barrel Wrangler” Brian Hink.

BC: Who came up with this beer’s recipe?

When we first started our barrel aging program, a lot of the wort was pulled from core brands as we slowly started building up our barrel stock to house 60 wine barrels worth of souring beer. The Topsail was the first beer to go into barrels that we’d used before, so I had a little more play and time to figure out what I wanted to do with this one. Prior to blending The Keel and emptying the barrels, I brewed up a simple golden base beer with an expressive yeast characteristic. The base beer for the Keel had a firm malt backbone, but very little in the way of esters and phenolics, so I wanted the beer going into these second-use barrels to be on the opposite end of the spectrum: let the yeast do all the talking and see what kind of flavor interaction we’d see with the Brett and friends.

BC: What’s your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

I love how vinous and fruity the beer is despite being bone dry. It finished below zero degrees plato, so almost wine levels of dryness – yet you would never know that based on the mouthfeel and flavor profile. It’s also wildly complex, going from tart and sour, to fruity and vinous, to refreshing and enticing all in the matter of a few sips.

BC: Where does this beer’s name come from?

When we first started our Barrel Aged Series, we wanted the first round of releases to tie together and build off one another. With The Keel laying the foundation, followed by The Skeg and The Scupper – we were constructing a ship. The Topsail is the most important sail on large schooners, and this last release of our initial lineup of releases felt like a culmination of everything coming before while steering us to the future.

BC: Is this your “desert island beer”?

As much as I love this beer and would drink it all the time if I had an endless supply of it, I don’t think a 9.9% ABV would be the ideal beer to be sipping every day while baking under the sun. If this was closer to a 4 or 5%, it absolutely would be my desert island beer.

BC: What’s a good food pairing for this beer?

Sushi and expressive cheeses, hands down.

Brewer Q & A

Brewery Lane Series: Barrel Aged Imperial Cherry Stout – Breckenridge Brewery – 97 Rating

Responses from Breckenridge Brewery's Eddie Varela, Barrel Master (left) and Carl Heinz, Head Brewer (right).

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

Its velvety mouthfeel and rich depth of flavors.

BC: Where does this beer's name come from?

Brewery Lane is a specialty series of one-off beers that we can get really creative with. It's also the name of the street that leads to our Littleton brewery.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

Not "desert island"- but it would be equally enjoyable around a high mountain campfire or on the dinner table shared with good friends.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Rich, malty, complex with dark fruit aromas and warming finish.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

This beer was a real challenge to create, both in the brew house and logistically as far as the timing and sourcing of raw materials. One major event that sticks out in my mind was when we got the rare (and brief) opportunity to acquire port wine barrels, and then we realized that we had to wait for the cherries to ripen. So even though we had almost everything we needed to brew, we were still waiting for mother nature. When the cherries finally arrived, I remember brewing 3 turns on a Saturday over more than 12 hrs, for approximately 200bbls of wort (a volume we can usually crank out in 2 turns and 8 hrs). It was all worth it.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

BBQ- ribs or brisket.



Brewer Q & A

Blackbeard's Breakfast – Heavy Seas Beer – 94 Rating

Responses from Heavy Seas brewmaster Christopher Leonard.

BC: Who came up with this beer's recipe?

I did.

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

The complexity - several layers of flavor keep the beer interesting and novel from start to finish. Chocolate, vanilla, coffee (obviously), bourbon, oak, char, fortified wine, earthiness, caramel, pear, apple, blueberry (from the coffee) - it just keeps going.

BC: Where does this beer's name come from?

Pirate, coffee, alliteration - blackbeard, breakfast. We came up with it fairly quickly and with little discussion.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

Goodness no. 10% ABV Imperial Porter, (possibly) with some caffeine - I'd be dehydrated and hyper, which doesn't sound like much fun on a desert island. Now, put me on a dessert island, and this beer will rock it all day.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Ambitious, raucous, powerful, complex, challenging, exciting sipper.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

We worked with a local company, Chesapeake Bay Roasting Company (CBRC), on the coffee portion of this beer. They suggested, quite correctly, a Sumatra blend with a bit of fruitiness. It gives the beer a fruity (berry) dimension that the English yeast doesn't quite provide. We gave CBRC a couple of the bourbon barrels in which we aged the beer. They turned around and aged some of their beans in the barrels! We sell that coffee here at the brewery. So, we went full circle on collaboration with this beer which is really cool.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Tiramisu, ice cream and grilled beef.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

A nice brie cheese covered in raspberry puree while watching the Broncos dominate their foes!



Brewer Q & A

Strawberry Beards Forever – Holy City Brewing – 92 Rating

Responses from Holy City assistant brewer Jack Pitts (left) and head brewer Sean Guidera (right).

BC: Who came up with this beer's recipe?

The HCB brew team. Chris Brown, Sean Guidera, and Jack Pitts.

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

The strawberries came through really nicely. Great flavor and aroma.

BC: Where does this beer's name come from?

We brewed this for the South Eastern Beard and Mustache Championships and one of our packaging guys, Dave Criscitiello came up with it.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

It could be, its real drinkable and low ABV.

BC: Can you describe this

beer in 10 words or less?

Tart, fruity, crisp, German, wheat.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

The story of the name is the best story for this beer.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Something sweet or fried.



Brewer Q & A

Grevensteiner – Brauerei C. & A. Veltins – 92 Rating

Responses from Brauerei C. & A. Veltins head brewer Walter Bauer.

BC: Who came up with this beer's recipe?

In the nineteenth century, brothers Carl and Anton Veltins brewed an exquisite beer in the Grevensteiner Brewery that achieved much more than popularity. With Grevensteiner beer, Brauerei C. & A. Veltins has brought this story back to life because brewing tradition and specialty beers are experiencing a revival in Germany.



BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

The beer exhibits a silky soft amber color with orange hues and has a smooth, velvety head. The complex taste is initially dominated by caramel with a light undertone of honey and roasted almonds and fresh, fruity notes closely resembling green apples. Despite its intense and slightly malty, sweet taste, Grevensteiner is still noticeably tangy and elegant. A roasted bitter note coupled with a nutty flavor tops off this sensory experience by allowing a creamy caramel taste to unfold.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Dominated by caramel, elegant, German beer purity law.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

More and more consumers are discovering the diversity of the world of beer and are developing a passion for beer culture.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Light salad, rustic specialty sausages, pasta, roast, camembert, almond-dessert.

Brewer Q & A

Juicy Watermelon – New Belgium Brewing Co. – 92 Rating

Responses from New Belgium Brewing brewer Cody Reif (left).

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

I like that this recipe has a very natural watermelon flavor. It's not like a Jolly Rancher (not that there's anything wrong with Jolly Ranchers). The juice we use is from the pacific northwest. It's from a vendor we've worked with for years on other fruits and they have a stellar reputation. I'm also proud of how we used a bit of restraint with this beer. I wanted it to be refreshing and not overwhelming.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

While I do think this beer would be particularly delicious on an island, I don't think I could pass up drinking Orval for the rest of my life.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Watermelon blends perfectly with light lime in this sessionable ale.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

This idea for this beer started at a barbeque. My buddy Shane had this watermelon, lime, mint salad. It was so good on a hot day and I thought the flavors might play in a beer. Ultimately the mint was cut, which was a bittersweet development, but in the end was the right move. From there it was just a matter of finding the right ingredients and prototyping to get the levels right. It was a surprisingly quick process.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Num Tok, it's a Thai beef salad with shallots, mint and chilli lime dressing. I never would have ordered it on my own but a Thai friend of mine recommended it and now it's one of my favorites. It has both complimentary and contrasting flavors with Juicy Watermelon. The light acidity works well with the savory beef. A little spice from the chillies is quenched by beer. Best of all, the mint comes back into play and completes the original concept.



Brewer Q & A

Strawberry Doppel Weizen – Buffalo Bill’s Brewery – 92 Rating

Responses from Buffalo Bill’s CEO Geoff Harries.

Who came up with this beer’s recipe?

Our Strawberry Doppel Weizen, 22oz bomber was created to compliment our lower alcohol Summer seasonal “Strawberry Blonde with Ginger” in six packs. Ed Chainey our former regional sales director, suggested some type of variation on the usual hefeweizen. From there brewers Geoff Harries and Mike Manty ramped up the alcohol, located a really estery heffe yeast, and added a hundred pounds of Strawberries.

What’s your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

My favorite is the layering of flavors and aromas, and how they all appear at different times. The initial estery banana aroma, the silky texture of the yeast, followed by clove, and then finished with a hint of strawberries.

Where does this beer’s name come from?

Like many of the fruit infused beers from Buffalo Bill’s, we like to use a description/style as the name, Buffalo Bill’s Strawberry Doppel Weizen.

Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Double German wheat beer with aromas of Banana, clove, strawberries.

Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

The newest edition to a long line of historical seasonal beers. It’s high alcohol content will likely make for some good stories in years to come.

What’s a good food pairing for this beer?

Great in the summer months with a charcuterie and cheese board, as well as grilled chicken or fish dishes.



Brewer Q & A

Local's Stash Reserve Series: Rum Barrel-Aged Dark Ale w/ Ginger and Lime – Crazy Mountain Brewing Co. – 92 Rating

Responses from Crazy Mountain Brewing Co. head brewer Ben Nadeau.

BC: Who came up with this beer's recipe?

I did.

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

My favorite aspect about this beer is the use of fresh ingredients to impart true flavors and aromas. Although hand zesting 60 pounds of lime and peeling/cutting 40 pounds of ginger can be tedious, it truly shows in the final product as fresh aromas and flavors.

BC: Where does this beer's name come from?

We refer to the Rum Barrel-Aged Dark Ale as “Dark and Stormy,” which is a rum based cocktail with ginger beer and lime garnish which was the inspiration for this beer.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Dark fruit, fresh citrus, warm rum.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

I grew up in Jamestown/Newport, Rhode Island which is considered one of the sailing capitals of the world. Dark and Stormy, the cocktail, is a staple in the bars and restaurants of Newport and a go-to for sailors. I have always wanted to imitate those flavors and aromas of my home drink in beer form!

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Pad Thai.





BLOOD ALCOHOL CALCULATOR

**CHECK YOURSELF
BEFORE YOU WRECK YOURSELF**

GET A BREATHALYZER

**STARTING AT
\$39.99**



Brewer Q & A

Stone Ripper – Stone Brewing Co. – 92 Rating

Responses from Jeremy Moynier, Stone Brewing's Senior Innovation Program Manager.

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

I love the interplay of the malt along with the tropical, citrus, and resin qualities from the hops. It's a lighter style, hoppy Pale ("San Diego Pale Ale"). It's EXTREMELY crushable.

BC: Where does this beer's name come from?

Ripper is Australian surf slang for something that's really great. Since we incorporated Australian and West Coast hops, we decided to make this beer a tribute to the prominent surf cultures of both coasts.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Upfront hops with a nice malt base and it's crushable.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

We had been looking for an excuse to feature Cascade in a beer (we traditionally didn't use this hop a lot but in the last few years started playing with it more and more). At the same time, we love Galaxy and wanted to incorporate it into another beer as well. We were calling Galaxy the "Cascade" of Australia, meaning it's a go-to hop found in a lot of great beers, so we loved the idea of using these two together. Kris Ketcham, senior manager of brewing & innovation - Liberty Station had done the prototype in his Buoy 1 pale ale series and we loved the combination.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

I recently did a beer dinner where Stone Ripper was paired with Thai beef jerky: the beer became even more refreshing and the fruit really came out. It was awesome.



Brewer Q & A

Sommer Fling – Smartmouth Brewing Co. – 87 Rating

Responses from Smartmouth Brewing head brewer Jimmy Loughran.

BC: Who came up with this beer's recipe?

We based this recipe on our desire to brew a traditional hefeweizen.

BC: What's your favorite aspect of this beer (flavor, aroma, etc.)?

It has to be the flavor. I love that nuances of banana, bubblegum and clove that don't hit you over the head like others that I have had. I wanted to make a beer that is super drinkable, hints of amazing flavor, and pairs perfectly with the summer time.

BC: Where does this beer's name come from?

For this answer I am going to totally pass this off to my über nice president, Porter Hardy, - "The name Sommer Fling is both a reference to its traditional German roots and our desire to make a beer that captures the passing and lighthearted nature of summer."

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

Honest answer.... if it was a pale ale, of course. Haha. But if you were to ask my mom she would shout yes. So let's go with that answer.

BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?

Authentic, refreshing, crisp, easy

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

People get so excited for this beer which is sometimes shocking. On sales calls or just passing conversations people get extremely excited to have this beer. When we started canning it, people would approach me and ask about the "light blue can." These are people that typically never tried a local beer but had one at a friend's house. I love bringing new drinkers to Smartmouth.

BC: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Bratwurst off the backyard grill. It sounds cliché, but the spiciness of sausage pairs well with the flavors of this beer.

BC: Do you know a story – or have a personal story – that revolves around this beer?

One of the most moving experiences for me as a brewer actually happened last week. I was drinking batch #1 of Casey with Casey at her home in Austin, TX. She, for the first time ever, asked for a second glass of beer; a beer I had designed for her.

C: What's a good food pairing for this beer?

Desert island seafood enjoyed with someone close to heart.





BLOOD ALCOHOL CALCULATOR

**DOCTORS
AGREE
HANGOVER'S
ARE EVIL**

