

Arizona Wilderness

Summertime Beer Picnic

# The *Beer* Connoisseur®

*Innovators Series:*

*Nate Lanier of  
Tree House Brewing*

*Indy Driver*

*Hinchcliffe and  
Flat 12 Bierwerks*

*South Africa:*

*Craft Beer in the  
Land of Lagers*

*Brewing With*

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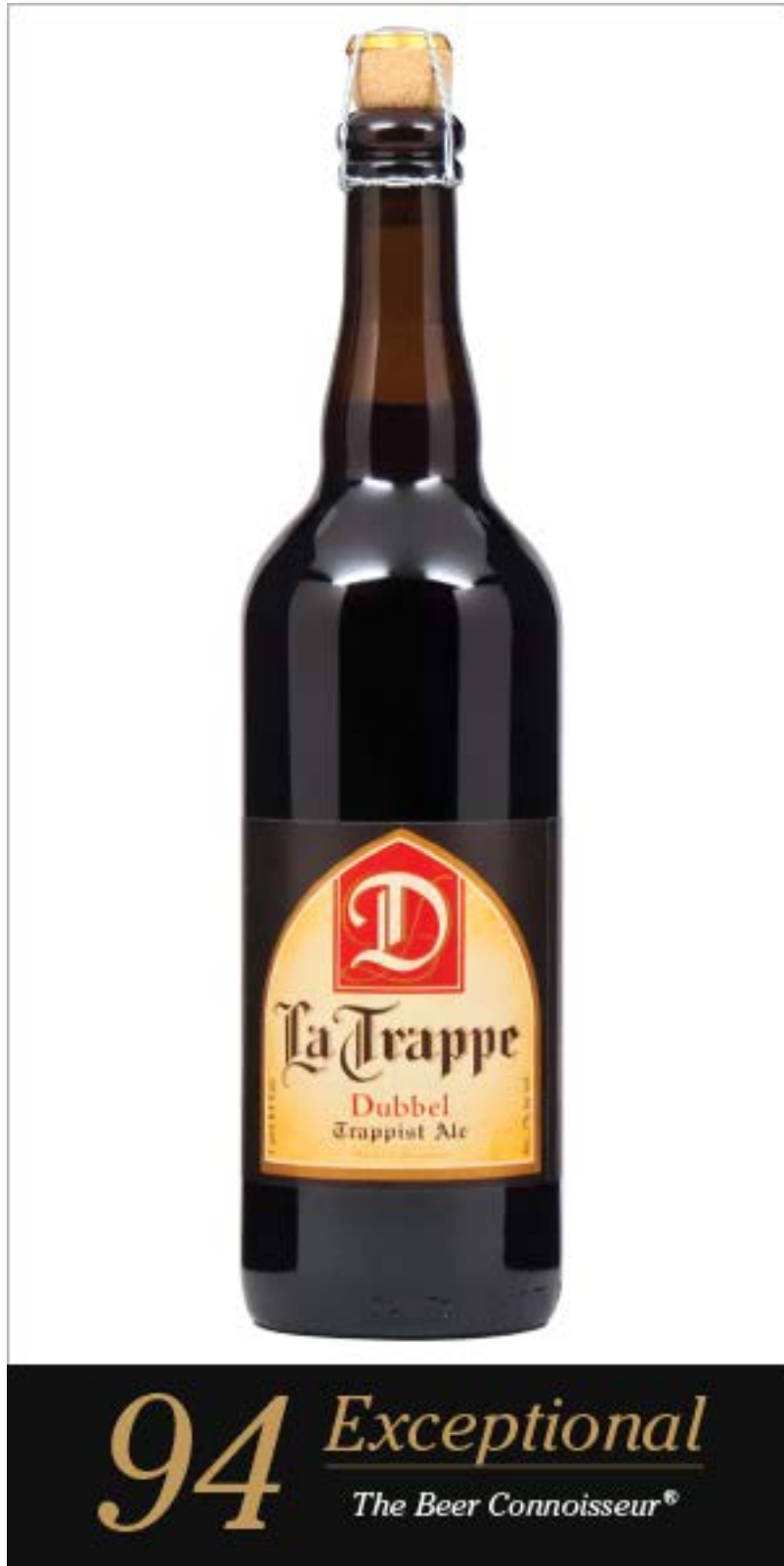


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# The Beer Connoisseur®

*Summer 2016, Issue 25*

Summer always seems to be the perfect time to enjoy the glorious beverage that is beer. Temperatures are up, inhibitions are down and the finest suds are just an arm's length away... what more could you ask for? Well, how about the 25th issue of The Beer Connoisseur!

Hazy, New England-style IPAs are trending, and we get the scoop with one of their originators Nate Lanier of Tree House Brewing. Then we travel to the Lone Star state for a chat with wild ale expert Jeffrey Stuffings, founder and head brewer at Jester King Brewery.

For our cover story, we delve into the history and artistry of coopering, which is the craft of making and maintaining spirit barrels. Also in this issue, Jonathan Ingram interviews "the mayor of Hinchtown," craft beer and indy car racing legend James Hinchcliffe, Dave Clark takes a trip to the desert to visit Arizona Wilderness Brewing Co., Lucy Corne's South Africa story charts the rise of craft beer in a macro-dominated landscape, and Sherry Dryja is back with a beer picnic that's sure to make even the dullest family gathering a raucous occasion.

All of the usual coverage is here as well: Our expert, single-blind beer reviews featuring a whopping 49 beers with scores of 91 and above along with corresponding Q & As, the lowdown on terrific beer fests nationwide and many tasty summertime new releases to wet your whistle.

So pop open a cold one and pop a squat by the pool with phone or tablet in hand and enjoy this, the Summer Issue of The Beer Connoisseur!

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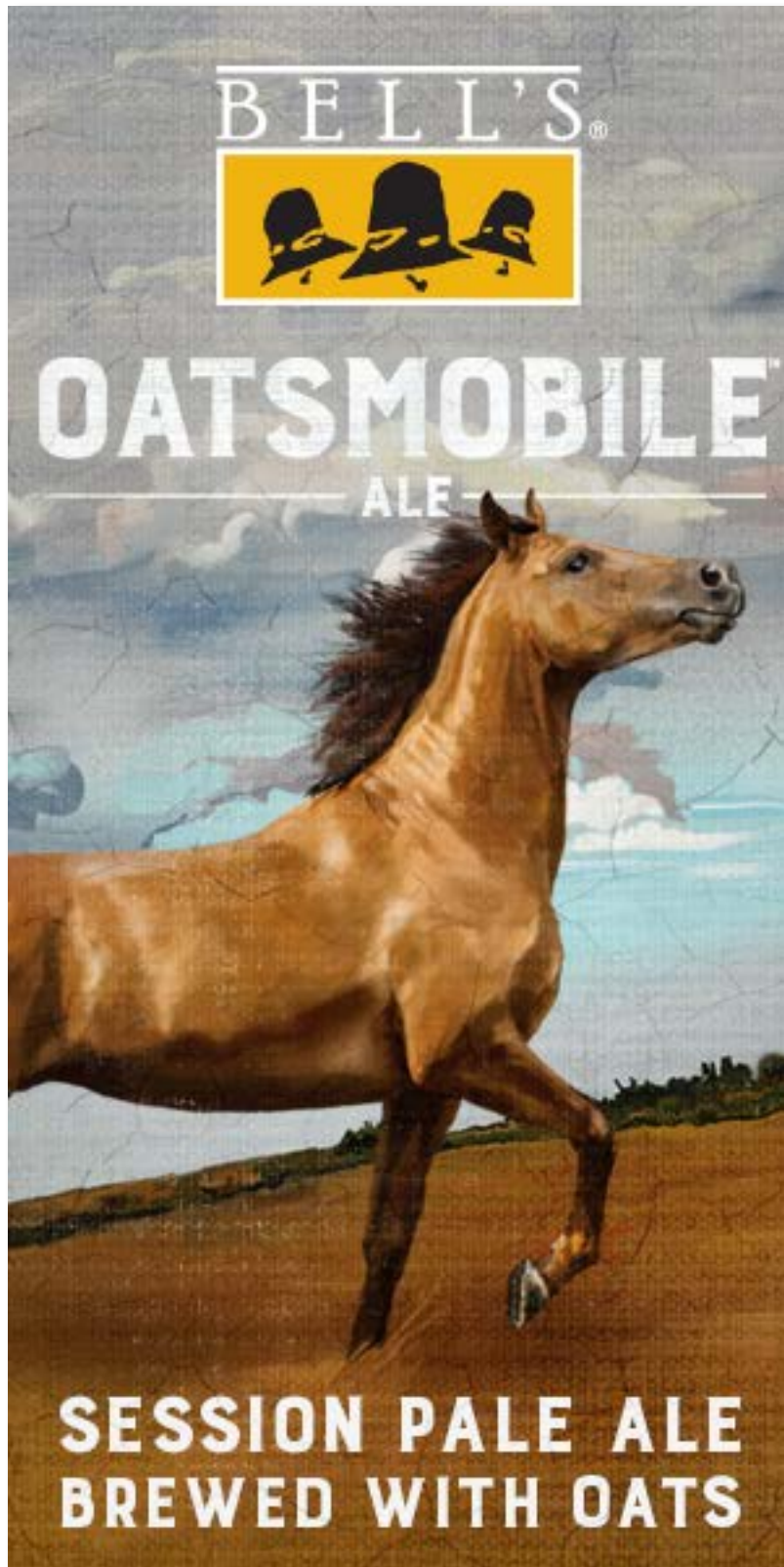
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Kellerbier (aka Zwickel Lager) is having a bit of a resurgence, led by originators such as Veltins.



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## *From the Editors*



Summer always seems to be the perfect time to enjoy the glorious beverage that is beer. Temperatures are up, inhibitions are down and the finest suds are just an arm's length away... what more could you ask for? Well, how about the 25th issue of *The Beer Connoisseur*!

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Coopering, or the art of making and maintaining spirit barrels, is our cover story this issue, as we delve into the history and intricacy of this artistic pursuit.

Dave Clark takes a trip to Arizona Wilderness, a beautiful craft beer oasis in the desert that's no mirage. Lucy Corne's South Africa story charts the rise of craft beer in a macro-dominated landscape, and Sherry Dryja is back with a beer picnic that's sure to make even the dullest family gathering a raucous occasion.

Jonathan Ingram cruises to Hinchtown with its founder, James Hinchcliffe, a decorated Indy Car

racer who has collaborated with Flat 12 Bierwerks on various craft brews.

All of the usual coverage is here as well: Our expert, single-blind beer reviews featuring a whopping 49 beers with scores of 91 and above along with corresponding Q & As, the lowdown on terrific beer fests nationwide and many tasty summertime new releases to wet your whistle.

We get on our hands on Fizzics, the fascinating home draft system that uses soundwaves to provide perfect, taproom-ready pours from your countertop, then revel in our geekiness with *The Beer Geek Handbook*, a hilarious and engaging guide on how to live "a life ruled by beer."

So pop open a cold one and pop a squat by the pool with phone or tablet in hand and enjoy this, the summer issue of *The Beer Connoisseur*!

Cheers!

*Jim & Chris*

# Contributors



## Sherry Dryja

Sherry is a travel writer, lifelong traveler and taster of life. A reformed cookie scorcher, she now shows others how to avoid kitchen failures, occasionally teaching baking classes and catering small events. To know her is to be recruited as a taste tester for the recipes she develops for *The Beer Connoisseur*<sup>®</sup> and her blog, Kitchen Dilettante. She and her husband split their time between Seattle and Phoenix with their miniature schnauzer, Lukas.



## Jonathan Ingram

A freelance writer for 32 years before crossing over to the dark side of editing, Jonathan's original "I Write for Beer" T-shirt was a tie-dyed model. He also enjoys running – yep – for beer. He's written six books on motor racing, a sport pursued to the ends of the earth because he enjoyed being paid to travel and write stories daily about danger and passionate individualism. A perfect day ended at the nearest emporium holding good food, beer and conversation.



## Lucy Corne

Lucy is a freelance writer specializing in two of life's finest pleasures: beer and travel. Her itchy feet have taken her to nearly 50 countries across every continent bar Antarctica – and that's largely because there are no microbreweries there. Lucy has written two books on the South African craft beer scene and also pens a popular blog – [www.brewmistress.co.za](http://www.brewmistress.co.za)



## Carolyn Smagalski

A frequent contributor, Carolyn won the Brewers Association's Beer Journalism Award in 2006 for her work on the website BellaOnline, where she is known as "the Beer Fox."



## Dave Clark

Dave is a Certified Cicerone, BJCP Nationally ranked judge, and all around craft beer geek who used to brew professionally at Hoppin' Frog Brewery of Akron, Ohio. A former President of Cleveland's S.N.O.B. Homebrew club, Dave now lives in Gilbert, Arizona with his wife, daughter, dog Porter, and six tap kegerator. He enjoys writing, recording and performing music, baseball, skiing and of course, all things craft beer.



## Carl Kins

An active member of the European Consumers Beer Union, and Zythos, Carl is an international beer judge, educator, a scholar, and a frequent contributor to *The Beer Connoisseur*.



## Max Bahnson

An Argentine living in Prague since 2002, Max is a translator, beer writer and beer philosopher who is a Contributor to the Spanish magazine *Bar & Beer*, the Czech magazine *Pivo, Bier & Ale*, and *The Beer Connoisseur*.



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## **LAGUNITAS BUYS STAKE IN THREE REGIONAL COMPANIES**

The evolution of Lagunitas, from outspoken independent craft stalwart to its current role as an international player under the Heineken umbrella, will continue as news arrives that the company has purchased stakes in three strategically located regional breweries: Charleston's Southend Brewery and Smokehouse, which will be rebranded as a Lagunitas brewpub, Santa Rosa, California-based Moonlight Brewing Co., a small Bay Area brewery verging on its 25th birthday, and Austin-based Independence Brewing.

Though details of the equity stakes weren't released, they will all be held under a new LLC titled Lagunitas U.S. Holdings, or LUSH. Though Heineken now owns 50 percent of Lagunitas, founder Tony Magee has stated that these actions came independently from within Lagunitas, the sixth-largest craft brewer of 2015.

In addition, the company has announced it will open spaces in Portland and San Diego to be used exclusively for nonprofit fundraising. Lagunitas will provide the space, staff and beer for free, as it does in its Chicago and Petaluma taprooms.

Though some will inevitably cry foul, Magee cites the

changes as necessary evolution of the ever-changing marketplace, and acknowledged the acquisitions by saying that "craft brewing has never been about anything but making relationships."

Magee went on to say that he plans to continue expansion into local breweries, and emphasizing that the deals are partnerships, rather than full-on takeovers.

## **HILLIARD'S, PRAIRIE ARTISAN ALES SOLD**

Over the past week, two small but popular craft breweries were sold to similarly sized beer companies.

Oklahoma's Krebs Brewing, which produced around 8,000 barrels of its Choc Beer line last year, acquired Tulsa-based Prairie Artisan Ales, widely known for its Bomb! series. Unbeknownst to many, Krebs was already the contract brewer for Prairie, which put out around 2,000 barrels in 2015, and the deal has more or less been in place for the better part of a year.

"Since I already felt like the beers were a partnership it only made sense," Krebs President Zach Prichard said of the acquisition. Prairie co-founder and head brewer Chase Healey will have "some involvement" in the future, though it seems the fate of Prairie is firmly in the



hands of Healey and Krebs. According to a blog post by Prichard on Prairie's website, this could mean new beers and new locations in the future.

"It is a humbling move that shows Chase continues to trust us to innovate, make great beer, and share Prairie across the globe," said Prichard.

In another West Coast sale, Seattle native Hilliard's Brewing has been sold to the smaller Odin Brewing, based out of Tukwila, Washington. Odin, which brewed around 3,000 barrels last year to Hilliard's 4,700 barrels, will move "certain tanks and equipment" to its new Tukwila taproom and brewery, and aim to sell the remainder of Hilliard's as an all-inclusive brewery package.

Founder Ryan Hilliard will look to exit the craft beer business entirely.

"I think the deal reached with Odin Brewing was a good one" Hilliard said in a press release. "It's not often that deals like this come along, and when they do you have to be ready to move on them. I have enjoyed my time in the craft beer sector and am thrilled my namesake beer will live on in good hands."

Odin Brewing Company was founded in 2009, and Hilliard's was founded in 2011.

### ***MOST OF STOLEN SWEETWATER BREW RECOVERED***

We'll start with the good news – Sweetwater Brewing Co. has recovered all but a few of the 3,272 cases (78,528 bottles) stolen from its brewery earlier this month, thanks to efforts by Georgia Bureau of Investigation's Major Theft Unit and the Southeastern Transportation Security Council. The bad news? They're all going to be destroyed.

"The product is being sent to Synergy Solutions Crisp County, a zero landfill, biofuel and waste recycling company," Sweetwater said in an announcement. Though it seems like a lamentable end for the reunited suds, to Sweetwater, it's a matter of maintaining quality.

"We can no longer trust that that beer would be up to the quality standards that we as a brewery maintain, so unfortunately we have to destroy it all," said Sweetwater marketing guru Steve Farace.

There's still no word on whether or not the culprits, who stole two trailers containing the beers have been identified.



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## ***VENEZUELAN BEER SHORTAGE LEAVES DRINKERS OUT IN THE COLD***

Few things are more devastating than an empty beer fridge, and the collective fridge of Venezuela is getting dangerously close.

Due to a barley shortage, Empresas Polar, a company which makes 80% of the country's beer along with many other types of food, was forced to shutter all of its breweries in April. The reasons for the shortage are myriad, though restrictive foreign currency laws along with the country's reliance on its oil industry over agriculture are central to the problem.

While it should be noted that this concern pales in comparison to the overall food crisis the country is facing, the beer shortage has struck a chord with citizens on principle, with many expressing outrage. Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro has attempted to deflect the anger with claims that Polar is deliberately halting production to disrupt the Venezuelan economy, though the government controls all imports and exports.

Empresas Polar's executive president Lorenzo Mendoza responded: "We have been discussing how to reactivate

our production of beer and malt and finally we found a temporary solution that will allow us to produce until the end of 2016."

The temporary solution came in the form of a \$35 million loan from Spanish bank BBVA, though there's still no long-term solution in sight.

## ***5,000 YEAR-OLD BEER RECIPE UNEARTHED IN CHINA***

Archaeologists from Stanford University have discovered a recipe for beer more than 5,000 years old, which marks the earliest recorded use of barley in China.

The discovery was made along a tributary of the Wei River, where scientists unearthed equipment presumably used for brewing, filtration and storage of beer including amphorae, funnels, stoves and wide-mouthed pots. Inside the containers lay the residue from a liquid which included barley, "Job's Tears" (Chinese pearl barley), broomcorn millet and tubers like potatoes and yams.

Though the ingredients would have likely made a somewhat flavorless brew, this discovery pushes back

# Industry News



the time when barley was first thought to be used by more than a thousand years, which would mean that the Chinese were using barley for brewing beer-like beverages before they were eating it, contrary to what was previously thought.

## **FLORIDA BREWERY CREATES EDIBLE SIX-PACK RINGS**

The Delray Beach, Florida-based Saltwater Brewery has pioneered a novel way to help protect the environment – edible six-pack rings.

These 100 percent biodegradable beauties are made with spent grains, and are reputed to be as durable as regular packaging, without putting marine wildlife at risk.

Though the edible rings currently run a bit more expensive than regular packaging, Saltwater Brewery hopes that increased interest from other breweries will ramp up production and drive down costs.

## **ANHEUSER-BUSCH RENAMES BUDWEISER BRAND “AMERICA”**

Just in time for Independence Day, Anheuser-Busch has

announced that its flagship brand, Budweiser, will be seasonally renamed as ‘America.’

‘The King of Beers’ will now be emblazoned with the nation’s motto of E Pluribus Unum, or “out of many, one.” Despite the fact that Anheuser-Busch is owned by AB InBev, a massive multinational company headquartered in Belgium and Brazil, the ‘America’ move is being touted as a call for unity in what Ricardo Marques, a Bud VP touted as “maybe the most American summer ever.”

“We thought nothing was more iconic than Budweiser and nothing was more iconic than America,” professed Tosh Hall, creative director at JKR, the branding firm behind the campaign.

It could be argued that supporting local craft, which creates more new jobs than macro, is more American, but to make this out as a battle of U.S. and them would be a cheap, watered-down rhetorical ploy.

Love it or hate it, it’s an interesting marketing strategy, and at the end of the day, nothing is more American than old-fashioned capitalism.



***“We really  
are living the  
dream.”***



*Innovators Series:*

# *Nate Lanier of Tree House Brewing*

*by Chris Guest*

---

*BC caught up with Tree House Brewing head brewer Nate Lanier to discuss his pre-brewing background as well as the meteoric rise of the brewery he co-founded. The Monson, Massachusetts-based brewery has found itself at the forefront of a burgeoning East Coast movement – the hazy IPA.*

*Named after a tree house left behind by a previous owner on the land where the brewery now stands, Tree House is often filled to capacity due to the intense demand for any and all of its beers. But it is also a place to convene with nature and reflect – a pastoral paradise in a rural neighborhood.*

*When asked about Tree House’s role in the community, Lanier was effusive.*

*“We hope to be good neighbors, and we try to give back at every opportunity. We try to build and curate an environment of solace – a place where people can leave the stresses of the world behind for a while...”*

## **Youth and the Path to Brewing**

I grew up in a small town called Ware, Massachusetts where I spent most of my days as a kid running around the woods behind my house building forts, climbing trees and digging holes. I wanted to be an archaeologist or an astronomer. I’m not sure how any of this leads to co-founding and co-owning a modestly sized brewery, but here we are!

I owe my daily life to loving parents who instilled in me the idea that hard work and humility is all you need for a life of joy and virtue.

## **Discovering Craft**

Very simply, the magic of a memorable drinking experience is what drew me to craft. Beer has this incredible power to bring people together and help put our troubles behind us for a short time. Some of my dearest memories are intertwined with a perfectly executed and presented pint of beer; I suppose I’m compelled by nostalgia and driven by the idea that



***“With Tree House, Lanier’s goal was to create “a place where people can leave the stresses of the world behind for a while.”***

deep focus and single-minded intent can collectively improve upon this liquid we all enjoy so much.

## **The “a-ha” Beer**

Everyone has their “a-ha” beer, and mine was Trappistes Rochefort 8. It remains one of my favorites to this day, and I drink several every Christmas! I wouldn’t say it inspired me to get involved with the industry, but it certainly opened my eyes to the idea that a malt beverage could be conceived and presented in wildly different and interesting ways.

## **The Founding of Tree House**

I have been culturing yeast and making pizza since my teens, but didn’t begin brewing until my mid-twenties (I’m 33 now).

I had been brewing at home for a while when my great friend Damien Goudreau (who also designed our logo) purchased a new home that just happened

to have the most perfect 600-square foot brewing barn with a majestic, west-facing vista to enjoy. This allowed my weekend obsession to quickly turn into a full-fledged, seven-days-a-week obsession. I started making beer that was as enjoyable as anything I could buy, and a few of the early recipes (Julius, Green and Eureka) had become some of my very favorite beers. As the project picked up steam we (Damien Goudreau, Dean Rohan and Jonathan Weisbach – my other co-founders) had several friends enjoying the fruits of our efforts for free – even though with all of the equipment and raw materials we were a nearly five-figure, self-funded operation!

In short, we founded Tree House because we felt we had something of value to contribute to the community. This idea continues to drive us to this day.

We opened our doors as a fully licensed brewery putting out about 20 gallons of beer a week in 2012, and we have been trying to get ahead of demand ever since. Our first year we brewed 60 BBLs. This year we will brew something like 12,000, and we still run out of beer every week. It’s insane.

The early days were times of great joy, and although we took our brew days quite seriously, we were always having fun: playing music, cooking on the grill and just enjoying these great times together. Tree House has given my life clarity and meaning in a way I could never have imagined five years ago.

## **Crafting a Recipe**

I feel very in tune with my process and my selection of raw materials after brewing thousands of commercial batches in the past four years. In other words, I try to imagine a flavor profile and then reverse engineer it into a recipe that I think will achieve that flavor profile. This works most of the time, but I am still learning. All of our beers are a work in progress!

*Despite his modesty, many of Lanier’s creations are among the most sought after beers in America. The brewery just celebrated its fourth anniversary, where Lanier and company debuted King JJJULIUSS, an imperial version of its popular year-round Julius, which sold out almost immediately.*

*Though consistency is a challenging cornerstone of brewing, making mild tweaks throughout the brewing process can sometimes create unintended and brilliant results.*



*Green was one of Lanier's earliest homebrew recipes, and it has turned into one of the most sought after IPAs on the market.*



***“I try to imagine a flavor profile and then reverse engineer it into a recipe that I think will achieve that flavor,” Lanier says.***

## **Picking Ingredients and Reverse Engineering**

Being in tune with raw materials and educating your palate is the most important part of creating recipes and choosing ingredients. Tasting, imagining and thinking about how certain things will work together takes up a lot of my time. I think the more a brewer develops his or her palate, he or she will become a better brewer. I am always tasting, smelling, and eating raw materials. You can't know what a dark crystal malt will contribute unless you eat some of it raw before including it in a recipe. When the beer is finished, you think back to the raw taste, and from there you just build your knowledge and experience... the key is to stay in tune at all times.

## **The Work Environment at Tree House**

It's extremely jovial! I liken it to a sports team finding success while having a good time off the field. The biggest source of tension is what is going to play on the radio that day; that's serious business! One of the guys is a huge Miley Cyrus fan... can you imagine?

There is a serious energy to the room when everything is rolling, and, in my opinion, there is no greater environment in the world!

## **Tales of Ales**

Julius was one of the very first recipes I conceived of with a commercial brewery in mind, but not the first

beer released. The first keg we sent to a restaurant was a classic balanced American Pale Ale in the vein of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale that we called Something New. A few others from the early days include That's What She Said, a milk stout, Dirty Water, a gently hoppy blonde ale, and Old Man, a special bitter. The story of That's What She Said hasn't been told too often... My very first home brew was an attempt at a milk stout. I was in an impressionable stage of learning and had read that oxygenating your beer was good. The only problem was that my beer had finished fermenting. Long story short, I shook the carboy and destroyed my very first brew, but I still packaged it. It was terrible! I still have bottles of it, and I can only imagine how awful they are! At any rate, That's What She Said exists as a bit of spite toward that first brew, and because I love milk stout.

## **The True Magic of Julius**

Julius is a beer that is designed to be immensely hop-saturated while never tiring the palate. I find it easy to brew a beer that makes a greater first impression than Julius, but it is exceptionally difficult to make a beer with this character that maintains drinkability pint after pint. To me, this is the true magic of Julius: It makes a tremendous first impression but never overstays its welcome. It has so much drinkability and an immense flavor profile.



***Despite IPAs being his calling card, Lanier loves to experiment with all kinds of styles.***

*Truly great beers seem to be imbued with a magical quality; perhaps you get an extra twinge of excitement when popping the top of the can, or you're overcome with how*



***With expansion plans in the works for Tree House, Lanier shows no signs of slowing down.***

*the light plays through the citrine contents of the glass. Tree House and many of its fellow New England breweries appear to have unraveled the fundamental mystery behind what it takes to make such a beer. The Alchemist, Lawson's Finest Liquids, Trillium, Tired Hands... What are these guys doing that could inspire someone to drive halfway across the country just for a six-pack?*

## **Hazy Days**

Over the years I have worked hard to develop a process that results in a perfectly hop-saturated beer that retains high drinkability without tiring the palate. More often than not this results in a beer that is hazy and unfiltered. The focus is more on making beer that tastes great and not so much what it looks like. I'm ferociously resistant to the idea that a hoppy beer must be hazy to be great!

## **Is It Worth It?**

My job has been immensely taxing both physically and emotionally for four unrelenting years. I know this is a candid and unromantic statement, but I feel compelled to share it for context of how wonderful the highs of the job can be when contrasted with the lows.

Early on with the new Monson brewery I had an absolutely terrible day with a mechanical failure forcing a late mash and an even later brew. I got home at 3 AM and was in a pretty terrible place. I happened to open my email (out of habit) and read a note from a gentleman that simply said, verbatim, "I don't have much to say other than thank you for doing what you do. I love your beer."

I'll never forget that. It reminded me that despite the trials and tribulations of owning a brewery, we really are living the dream.

In a much lighter vein, I enjoy my day-to-day demands and being around the crew at Tree House. We all have a good time, and while we are often engaged in times of intense concentration and focus, there are just as many moments of levity and humor. At the end of the day I get to do what I love doing with the people who mean the most to me – what more could you ask for?

## **Future Plans**

I was a project manager / assistant at a construction firm before becoming a brewer. A lot of what I learned there has really helped with our Monson build-out, and more recently, our new brewery planned for Charlton.

In terms of distribution, our goal is to meet the demand we have locally first and foremost. Distribution to other states is not our focus at the moment. Our mission has always been to brew the best beer possible and serve it in its ideal condition. Everything else is secondary.

*As Lanier walked us through life at the destination brewery he co-founded, it became clear that this was a man who is devoted to his craft and who cares about the community and his role within it.*

*While many people feel like being a head brewer at one of the most popular breweries in America would be a dream job, Lanier wears many different hats on a daily basis and puts in hard work day after day at the brewery. Yet he still loves what he does, and feels he is "living the dream." That's the kind of passion you want from a brewer.*

*Just like the foliage-fringed dwelling it's named after, Tree House is a warm and inviting getaway in a beautiful, pastoral setting. Who knows, you might even find the meaning of life here, like Lanier has; the beers are that special. Just watch out for those lines – I've heard they can get pretty long.*

# Brewing With: Jeffrey Stuffings

by Chris Guest

## What did you do before joining the craft beer industry?

Prior to joining the craft beer industry I was a lawyer. The job lacked creativity and the culture was fairly oppressive. Craft beer served as a lifeboat out of that world. I started working at Austin Homebrew Supply, which I loved, before starting Jester King a few years later.

## What drew you to brewing?

The alchemy of fermentation. Using living microorganisms to create flavor and aroma is an amazing process. The sights, smells, sounds, textures and flavors from fermentation drew me in. The culinary aspect of brewing was also appealing, and I view brewing as an extension of cooking. Finally, the culture of the brewing industry held major appeal; I can't think of a better industry to be in.

## How did Jester King get started?

Jester King took three years to get off the ground. In late 2007, I began writing a business plan and working on test batches. By the summer of 2009, I was ready to start fundraising. Around that time, my brother Michael moved to Texas to help me get the brewery off the ground. We raised the money and broke ground in April of 2010, then opened in October of 2010.

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## Why does Jester King focus on sours?

We consider ourselves to be an authentic farmhouse brewery, and our philosophy is to make beers with a sense of time and place. A big part of this to us is engaging in mixed-culture fermentation with native yeast and bacteria. We don't explicitly set out to make sour beer, but the bacteria in our mixed culture creates natural acidity, which gives the beer its signature tartness.

Some reputations  
are **built.**  
Others are **poured.**



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***Jester King's koelschip allows native yeast and bacteria to thrive during fermentation of the brewery's signature tart beers.***





## **It's often hard to keep up with new releases, but Jester King announces one seemingly every week. Why so many different releases from Jester King?**

Just as our beer is tied to a place, it's also tied to a time. The reality is that we can only make certain beers at certain times of the year. For instance, the spring and summertime are fruit season, and the wintertime is our spontaneous season. The ambient temperature and ratio of yeast to bacteria in the air also controls when we can make certain beers. Noble King Hoppy Farmhouse Ale, for instance, is a beer that needs to ferment quite hot (upper 80s Fahrenheit) to get the flavor and aroma profile we want. We can't maintain these high fermentation temperatures in the winter. Likewise, we've found that when fermentation temperatures dip down into the 50s and 60s, the yeast is stunted and the bacteria dominate. Therefore, we make beers where we want more acidity in the winter. Various ingredients themselves are only available to us at certain times of the year, whether they be fruits or vegetables. Finally, we like to keep our brewing environment fun and interesting. Making the same beer day in and day out isn't of interest to us.

## **What's the craft beer and brewing scene in Texas like?**

Growing fast! I saw an analysis recently stating that if Austin, Texas was a state rather than a city, it would rank 11th in the country in breweries per capita. Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston all have rapidly emerging beer scenes too. Locally, I love the American and English styles from Real Ale Brewing Company, and the Czech and German styles from Live Oak Brewing Company.

## **With sours firmly entrenched in the public's consciousness, how do Jester King beers stand out from all the others?**

As I mentioned before, our beer is a product of its specific time and place. We embrace our natural surroundings to make beer that simply would not exist were it not for our surroundings. For instance, we use raw Hill Country well water, local grains from Blackands Malt, aged hops from our barn, and native yeast and bacteria cultured from the land and air around

our brewery. Our beers are inextricably tied to our environment. Also, while we're not alone on this, we try to balance the acidity in our beer to make it very drinkable – we don't embrace a “sour for sour's sake” mentality. We control acidity through time, temperature, hops and blending, and we strive to incorporate acidity as one of an array of flavors in our beer. Finally, it seems like virtually every sour beer on the market these days is kettle-soured. While kettle-soured beer certainly has a role, there's no replacing the complex results of extended fermentation and maturation with native yeast and bacteria.



*All of Jester King's eye-catching artwork (such as Ol' Oi) is done in-house by longtime employee Josh Cockrell.*

## **Your artwork and branding is extremely eye-catching and interesting. How important is that aspect to your business, and who does Jester King's artwork?**

Thanks! All our artwork is by Josh Cockrell of Jester King. Josh was our first employee. He helped with brewing, tours, deliveries, maintenance and construction before focusing solely on our artwork, which I think is a very important part of our business. It helps complete the story that my brewers and I are trying to tell. Beer is in many ways art, and visual art goes hand-in-hand with that.

## **Most of your beers only come**



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*Despite all its success and clout in the business, Stuffings says Jester King is in many ways “a glorified homebrewing operation.”*

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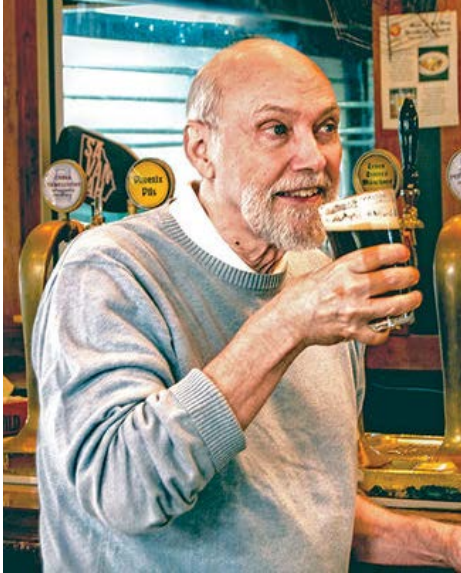
**in 750-ml bottles (save for a few exceptions). Why that bottle size?**

For a brewery our size (2,200 barrels per year annual sales) that takes anywhere from three months to three years to make a batch of beer, we need to make a good sales margin off of that beer or we'd go out of business. 750-ml bottles provide us with the sales margin we need to stay afloat. The reality is that if we put our beer in six-pack cans, the price point would be too high. Also, 750-ml bottles allow us to show off Josh's artwork.

**Lastly, I read your post about Fantome Del Rey's “ropiness,” from a couple years back and was impressed by your honesty. Do you think this level of transparency is rare in the**

**craft beer world, what with everyone in the business still very affected by the “bottom line?”**

I don't! I believe it was Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head who said that the craft beer industry is “99% asshole free.” This has been my experience as well. A lot of craft breweries, including Jester King, are in many ways glorified homebrewing operations. We as brewers aren't far removed from being beer geeks (and many of us still are). I think this mentality translates into craft brewers by and large being upfront with our customers.



by Jonathan Ingram

## Connoisseur's Corner

# *Upheaval In Colorado Symbolic of Other Parts of the Union?*

We live in red state/blue state political times. In beer, of course, it's macro versus craft, Big Beer versus the Independents. A shot of a different sort was recently fired in the current war for beer market share in Colorado when 14 brewers chose to leave the Colorado Brewers Guild to start a rival one based on craft only membership.

If the creation of Craft Beer Colorado is symptomatic not only of our times, but also of the state of beer, where are we headed?

Legislative efforts affecting the sale of beer are taking place in virtually every state. But here was a case where craft brewers chose not to speak out against legislation favored by grocers and eventually lost the battle in the statehouse. There was concern about retaliation by chain grocers in Colorado and beyond, which sell a lot of beer. But even so, by brewers not taking a more public stance it has not been craft beer's finest hour.

With more regional and national craft brewers who call it home than any other state, Colorado has quite a few beer makers under

considerable pressure to continue to expand sales and to figure out how to finance it. The good ol' days of taking market share by converting college students or just opening distribution in a new state are gone. No state is virgin territory any longer due to the growth of craft brewing and the macros are fighting back with their own brands, buying distributors where possible and by buying craft brewers. One only need look at the jump in sales of Goose Island IPA (and the attractively low price due to scale) to see how this strategy is going.

The key element to the perfect storm in Colorado is the way beer has been retailed in the state – primarily by liquor stores. But a new bill was recently signed by Governor Hickenlooper, a co-founder of the Denver's first brewpub, enabling grocery chains to start selling more than the 3.2 ABV beer marketed under the old law. Hickenlooper thinks the new law enabling up to 20 stores in each grocery chain to start selling all strengths of beer is a bad one, but there are protections for the liquor stores, he said, who might directly be affected by a nearby grocery store. And, the governor was

fearful of a ballot initiative that might have opened sales at all big box discount stores or all grocery stores.

Colorado is THE craft state in part because it's been easier for start-ups to find distribution in a beer economy driven by brewers' own tap rooms, smaller shop keepers, i.e. liquor store owners, and bars with multiple taps. But once the discussion shifts to larger retail outlets, it begins to favor big beer due to volume, pricing and a long history of macro brewers dominating these kinds of retailers through distributor relationships.

Given that Golden, Colorado is home to the world's largest brewery operated by the Coors Brewing Company, it's kind of amazing that this distribution push has not succeeded sooner in Colorado. It comes down to history. There's a lot of respect for the legend of the guy who went out West and helped settle the territory by opening a hardware and dry goods store that supported the, um, movement. That guy is alive and well in the form of liquor store owners, the soul of craft retail sales in Colorado in large part because the state has previously allowed only

one license per person or business. (Yep, a grocery chain previously could sell full strength beer in only one store in the state. And yep, Coors is the one of those selling a lot of that 3.2 beer.)

Another key element of the perfect storm is that the Colorado Brewers Guild inevitably got involved in the legislative process that was pushed by modernity, if nothing else, and new citizens moving in as well as big beer when it came to changing how beer is retailed. Above all, the grocery chains wanted the ability to sell all beer and have finally lobbied successfully for that right, although they agreed to a limit of 20 locations for each chain introduced over time – controlled by the issuance of licenses on a per store basis.

The other stormy aspect is the make-up of the current guild is no longer entirely craft brewers because Anheuser-Busch InBev recently purchased the Breckenridge Brewery, a longtime stalwart of the Colorado craft scene, so there's been a previously elected board member in the form of Todd Usry, the president of Breckenridge.

Led by some well known brewers who have created Craft Beer Colorado, the schism occurred as a result of the new legislation. To the departing brewers, it symbolized an organizational process they felt was antithetical to their best interests. It highlighted an impasse when it came to an effort to restructure the organization, which was accused of secrecy among other things. But the chief complaint really seems to be compromising in the name of legislation.

Apparently, the liquor store owners decided to compromise after years of staving off the grocers and the result is now signed by Hickenlooper. The departing brewers take exception to this outcome – but strangely didn't

take much of a public stand on the issue during the process. In effect they blamed the guild for dropping the ball. It became convenient to then suggest the presence of Usry and AB InBev was no longer acceptable, a move that smacks of more scapegoating. One wonders what might have happened with this law without the current guild and how much more the legislation might have favored grocers' interest. And if Hickenlooper was concerned about a ballot initiative, one would think the craft brewers would be, too.

It seems to me that two craft guilds will fare no better than one in the legislative process in Colorado when it comes to promoting the best interest of craft. The lobbying group that worked with the current guild is looking to switch to the new one, which only muddies the picture.

There's an interesting example taking place elsewhere when it comes to beer legislation. A somewhat curious joint effort is being made by the Brewers Association, the home of small and independent brewers based in Boulder, and the Beer Institute, the longtime representative of major brewers in Washington. The two rival factions have joined at the hip to promote a reduction in federal excise taxes for all brewers in a bill still wending its way through the halls of Congress. This effort stands in sharp contrast to the political times in general and specifically to events in Colorado, where paranoia about getting railroaded by grocers and big brewers – despite the huge success of craft – appears to have reached a Rocky Mountain high.

At the same time the BA is waging a very vocal campaign against AB InBev's ability to own distributorships, joining with the Beer Institute is a testimony to how hard it is to get effective legislation sometimes without acknowledging

that there are others involved in the democratic process. The proposed reduction in excise taxes is still circulating and has no guarantee of success, but the BA has decided its brewers will benefit from a reduction and isn't going to worry about how the increase in revenues will also help the macros who comprise the Beer Institute. (Beware, of course, of how the numbers may get switched around in this bill if it becomes law...)

In other words, the BA believes its brewer's products and ability to maneuver in the marketplace will be more important than politically defeating the macro brewers and posting a complete victory on the legislative battlefield. I tend to believe the same thing – that craft brewers have the ingenuity and proven business savvy to deal with the ever changing landscape and a call to arms is not needed every time a BA brewer gets bought by a big brewer or distribution rules are altered.

It's understandable that some craft brewers are now feeling the pressure, possibly self-imposed, when it comes to sustaining what has been an incredible revolution, one that is changing the world in many positive ways. Sometimes I think craft brewers are trying to fight the last war – the war they won 20 years ago when major distributors began carrying craft brands despite pressure from the macros. Somehow, in some quarters, there's the ongoing belief that big brewers – and now grocers – will one day manage to take away our flavorful beer, which is absurd on the face of it. Perhaps the biggest threat is if craft brewers stop speaking out publicly about where they stand.



*Rogue's Nate Lindquist Heats the "Bunghole Caulerizer"*

# The Art of Coopering

by Jim Dykstra

At this point, wood-aged beers are far from obscurity. They are the Bender in *The Breakfast Club* of trending beer styles: brooding, powerful and often surprising in their character arcs throughout the aging process. For most, the flavors imparted from wood aging is where the line of focus is drawn. However, the path to wort on wood action is anything but dull, requiring expertise in an esoteric profession whose fate teeters on the brink of obsolescence.

The profession is coopering, which involves the creation of wooden, staved vessels held together with hoops and flat heads. Though the technological

revolution has whittled it down to an oaken shell of its former industrial glory, coopering has found new life in the craft brewniverse, blending the line between art and science. Throughout upcoming issues, we're going to pull the nail, open the bung and take a look at the intersection of wood, beer and the proud few who burn the torch of a bygone era.

So where'd this almighty vessel come from?

The earliest origins of the barrel are thought to have been natural, rather than man-made. The typical plot line of legend involves a hirsute ancestor stumbling

upon a hollow tree stump full of rainwater. Recognizing its value as a storage container, it wouldn't take a giant leap to slap an animal skin over the top, making a proto-barrel. In fact, Oregon-based Ale Apothecary has put this into practice, brewing a Nordic Sahti in a hollowed-out white spruce log lined with juniper.

What we know for sure is that the basis for the modern barrel evolved in northern Europe and Celtic territories between 1000 and 500 BCE, beginning as a simple wooden bucket and developing alongside the tools needed for more exacting craftsmanship; from early stone tools to bronze, then iron. Such tools allowed for pieces to be joined and eventually enclosed entirely, making for a more portable and shatterproof container than the clay amphorae, which we know to have been used in conjunction with alcoholic beverages since at least 3000 BCE.

As advances in technology go, the techniques used to make a ship seaworthy also applied to creating watertight barrels, and as our ability to sail improved, so did our barrel-making. It helped that the primary method of storage and transportation of goods was the barrel. By the Middle Ages, the barrel ruled, and would continue to do so until the early to mid-20th century, as steel and glass began to usher in a new era, relegating the barrel to part novelty, part antiquity; the flip-phone of containers. Today, around 2.5 million new barrels are produced each year, largely for alcoholic beverages. In the heyday of the barrel, the number was closer to 200 million, including wooden barrels used for oil.

But barrels refuse to go quietly. Wooden containers have long remained at the heart of the whiskey and wine industries, and beer has created an entirely new market for used barrels, and in some cases, new ones constructed specifically for the enhancement of beer.

What kind of wood is ideal for a beer-tight barrel? The short answer is oak, which is strong yet light, malleable and relatively impermeable compared to other woods due to its unique physiology. As a slow growing tree, an oak tree's grains are tight and liquid-resistant. It can take anywhere from 80 to 300 years for an oak to be ready for

harvest, with regulations in place to ensure sustainability. Oak also has a singular quality in that its sap channels, which initially allow nutrients to move through the tree, later fill with a material called tylose, essentially shoring up its conductive capillaries. The tree uses tylose as a mechanism for defense against rot and infection, but for the cooper it helps to create an ideal material. Oak also boasts extensive medullary rays, another form of protection and strength, which exists perpendicular to the tree's rings. [1]


Oak is also a chemically pure wood that produces pleasant flavors ranging from coconut, sweet vanilla, clove, butterscotch, spice and smoke when heat-treated. While oak is the accepted industry standard, it's by no



***A barrel is hoisted at the famed Brasserie Cantillon, which brews lambics that are then aged and blended in barrels.***

means the only wood used to impart flavors to beer. There are many kinds of wood, and many species within each kind, some of which are more suited to wood-aging than others.

You may recognize cedar, cherry, chestnut, pecan, palo santo (most notably used in Dogfish Head's Palo Santo Marron) and a host of others used to imbue all ranges of beers, wines and spirits with countless qualities of



**Though there are no hard and fast rules, oak is the wood of choice for coopering, due to its strength, durability and the flavor characteristics it imparts.**



variable desirability. The intricacies of wood are myriad, and it takes a practiced hand to navigate them.

Like most trades, aspiring coopers learned through committed apprenticeships, usually for a period of seven years. Today, with modern machinery in the mix, the time period ranges from two to four years. The dedication required highlights certain traits that one must possess to even consider the work: patience, a desire and ability to work skillfully with the hands, as measurements can be as exact as one-two thousandth of an inch, and a finely tuned sensory palate – coopering is much more than placement of wood. Much of the work requires a trained nose to gauge the desired char of the barrel, or a keen eye to determine the worthiness of a stave.

## The State of Coopering

A century ago, there were enough coopers to form unions, with the famed Bass Brewery in Burton-on-Trent employing 400 coopers alone. In fact, London's cooper union was officially chartered all the way back in 1501, and was thought to have existed hundreds of years prior. Today, those numbers have dwindled to a fraction. In America, there are thought to be around 25 cooperages of varying size and purpose, and England is down to single digits. Recently, an article appeared in the UK's Telegraph billing Alistair Simms, owner of White Rose Cooperage as England's last "Master Cooper," a title that took 14 years to achieve. Simms voiced his concerns about finding an apprentice to keep the tradition alive in today's world. A similar article posted by the same publication ran in 2009 – no one's taken the bait... yet.

Nevertheless, the practice lives on. Rodenbach keeps a cooper in-residence to maintain its giant foeders, which require an even further specialized knowledge, due to their size and delicacy. Generally, the construction of one foeder requires an entire team of "foudriers," and can take weeks or months, depending on the size. If coopers are skilled builders, then foudriers are architects. We'll take a closer look at foeders later on.

The majority of coopering in America is focused on whiskey and winemaking. Thus, the strongholds of Kentucky and Tennessee produce many of the barrels that are purchased second hand for use with beer, while California boasts the largest number of wine-focused barrelmakers. Production aside, the industry that remains also sees a focus on maintenance, with some businesses solely devoted to barrel repair, while others act as brokerages, acquiring and often maintaining barrels from all over the world. Were you

to desire a Portuguese chestnut barrel used for wine, such brokerages would be a good place to start.

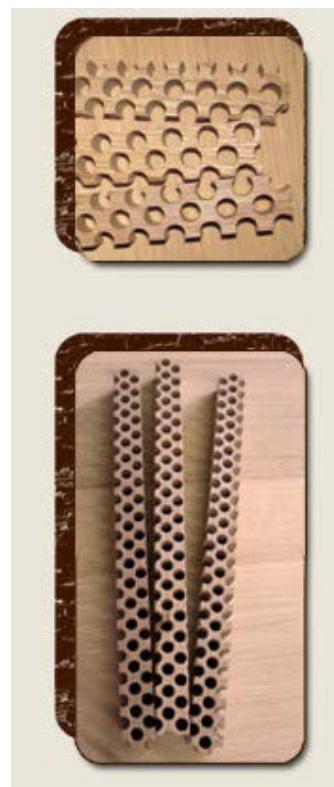
When barrels aren't available, which is a common problem due to the many limitations faced by modern coopers amidst heavy demand, alternatives include wood chips, often soaked in a spirit, or specifically designed wooden contraptions designed to maximize contact with the liquid and impart flavor rapidly. Minnesota's Black Swan cooperage, a family-owned operation, offers a patent-pending "Honey Comb Barrel Alternative" (pictured) in nine different wood "flavors." Sassafras, for example, will imbue your brew with notes of vanilla, mint, sage and root beer.

Wood use in beer isn't always for flavor, though. Budweiser's famed beechwood aging process imparts zero flavor, and they boil the wood specifically to ensure it's as sterile as possible. Why use beechwood at all then? It helps create more surface area, which keeps the yeast active and working as quickly and efficiently as possible. The use of beechwood for this purpose was a common practice in the 19th century, and while it's no longer technically necessary, it is tradition (and a nice marketing tactic).

It's rare that you'll find an all-inclusive cooper, engaged at every step of the process. In America, there's only one that goes from sourcing wood to filling the barrel, Rogue's Rolling Thunder Barrelworks.

Longtime employee Nate Lindquist fashions local Oregon White Oak into barrels by hand on vintage equipment. At max capacity, he cranks out one a day, indicative of both the attention to detail and level of specialization required in coopering.

After purchasing the equipment, Rogue President Brett Joyce had to find someone who had the necessary character traits to succeed as a cooper. With almost three decades of experience at Rogue, Nate was the first choice.





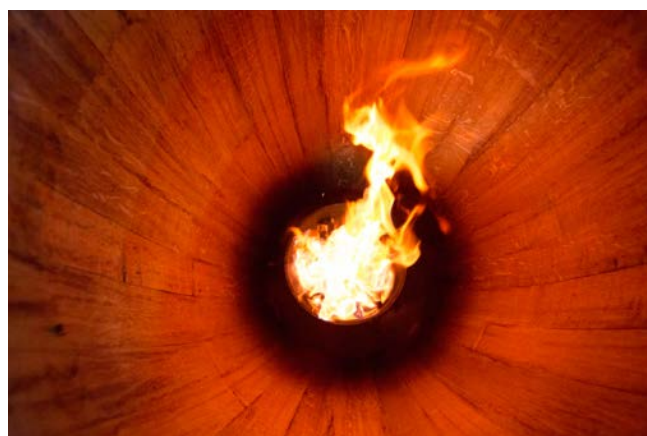
***Lindquist determines the appropriate level of char with no tools, save for his senses – specifically sight and smell.***

“Nate has a lot of qualities that make him a good cooper,” said Joyce. “It takes brains – he’s a smart guy, and it takes a real work ethic. Nobody in this company has a work ethic like Nate. You also have to be a little bit crazy to want to do it. It’s an old school craft and you have to have the patience and passion, and you have to be mechanically inclined. It didn’t take long to think about who might be able to pull this off. He’s even got the look and personality.”

Lindquist, who isn’t averse to charring barrels in a kilt, packed his apprenticeship into a year at the nearby Oregon Barrelworks. By the end of his tenure, he was able to summon a barrel from a pile of staves – assembling, raising, toasting, charring, hooping, setting the heads, permanently hooping, cauterizing, sanding and branding each barrel. All in a day’s work.

“We’ve been making barrels for over a year now,” Joyce said. “It’s one of the best embodiments of our philosophy – Dare, Risk, Dream.”

Two years since the initial dream, Rolling Thunder Barrelworks is releasing its first beer – Rolling Thunder Imperial Stout. The barrels used for the stout were soaked for a year in Rogue Dead Guy Whiskey, and then filled with the stout, which features eight grains, Rogue Farms hops, brown sugar, sweet dark cherries,



***The “Eye of Sauron” leers up at the cooper during the barrel charring phase, which is integral to the flavors imparted during the aging of beer.***

vanilla and chocolate. The beer is then aged six months in the barrels.

Coopering requires a bit of daring, plenty of monetary and physical risk between fires, brands and heavy machinery, and the vision to fashion a barrel of specific character from a piece of timber. And we’ve barely scratched the surface of this nearly forsaken art form.

Stay tuned next issue for a closer look at the processes involved in breathing life into a barrel, and the tools needed for the job.



# Flying Saucer

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# Style Studies



by Jim Dykstra

## Kellerbier

When you think of a lager, you'll generally think of an exceedingly mild, crisp and clear beer. However, there's a style of lager that kicks these expectations right out of the mash. Kellerbiers are typically unfiltered, unpasteurized lagers born of deep German tradition – the name translates directly to “cellar beer,” as the beer would be served fresh directly from the lagering cellars or caves beneath breweries.

Were the beer lagered further, it would likely become a Munich Helles or Marzen, depending on the malt bill. Today, the BJCP delineates these sub-styles as Pale and Amber Kellerbier.

As with most lagers, the alcohol range is mild, varying from 4.7% to 5.4% ABV, though characteristics such as color and mouthfeel vary depending on the base style. Compared to the average lager, kellerbiers can be expected to have a slightly creamier texture due to yeast character, which also manifests itself in inoffensive flavor notes of sulfur and diacetyl. The latter can also contribute to a slicker mouthfeel, and the mild level of attenuation also creates a softer, more gently carbonated beer.

Flavor profiles vary with base style, but benchmarks include a grainy, sweet and lightly malty base with low to moderate Noble hop presence, combining for a finish that, while crisp, dry and sometimes bitter, is always tempered by maltiness and the rounded character from yeast.

# Style Studies

There's also much tradition in when and how kellerbier is served. In the 19th century, a kellerbier was any strong beer aged in and served directly from rock cellars. As refrigeration became commonplace, the phrase evolved to special beers served young, directly from the lagering vessel or cellar. As such, though bottled or canned versions do exist, this style is made for draft.

The customs associated with kellerbier are still in place today, especially around Munich and its surrounding areas. Alternate names for kellerbier stem from such traditions – Naturtrüb, or naturally cloudy, and Zwickelbier, which refers to the name of the tap used to sample from the lagering tank.

It should be noted that kellerbier is a fluid term – it describes more the aging and serving processes than specific stylistic requirements. The BJCP allows for multiple styles, such as Pils, Bock or Schwarzbier to be entered as Kellerbier for competition, provided the entry includes a style description for judges.

The sum of the whole is a pleasant, flavorful lager perfectly poised for a rise in popularity, as palates return to favor the nuances of a lager with a little more character and body than the average lawnmower beer.

## PALE KELLERBIER

**Vital Statistics:**  
**OG: 1.045 – 1.051**  
**IBUs: 20 – 35**  
**FG: 1.008 – 1.012**  
**SRM: 3 – 7**  
**ABV: 4.7 – 5.4%**

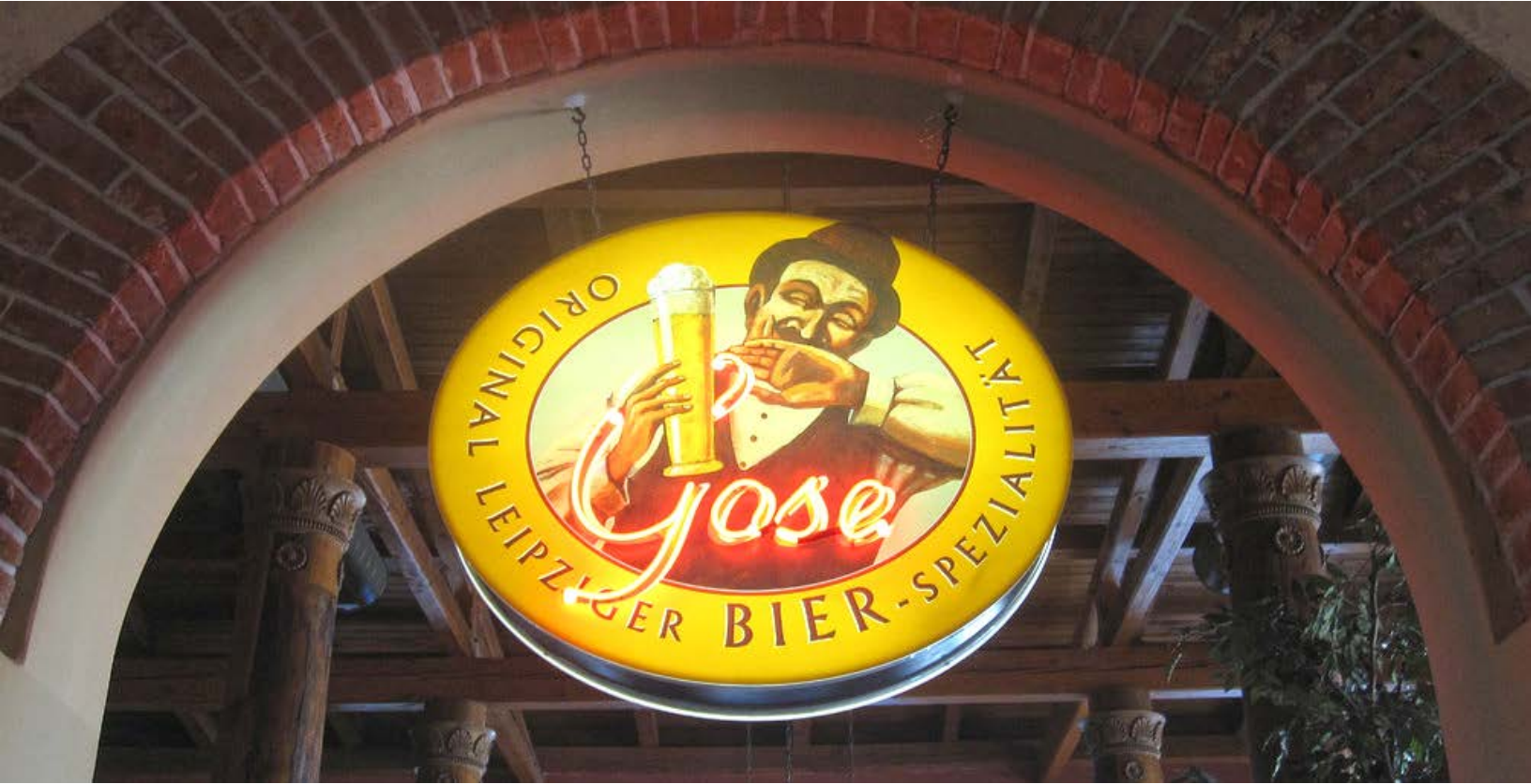
**Commercial Examples:** (local) Paulaner, Paulaner Brauhaus, Hofbrau, Tegernseer Tal. (bottled) Ayinger Kellerbier, Hacker-Pschorr Munchner Kellerbier Anno 1417, Summit 30th Anniversary Keller Pils

## AMBER KELLERBIER

**Vital Statistics:**  
**OG: 1.048 – 1.054**  
**IBUs: 25 – 40**  
**FG: 1.012 – 1.016**  
**SRM: 7 – 17**  
**ABV: 4.8 – 5.4%**

**Commercial Examples:** (local) Greif, Eichhorn, Nederkeller, Hebindanz (bottled) Buttenheimer Kaiserdom Kellerbier, Mahr's Kellerbier, Green Flash Sea to Sea Zwickel Lager





**Gose** (pronounced go-zuh), is another style rooted in German tradition that has found a firm foothold in the hearts and palates of modern connoisseurs. The bright, refreshing Gose style began in Goslar, Germany, where minerals from the nearby Harz Mountains provided the River Gose with a tangy, mineral quality that the locals described as “copper water.”

This water provided the base for what would become Gose, a spritzy, tart and salty beverage spiced with coriander that had the Bavarian region of Saxony buzzing as far back as 1239, the year of the first recorded mention of Gose from one Duke Otto von Braunschweig.

Stylistic hallmarks include noticeable, but balanced lacto acidity, wheaty to doughy malt character, moderate notes of stone or citrus fruits with a light body and dry finish, often punctuated with tartness.

This rollercoaster ride for the tastebuds was especially hot in Leipzig, capital of the German state of Saxony where, at the height of its popularity, at least 80 licensed Leipziger Gose houses served the briny suds. Things were groovy for Gose from 1738 until the early 20th century, when Germany’s geopolitical affairs detracted from time that might have otherwise been spent enjoying this delightfully sour concoction.

By the end of World War II, the last remaining Gose brewery had ceased production, and save for one small brewer in Leipzig from 1949 to 1966, the venerable Gose had ceased to be, and it took twenty years for a

man named Lothar Goldhahn to revive the style at the Schultheiss Weissbier brewery.

Decades later, Gose has finally regained its stature both in Germany and America, where brewers are exploring piquant variations on the theme, adding all manner of adjuncts including lime, cucumber, blood orange, watermelon and blackberries. The now-defunct Aloha Beer Company even experimented with seawater as a liquor for brewing Gose.

Similar to a Berliner Weisse, Gose is ripe for blending. It can be sweetened with syrups, or fortified with various liqueurs, and pairs well with robust seafood flavors like smoked salmon or oysters.

No longer an obscurity, Gose is gaining popularity as an easily palatable brew suitable for almost any occasion. Whether served in its traditional stange or a can, it remains a living piece of history perhaps more relevant than ever before.

**Vital Statistics:**  
**OG: 1.036 - 1.056**  
**IBUs: 5 - 12**  
**FG: 1.006 - 1.010**  
**SRM: 3 - 4**  
**ABV: 4.2 - 4.8%**

**Commercial Examples:** *Anderson Valley Gose, Bayerisch Bahnhof Leipziger Gose, Döllnitzer Ritterguts Gose, Uinta Ready Set Gose, DESTIHL Here Gose Nothin’, FATE Uror, Westbrook Gose, Sixpoint Jammer*

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# Indy Car Driver ‘Hinch’ Gives Lift to Flat 12 Bierwerks

..... by *Jonathan Ingram*

James Hinchcliffe takes his beer drinking and his Indy car driving seriously. But he’s also a funny guy. Some of this results from being Canadian, but much of it has to do with Hinchcliffe not being cut from the same flame-resistant Nomex as his fellow race car drivers.

Known as the Mayor of Hinchtown, for example, who else is the plenipotentiary of his own online village?

An accomplished racer, Hinchcliffe won the pole at this year’s Indianapolis 500 and counts four career victories in the Verizon IndyCar Series to his credit. Also, he had the unique distinction of replacing Danica Patrick at the Andretti Autosport team after she moved to NASCAR – making more than a few people forget she was once there.

Hinchcliffe, also known as Hinch, transformed himself into one of the most recognizable and beloved drivers in Indianapolis, one of the finest feats since “Danica Mania.” Perhaps there’s a future bid for mayor of Indy by Hinch once his racing days are completed. If nothing else, he is the toast of craft

beer lovers in Indianapolis – as well as Hinchtown.com – after four years of collaborating with the city’s Flat 12 Bierwerks.

This year the Indianapolis Motor Speedway welcomed an impressive crowd of 350,000 to the Indy 500, where every seat was full, the infield was jammed and more than a few fans lofted one of the Hinchcliffe collaborations to salute the pole winner at the start: Hinchtown Hammerdown Pilsner and Bricks Red IPA. It was the 100th running of the world’s largest single-day sporting event and the Bricks Red, which honored the track’s brick-paved origins, carried 100 IBUs of Centennial hops. There was a pinch of milk sugar, too, in honor of the tradition of drinking milk in Victory Lane at the Brickyard.

Hinchcliffe’s career storyline includes an amazing comeback from a near-fatal accident in May of 2015, when a suspension piece pierced the chassis of his car after a practice crash – and also the driver’s femoral artery. Soon, Flat 12 was producing cans of Hammerdown with “Get Well Soon Hinch” stamped on them.

Brewmaster Sean Manahan now kids his collaborator that he’s not himself anymore, since it took 14 pints of somebody’s else’s blood to bring him back to life.

Hinch’s first real question of his doctors at Methodist Hospital after regaining consciousness concerned the upcoming 2015 race that he was ostensibly practicing for: “Will I be OK in time for the 500?” The answer was “No, James, probably not.”

That’s when it began to sink in that the time missing from his memory was an iffy period where the smart, quick work of safety crews saved his life.

Upon regaining consciousness Hinch didn’t first ask for a refreshing namesake pilsner, the one designed for craft lovers to hoist all day at the track or for premium light beer drinkers to drink and “not feel like they just ate a turkey dinner.”

Nor did he come back this year to win the race after winning the pole at 230.760 mph, though he did lead the race 11 times for 27 laps and finished fifth in one of the most compelling 500s ever run – The



12



HINCHTOWN  
Hammerdown

A PILSNER STYLE BEER



cottage, especially in Ontario, there's a huge cottage culture around Toronto and sitting by the lake on the weekend. Yeah, you go through an awful lot of beer when you're sitting by a lake."

Hinchtown, in fact, was conceived with a few beers at hand. "We were sitting in the basement of an office in Ludington, Michigan, drinking beer and started brainstorming ideas," said Hinchcliffe. "It was the time of my career to build a website and I was with a few guys who were helping me out... We looked at all the websites that drivers were doing in F1 and IndyCar and NASCAR, etc. We came to two conclusions. One, they were exactly all the same and two, they all sucked. We wanted to do something different... We sat there for a couple of hours bouncing around ideas and we settled on Hinchtown and me being the mayor and it's kind of taken on a life of its own."

Most Interesting Man in the World has nothing on this guy.

So how did the Mayor of Hinchtown let his fans know he was really back for this year's 500 and in seriously good health? He ran an ad on his Facebook page for his new Hinch-Lift app. The photo showed the driver carrying a sleepy-headed guy piggyback and the caption offered this:

*Had a long night? Need a ride home but don't want to pay Uber surge charges? Introducing the brand new discount ride sharing app, Hinch-Lift! Just hail Hinch from the app and he will come and piggy back you home! Costs are kept down by the complete lack of a car and all those pesky bills that go along with maintaining one. We are in beta testing now, but look for Hinch-Lift to be in a city that hosts an Indycar race near you this summer.*

Hinch gets it when it comes to racing, athletic stardom and beer. Be passionate and dedicated, but don't take it all too seriously. That might be un-Canadian.

Hinchcliffe grew up in Oakville, located on Lake Ontario just south of Toronto. "Beer is definitely the libation of choice for the Canadian youth," he said. "By youth I mean, of course, 19 years old because that's what the drinking age is in Ontario. You're sitting around watching hockey games with buddies or up at the



**After a near-fatal crash in 2015, Flat 12 festooned a wall of its brewery and bottoms of can with wishes for Hinch's speedy recovery.**

It wasn't until Hinchcliffe first came to Indianapolis in 2009 that he got interested in craft brews. "It took a while," he said. "It wasn't something I was born with. For a long time I thought Heineken was a little too much to drink. When I moved to Indianapolis, there's a huge craft beer culture at Indy... I started experimenting with different styles and different craft brews and learning

to appreciate them a little bit better. I was a lager guy for a long time. It was probably before I got introduced to the guys at Flat 12. Being in Indy as the explosion happened, it definitely expanded my palate.”

The relationship with Flat 12’s founder Sean O’Connor began shortly after Hinchcliffe joined the Andretti Autosport team in 2012, which raised his career profile considerably as the guy who would replace Patrick and represent GoDaddy in IndyCar. (Following three seasons with Andretti, Hinchcliffe joined Schmidt-Peterson Motorsports.)

Hinchcliffe told his accountant he was looking for something to sponsor that was “local and really cool.” The accountant put him together with another client – Flat 12 founder O’Connor – and the collaboration was born. From their first meeting over beers a little more than four years ago, the match-up with O’Connor turned out to be a good fit in terms of both beer and personalities.

Hinchcliffe has subsequently become the unofficial coach for the karting escapades of O’Connor’s son in addition to the chief beer collaborator. “Sean is motivated, he’s passionate about racing and passionate about beer,” said Hinchcliffe.

O’Connor is a former merger and acquisition specialist who worked in Europe for Indianapolis-based Klitsch & Associates, the hi-fi speaker company. When in Europe, O’Connor fell in love with Dutch and Belgian beers. He took the plunge in 2010 and opened Flat 12 Bierwerks in the Holy Cross neighborhood, a section of the city once popular with German immigrants who sustained several local breweries.

The German connection explains the spelling of the Bierwerks and the Flat 12 is a reference to innovation as well as racing. As engines go, a flat 12-cylinder engine is rare; in fact, one has never appeared in the Indy 500 in a racing car, although they have powered Ferraris in Formula 1.

“The name Flat 12 pays more homage to the history of racing than any specific genre,” said O’Connor. “I didn’t try to peg it to any one driver, or car or race. The 12-cylinder flathead engine was kind of developed here in Indianapolis and had a reputation for quality and American ingenuity. That’s what we pride ourselves on with the beers that we make – great American beer, ingenuity, stretching the limits and doing fun things.”

Fully recovered from his accident, Hinchcliffe put in time at the brewhouse to help with the collaboration brews.

With a name like Flat 12 and some good beers on the table in the taproom, the racing angle played well at his first meeting with Hinchcliffe, said O’Connor. “It was a really cool natural fit, in a much different way than if somebody had said, ‘Hey, I want to introduce you to Peyton Manning or Reggie Miller.’ Not that those guys aren’t Indianapolis icons.”

As for the Hammerdown beer, in its third year of packaging each May, Hinch was involved from concept to completion. Originally a golden ale, it was decided to switch to a pilsner with relatively low ABV and an excellent malt-to-hop balance. Compared to a traditional pilsner, what makes it delicious is the slight edge of sweetness and hop bitterness. It is well-aimed for hot race days at 4.8 percent ABV and 27 IBUs.



### ***Hinchcliffe with the 2015 Hinchtown/Flat 12 collaboration.***

“But,” says Hinch, “I’m an IPA guy. I won’t lie. I always talked with Sean O’Connor about doing another one and if I did another one I’d want it to be an IPA. We started chatting about it. Sean Manahan [Flat 12 Brewmaster], he kind of designed a flavor profile in his head and wanted to pay homage to the race as best he could... We made just one batch, a limited run, but I was in there at 7 in the morning throwing hops into the tank, stirring the pot and it



***Fully recovered from his accident, Hinchcliffe put in time at the brewhouse to help with the collaboration brews.***

was fun to be part of the process right from the beginning.”

While Manahan gives the nod to Hinch when it comes to Mario Kart on Nintendo, he’s the Merlin behind the beer, a single IPA at 6.4 percent ABV. “It was tricky to get 100 IBUs in there and make it work,” said Manahan. “It was really a matter of spreading it out and adding hops over the entire course of the boil so that the IBUs don’t punch you in the mouth. We wanted it to be aggressive – it’s a racing beer. But we didn’t want to be offensive.” In honor of Hinch’s friend and fellow Indy car driver Scott Dixon of New Zealand, some Wakatu hops were also part of the mix.

Prior to this year’s race, there was a veritable parade of enthusiasts at the Flat 12 brewery, which is painted a very canny flat red. Fans wanted the canned four-packs for the race and the party the night before on Georgetown Road. Flat 12 also is among those that have concession rights at the Speedway.

In addition to its hometown, Flat 12 is sold in Cincinnati and Louisville, where a Flat 12 pub has been established in Kentuckiana. Using a 20-barrel DME system, the brewery has grown from 1,000 barrels its first year to 10,000 in 2016, in part because of the Speedway, which also hosts NASCAR and a major vintage event each year. But it’s the Indy 500 and the month of May

schedule that is the biggest draw and the city’s claim to fame.

No wonder one of those selling the four-packs at the brewery said the company doesn’t sponsor Hinchcliffe. “He sponsors us,” she said proudly. Once again, His Honor has found a whole new approach. Instead of a macro brewer spending millions to go racing, he’s collaborating in order to go brewing. Meanwhile, his favorite brewer can go racing in a sport where sponsorships generally run seven to eight figures.

Although the Flat 12 brand is not a direct sponsor on the car, various promotions – such as the launch of Bricks Red at the brewery featuring Hinch, fellow driver Conor Daly and

racing simulators, or a photo of the car sitting on the track with a four-pack of the IPA on the nose – helps clinch the Hinch connection.

The mainstays at Flat 12 include Half Cycle IPA, Walkabout Pale Ale, Upside Down Blonde and Pogue’s Run Porter, plus seasonals like the Cucumber Kolsch. They’re close to the classic mold, but push the boundaries. The Walkabout, for instance, is another beer where Manahan has relatively high IBUs for the style without losing taste to bitterness. The Woodwerks cellar has been in operation since the brewery opened and this year expects to release about 60 beers aged in tequila, rum, whiskey, wine and port barrels.

The goal for O’Connor, whose family has been fans of the Indy 500 for five generations, is to have Flat 12 on the side of a car, which would require a significant boost in barrel production that is not on the immediate horizon. For Hinchcliffe, who knows?

Maybe one day he’ll race flat out at Indy in a flat red car with Flat 12 on the side. The ultimate goal is winning the world’s biggest race and clinching one of the sport’s greatest comebacks. This year was a good start.

“To get back on the track a year after the accident happened and to put it on pole, I was especially proud of the guys at Schmidt-Peterson,” he said. “All the hard work that they put into the race cars to make them as slippery as they are. To be a factor in the race, really right up until the last stint, I think it speaks volumes just for all the effort put into it... Sure, the end result was not the fairy tale we were hoping for, but we can be proud of what we did... We laid it out there and it was a great effort by the whole team.”

Will there be a third Hinch beer added to the line-up next May?

“We’re playing it by ear at the minute,” said Hinchcliffe. “It’s tough. I always wanted to do an IPA and I wanted to do that with Bricks. It was a one-off beer. But man, it sold well and tasted great. It’s so tempting to make it again next year. It might be better to stick with it that way or have people remember the allure and the myth of the Bricks IPA and try something else... We’ll see what comes about organically.”

So there you have it. Straight from City Hall at Hinchtown, where we suspect you know which beers are on tap.



***The Bricks, a Red IPA, was a popular limited release that debuted in advance of the 2015 running of the Indy 500.***

# Summertime Beer Picnic

*Story & photos by Sherry Dryja*

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Summer picnics and craft beer were made to go together. While our picnic menu is packed with traditional favorites like fried chicken, potato salad, corn on the cob, and blackberry cobbler, we ventured a bit out of the basket to bring you some unique beer pairings.

Usually malt-forward styles such as pilsners, märzens, and Munich helles are good pairings with fried chicken. The malts in these styles resonate with the browned crust on the bird. Our Spicy Fried Chicken has a mild kick to it, thanks to the taco seasoning added to the crust. We combined this with The Cowboy, a smoked pilsner from Evil Twin Brewing. The beer deepens the flavors of the meat, creating the sensation of chicken that's been smoked over a cowboy's campfire.

The Cowboy also deepens the flavors in our classic potato salad, but we preferred the brighter notes teased out by Black Raven Brewing's Flock Party Pale Ale. It's a malty brew heavy with orange citrus zing. This combination harmonizes with the richness of the creamy mayo and elevates the other, lighter flavors in the dish. It may leave you wondering if you just had dessert. It also might send you back for seconds.

While you're loading up your plate with more potato salad, pour an extra glass of High Water's Cucumber Kölsch for the Grilled Corn on the Cob with Green Chile-Spiced Butter. As with Black Raven's pale ale, High Water's kölsch lightens up the potato salad and is delightfully refreshing with the corn and butter.

Our Blackberry Cobbler keeps the happiness flowing when paired with Quilter's Irish Death Dark Smooth

Ale from Iron Horse Brewery. The cobbler has crust on the bottom and the top. Because of the high crust-to-berry ratio, stouts and porters with vanilla and caramel notes are classic styles to pair with it, but Irish Death enriches the dessert in a holistic way. This "beer candy," as Iron Horse lovingly calls their brew, brings together the rich, buttery crust and the juicy berries without rendering the whole thing cloyingly sweet.

Black Raven's Flock Party Ale is a delicious alternative (or additional) pairing with the cobbler. It brings out the sweetness in the cobbler while creating a taste combination that can only be described as "doughnutty."

If the idea of pairing flavors like citrus and cucumber to potato salad and corn on the cob leaves you cold, allow us to suggest one last beer: Bainbridge Brewing's Kömmuter Kölsch. In spite of its rainy Seattle roots, this brew has a sunny disposition that plays well with everything on our menu. It's a classic picnic beer that is pleasing all the way around.

Now that you're armed with an unbeatable menu and pairing options that are both unique and classic, gather up your friends, find a sunny patch of grass, and enjoy the summer sun.



AB

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SANTA CRUZ

# Potato Salad

## **Ingredients:**

6 russet potatoes  
6 hardboiled eggs  
3 large dill pickles, or to taste  
1 cup mayonnaise  
½ cup stone-ground mustard  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper

## **Directions:**

Peel the potatoes, rinse, and cut into bite-size pieces, about 1-inch. Place in a large pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to medium-high and continue a gentle boil for 15 to 20 minutes, until the potatoes are cooked through. Drain in a colander and set aside to cool.

Peel and chop the eggs to desired size – larger pieces will give the salad an eggier bite, smaller pieces will mix into the background of the salad. Likewise, chop the pickles to desired size for similar effect.

Add the eggs, pickles, mayo, mustard, salt, and pepper to the cooled potatoes and stir until all the ingredients are evenly mixed.

For best results, make a day before eating and refrigerate overnight to allow all the flavors to come together.

**Serves 6**





# Grilled Corn on the Cob with Green Chili-Spiced Butter

## **Ingredients:**

8 ounces unsalted butter, softened  
4-ounce can diced green chiles, drained  
½ teaspoon taco seasoning  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon grated lime zest  
4 ears of corn

## **Directions:**

Make the butter at least 2 hours before grilling the corn. Place all the ingredients for butter into a small bowl. Mash and stir until they are well combined.

Spoon butter onto parchment paper or plastic wrap. Roll into a log and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

To make the corn, heat a grill on high. Remove the husks and

silk. Butter each ear of corn with 1 tablespoon of Chile-Spiced Butter. Salt and pepper to taste.

Wrap each ear of corn tightly in aluminum foil. Place on the prepared grill. Cook approximately 30 minutes, turning occasionally, until corn is tender.

Serve straight off the grill with additional Chile-Spiced Butter.

**Serves 4**





# Spicy Fried Chicken

## **Ingredients:**

6 pieces of chicken meat with skin on  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon kosher salt  
2 teaspoons taco seasoning  
Vegetable oil for frying

## **Directions:**

Pour vegetable oil into a cast iron skillet or heavy-duty pan until there is about an inch of oil in the pan. Set the heat to medium-high to bring the oil temperature to 350°F.

While the oil is heating, prepare the chicken. Place the flour, salt, and taco seasoning in a sealable bag. Seal the bag and shake it until spices are mixed throughout the flour.

Add several pieces of chicken to the bag. Seal it and shake it gently until the chicken is coated in the flour mixture. Shake excess flour off the chicken and place it on a clean plate. Do this with all the chicken pieces until they are coated.

When the oil is heated to 350°F gently lower two or three pieces of chicken into the pan. Be careful not to overcrowd the meat. Cook chicken until it is golden brown on each side. This will take about 10 minutes per side. The finished internal temperature should be 165°F or higher.

When the first batch is complete, remove it to a cooling rack set over a sheet pan. Finished chicken can also be kept warm in a 200°F oven. If serving cold, cool it at room temperature, place it in a sealable container, and store in the fridge.

**Serves 6**

# Blackberry Cobbler

## Ingredients:

1 cup butter, divided in half  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup water  
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2-1/4 teaspoons baking powder  
1/3 cup milk, room temperature  
2 cups fresh or frozen blackberries  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, divided  
2 tablespoons sugar, divided

## Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.  
Melt a 1/2-cup of the butter in the microwave. Pour into the bottom of a 10-inch round baking dish. (To make individual servings, divide the butter over 8 medium-sized ramekins.) Set aside.

Heat the sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium to medium-high heat until the sugar melts and the liquid is clear. Set aside.

Dice the remaining butter and add it, along with the flour, salt, and baking powder, to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until the butter is cut into fine crumbs. Add the milk and pulse several times until the mixture comes together and the dough leaves the side of the bowl. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead three or four times. The dough will be buttery and smooth.

Divide the dough in half. Roll out one half to the size of the bottom of your baking dish. Place that half on the bottom of the butter-coated dish.

Spread the berries evenly over the dough in the dish and sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon and 1 tablespoon of sugar. Roll out the second half of the dough.



Cut the dough into circles using several different sizes of round pastry cutters. Place the pastry circles in a decorative way over the berries.

Carefully pour the sugar syrup over the dough and berries. Sprinkle the top with the remaining cinnamon and sugar.

Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, until the top crust is golden brown.

Remove from the oven, cool, and allow the juices to firm up in the refrigerator overnight.

**Serves 8-10**



# CRAFT BEER IN THE LAND OF LAGERS

## South Africa's Evolving Beer Scene

by Lucy Corne

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This year, on IPA Day (August 4th), some bars in Cape Town, South Africa, will have upwards of 25 India Pale Ales on tap. This might not seem like anything spectacular, but consider this: Five years ago, few people in South Africa knew what an IPA was and not a single local brewery produced one.

South Africa has long been a land of lagers. SABMiller, the world's second-largest brewing company (which will soon be taken over by the world's largest, AB InBev) is based in South Africa and controls around 90% of the local market. The corporation has always championed pale lagers and until quite recently, beer drinkers had very few other options. But craft beer is booming here now, and things are changing rapidly.

The country's first microbrewery – Mitchell's Brewery – launched way back in 1983 and while its founder Lex

Mitchell is sometimes referred to as the “godfather of South African craft beer” it would be another couple of decades before the concept of craft beer would truly take off. And it wouldn't be a massively hopped IPA or a thick, potent stout that would lure people away from their mainstream beer, but rather another clean, simple lager.

This shift occurred in 2007, when local lad Ross McCulloch and his Canadian wife Megan MacCallum set up Jack Black Brewing Company in Capetown and managed to convince macro brand-loyal South Africans to switch to a flavorful, microbrewed lager.

When Jack Black's lager first found its way into South African fridges, there were fewer than 10 microbreweries across South Africa, a country about half the size of the Midwest with a population of 55 million. Today, less



## Cape Town's Jack Black Brewing Company helped convince macro-loyal South Africans to switch to more flavorful craft lager.

than a decade on, there are more than 160 craft breweries scattered about the country, with hundreds more navigating the web of red tape to obtain a brewing license. Jack Black is still a major player in the industry, and following nine years of contract brewing at various breweries around Cape Town, the brand finally has its own brewhouse, a 25-barrel (3000-litre) Kaspar Schulz system imported from Germany.

The brewery opened at the start of July in a small industrial complex in Cape Town's suburbs. The lager is joined on tap by a pilsner, a pale ale, a weissbier and an IPA. Beer-loving locals swarm the hip taproom with its furniture fashioned from brewhouse packaging materials, street art etched on the walls and food trucks parked outside. It might seem like a small setup, but by South African standards, Jack Black's new brewery is a significant size. The average batch of beer produced in South Africa is around 3.5 barrels (400 litres) and few breweries put out more than 42 barrels (5000 litres) in a month.

Of course, larger producers do exist. Darling Brew, another local veteran that also began as a contract brewer, launched their 25-barrel (3000-litre) brewery complete with restaurant earlier this year in the rural town of Darling, an hour's drive north of Cape Town. Then there is Cape Brewing Company, where up to 42,000 barrels (50,000 hectolitres) of lager, pilsner, weissbier and IPA are produced each year. Sitting in the Cape Winelands, Cape Brewing Company is one of an increasing number

of breweries challenging wine on its own turf. In fact, many wineries are opening small breweries on their farms, keen to get on board with the Cape's current passion for beer and to offer something a little different in the heavily saturated South African wine market.

Back in the city, there is an urban brew route emerging in the arty suburb of Woodstock. Here, you can ditch your car and walk from taproom to taproom, starting at Riot Brewery, known for its heavily-hopped IPAs. Just half a mile away, Drifter Brewing Company also produces a popular IPA, alongside a red lager and an ale infused with coconut. A five-minute walk away is one of South Africa's most interesting breweries, the Brewers Co-op. Established in 2015, the Co-op sees 15 former homebrewers coming together to brew 120-liter batches of

anything from a blonde ale using South African-grown malt and hops to a rye IPA that took the top spot in the country's 2015 National Craft Championships.

The nearby Woodstock Brewery is known for its seasonal ales, which are on sale in the taproom alongside the core range, developed by an American homebrewer who used to call Cape Town home. And then there is Devil's Peak Brewing Company, considered to be at the forefront of craft brewing in South Africa. They were the first to introduce the American IPA to a wider South African audience and while their lager far outsells the superb King's Blockhouse IPA, the latter has won numerous awards as well as a cult following around the country. Their barrel-aged saisons, sour ales and beer-wine hybrids have a smaller fanbase but the new, limited-edition releases ensure that Cape Town's growing contingent of beer geeks keep coming back to Devil's Peak's urban taproom.

Cape Town is certainly the center of the South African brewing scene, with close to half of the country's breweries in or around the city, but that's not to say that there's nothing happening elsewhere – breweries are scattered around all nine of South Africa's provinces. There are breweries with 25-barrel (300-litre) systems cobbled together from old milk or wine or olive tanks; there are tiny 4-barrel (50-litre) breweries sitting on farms near the famous Kruger National Park; there are part-time brew-



**Few South African craft breweries produce more than 42 barrels per month, including Darling Brew, which tops out at 25.**

ers producing thirst-quenching lagers in surfing hotspots along the coast; there are cozy brewpubs serving warming Belgian styles in the foothills of the Maluti Mountains; and there are stylish taprooms opening in the gritty city centre of Johannesburg. The newest addition to the so-called “City of Gold” is Mad Giant, yet another brand that has traded in contract brewing for a real-life brewhouse, this time in a spectacularly revamped building in a gentrified corner of Johannesburg.

One thing that many of these breweries have in common is that somewhere in their range, you’ll find a pale lager or a blonde ale so lager-like that most drinkers can’t tell the difference. Whether it’s the weather or the country’s long-term love affair with lager, it’s still the style that most South Africans reach for while they’re watching cricket or hosting their beloved braai (barbeque). But while most breweries do produce a crowd-pleaser, the beer repertoire is expanding swiftly and in some very interesting directions. For the most part, of course, South African

brewers are producing global beer styles – Belgian witbiers, German weissbiers, American Pale Ales and Irish stouts – but there is an increasing trend towards giving beer recipes a South African twist.

Those of you that occasionally drink something other than beer might be familiar with rooibos, also known as “red bush,” a type of herbal tea produced solely in South Africa. The indigenous plant has recently found another use with a handful of breweries using it to flavor their beers. Grown in similar areas and also used in tea is buchu, a medicinal herb with a pungent, menthol-like aroma. Used in small quantities, it can add a pleasant sweetness to a beer and offers interesting aromas of mint and blackcurrant. It is perhaps best represented in Loxton Lager, a 4.8% ABV pale lager flavored with buchu, honey and other indigenous herbs. It’s one of those beers that you’ll love or loathe, but it’s a must-taste if you’re visiting – it doesn’t get much more South African than this!



**Devil’s Peak in Cape Town is one of the most well-known South African breweries due to the cult following of its King’s Blockhouse IPA.**

Loxton Lager is brewed under contract by Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela, one of the country’s few female craft brewers, at Brewhogs brewery on the outskirts of Johannesburg. Loxton is brewed alongside Apiwe’s own beers, all of which speak of her proud South African roots and her brewing background with SABMiller. While the rest of the country attempts to get their lager-loving public to embrace the IPA, Brewhogs are trying to lure the IPA drinkers back to the beer that they started out on. In their range is a pilsner, a red lager, an India Pale Lager (IPL) and a black IPL.

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**Jonannesburg’s Mad Giant transitioned from nomadic contract brewing to a brick-and-mortar establishment, which is a common trend among South Africa’s craft breweries.**

“Lagers are much more interesting than many beer drinkers – and brewers – think, and our aim is to show South African drinkers that lagers can have the same variety in color, flavor and aroma [as ales],” Apiwe says. You might think that drinkers flock to the Brewhogs stand at a beer festival because they see ‘lager’ etched on the chalkboard menu but that’s not the case.

“What I find interesting is that a lot of beer drinkers still refer to our beers as ales,” explains Apiwe. “Most South African beer drinkers consider a lager to be ‘what SAB and Heineken make’ – everything else is considered an ale, so I have to do a lot of educating and explaining.”

Although it’s growing rapidly, the South African scene is still very young and there is a lot more for drinkers – and brewers – to learn. But the thirst for beer knowledge is almost as strong as the thirst for the beer itself. There are half a dozen major festivals around the country each year, homebrewing shops are cropping up all over the place, courses and conferences are beginning to take hold and while the vast majority of bars still offer only SAB lagers, there are a growing number of restaurants with more than 20 taps of local craft beer to choose from.

South Africa might still be a land of lagers, but on IPA day, groups of beer lovers will descend on taprooms,



**Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela (front left) is one of the country’s few female craft brewers at Brewhogs, which delivers interesting styles to its lager-loving public.**

brewpubs and dedicated beer bars to work their way through flights of local IPAs. Some pints might be flavored with buchu or rooibos and others will feature coconut, roasted malt or bushels of imported C-hops, but all will be raised to toast a young, flourishing industry at the southern tip of Africa.



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# Fulfilling the Call of the Arizona Wilderness

*To its founders, Arizona Wilderness represents a way of life.*

by *Dave Clark*

Co-founders Jonathan Buford and Patrick Ware sit together on one of the few unfilled patio tables, pondering Arizona Wilderness' next move. They think about the brewery that has come so far so fast, with a future as bright as the Arizona sun. What's next? It's hard to say, but chances are Ware and Buford will choose the right path, as they have serendipitously done so many times before.

Growing up in Arizona, Patrick Ware developed a love for the outdoors – hiking and camping with his Dad. While studying at Arizona State University, he split time

between his studies and homebrewing, eventually taking an internship at Gordon Biersch under the tutelage of Dieter Foerstner, who would soon help him land his first professional brewing position with SanTan Brewing in Chandler, Arizona.

Meanwhile Jonathan Buford was living in Ohio, though he longed to return west, where he first fell in love with the Arizona landscape. Ultimately, he decided to follow his heart. Armed with only his 1988 Chevy Nova and \$300 (\$100 of which went toward gas), he struck forth to the Copper State.



Buford's entrepreneurial spirit initially led him to open a window-cleaning company, which he helmed for six years. All the while, though, Buford's passion for craft beer was brewing. Listening to audiobooks about beer and brewing while washing windows, he was determined to one day open a brewery of his own. Once more, his true calling bubbled over.

A regular at local watering holes, Buford was often mistaken for some guy named "Pat." When this became a regular occurrence, he determined to track down his doppelganger and get to the bottom of the situation.

Buford soon figured out that the mysterious "Pat" was none other than Ware, who had become the head brewer at SanTan Brewing Company. He introduced himself, and the two shared stories of their love of the Arizona countryside. After telling Ware of his goal to open a brewery focused on local terroir, Buford offered to make Ware head brewer of the venture, and Ware accepted.

It took Buford's life savings, a highly successful Kickstarter campaign and an outside investment to fund the brewery before Buford could set everything in motion. Unfortunately, things weren't so peachy. Without warning, the investor got cold feet, and Buford was left scrambling to find a way to come up with the funds to complete the project.

Originally, Ware was to be an employee, not an owner, but the only way Buford could pay Ware was in shares of ownership. Now partners, they scrounged together every last penny to get the doors open.

When the doors did open on September 2, 2013, the pair still owed their contractor \$36,000. Buford had 60 days to come up with the money or the contractor threatened to take possession of the brewery. It took until the final day before the contractor was paid, but Ware and Buford were now bona fide brewery owners.

Arizona Wilderness opened in Gilbert, Arizona as a traditional brewpub with one main dining room, a small bar and modest patio. The 17 employees were settling in and business was good. Not even six months into their existence, a national beer publication announced that Arizona Wilderness had been voted the "Best New Brewery in the World" for 2014. Their fortunes changed overnight.

Local Phoenix news stations appeared wanting interviews. Craft aficionados from all over wanted to experience the wunderkind brewery. They doubled, then tripled the workforce to keep up with demand. Two-hour waits at the door were the norm, and full serving tanks of beer became a pipe dream; at one precarious point their stock dwindled down to their final two kegs. Only through hard work and the divinity of the yeast would enough beer be produced for the thirsty public.

Imbibing Arizona's wilderness is a way of life for both Ware and Buford – hiking, camping and enjoying nature is what they live for. Photographing nature is one of Buford's biggest passions, and may have been his profession had the brewery not panned out. His striking photos are looped on the brewpub's TV screens, and most beers have names that reflect the Arizona landscape.

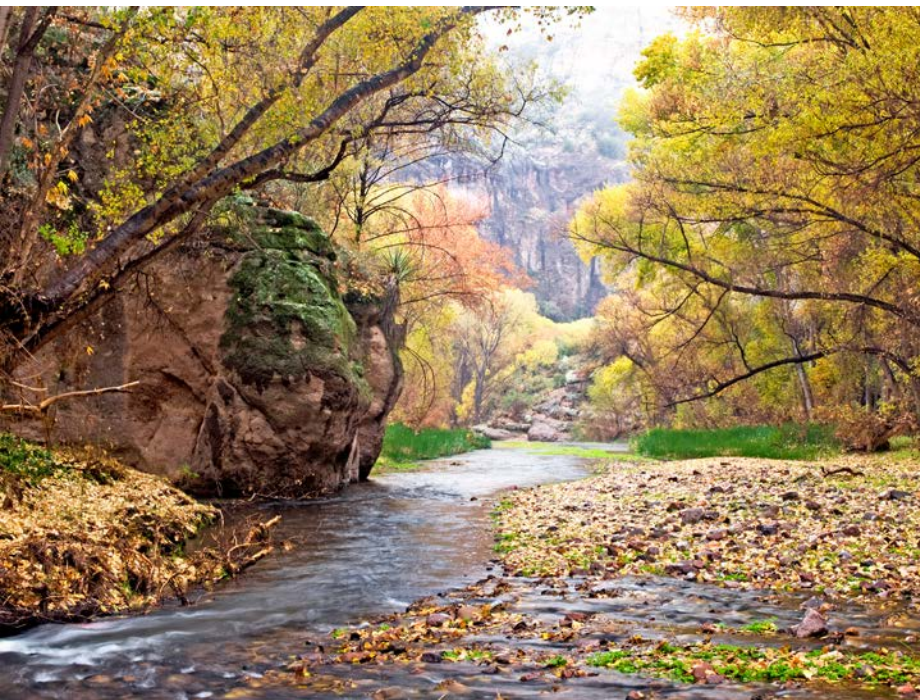


PHOTO COURTESY JONATHAN BUFORD

**Jonathan Buford and Patrick Ware founded Arizona Wilderness on a shared vision of a brewery that embodied the land it was built upon, such as the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness, shown here.**

DC Mountain Imperial IPA, a highly hopped Double IPA and their second-biggest seller, and Superstition Coffee Stout, an oatmeal-based American stout brewed with seven pounds of local cold-roasted coffee and Madagascar vanilla beans are both named after local Arizona mountain ranges. The juicy, 7.2% Refuge IPA remains their best-selling beer and is arguably the best IPA produced in the state.

For Arizona Wilderness, remaining homegrown is key, a mentality that extends to building relationships with local farmers and businesses, which includes trading spent grain to farmers who provide beef for the brewpub's extensive menu. The brewery's incredible Blood Orange Gose is made from Arizona-grown blood oranges, Sonoran white wheat and locally sourced salt.

Because of the continued success of the brewpub, Arizona Wilderness recently opened an additional tasting room onsite. Within this room resides Ware's baby – a new, humidity-controlled barrel-aging room to satisfy the pair's fondness for Belgian-inspired brews.

In an unending quest for brewing knowledge, Ware and Buford have traveled extensively to learn from and collaborate with some of the world's best brewers. Their travels have produced collaborations with Almanac of San Francisco, Way Brewing of Brazil and Lervig in Norway, among others. But none match the "star factor" of collaborating with Logan Plant, the owner of North London's well-known Beavertown Brewery, who also happens to be the son of Led Zeppelin vocalist Robert Plant. After collaborating in England, Plant came to Phoenix, the group traveled north to Sedona and they picked local pine cones, which were later smoked and added to a collaborative Gratzler beer.

Arizona Wilderness is the living, breathing embodiment of its founders' spirits. There is an "it" factor there; an infectious energy that draws people back to the brewery again and again. Nature, artisanal craft beer and a passion for both – that's a recipe for success in Arizona.



**The beers on tap at Arizona Wilderness represent the local terroir, along with Belgian and American brewing traditions its founders have absorbed in their time as brewers.**

PHOTOS COURTESY DAVE CLARK



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Vermont Brewers Festival  
Burlington, VT  
July 15-16

Pittsburgh Summer Beer Fest  
Pittsburgh, PA  
July 15-16

Dog & Grog / Montana Microbrew Festival  
Virginia City, MT  
July 15-16

Roadhouse Brew Fest  
Hillsboro, OR  
July 16

Denver Summer Brew Fest  
Denver, CO  
July 22-23

All Pints North Summer Brew Fest  
Duluth, MN  
July 23





Beer on the Bay  
Erie, PA  
July 23

Real, Wild & Woody  
Phoenix, AZ  
July 23

Milwaukee Brewfest  
Milwaukee, WI  
July 30

Indiana Microbrewers Festival  
Indianapolis, IN  
July 30

**August**

Columbus Summer Brewfest  
Columbus, OH  
August 5-6

Belgium Comes to Cooperstown  
Cooperstown, NY  
August 6

Music City Brewer's Festival  
Nashville, TN  
August 6

Great Taste of The Midwest  
Madison, WI  
August 13

Microfestivus  
Roanoke, VA  
August 13

Surf n' Suds Beer Festival  
Carpinteria, CA  
August 13

Stone 20th Anniversary Celebration  
San Marcos, CA  
August 20





Micro Brew Review  
Oak Park, IL  
August 20

Great Nebraska Beerfest  
Papillon, NE  
August 27

## **September**

Sun King CANvitational  
Indianapolis, IN  
September 10

California Craft Beer Summit  
Sacramento, CA  
September 10



# WORLD CLASS



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### ***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 *Joseph Formanek*

## Bomb!

Prairie Artisan Ales

**Aroma:**  
24 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
40 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
20 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Prairie Bomb! is a very aptly named concoction. The quite amazing complexity exhibited in this specialty Imperial Stout delivers a massive explosion of delicious flavors and aromas that linger in the memory well after the drinking is done. This deep black-colored opaque brew with a moderately lingering tan head has a cappuccino-like aroma of coffee and chocolate with a peppery, fruity flavor in the background.

Drinking this brew is akin to drinking a chili chocolate coffee milkshake with a huge, thick and chewy body. A moderate vanilla flavor marries well with all of the flavors present throughout sampling. There is a touch of heat in the middle and finish, along with a moderate alcohol warmth,

delivering layered mouthfeel factors to the equation. Incredibly, with all that is going on in this brew, there is an amazing marriage of flavors that add up synergistically. Truly, this is a meal in a bottle!

This is an incredibly complex and well-made beer that would be a fantastic choice for finishing off a hearty meal, or for just lounging around by the fire. This massive brew is definitely "Da Bomb!" Highly recommended!



# 97

by *Susan Ruud*

## Oi' Oi

Jester King Brewery

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Wow! This is a beautiful beer all the way around. It started out with a lovely pour: nice foam and a reddish-brown color that was extremely inviting. This Oud Bruin had an intense sour flavor and aroma with hints of sweet malt tied in to balance throughout sampling. Each sip of this lovely brew just draws you back in for more. Hints of light cherry esters shine throughout the aroma. This smooth yet sweet tart beer was perfectly balanced and absolutely delightful. This is a wonderful beer for the sour beer lover, and a treat for any aspiring connoisseur.



# 97

by *Randy Scorby*

## Parabola

Firestone Walker Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

The beer pours midnight black with a thick, tan, creamy head that seems to last forever. The aroma is an intense, rich and complex blend of vanilla, bourbon, chocolate, dark roast coffee, black cherries, raisins and a light spicy alcohol character that contributes to a multi-layered bouquet. The flavor follows the aroma with prominent chocolate, coffee, vanilla, bourbon and mixed dark and dried fruit characters. The solid spicy alcohol warming and prominent hop bitterness helps to dry out and balance the moderate residual sweetness that develops mid-palate and lingers through the aftertaste. The full body and creamy, velvety mouthfeel rounds out a very

complex beer. Overall, this is an impressive, near-perfect Barrel-aged Imperial Stout. Don't miss out on trying this one now, but grab a few extra to cellar, as this beer should only get better with age.



# 96

by *Michael Bury*

## KBS

Founders Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
24 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
20 / 20

### Judge's Notes

An intense, rich aroma greets you upon first sniff. Notes of dark chocolate, coffee, bourbon, vanilla, oak, coconut, toast and even hints of caramel and cherry come out to say hello. While wickedly complex, the aroma is balanced throughout even as the beer warms, which is an impressive feat to say the least. Dark would be an understatement of this stout's color as no light escapes this pitch black beverage. It also features a small deep brown head of fine bubbles, which unexpectedly clings to the side of the glass even as the level of liquid decreases.

Picking up where the aroma left off a montage of bourbon, toast, oak, dark chocolate, sweet caramel and dark roasted coffee assault

the palate in the best way possible. The higher level of alcohol creates a bit of sweetness to complement the malt but also in combination with the proper level of attenuation allows the beer to finish only semi-sweet. A note of a high-quality dark chocolate lingers in the aftertaste alongside the small-batch bourbon flavor.

This a moderately full-bodied beer that seems a bit lighter due to the above-average carbonation for a beer of its stature. Strong alcohol seamlessly weaves itself into the numerous flavors throughout the beer and it would also allow the beer to age gracefully for many years to come. Founder's KBS Stout is easily a world-class beer that deftly combines art and skill in the specialty wood-aged beer category.



# 96

by *Tracy Hensley*

## Big Guns

Fort George Brewery

**Aroma:**  
24 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Aromas of grapefruit, sea mist, peach juice, golden apricot jam and spearmint are apparent upon first whiff. Overall, this beer's aroma profile was reminiscent of a lemon curd chiffon tart. In the looks department, this beer was a heavy, bright, medium-golden color with a persistent off-white head clinging to the sides of this glass for over five minutes. In the flavor, this beer is dominated by hop flavors of resin and lime pith, followed by clean, low milled white flour. A smooth, clean and dry finish is capped off by hop bitterness that lingers and clings to the teeth with a very low heat in the throat. It all finishes with a mouthwatering clean lime zest aftertaste. The

mouthfeel is medium with a tongue-prickling carbonation character, very low warmth, a milky creaminess with slight watery character. Overall, this is an impressive example of a Session IPA that balances hop-forward IPA characteristics with a complex supporting malt profile.



# 96

by *Tracy Hensley*

## Meyer Lemon Lager

Anchor Brewing

**Aroma:**  
24 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This lager starts with melted Creamsicle aromas supported by clean frothy milk, low Mexican vanilla and sour lemon candy. After a minute, freshly made crepes and an earthy fern character appears. The beer is a clear straw color with fine consistent carbonation creating a low, white, filmy head. The flavor starts as creamy wheat cereal, crisp mouthwatering homemade lemonade and lemon saltwater taffy that's neither cloying nor sweet. The finish is dry with a tart lemon hard candy character and very low alcohol heat aftertaste. A high level of carbonation balances the moderate creaminess from the wheat and very low alcohol warming in the belly. Overall, this is a balanced beer with a

complex and evolving aroma. Easy to drink yet interesting enough to go back for a second pint.



# 96

by Nelson Crowle

## Mach 10

Bear Republic Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

A big cream-colored head of small bubbles sits atop a slightly hazy, deep burnished gold liquid that looks very inviting. The aroma is of grapefruit with background notes of resinous, piney, spicy and earthy characters, but not just from the hops. There's also a nice balance of bread crust and bready notes. There is some grainy, caramel, and bread crust depth to the malt character in the flavor, along with big (but nicely balanced) grapefruit, and a rustic spiciness with a crisp and clean bitterness level. The finish is dry with notes of tropical fruit that linger. Overall, this Double IPA is very nicely balanced – sure, it features a huge hop profile, but the malt provides a great

counterpoint and balance. This is an amazing DIPA that's perfect for sipping (use a snifter to contain all the hop aromas), but the tropical fruitiness would also go very nicely with some dry-rubbed Memphis-style baby back ribs.



# 95

by Jason Johnson

## St. Lupulin

Odell Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

The beer poured a beautiful and clear gold color with a nice lasting white head into a tulip glass. The hop aroma is assertive enough for a pale ale, showcasing the stereotypical citrus hop character many expect, but there are some floral background tones as well. The malt aroma is lightly sweet and clean.

The flavor is very pleasing. Most notable is its soft crisp citrus hop flavor followed by a touch of slightly honey-sweet bready malt with moderate bitterness. The winning aspect of this beer for me is how well balanced this beer is. The play between the malt and hops flavors and in-

tensity is very well done. That grapefruity citrus character is by no means overplayed and is very refreshing, which makes it easily drinkable even on a hot day. Some hop-forward styles can become sticky in the mouth and the bitterness can be overdone, but not this one.

In the end, the hops are showcased well, the malt is happy to be thumping the bass in the background; this beer is a definitely worth a look. In today's market of over-hopped IPAs and Double IPAs, this was a breath of fresh air... even for this admitted hophead.



# 95

by *Richard Wong*

## Beatitude Mango Council Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

The aroma of this beer had bouquets of citrus, hints of mango and bread-like qualities. The appearance was a cloudy straw-like color due to the beer being unfiltered. I personally like the look of unfiltered beers and this one was beautiful. Even with the cloudiness, I could see the bubbles rising from the bottom of the glass to the top like a geyser trying to break through the foamy, rocky head. The initial taste of this beer was wonderful. Straight lactic sourness and tartness with hints again of citrus (predominantly grapefruit and orange) and slight hints of mango. The malt backbone was very light with a slight hint of breadiness. It was crisp, dry and effervescent

with some champagne-like qualities that tickled the mouth and finished off with a lip-smacking sourness. This could easily have been a breakfast mimosa (orange juice and champagne), and actually exemplifies the Fruit Lambic style. I can picture this beer being fermented in open fermenters with cobwebs on the ceiling and windows left wide open, letting the microflora circulate within the room. Simply wonderful!



# 95

by *Michael Heniff*

## Humulus Terreux The Bruery / Bruery Terreux

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

The Humulus Terreux series from The Bruery is known for its various use of hops and Brettanomyces strains, and this beer doesn't miss on either of these two elements. The Brett is immediately apparent in the aroma with characteristic cherry pie and leather elements along with a little barnyard note for character. The hops are citrusy and herbal – complementing the Brett character very well. The Brett adds a light acidity and when combined with the moderate-high carbonation, it excites and refreshes the palate. The finish is slightly tart and carbonic with light citrusy hops and leather. This Brett beer does everything well – Brett character, hops,

balance and a little funk make for a refreshing and near-perfect brew.



# 95

by *Nelson Crowle*

## Pace Car Racer

Bear Republic Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

An infusion of citrus grapefruit and tangerine comes across as almost tropical with both a white-bread breadiness and bread crust in the aroma - very inviting. The beer pours a slightly hazy (maybe dry-hopped?) light gold, with a medium size head of small white bubbles - and the head hangs around for a while. Huge hop-burst earthy, pine tree, grapefruit, lemon, tangerine and just a touch of garlic - the hops are the star of the show! There's a bit of bread and toasty malt holding up all those hops, but this beer showcases a melange of hop flavors that work well together. There's a bracing bitterness but it's not overpowering - very nicely balanced with the

malt, so that the hop flavors and aromas can be presented to your senses. A dry and clean finish that's crisp but still smooth - everything is in almost perfect balance. The citrus would complement a banana cream pie nicely, or go full citrus, and have it with a key lime pie! As a Session IPA, you could drink this all day - not a whole lot of alcohol to dull your senses - just waves and waves of yummy juicy hops!



# 95

by *Joseph Formanek*

## Funky Gold Simcoe

Prairie Artisan Ales

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This very hazy, golden-colored brew has a small head of white-colored bubbles that dissipates rather quickly, which is expected for the style. Brett dominates the fermentation character of the aroma, delivering a complex woody, corky, leathery and earthy funkiness alongside a lemony tartness, with the dank mango and citrus notes from the Simcoe dry-hopping blending in well with the fermentation notes. The aroma delivers a moderate level of dank hop character with a touch of citrus - melony and light malt characters play a supporting role.

The flavor is dominated by sour fruity notes, including pear, pineapple and unripe

peach notes. Little base malt backbone is evident, which is fine for this style. The fresh character of these fruit flavors is quite impressive, delivering an appealing crisp dryness that prepares the palate quite well for the next sip.

This is a very well-crafted example of the Brett Beer style. The Brett character is the star of the show here with little else to complicate matters, but the dry-hopped aroma brings just a bit more to the table and works quite well with the overall character of the brew.





# 95

by Tracy Hensley

## Suicide Squeeze IPA

Fort George Brewery

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
19 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Aromas of pine, resin, clean grapefruit pith, fresh white bread, lemon juice and low yellow iris. A creamy, white, frothy head persists and clings to the sides of the glass with this brilliantly clear, light amber-colored beer. Flavors of strong, clean pine resin, pineapple, white pastry flour and light caramel sauce are first out of the gate, along with the impression that this beer is hop-forward with a supporting light malt character. The finish is dry, crisp, with mouthwatering moderate bitterness and an aftertaste of clean, medium pine resin. Mouthfeel is highlighted by a smooth creamy texture, medium-high carbonation, low alcohol warmth, and medium hop

astringency. Overall, this is an appropriately hop-forward American IPA that's clean, crisp and quite drinkable. Highly recommended.



# 95

by Joseph Formanek

## Coffee Okie

Prairie Artisan Ales

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Prairie's Coffee Okie is a complex, barrel-aged spiced Imperial Brown Ale. This deep brown-colored brew with a rather quickly dissipating white head has a huge roasted coffee aroma with moderate levels of raisin, whiskey, chocolate and oak character. Very appetizing!

The first sip delivers an up-front coffee and raisin character that lingers throughout the drink. The flavor shifts to more chocolate and roasted notes in the middle and finish, with the coffee and caramelly raisin flavors playing a supporting role at that point. A sweet whiskey and alcohol warmth is also quite evident in this medium full-bodied brew. The rather dry finish delivers a delicious balance

of whiskey, oak and coffee flavors that lingers on the palate for an enjoyably long time.

This is quite a massive brew that delivers a very satisfying overall character. Highly recommended!



# 95

by *Nelson Crowle*

## Saison Imperiale De Proef Brouwerij

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

A nice, big, mousse-like headstand of yellowish-beige bubbles sits atop an orange-tinted, slightly hazy, deep copper-colored liquid that looks very inviting. The aroma is complex with caramel and toasty characters and some earthy, lemony and wet hay elements, along with a spicy black pepper note. The first sip echoes all of the complexity of the aroma, and adds a light stone fruit note and a slight river-rock minerality, leaving behind a beautiful Belgian lace on the sides of the glass. The toast (maybe some Vienna or Munich malt) and Brettanomyces-like earthy notes come across very nicely in the flavor, and there is a pleasant and well-balanced

funky character that plays a great counterpoint to the fruitiness from the yeast. This beer is very highly carbonated and extremely fizzy in the mouth. A medium body with a spicy, fruity and slightly funky and dry finish lingers. There is substantial alcohol, but it is very clean – no fusels, just a pleasant warming feeling. This is a great Farmhouse Ale in pretty much every way – the only thing I would do is reduce the carbonation slightly. However, the carbonation and clean/crisp finish are perfect for fatty food; I am going to have a second glass of this beer with some spicy French fries smothered in chopped chili peppers. A nice ribeye steak would also pair well with this beer.



# 95

by *Michael Heniff*

## Decadent Imperial IPA Ska Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
20 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This has everything that you want to see in a double IPA: plenty of hops abound with enough malt character to lend support. This beer starts appropriately hop-forward with aromas of resins, grapefruit and citrus fruits. In the flavor, the hops continue to be upfront: tons of citrus, with tangerine and grapefruit leading the charge. A light nutty and bready maltiness lends a little background support but never steals the limelight away from the prominent citrusy hop character. The finish is moderately bitter and palate-cleansing with a lingering grapefruit hoppiness. This is a delightful (and dare I say decadent?) Double IPA that pushes all the right buttons.



# 94

by *Richard Wong*

## Ol' Dirty Barrel

Belching Beaver Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

We were off to a great start when I sniffed aromas of slight roastiness and a very strong bourbon presence. The beer poured pitch black with a nice tan head with moderate carbonation. Rich, complex flavors of bourbon barrel jumped out on the first sip from the oak rye whiskey barrels this beer was aged in. It had a wonderful vinous quality of dried fruit (raisins and plums) along with hints of vanilla and roasted malts. Malt and hops were beautifully balanced, giving a nice, sweet, roasty maltiness and hop bitterness. Sometimes hop bittering can be overdone with this style, but that was not the case for this example. The hops blended

well with the malt, lending real balance to it. No doubt this is a hearty Imperial Stout as the alcohol was well recognized upon first sip at 10.5 percent ABV. Even with this amount of alcohol, the aftertaste was a little dry along with a subtle burn – much akin to an aged whiskey.



# 94

by *Nelson Crowle*

## Watermelon Dorado

Ballast Point Brewing & Spirits

**Aroma:**  
21 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This brilliantly clear, deep golden beer displays a frothy, cream-colored head of tiny bubbles that is very inviting. The aroma is fairly complex with grainy bread dough, a touch of clover honey, some interesting lemon and melon hops, and as expected, watermelon characteristics. The first sip has a nice bready and nutty character, which provides a great backdrop to support all kinds of resinous, tangerine, floral, lemony, and honeydew notes. A very clean fermentation with a fairly big alcohol presence appears at the back of throat, but no fusels or higher alcohols distract. Moderately high hop bitterness leads into a very

dry and crisp finish that leaves melon-like and floral flavors lingering for a long time. The beer creates a melange of flavors that really work well together. This beer is nicely balanced – the malt is there, and the hops just blossom out beautifully. This beer would complement a fruit and cheese platter that features some milky, creamy and mild cheeses – along with a cluster of on-the-vine raisins.



# 94

by *Tracy Hensley*

## The Optimist Fort George Brewery

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Aromas of pineapple syrup, torn mint leaves, fresh guava fruit, freshly baked white bread, grapefruit and pine needles are immediately apparent upon first whiff. An ivory-colored, creamy, persistent head clings to the sides of the glass of this light amber-colored, hazy beer. Candied mango and pineapple flavors are the first impressions upon sipping, followed by pine needles, resin and caramel breakfast rolls. This IPA is definitely hop-forward, but is backed by noticeable supporting malt. A dry, low, warming finish with supporting medium bitterness leads into a green pepper-like aftertaste. The mouthfeel was like a light

cream sauce, and medium-high carbonation elevates the beer. Overall, this was a malty, well-balanced American IPA without the bitterness of many high-IBU IPAs.



# 93

by *Owen Ogletree*

## Citra Ass Down Against The Grain Brewery

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
4 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
17 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This hoppy ale confirmed its Double IPA moniker after one sip, as thick, complex layers of malt complexity wash across the palate with tones of toast, biscuit crust and light caramel nuances – all backed by a touch of alcohol warmth. Aromas of citrusy tropical fruits follow through in the flavor that's highlighted by a hop presence of pineapple, kiwi, light tangerine and mango. The crisp, sticky Citra hop personality shines through the rich malt in impressive aroma and flavor appeal. With its rather high alcohol content, don't be tempted to cellar this potent IPA; it's best to consume

this one fresh in order to fully appreciate the Citra magnificence before it fades.



# 93

by *Joseph Formanek*

## Phantasmagoria Prairie Artisan Ales

**Aroma:**  
21 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Phantasmagoria is a delicious and approachable take on a Double IPA. This slightly hazy, deep golden-colored brew has a solid white-colored head of fine bubbles that lingers. The aroma delivers an intense level of dank hop character with a touch of citrus, melon and pineapple, and the malt character playing a supporting role.

The flavor is dominated by strong, dank, allium-like oniony hop flavors along with moderate hop bitterness on top of a somewhat mild malt backbone. Some citrus, mango and pineapple flavors come through up front as well as in the middle and finish. The fermentation character of this medium-bodied brew is quite

clean, allowing the hop flavors to be the star of the show. The finish is moderately dry, preparing the palate well for the next sip. While this is a moderately strong brew (around 8.0% ABV), the alcohol is very well hidden.

This is a very nice hop flavor-centric Double IPA. Definitely not a bitterness bomb or palate destroyer, the balance of this brew makes it a quite approachable example of the style.



# 93

by *Michael Heniff*

## Steel Toe Milk Stout Ska Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
24 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

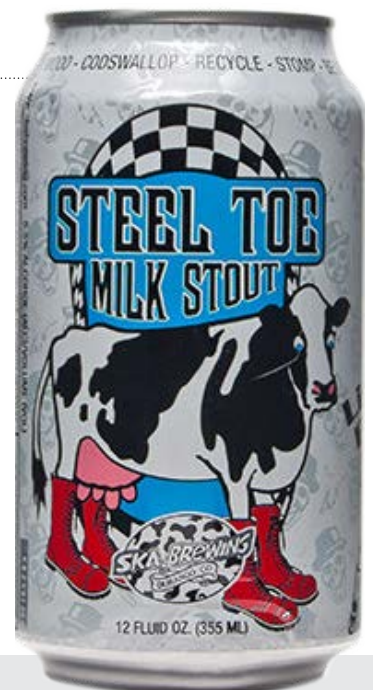
**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
7 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Aromas of roasted chocolate, espresso, toast, treacle and a hint of anise invite the drinker into the first sip. Luscious, pitch black and creamy are the obvious first impressions regarding this beer's appearance. The creaminess and semi-sweetness are derived from the lactose but they fall short of a typical sweet stout sweetness, but where this sweet stout excels is in its drinkability. Enjoy the rich dark malt flavors of this Sweet Stout without harsh dark malt astringency and without being too full on the palate.



# 93

by *Joseph Formanek*

## Oatsmobile Ale

Bell's Brewery

**Aroma:**  
21 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Oatsmobile Ale is a good example of a Session IPA with enough body and flavor to satisfy and compensate for the style's hallmark – a lack of alcohol.

Moderately complex dank hop characteristics dominate the aroma, with the earthy dankness augmented by roasted onion and garlic notes up front. Tropical melon and citrus characters come up behind this, along with an interesting heaviness in the nose that is likely due to the oats and caramel malt in the grain bill. The overall impression is rather savory – almost like Thanksgiving stuffing. This moderately carbonated brew pours a slightly hazy golden color

with a solid white head and solid lacing. The flavor takes the character from the aroma and runs with it.

Overall, the complexity delivered by the marriage of aromas and flavor of this quaffable brew really make this one stand out from the rest of the Session IPA crowd. The smoothness from the oats also rounds out the thin body and sharper bite of bitterness typically seen in this style, delivering an easy-drinking and enjoyable brew.



# 93

by *John C. Tull*

## Baracus

Noble Rey Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
21 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

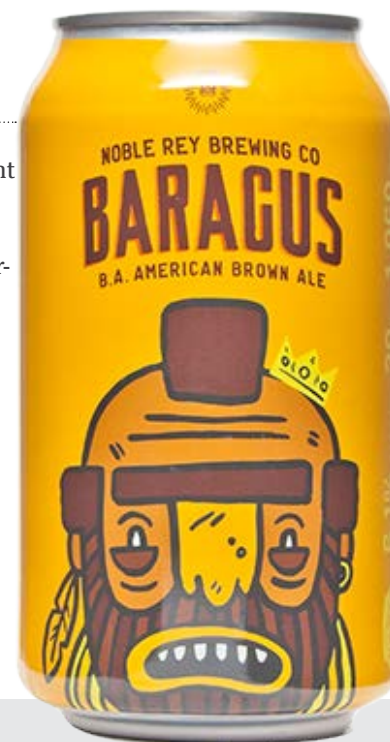
**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

An aroma of dark roasted grains with a touch of stone fruit (plum), earthy and herbal hops and a bit of alcohol mix together in the nose of this beer. The color is medium-brown with reddish highlights and a light tan head. Minty hop flavors and moderately high hop bitterness layer on caramel and darker malts that are slightly sweet and chocolaty. The richness of the malts is balanced well with the hop flavors and bitterness – leaving nice malt and hop traces beyond the finish. The body is medium with a perceived dryness and roast grain astringency that balances well with the overall flavors in the beer. If you like

darker beers with a hop leaning and you want something smaller than a Russian Imperial Stout, this American Brown Ale will please you with its assertive malt and hop characteristics that are spot-on for this style.



# 93

by *Richard Wong*

## 7 Hop IPA

Rogue Ales & Spirits

**Aroma:**  
21 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This Double IPA featured a sweet malty character with a surprisingly muted hop aroma. At first sip, the hop flavor (pine, resin) definitely made up for the aroma's lack of hoppiness – this beer definitely had the necessary hop bittering to fit in the DIPA category. The 7 hops used to make this beer blended well together and lent some depth and complexity to the brew. Some Double IPAs can be somewhat harsh and have an aggressive hop bite, but this beer was very smooth from beginning to end; the malt to hop ratio was perfect. A nice sweet malty flavor balanced nicely with the hop bittering with a slight hint of sherry-like qualities. The alcohol was definitely there to warrant the DIPA

moniker. The body and mouthfeel was perfect, as well the carbonation, and a slight alcohol burn in the aftertaste that was both smooth and clean. Recommended!



# 92

by *John C. Tull*

## Beerito

Mexican Lager

Oskar Blues Brewery

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Light toasty malt and moderate caramel malt dominate the aroma. A very subtle hop spiciness is detectable in the nose of this beer as well. The color is copper, very bright, with a persistent, finely-bubbled head that is slightly off-white. The flavor of this beer is malt-accentuated with toast and caramel malt components followed by a mild hop bitterness. The finish is slightly sweet with caramel malt lingering along with some toasty malt, a slight floral hop flavor and a little bite from the hop bitterness that creates a touch of crispness in the finish. The ferment is very clean and lager-like with no fruit esters or

other off-flavors from yeast. The mouthfeel is medium-light with just a touch of carbonic astringency. Overall, this is a very good example of a Vienna Lager that does not taste like it has been compromised with sugary adjuncts, shortchanged of hops, or otherwise turned into a beer made for marketing slogans and spring break beach parties.



# 92

by *Michael McGuire*

## Slap Fight

Monday Night Brewing

**Aroma:**

22 / 24

**Flavor:**

37 / 40

**Overall**

**Impression:**

18 / 20

**Appearance:**

6 / 6

**Mouthfeel:**

8 / 10

### Judge's Notes

This American IPA poured a pretty orange color with a thick, creamy and well-retained white head. The aroma evinced plenty of malt and citrusy hops – as expected for the style. An initial whiff of animal mustiness proved very transitory. The taste led off with those hops and fruity esters followed quickly with malt sweetness to balance. The finish was smooth leaving the palate pleasantly, rather than excessively, hoppy. The mouthfeel was that of a well-carbonated, medium-bodied hoppy ale lacking astringency and alcohol warmth. In a market seemingly flooded with average IPAs, this beer stands above many of its peers, brewed to style very well with inviting drinkability.



# 92

by *James Link*

## Boomsauce

Lord Hobo Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**

22 / 24

**Flavor:**

36 / 40

**Overall**

**Impression:**

19 / 20

**Appearance:**

5 / 6

**Mouthfeel:**

9 / 10

### Judge's Notes

A vigorous pour from a 16 oz. can produced a bold pine sap aroma accompanied by citrus hop notes and the honeyed effect of caramel malt.

Featuring a light gold color with slight haze and a medium white head, this beer's flavor profile featured a medley of hops that were distinctly unveiled in a flowery blend of citrus and pine. A very sweet caramel malt base both supports and balances the high hop levels present here.

This is a full-bodied rendition of the style with carbonation at the lower end of the style spectrum, while the alcohol con-

tent was quite evident – contributing to this beer's warming presence.

Very true to form, this Double IPA stands tall and should be considered for consumption as a fine example of the style.





# 92

by *Dan Martich*

## The Partner Ships Series: Maine Beer Co. Heavy Seas Beer

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
7 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This Red IPA exhibits reddish-amber hues that lean toward a very light brown color when poured. It has great clarity, and above it is a light tan-colored, fluffy head that gives this beer an inviting appearance. The moderate aroma of citrus and piney hops, along with light bready toast and nearly burnt caramel define this beer. Some dark fruity esters are picked up, perhaps from the yeast, layering the aroma alongside some light spicy notes. In the first sip, you experience rich caramel – almost burnt – and moderate earthy hop flavors. A low grainy malt balance guides you to an assertive hop bitterness; let's not forget this is an IPA after all, and the

style comes through in the medium-full body, and moderate alcohol warmth reflective of the 7.25 percent ABV. No creaminess or astringency detract from this balancing act. The scales are certainly tipped toward the bitterness, yet the caramel and toasted malt notes become more prevalent as it warms.



# 92

by *Josh Weikert*

## Festina Pêche Dogfish Head Craft Brewery

**Aroma:**  
20 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

When done well, fruit and Berliner Weisse go together like peas and carrots. Festina Pêche's peach/sour combination definitely does it well!

The beer pours a pale straw color, with a scant white head that dissipates quickly. The haze is as expected for the style, but the head is a bit of a disappointment. The aroma is a clean and simple balance between a light funky sour note and a bright peach background note, with neither overpowering the other but both clearly present.

On first taste, a bright and moderate acidity blends perfectly with the flavor of peach,

right down to the slightly tannic flavor of the skin. Malt flavor is almost absent, but there is a low honey-like malt note. The finish is semi-dry, with a lingering sour funk. In the mouth it's light and effervescent.

Overall, this is an excellent beer. Purists might like a touch more wheat and grain flavor (bumping up the wheat might also aid in head retention), but there's no denying that this is a fruit beer done very, very right.



# 92

by *Joseph Formanek*

## Adaptation Ale Roughtail Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This brew pours a hazy gold with a lingering, finely-bubbled white head that leaves an attractive lacing. The aroma in this brew is quite assertively complex and amazingly fresh, with a combination of dankness, lemon and lime zest, melony and fruity hop character along with a hint of sweet malt in the back. Galaxy hop notes seem to stand out more than the other hops that are used.

The flavor of this surprisingly smooth and creamy brew delivers clean base malt character without any specialty malt distractions. There is a touch of cereal note presumably coming from oats, which also explains the creamy texture. The brew exhibits a moderate level of hop

bitterness – not overwhelming, and definitely within the proper balance for the style. Dank, resinous hop flavors come up front, which are then followed by moderate levels of tropical hop flavors of melon, pineapple, fruit and lime zest notes that linger well into the aftertaste. The finish displays a drying tartness that seems to come from the citrus zest character along with lingering bitterness, which prepares the palate very well for the next sip.

This is a very enjoyable and well-crafted brew. There is a lot going on in this one, which is nice to see in a standard-strength American IPA.



# 92

by *Michael Heniff*

## Good Chit Pilsner Rogue Ales & Spirits

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
36 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Named with a play on words on a malting term (“chit” refers to the tiny rootlets that grow from the grain during the germination phase of malting), this generically labeled “pilsner” is brewed with floor-malted barley and Liberty hops from Rogue Farms. While Czech yeast is used, both the malt character and dry finish exude more German Pils-like qualities. The aroma begins with spicy and herbal hops that are quite noble in quality despite being a homegrown American varietal. The malt character is bready with a light toastiness but not too heavy; the malt character is quite good with no grainy or corny

flavors. The finish is moderately bitter (seems higher than 38 IBU) with a crisp, dry finish. This is an great example of how good a basic beer style can be when you have total control over the whole brewing process – including the ingredients!



# 92

by *Joseph Formanek*

## Everything Rhymes with Orange

Roughtail Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
7 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Roughtail's Everything Rhymes With Orange is a very hop flavor-centric example of the American IPA style. This slightly hazy, golden-colored brew maintains a solid creamy small head with quite attractive lacing. The assertive aroma delivers a huge citrus and Citra hop character along with a solid wallop of dankness, a touch of woodiness as well as other characters that add to the overall impressive aromatic complexity of this elixir.

The flavor of this smooth and creamy brew is loaded with dank resinous and citrus hop flavor, with the latter really come to the fore in the middle and finish. Moderate levels of hop bitterness linger through the aftertaste

helping deliver an appealingly crisp finish. There is very little malt complexity, and the body is a bit light for the style – on the medium-light end of the scale – but the hop flavor complexity keeps the attention of the palate quite well. This assertively flavored yet well-balanced complex profile is retained throughout the drink, with an appealing flavorful yet dry finish that prepares the palate very well for the next sip.

This is a fine, citrus-forward American IPA. It is clean, crisp and quite quaffable. Definitely worth a try.



# 92

by *Tracy Hensley*

## Cavatica Stout

Fort George Brewery

**Aroma:**  
20 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This stout's aroma bursts from the glass, leading with roasted almonds, coffee beans, dark chocolate-covered pretzels, pine resin and crispy bacon dipped in dark chocolate. A thin, creamy tan head falls away to form a fine film with tiny bubbles underneath. This beer pours an opaque, red-tinted dark brown color with rapid effervescence that rises along the sides of the glass. Intense flavors of roasted coffee beans and pine resin are immediately apparent upon first sip and the finish is dry, chalky, gritty and bitter – with an aftertaste of cacao nibs and burnt BBQ chicken. This beer has a medium body, medium-high carbon-

ation, low alcohol warming and moderate roast astringency. Overall, a fine representative of the Imperial Stout style with restrained hop presence and lower ABV than expected.



# 92

by *Dan Martich*

## Tony Goes Dancing Back East Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

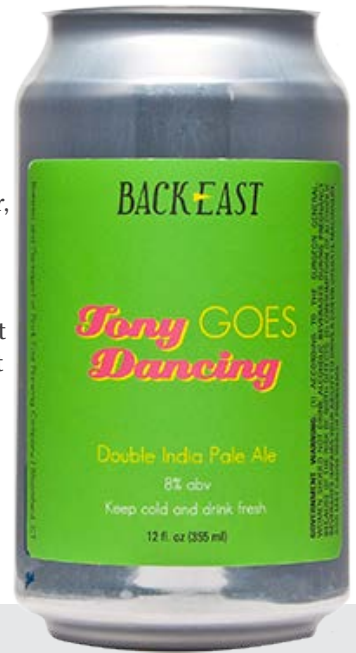
**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This beer has “hop lover’s serum” written all over it. Put your nose to the beer and huge aromas of passion fruit and mangoes explode out of the glass. The little voice from the malt says grainy, with a light sweet caramel note, but then it’s back to the hops for some citrusy grapefruit that ends with melon-like fruity esters. Copper-amber in color and quite hazy, this beer exhibits a big rocky head with long-lasting retention, bringing those aromatics to the foreground again and again. Tropical fruit flavors are found again in the flavor, along with a piney and citrusy grapefruit finish that is very dry. Quite typical of a Double IPA, the balance is definitely toward the bittering hops.

The fruity aftertaste dissipates quickly, suggesting another sip. The medium-full body is felt due to the unfermentables (dextrins) and medium carbonation. The perceived alcohol warmth suggests that this is a high-alcohol beer, and with its 8% ABV muscle to flex it, that is indeed the case. This beer is a great example of an East-meets-West Double IPA. The piney, citrusy hops are a reminder of some of the best West Coast IPAs, but the big, juicy, tropical fruit character of New England IPAs is also present. A well-played concerto of hops to please the most discerning hop lover.



# 91

by *Dan Martich*

## AleSmith Double IPA AleSmith Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This Double IPA pours a deep amber color with near-brilliant clarity and a rocky, off-white head that seems to last forever. As you admire the appearance, a prominent grapefruit rind hop aroma bursts from the glass and slowly evolves to allow light stone fruit and a bready maltiness to emerge, with just a touch of floral alcohol. The flavor evolves even more, showcasing a prominent mixed citrus and resin hop flavor that is immediately backed up by a strong hop bitterness that doesn’t assault your palate, and helps to balance the beer’s light residual sweetness. A light bready malt character,

floral alcohol and mixed stone fruit emerge mid-palate to add intrigue to the pronounced hop flavor and bitterness to create a nicely balanced Double IPA.



# 92

by *Jason Johnson*

## Cuvée des Jacobins Brouwerij Omer VanderGhinste

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
7 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This beer pours a light brown with reddish hues, very good clarity and a manila-colored head with moderately good retention. The aroma is quite complex. Initially, I get a hint of bready, biscuity malt, followed by a bit of cedar, a hint of oak and the slightest bit of aged, sour funk. I also get a cherry fruitiness that's close to lingonberries. The flavor is acidic and sharp, but not so much that it causes you pucker – it just makes you start to salivate. There are beady and toasty malts that give way to the softer and tart fruits, and there is very little hop bitterness and no discernible hop flavor. The best way I can describe this beer's flavor is that it's a bit oaky,

a bit cedary and old, barnyard-like funky. It's actually extremely pleasant. The mouthfeel is light with a lot of carbonation. The beer lacks much in the way of creamy textures, possibly due to the sharp acidity. Still, aside from being slightly lighter in body than expected, it's quite the experience and a very unique Flanders Red.



# 91

by *Randy Scorby*

## Uror FATE Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
7 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This Gose pours a hazy yellow with a very long-lasting white head. The aroma has a quickly fading sulfur character, followed by a bready, doughy and cookie-like maltiness. A very light lemon citrus ester emerges as it warms, along with noticeable tartness. The flavor builds on the aroma, with a bready, doughy and light honey-like sweetness that takes on a lemon citrus character, and transitions into a light spiciness. Light saltiness emerges mid-palate that complements the honey sweetness and firm lactic sourness. The finish is fairly dry and supported by

low hop bitterness. This is a very refreshing Gose that displays a firm sourness as well as a light saltiness that compliments the overall character of the beer.



# 91

by *Jason Johnson*

## Kriek des Jacobins Brouwerij Omer VanderGhinste

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

This beer pours a light brown with reddish hues, very good clarity and a manila-colored head with moderately good retention. The aroma is quite complex. Initially, I get a hint of bready, biscuity malt, followed by a bit of cedar, a hint of oak and the slightest bit of aged, sour funk. I also get a cherry fruitiness that's close to lingonberries. The flavor is acidic and sharp, but not so much that it causes you pucker – it just makes you start to salivate. There are beady and toasty malts that give way to the softer and tart fruits, and there is very little hop bitterness and no discernible hop flavor. The best way I can describe this beer's flavor is that it's a bit oaky, a bit cedar-y and old, barnyard-

like funky. It's actually extremely pleasant. The mouthfeel is light with a lot of carbonation. The beer lacks much in the way of creamy textures, possibly due to the sharp acidity. Still, aside from being slightly lighter in body than expected, it's quite the experience and a very unique Flanders Red.



# 91

by *John C. Tull*

## SteamPunk Noble Rey Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
22 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
36 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
19 / 20

### Judge's Notes

An earthy, somewhat resinous, woody aroma mingles with hints of medium-dark, toasty malts and some yeastiness in this beer. Light esters can also be found, although they are subtle and non-distinct. The color is medium amber, although clouded by significant yeast that apparently did not result from handling and pouring the beer. A light tan head floats on the top of the glass, reducing to a very thin layer that collects on the edge of the glass as time passes. The flavors consist of minty and woody hops with obvious, but not overpowering, hop bitterness accentuating a firm and toasty malt flavor. The finish

accentuates the hops with bitterness and a lingering, minty hop flavor coming to the fore. The mouthfeel is medium with well-balanced carbonation. This beer captures the essence of a California Common very well with rustic American hop flavors, good bitterness, and toasty malt flavors and subtle fruit esters. I would highly recommend this for its quality and as a good contrast for the more commonly known California Common beers.



# 91

by *Susan Ruud*

## Wayfarer

Green Man Brewery

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24

**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
7 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

An extremely nice American IPA. Pours with a fair amount of chill haze, but has a beautiful, tall white stand of foam. Wonderfully pungent citrusy hops upfront in the aroma are followed by a crisp, crackery, bready malt. In terms of this beer's flavor, the hop character is pleasant but not overwhelming and blends beautifully into a soft, pleasant, palate-cleansing finish of bready malt. A delectable and quenching IPA on the lower end of the ABV spectrum for the style.



# 91

by *Michael Heniff*

## Brutal IPA

Rogue Ales & Spirits

**Aroma:**  
20 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
37 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Billed as “the official brew of the Rogue Nation,” this American IPA is a showcase for Rogue Farms Alluvial hops. The hops are certainly prominent in the aroma with a plethora of tropical fruit notes wafting from the glass, including pineapple, grapefruit and passion fruit. In the flavor, the smorgasbord of tropical fruit once again is in the forefront with a light bready malt (of which many of the malts are Rogue Farms varieties). The beer finishes with an assertive, lingering bitterness that seems higher than the listed 46 IBU but is quite appropriate for a West Coast IPA. The unique Alluvial

hops are showcased well in this very good example of an American IPA.



# 91

by *Josh Weikert*

## Whitewater

Great Divide Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
20 / 24  
**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
38 / 40  
**Mouthfeel:**  
9 / 10

**Overall Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Everyone has their favorite summer sunshine beer – this one might well be mine. Light but very flavorful, this is an easy-drinker that still tastes like a very cared-for beer!

Whitewater pours gold with a slight haze and a wispy white head. The aroma is characteristic of Pilsner malt with a medium honey and grain note. Despite being a “wheat” beer, it isn’t in the German Weizen style, and so there’s no banana and just a touch of peppery spiciness.

The flavor echoes the aroma with a grainy, white pepper background and medium-low bitterness. This is a very refreshing beer, and the flavor doesn’t overwhelm.

The body is light but pleasantly “full,” a thin macro lager this is not.

This lightly spicy wheat beer can be enjoyed on many a warm summer day.



# 91

by *Joseph Formanek*

## Transilience

Southbound Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
23 / 24  
**Appearance:**  
5 / 6

**Flavor:**  
35 / 40  
**Mouthfeel:**  
10 / 10

**Overall Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

Transilience is an “Imperial Berliner Weisse” fruited with Mango and Pomegranate. While the term Imperial has become quite commonplace for a number of typically moderate-alcohol beer styles, Southbound did an outstanding job delivering an “IBW” that still retains the refreshing drinkability of the original.

Transilience pours a cloudy gold with a moderately large white head arising from moderate carbonation that dissipates rather quickly, as is typical with the Berliner Weisse style. The brew has a complex, earthy tartness along with some lactic and fruity mango notes in the aroma. The flavor of this brew demonstrates a moderately strong clean tartness that dominates over the wheat and pils malt flavors in the background. The clean

tartness carries through from start to finish, with a touch of pomegranate fruitiness in the middle and finish. The mango character from the aroma doesn’t seem to come through as strongly as in the flavor, though it might be simply marrying well with the tartness. Hop character is very low, as expected.

This is a very refreshing, clean and dry brew. The relatively thin body and pleasantly dry finish taunts the palate to be wetted with another sip (or gulp) of the beer. The alcohol (at 7%, almost 3x higher than a standard Berliner Weisse) is hidden amazingly well.

Consider Transilience if you are looking for a refreshing Summer thirst quencher. Just don’t be surprised if the alcohol sneaks up on you unexpectedly!





# 91

by Sean Coughlin

## Nimble Giant

Troegs Brewing Co.

**Aroma:**  
20 / 24

**Appearance:**  
6 / 6

**Flavor:**  
39 / 40

**Mouthfeel:**  
8 / 10

**Overall  
Impression:**  
18 / 20

### Judge's Notes

The aroma struggles to make its way out of the glass but what does emerge is very inviting. Pine, ripe pineapple and juicy mango meld together to create an intoxicating harmony of aromatics. Perhaps more carbonation would help lift the aroma a bit more. A bit of grapefruit rind emerges as the beer warms closer to room temperature, but there is still an overall lack of aroma. The beer is light amber and surprisingly clear, and a medium-sized, off-white head persists extremely well. The hop resin seems to coat the tongue with every sip but the high bitterness is well balanced within the beer. The hop flavor is bright and

citrus-laden, following the hop profile of the aroma. The beer finishes dry with lingering alcohol. This is a very nice Double IPA that comes across a bit boozy in the balance. More late hops and/or dry hopping would help elevate the aroma, which does a poor job of setting the stage for the enjoyable drinking experience to come.



# *Beer Review*

## *Very Good (86-90)*

- 90 | **Cosmik Debris, Creature Comforts Brewing Co.** *by Michael McGuire*
- 90 | **Ocho Barril: Magic Beer Genie, Half Moon Bay Brewing Co.** *by Randy Scorby*
- 90 | **Perfect Day IPA, Asheville Brewing Co.** *by Owen Ogletree*
- 90 | **Commotion, Great Raft Brewing Co.** *by Mike Castagno*
- 90 | **Overdub IPA, Fort George Brewery,** *by Tracy Hensley*
- 90 | **6 Hop IPA, Rogue Ales & Spirits,** *by Richard Wong*
- 90 | **Mango Wheat, Anchor Brewing,** *by Tracy Hensley*
- 90 | **Pale Death, Double Mountain Brewery,** *by John C. Tull*
- 90 | **Grapefruit King of Hop, Starr Hill Brewery,** *by Dan Preston*
- 89 | **Off The Leash, Noble Rey Brewing Co.** *by John C. Tull*
- 89 | **Vortex IPA, Fort George Brewery,** *by Tracy Hensley*
- 89 | **Omer Blonde, Brouwerij Omer VanderGhinste** *by Jason Johnson*
- 88 | **Hobo Life, Lord Hobo Brewing Co.** *by James Link*
- 88 | **The Rites, Orpheus Brewing,** *by Michael McGuire*
- 88 | **Watermelon Laimas, FATE Brewing Co.** *by Randy Scorby*
- 88 | **Spring Saison, Blackberry Farm Brewery,** *by Graham L. Barron*
- 88 | **Raspberry Jam, Tallgrass Brewing Co.** *by Sal Mortillaro II*
- 88 | **4 Hop IPA, Rogue Ales & Spirits,** *by Richard Wong*
- 88 | **Ape Snake, Prairie Artisan Ales,** *by Joseph Formanek*
- 88 | **Rollin' & Tumblin', Southbound Brewing Co.** *by Michael McGuire*
- 88 | **Prost Altbier, Prost Brewing,** *by Susan Ruud*
- 88 | **Watermelon Gose, Terrapin Beer Co.** *by Michael McGuire*
- 87 | **Hop Nosh Tangerine IPA, Uinta Brewing,** *by Randy Scorby*
- 87 | **Southern Drawl, Great Raft Brewing Co.** *by Mike Castagno*
- 87 | **Rudie Session IPA, Ska Brewing Co.** *by Michael Heniff*
- 87 | **Half-Pipe Tart Pale Ale, Tallgrass Brewing Co.** *by Sal Mortillaro II*
- 87 | **Chocolate Oak Aged Yeti, Great Divide Brewing Co.** *by Josh Weikert*
- 87 | **Nadia Kali, Great Divide Brewing Co.** *by Josh Weikert*

## ***Beer Review***

- 87 | **Free Spirit No. 6, Terrapin Beer Co. & Coppertail Brewing Co.** by *Michael McGuire*
- 87 | **1811 Lager, Fort George Brewery,** by *Tracy Hensley*
- 87 | **Sticky Hands, Block 15 Brewing Co.** by *Nelson Crowle*
- 87 | **Gamma Bomb IPA, Warped Wing Brewing Co.** by *Sandy Cockerham*
- 86 | **Private Stock Ale: 2016 Vintage, AleSmith Brewing Co.** by *Randy Scorby*
- 86 | **Reinaert Flemish Wild Ale, De Proef Brouwerij,** by *Nelson Crowle*
- 86 | **Single Origin Coffee Stout: Kona, Terrapin Beer Co.** by *Michael McGuire*
- 86 | **I.P.W., Upstate Brewing Co.** by *Dan Preston*
- 86 | **Dammed Double IPA, Belching Beaver Brewing Co.** by *Richard Wong*
- 86 | **King of Hop, Starr Hill Brewery,** by *Dan Preston*
- 86 | **Misty Mountain IPA, Back East Brewing Co.** by *Dan Martich*

## ***Average (75-85)***

- 85 | **F 85 | Neato Bandito, Deep Ellum Brewing Co.** by *John C. Tull*
- 85 | **Or Xata, The Bruery,** by *Michael Heniff*
- 85 | **Big Bend Hefeweizen, Big Bend Brewing Co.** by *Richard Wong*
- 85 | **Single Origin Coffee Stout: Sumatra, Terrapin Beer Co.** by *Michael McGuire*
- 84 | **Reasonably Corrupt, Great Raft Brewing Co.** by *Mike Castagno*
- 84 | **Plaid, Fort George Brewery,** by *Tracy Hensley*
- 84 | **Number 22 Porter, Big Bend Brewing Co.** by *Richard Wong*
- 83 | **Terlingua Gold, Big Bend Brewing Co.** by *Richard Wong*
- 83 | **Flyin' Rye IPA, Warped Wing Brewing Co.** by *Sandy Cockerham*
- 82 | **Daily Grind, Starr Hill Brewery,** by *Dan Preston*
- 82 | **Ermal's Belgian Style Cream Ale, Warped Wing Brewing Co.** by *Sandy Cockerham*
- 81 | **Denver Pale Ale, Great Divide Brewing Co.** by *John C. Tull*
- 80 | **Blueberry Shandy, Ipswich Ale Brewery,** by *Josh Weikert*
- 80 | **Back East Summer Ale, Back East Brewing Co.** by *Dan Martich*
- 80 | **Zoetzuur, De Proef Brouwerij,** by *Nelson Crowle*
- 80 | **Habanero King of Hop, Starr Hill Brewery,** by *Dan Preston*

# 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.*

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## 97 Rating – Jester King Brewery – Ol’ Oi

*Responses from Jester King founder and head brewer Jeffrey Stuffings.*

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

*I think the lactic character is my favorite aspect. It somewhat pushes the boundaries of lactic acid in a beer for me, but ultimately, it presents itself as balanced.*

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

*We make a beer inspired by English Mild called Commercial Suicide. The label art has an English punk rock theme (think Sex Pistols). In some ways, Ol’ Oi is the older, more mature version of Commercial Suicide. So we pictured an aging rocker and gave it the name “Ol’ Oi” as a nod to the subgenre of Oi! music from the UK in the 70s.*



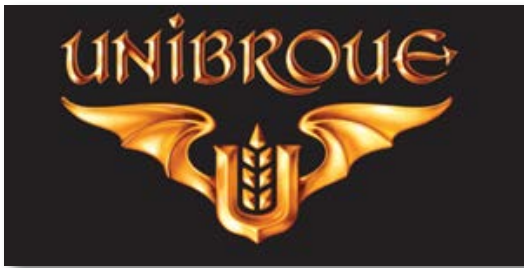
**BC: Can you describe this beer in 10 words or less?**

*Barrel-aged sour brown ale.*

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

*Ol’ Oi was one of the highlights of our first-ever sour beer event at Jester King (the original Funk n’ Sour Fest). A lot has changed at Jester King since then, so Ol’ Oi has a lot of sentimentality attached to it.*

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# Brewer Q & A

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## 97 Rating – Firestone Walker Brewing Co. – Parabola

*Responses from Firestone Walker head brewer Matt Brynildson.*

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

*Parabola is a 10-year-old recipe that was one of my creations. It was one of the first barrel-aged beers we brewed at Firestone Walker and it was originally created to be just a blending component for our very first Anniversary beer, which is always a blend we make with local wine makers.*

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

*I'm a huge fan of stouts and Parabola is a huge Imperial Stout. The roasty, espresso, chocolate flavors of the stout pair perfectly with the bourbon barrels that we have selected to age the beer in. After a year in the barrel, all of the sharp edges fade away, beautiful vanilla and coconut flavors start to emerge and the roasty dark chocolate notes turn into milk chocolate goodness. We focus on clean barrel expression and try to limit the sherry and heavy oxidation notes that can come along with warm-cellar barrel programs.*

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

*Parabola is an interesting word that seems to encapsulate the size and feel of the beer and a brewing project like this. Remember that we built the Vintage Barrel aging program over 10 years ago and we were trying to make a mark in a relatively new frontier in craft brewing. We are close friends with the folks at Three Floyds, Bell's and Goose Island so they were big inspirations when conceiving this beer. I was also listening to and seeing a lot of heavy metal shows at the time so that comes into play as well.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*Oh no way – Parabola is my ultimate dessert beer and certainly not my desert island beer. Pivo would be the desert island beer.*



Photo Credit: Little Films

# Brewer Q & A

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## 96 Rating – Founders Brewing Co. – KBS

*Responses from Founders head brewer Jeremy Kosmicki.*

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

*Founders began brewing a chocolate and coffee-infused oatmeal stout back in the early 2000s that was known as Breakfast Stout. It was based on a homebrew concept that then Head Brewer Nate Walser and myself had worked on prior to our professional brewing careers. It was the first beer we tried aging in bourbon barrels, and though it came out great, the body seemed a bit thin and the chocolate and coffee flavors had become muted due the extended time spent in the bourbon barrel. So the grain bill was increased and the chocolate and coffee amounts were doubled. That recipe has never changed since.*



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

*I personally love the balance of flavors in this beer. There is so much going on, but they all play very nicely together. I like the way the coffee and bourbon jump out in the aroma and first sip, then the chocolate and oak finish up in the aftertaste.*

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

*The beer was originally called Kentucky Breakfast Stout, since it was basically an imperial version of our Breakfast Stout and Kentucky is home of the best bourbons. I believe there were some legal issues though, something about the beer not being made in Kentucky, so we just went with KBS. It's what everyone was calling it for short anyways.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*No way! If I'm on a desert island I'll need something pale, hoppy and sessionable. It's more like my "weekend transition from breakfast to afternoon when I'm feeling fancy" beer*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 95 Rating – Ska Brewing Co. – Decadent Imperial IPA

*Responses from Ska brewer Thomas Larsen.*

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

*The original recipe for Decadent was created for our 10th anniversary and was meant to be a robust reincarnation of Pinstripe (one of our flagships) but, at the time, there was no Imperial Red category so we geared it to an Imperial IPA instead.*

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

*I love how the immediate burst of hop bitterness quickly transforms into candied grapefruit awesomeness.*

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

*10th anniversary, from Deca, having ten, and decadent, reflecting a state of moral or cultural decline, or luxuriously self-indulgent. I find them both fitting!*

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

*Um.....Decadent? That's one word; yeah, I'll stick with that.*

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

*We just recently had a customer ask if we use grapefruit in the Decadent because she read some reviews and thought it might interfere with her medication. We assured her that there is no fruit of any kind in this beer and that the flavor comes only from the hops.*



*Photo Credit: Scott Smith*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Belching Beaver Brewing Co. – Ol’ Dirty Barrel

*Responses from Belching Beaver brewmaster Troy Smith.*

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

*I did.*

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

*We age this beer in Ol’ Dirty Barrels, and I wanted to reference the late great ODB from Wu-Tang Clan. :)*

**BC: Is this your “desert island beer?”**

*My desert Island beer would have to be our Dammed Double IPA, because it has tons of drinkability, a higher ABV to “get the job done,” and you can’t get a DUI on a desert island...*

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

*Whiskey, figs, raisins, wood characteristics, caramel, sweet undertones. Good Times.*

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

*Juicy ribeye steaks or chocolaty desserts.*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Ballast Point Brewing & Spirits – Watermelon Dorado

*Responses from Ballast Point VP of Brewing & Distilling Jamie Murray.*

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

*We like to think that ALL of our recipes are a collaborative effort. There is no one person responsible for the world-class execution of our beers.*

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

*I love the fact that our team decided to use cucumber alongside the watermelon. It gives this beer added depth and really accentuates the aroma and flavor of watermelon and watermelon rind.*

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

*Dorado (Spanish for golden), in this case, refers to the beautiful common dolphinfish or Mahi Mahi (Hawaiian for very strong). With unmatched variations in color, the vivid Dorado astounds San Diego anglers with its strong aerial fighting ability. Their prized fillets make for some of the finest fish tacos in the world! Two Dorado fish, painted by local artist Paul Elder, grace the label to remind you of the double punch of flavor.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*This beer is a little too high-octane for a desert island. Mango Even Keel is more my style.*

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

*Another home run by the best team in the biz.*



Photo Credit: Ballast Point

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# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Funky Buddha Brewery – Wide Awake It's Morning

*Responses from Funky Buddha owner and brewer Ryan Sentz.*

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

*I did, about 5 years ago.*

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

*At this point where the beer is, I really enjoy the balance of all the flavors. I think when we first started brewing it, it was more maple-heavy.*

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

*We tend to use a lot of 80s pop culture references or music references, and this one came from the name of a 2005 Bright Eyes album.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*No way! I tend to think of desert island beers in two ways. One, I always picture it being really hot, so it would have to be something I would want on a hot day. Next, it would have to be something that was kind of neutral, so you didn't get too sick of any particular flavor. For me, our Floridian Hefeweizen fits the bill perfectly.*

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

*We've always described the smaller 6% version of this beer as "evoking a complete diner-style breakfast in a glass." So I think that same description applies here.*

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

*Not really a story, but I always love seeing people's reaction when first trying or smelling this beer. We get a lot of "holy shit" reactions, which always make us smile.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Rogue Ales & Spirits – 8 Hop IPA

*Responses from Rogue founder and brewmaster John Maier.*

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

*After making 7 Hop, we thought, "Why stop at 7? Why not use every hop we grow in the rich Willamette Valley soil at Rogue Farms to make what we call the boss of the Hop Family?" So we did.*

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

*The strong malt backbone that you can sink your teeth into and the big hop punch that follows.*

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

*The number of hop varieties in the beer. The bottle uses the hops to form the number 8 – it also serves as a field guide-style drawing; if you were to take the bottle out to the hopyard with you in the summer, you could easily identify each hop in your beer.*

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

*Brash, burly, imperial, unforgettable.*

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

*Veggie burger with Rogue blue cheese.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Rogue Ales & Spirits – Rogue American Amber Ale

*Responses from Rogue founder and brewmaster John Maier.*

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

*The deep, burnt caramel malt flavor.*

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

*American Amber was originally known as Ashland Amber as it was created at Rogue's original brewpub in Ashland, Oregon, which was destroyed by flooding not too soon after opening. It was renamed "American" because it represents more than the town in which it was brewed (which is now Newport, Oregon); American Amber reflects Rogue's commitment to brewing complex ales of distinction and Rogue's philosophy of placing no restraints on style or amount of ingredients in its quest to revolutionize beer in America.*

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

*Oregon crab cakes or Mo's Clam Chowder (Oregonian-style clam chowder).*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Blackberry Farm Brewery – Summer Saison

*Responses from Blackberry Farm head brewer Daniel Heisler.*

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

*Its bright, tropical hop flavor and dry, spicy finish.*

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

*The Australian Summer Hop and also the season we release the beer, Summer.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*Summer Saison would be fantastic sipped underneath the coconut palms of Clipperton Island with some fresh, fire-grilled crabs. Let's go!*

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

*We were inspired by a great hop from Australia, "Australian Summer." We wanted a tropical and refreshing beer that was a combination of flavors from mixing the Saison and American Pale Ale styles.*

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

*I think Summer is fabulous with grilled meats and BBQ as well as spicy dishes like Curries and Thai cuisine.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 94 Rating – Ska Brewing Co. – True Blonde

*Responses from Ska brewer Thomas Larsen.*

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

*True Blonde was the first beer brewed by Ska and was created by Dave and Bill back when they were still young and good-looking, as well as Kyle Carstens, their brewer/consultant/longtime friend, who was running the Wynkoop Brewery at the time while helping them get started.*

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

*I love the smooth maltiness and the way the hops give it a crisp, balanced finish.*

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

*When Bill and Dave were writing their business plan on the back of a bar napkin, Kyle asked them for a name for their first beer, which, obviously, was a blond ale, and their response was tinged with depravity and something about the short and curlies. In that moment, True Blonde was born.*

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

*Golden, malty goodness.*



Photo Credit: Scott Smith



# Brewer Q & A

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## 93 Rating – Ska Brewing Co. – Steel Toe Milk Stout

*Responses from Ska brewer Thomas Larsen.*

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

*It was originally created by Bill and Jeff Ogden (previous Head Brewer) but we made some changes to it a few years ago and took back-to-back Golds at GABF and WBC!*

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

*The velvety, smooth mouthfeel is out of this world; it still doesn't come across as heavy, even with healthy residual sweetness. Sometimes it can even come across so balanced you might not think it's a Sweet Stout.*

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

*This was originally just named Milk Stout but someone beat us to the punch with trademarking and we wanted it to reflect a working person's choice of tasty beverage so we went with Steel Toe, not to mention an owner's previous affinity for Doc Martens.*

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

*Smooth, chocolaty deliciousness.*

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

*Nothing difficult here, just desserts! Most sweet desserts (whether fruit- or chocolate-based) will be heavenly alongside Steel Toe.*



Photo Credit: Scott Smith

# Brewer Q & A

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## 93 Rating – Rogue Ales & Spirits – 7 Hop IPA

*Responses from Rogue founder and brewmaster John Maier.*

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

*Rogue Farms came up with this recipe. If taking in deep breaths of air, thick with aroma from hops growing on vines wasn't inspiration, then I don't know what was. This was our first IPA from the Rogue Farms Hop Family series and really a catalyst to brew the rest of the Hop Family beers too.*

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

*It's both bold and balanced.*

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

*7 Hops – simple and easy to understand. We let the hops speak for themselves and even write the number 7 on the bottle just to be sure.*

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

*It's a great synergy of aroma, bitterness and malt.*

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

*Spicy tofu curry.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 92 Rating – Oskar Blues Brewery – Beerito Mexican Lager

*Responses from Oskar Blues head brewer Tim Matthews.*

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

*The brewing team at OB collaborated to create this. We had multiple employees taste test a bunch of different fermentation techniques and then do chews on different malts. Then we paired two hops, Aramis and Hallertauer Mittlefrueh, that we had used in past amber lagers that we felt accentuated the malts in the way we desired. Then we ran multiple test batches in Lyons to dial in the grain bill before we let loose in NC and CO.*

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

*How bright the malt flavors are without a fatiguing sweetness.*

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

*The musings of our resident OB innovator, Jeremy Rudolf. He sent a mysterious midnight text about a year ago that simply said "Beerito." Next day we all chatted it up and felt like it would be great name for a Vienna/Dark Mexican Lager.*

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

*Complex yet approachable, this malt treat sinks into your tongue.*

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

*Walnut, goat cheese and raspberry vinaigrette salads plus creamy, chocolaty desserts.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 92 Rating – Monday Night Brewing – Slap Fight

*Responses from Monday Night lead brewer Josh Johnson.*

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

*I worked for about 6 months to perfect the base recipe. The dry-hop was chosen by our tasting panel at the brewery.*

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

*My favorite aspect of the beer is that it's a tomahawk slam jam of flavor, but is still so sessionable. We can drink this beer 24/7 here at the brewery.*

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

*We wanted to create a beer that slapped you in the face with hops, so we did.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*Oh, most definitely. I would love to drink Slap Fight out of a coconut.*

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

*A tasty cold snack.*

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

*BBQ, steaks, soft cheese, a body of water (i.e. swimming pool, beach, etc.) and of course, other Slap Fights.*



*Photo Credit: Jason Travis*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 92 Rating – Heavy Seas Beer – The Partner Ships Series: Maine Beer Co.

*Responses from Heavy Seas brewer Courtney Lacey.*

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

*It really was a collaborative effort, we went up to Maine and were sitting around with their brewmaster at the time discussing the general processes we use to make our beers and noticed a lot of similarities. We all agreed Zoe was our favorite Maine Beer Co. offering, so making a Red IPA just seemed to be the next logical step*

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

*I like the balance between the maltiness and the hop character.*

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

*We love our seaworthy puns here at Heavy Seas.*

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

*An easy-drinking, ruby-colored beauty.*

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

*It was a challenging filtration, but I am very proud and happy with how this beer looks in a glass.*

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

*Personally, I love drinking this beer with a freshly grilled cheeseburger in my backyard.*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 92 Rating – Dogfish Head Craft Brewery – Festina Pêche

*Responses from Dogfish Head founder Sam Calagione.*

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

*We brewed a stronger lambic-style beer with local peaches about 13 years ago called Festina Lente, which people dug. I read a story on historic Berliner Weisse beers in Germany and thought there might be an opportunity to revive the style in the US. I believe our Festina Peche was the first bottled Berliner Weisse in the US and it was definitely the first fruit-infused version to be packaged and distributed in the states. Now there are hundreds, which is cool, and shows the explosive growth of sessionable sours. Via IRI data, Berliner Weisse beers have seen over a hundred percent growth over the last 12 months.*

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

*How light and refreshing it is. It appeals to white wine drinkers as much as beer drinkers.*

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

*Festina Lente means "makes haste slowly," since sour beers take a long time to make. But Berliner Weisse can be made more quickly than lambics, so (long story short) Festina Peche means "swift peach."*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*It is one of them for sure – so light and refreshing. And the fruit can't be bad for you. ;-)*

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

*Sessionable sour! Stand up and salute: Tart and fruity reporting for duty! Oops – that's 12.*

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

*When we first distributed this beer about a decade ago – about one-fifth of what we sent out got returned to our brewery by distributors – some of them and some of our retailers thought the beer went bad and wasn't supposed to taste tart. It shows you how far beer lovers' palates have evolved in ten years.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 92 Rating – Rogue Ales & Spirits – Good Chit Pilsner

*Responses from Rogue founder and brewmaster John Maier.*

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

*I wanted to create a beer that lets you experience the barley we grow and floor malt by hand. Floor malting is an old fashioned, eight-day process that not many people are doing any more. Good Chit lets the barley speak and floor malting speak for itself.*

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

*The chit is the start of the rootlets of the barley that emerges from the kernel once steeping is done and germination then begins. We think it's pretty good, too.*

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

*Crisp, clean, refreshingly bitter.*

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

*We had no idea how to floor malt when we first started – we wasted so many batches of barley to finally get it right. We also didn't have a lot of space so it went from a small space above one of our pubs in Portland to now next to our barley fields located in Tygh Valley, Oregon.*

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

*Black bean chili or a nice summer salad with Oregon pink shrimp and lemon-herb vinaigrette.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 92 Rating – Back East Brewing Co. – Tony Goes Dancing

*Responses from Back East co-founder Tony Karlowicz.*

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

*This beer was designed by our former Head Brewer Stephen Andrews. As with any new recipe, all of our brewers collaborate and give suggestions too. This is a limited release for us and it is exciting because we'll be changing the hops each time, so each time Tony Goes Dancing, it will be a somewhat different dance. We just brewed a new batch, designed by our new Head Brewer Brian Flach, and this one will be a little bit different from the last.*

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

*I love the body of this beer. It is a double IPA with a nice body, lending it some complexity, but also has nice stone fruit and juicy flavors and aromas that you'd expect from the newer East Coast-style IPAs.*



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

*This was only our second DIPA, and following up on the popularity of Palate Mallet (our first), we knew we had to come up with a good name. Stephen Andrews actually came up with the name, and as soon as he suggested it, I loved it. He basically said, how fun would it be to go to a bar and say "I'll have a Tony Goes Dancing." I do like to dance, but I'm not very good at it.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*I don't think this is. I think my desert island beer would be our Summer Ale, which is light, crisp and hoppy. I don't think Summer Ale is a desert island beer just because it's a crushable, lighter ale, but also because I could probably be happy drinking just that beer for the rest of my (short) life on that island.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – AleSmith Brewing Co. – AleSmith Double IPA

*Responses from AleSmith brewmaster and owner Peter Zien.*

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

*My favorite aspect of AleSmith Double IPA is the intensity of the hop flavor and aroma without any overpowering bitterness.*

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

*Scaling the wall of hops against a solid malt backdrop.*

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

*In 2005, a happy accident occurred when we set out to brew our winter seasonal, YuleSmith, for a one-off summer release. Apparently, some malt bags had been mislabeled and the expected reddish-hued beer was instead a light copper color. Upon tasting this now lighter-colored hop monster, our Double IPA was born!*



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

*Carnitas and carne asada come to mind, but you might be surprised to try this as the base liquid for steamed mussels as well. It's crazy-versatile as a food-pairing beer!*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – FATE Brewing Co. – Uror

*Responses from FATE head brewer Jeff Griffith.*

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

*I've been making Gose since there were only four reviews online, two of which were from Germany.*

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

*The surprise on people's faces once they've tasted it. They love the balance and how refreshing this beer is. Many haven't tried a style like this before and are very intrigued after their first sip.*

**BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"**

*Yes. So much so that we like to call it "Brewer's Gatorade."*

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

*Tart, crisp, salty, bready, sour, flavorful, refreshing and surprising.*



*Photo Credit: Dave Engle Photography*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – Green Man Brewery – Wayfarer

*Responses from Green Man head brewer John Stuart.*

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

*Wayfarer started out as a Session IPA in the tasting room called StormTrooper. I made some adjustments to it after spending some time at Dechutes Brewery in Bend, OR. Their ChainBreaker IPA was my inspiration.*

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

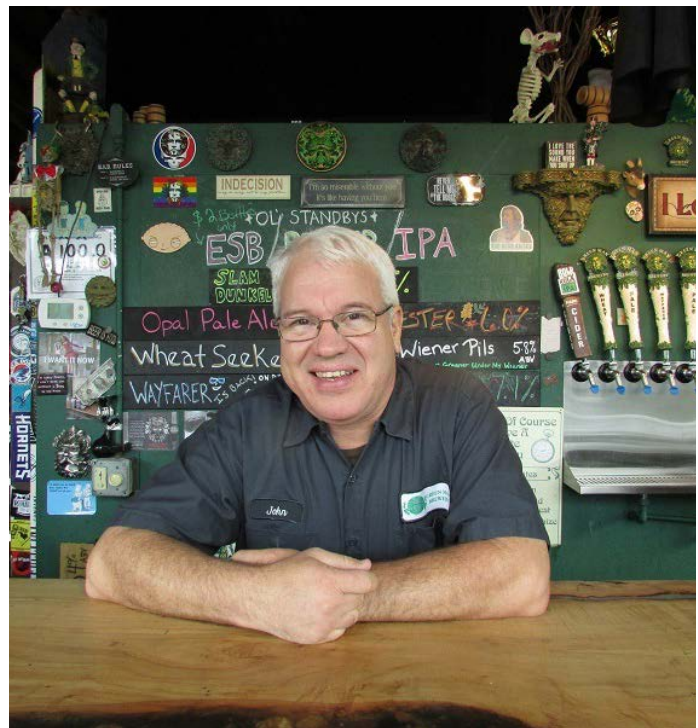
*I like Wayfarer's crisp hop snap and easy drinkability.*

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

*Dennis, Green Man's owner, has a pair of Wayfarer sunglasses that he's quite fond of, and he thought it would make a cool name.*

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

*Thai food. Particularly Green Curry.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – Rogue Ales & Spirits – Brutal IPA

*Responses from Rogue founder and brewmaster John Maier.*

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

*I did.*

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

*The peachy flavor from the Alluvial hops grown on our farm.*

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

*When I first made this beer, it was on a different brew system, using all bagged malt and loads of hops. We had to shovel out of the hop-back by hand and the whole process was "brutal," hence the name.*

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

*Fruity and hopilicious.*

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

*Grilled oysters with garlic butter*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – Great Divide Brewing Co. – Whitewater

*Responses from Great Divide founder Brian Dunn*

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

*Whitewater wheat was the name of an American Wheat Ale that Great Divide stopped packaging long ago, yet would occasionally brew for special occasions and celebrations. The R&D team discussed some proposed changes to be made to the original recipe and the Brewing Team ran a pilot batch that hit the specs and everyone was thrilled with the results.*

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

*Lower ABV and more flavor was the goal of the reworked recipe. The beer doesn't feel thin and it isn't too bitter, but rather remains hoppy and refreshing*

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

*Named after the frothing rapids of Colorado's rivers.*

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

*Light, refreshing, hoppy, bright, fragrant, clean, summery, unfiltered... and yummy.*



# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – Southbound Brewing Co. – Transilience

*Responses from Southbound brewer Chris Geerlings.*

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

*The flavor is refreshing and thirst-quenching. Mango and pomegranate notes provide some fruitiness in the sip, and it finishes nice and tart.*

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

*Transilience means leaping forward from one thing to the next, which applies to musical improvisation but also to progress in general. Transilience was the beer that we launched into the Atlanta market last year for the first time – a significant step for the brewery.*

**BC: Is this your “desert island beer?”**

*Sure. This beer is our summertime seasonal, and it's an absolutely perfect beach beer. Light, tart, flavorful and totally refreshing.*

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

*Transilience drinks light, sour and fruity, and it also carries a touch more carbonation than our other beers. I think this tart effervescence makes it a great brunch beer. It's also great with fresh seafood and mild soft cheeses like Brie.*

# Brewer Q & A

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## 91 Rating – Tröegs Independent Brewing – Nimble Giant

*Responses from Tröegs brewmaster and co-owner John Trogner.*

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

*We set out on the path to Nimble Giant more than a year ago, but we didn't know it then. It started with our Scratch Series team doing a small-batch beer with Mosaic hops, which we had never brewed with before. We didn't set out to release another double IPA, but when we tasted this hop combination, we latched on and couldn't let go. After seven different recipes, it became Nimble Giant.*

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

*We love how it builds; the layers of Mosaic, Azacca and Simcoe take over your senses. Mango, tropical fruit and creamsicle notes give the beer a silky, juicy underbelly that builds to a punch in the face of grapefruit rind, honeysuckle and pineapple.*

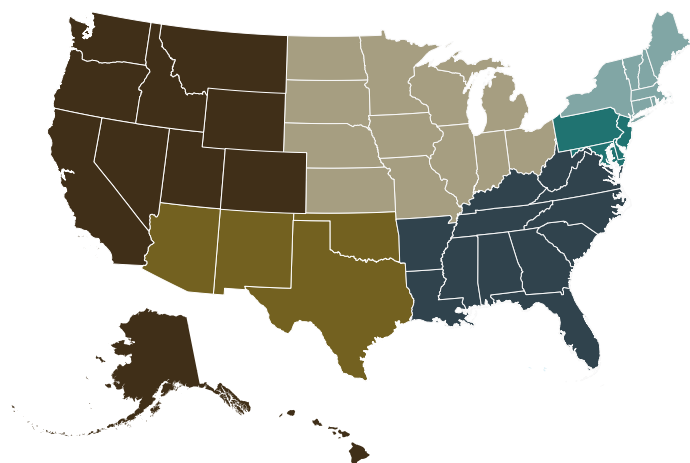
**BC: Where does this beer's name come from?**

*About 3 or 4 recipes in, we knew we were onto something and wanted to work toward a final recipe. Right around then, my brother Chris saw the word "giant" on a roadside sign. This beer is definitely a giant, but it's also agile and lively, so we started calling it Nimble Giant. The name stuck.*

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

*It's Pavlovian. Smell it and you're a drooling mess.*





## WEST

(AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)

### **Fortune Favors the Funk**

Beachwood Blendery

Long Beach, CA

### **One Foot Out the Door**

El Segundo Brewing Co.

El Segundo, CA

### **The Great One**

Four Sons Brewing

Huntington Beach, CA

### **El Gose**

Avery Brewing Co.

Boulder, CO





**Whiskey Barrel Quandary**

River North Brewery  
Denver, CO

**Deluge Peach Nuptial**

Sanitas Brewing Co.  
Boulder, CO

**Gloria Pilsner**

Block 15 Brewing Co.  
Corvallis, OR

**Summer Pale**

pFriem Family Brewers  
Hood River, OR



# SOUTHWEST

(AZ, NM, OK, TX)

## Basic Not Boring

Arizona Wilderness Brewing Co.

Gilbert, AZ

## Imperial Popcorn Pilsner

Bosque Brewing

Albuquerque, NM

## Foeder Gold

American Solera

Tulsa, OK

## 4th Anniversary Beer

Prairie Artisan Ales

Tulsa, OK

## Fisticuffs English Barleywine

Cedar Creek Brewery

Stevens Point, TX

## Wealth and Taste

Deep Ellum Brewing Co.

Dallas, TX

## Cherry Bexarliner

Fretail Brewing Co.

San Antonio, TX



**Hop Delusion**

Karbach Brewing Co.  
Houston, TX

**Here Comes The Sun**

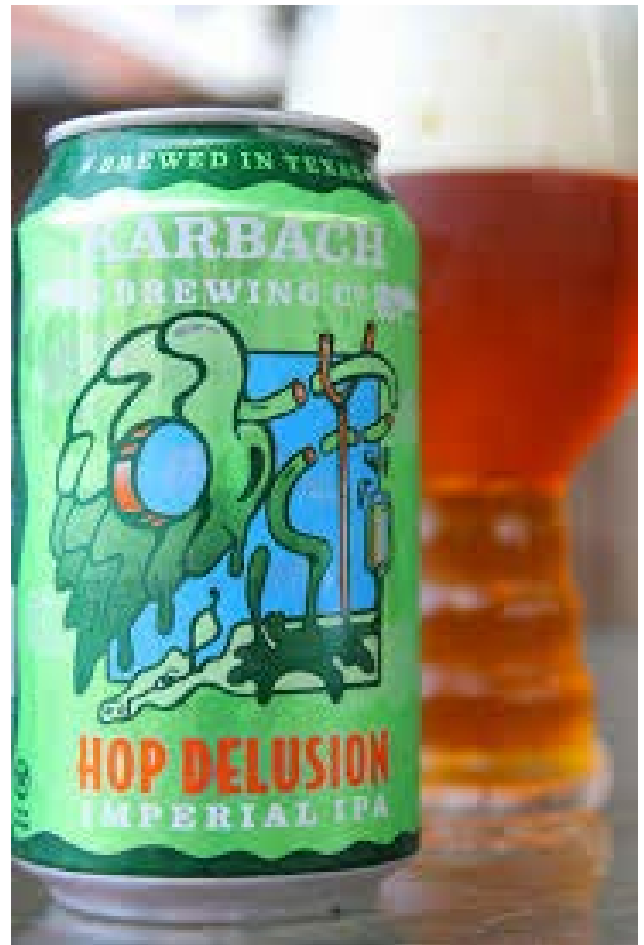
Karbach Brewing Co.  
Houston, TX

**Troll Toll**

Lakewood Brewing Co.  
Garland, TX

**Summer Pils**

Saint Arnold Brewing Co.  
Houston, TX



# MIDWEST

(IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)

## **Poolside Ale**

Bell's Brewery  
Kalamazoo, MI

## **Civillistic**

Brewery Vivant  
Grand Rapids, MI

## **Dragon's Milk Reserve Raspberry Lemon**

New Holland Brewing Co.  
Holland, MI

## **Strawberry Short's Cake**

Short's Brewing Co.  
Bellaire, MI

## **Unchained #22: Zingiber Cream Ale**

Summit Brewing Co.  
Minneapolis, MN

## **Ten**

Surly Brewing Co.  
Brooklyn Center, MN



**Imperial Three Blind Mice Bermuda Style**

Mother's Brewing Co.  
Springfield, MO

**Jacuzzerooski**

Hoof Hearted Brewing  
Marengo, OH

**Lava Blender**

Arcade Brewery  
Chicago, IL

**Pipeworks Citra**

Pipeworks Brewing Co.  
Chicago, IL



## MID-ATLANTIC

(DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)

### TreasureFest Oktoberfest

Heavy Seas Beer

Baltimore, MD

### Curiosity Series: Rye Saison

Forgotten Boardwalk Brewing Co.

Cherry Hill, NJ

### Pollination

Magnify Brewing Co.

Fairfield, NJ

### Red, White & Raw

Rare Form Brewing Co.

Troy, NY

### Summer IPA

Upstate Brewing Co.

Elmira, NY



**O' Doyle Rules**

Evil Genius Beer Co.  
West Grove, PA

**Gatherer**

Tired Hands Brewing Co.  
Ardmore, PA

**Berliner Weisse with Elderflower**

Victory Brewing Co.  
Philadelphia, PA

**Hop Buggy**

Lancaster Brewing Co.  
Lancaster, PA

**Ecomis**

Neshaminy Creek Brewing Co.  
Croydon, PA



# SOUTH

(AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)

## **Bourbon Barrel-Aged Black Tip**

3 Daughters Brewing  
St. Petersburg, FL

## **Belgo Ruskie**

Cherry Street Co-Op  
Cumming, GA

## **Old Guard Biere de Garde**

Service Brewing Co.  
Savannah, GA

## **Bramblin' Man**

Lazy Magnolia Brewery  
Kiln, MS

## **Dry-Hopped Centaur**

Big Boss Brewing Co.  
Raleigh, NC





**Hibiscus Grape Saison**

Hi-Wire Brewing  
Asheville, NC

**Coolcumber**

Wicked Weed Brewing  
Asheville, NC

**Casper Gose**

Jackalope Brewing Co.  
Nashville, TN

**Coconut Delight**

Lickinghole Creek Craft Brewery  
Goochland, VA



# NEW ENGLAND

(CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)

## **James Bean**

Allagash Brewing Co.

Portland, ME

## **Substance**

Bissell Brothers Brewing Co.

Portland, ME

## **Sable**

Night Shift Brewing

Everett, MA

## **Outside the Lines**

Trillium Brewing Co. & Omnipollo

Boston, MA



**Hopulization**

Stoneface Brewing Co.  
Newington, NH

**Crusher**

The Alchemist  
Waterbury, VT

**Mastermind**

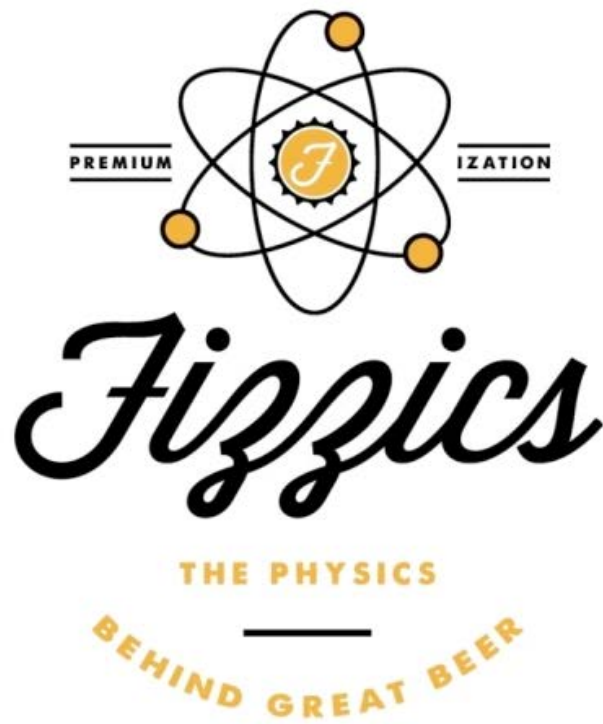
Fiddlehead Brewing Co.  
Shelburne, VT

**Mutiny IPA**

Foley Brothers Brewing  
Brandon, VT



# Product Review



by Jim Dykstra

Isaac Newton's work led to a paradigm shift in our understanding of the universe, and today, he is regarded as the father of modern physics. Folks, brace yourselves, because the team behind Fizzics have created a contraption of Newtonian magnitude, which could forever change the way you drink your beers.

Hyperbole aside, this is a sleek, well-designed piece of technology that seems to strike a balance between affordability and practicality.

It's not just a gimmick, there's actual technology behind Fizzics – pressure from ultrasonic waves provide a perfect head without sucking all the carbonation out of your beer. Before its widget gadgets, Guinness experimented with similar technology in the seventies, though they couldn't make it practical. Thankfully, all Fizzics needs from you are 4 AA batteries, and your favorite beer placed in the chamber and sealed in place with an easily closable lid.

Once you've got the beer primed and your chalice at the ready, pull the lever forward (towards the front) and let the magic (read: science) happen. It's fun to do, but it does take a bit of a learning curve. The TAP setting, which should be used to pour about 90% of the beer, can still create a lot of foam, so we recommend holding the glass up closer to the tap, like you would with a keg. The TOP (push the lever back) setting really does work wonders, creating a billowy, pillowy cumulus cloud of foam you could almost rest a nickel on.

Cleanup is easy, as simple as rinsing. When you're done using it, just run a couple ounces of water through the hose the same way you would with beer, and it's ready for the next vessel. The antimicrobial mat comes out for easy rinsing, if necessary.

As for the size of the Fizzics unit, we had no trouble fitting in growlers, crowlers, bombers, 12-ounce bottles, and

though it's not directly intended for use with cans, it does work with them as well.

When should it be used? It's great as a party tool and encourages sharing, so larger bottles or growlers are recommended, as the resulting effects on the carbonation (smaller bubbles) and flavor make it easier to drink rapidly.

It works great for single-person use as well, in which case I would recommend pouring the entire glass in one sitting.

Consideration of the style and its level of carbonation should be taken into account when deciding whether or not to use Fizzics. Depending on personal preference, you may find you prefer some styles over others, with more or less carbonation. The sonic waves agitate the bubbles, creating more nucleation points, and thus, smaller bubbles. Similar to a nitro beer, the mouthfeel becomes softer, which can really change the beer.

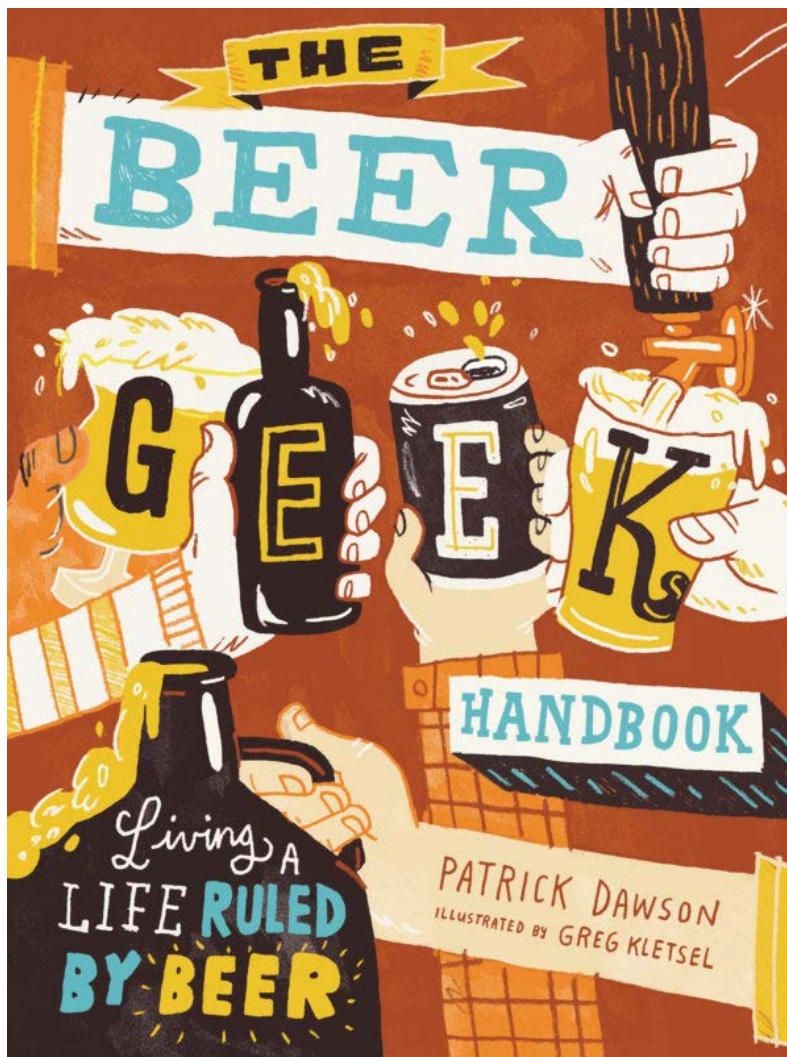
Don't underestimate the flavor of carbonation! Often it is key to the overall flavor profile. Saisons, for instance, generally benefit from a bit of carbonic tang, and thus you may prefer to use Fizzics on your DIPA or Imperial Stout.

Ultimately, craft drinkers are those who enjoy experimentation, and Fizzics is not only a great way to get a different flavor out of your go-to sixer, but also a way to learn about flavor characteristics, and to refine the palate. It's fun, easy, and a guaranteed talking piece.

It seems to really work well with all IPAs, and gave a second life to a near-flat growler of Clown Shoes Mango Kolsch, accentuating the fruitiness. Best of all, we paired some Founders Rubaeus run through the Fizzics with a dollop of Dark Chocolate Raspberry Gelato, and the result was heavenly.

Though we were initially skeptical, Fizzics won us over with its fun, easily usable and cleanable design, and its ability to shed new light on how we drink. Will it turn your Genesee Cream Ale into a World Class brew? Debatable, but it will certainly add a new element to your drinking experience. Fizzics encourages experimentation, discussion and sharing; some of the best parts of enjoying beer. And the name is fun. As Olivia Newton-John would say: "Let's get Fizzic-al."





## The Beer Geek Handbook

*by Chris Guest*

Beer geek. While this moniker might seem like an insult at first, it has been fully embraced by craft beer fanatics – so much so that claiming yourself as one is more a badge of honor rather than a self-deprecating aside. Just as “nerd culture” has permeated modern society (Who doesn’t know who J.J. Abrams and Joss Whedon are?), so too has the term “beer geek” become the calling card for any discerning craft beer drinker.

Patrick Dawson is a proud beer geek, and from the very first line of *The Beer Geek Handbook* he wears his geekdom on his brewery t-shirt sleeve. And even before the first line, Dawson exposes his powerful geekery – trying to curry favor with whale-makers by dedicating the book to “craft brewers everywhere – especially those who make really rare, barrel-aged beer.” Of course, a book specifically aimed at beer geeks should both cajole and prod its intended audience into learning about their chosen hobby, which

## Book Review

TBGH (excessive acronyms are the mark of a true beer geek, according to Dawson) does in spades.

Dawson's prose is laced with wit, verve and snide humor, and the book is loaded with tips, tricks and the history of beer geekdom the world over. Numerous how-to's and suggestions are also present, such as how to trade beer online, the types of bars that serve the best beer and how to host a perfect bottle share.

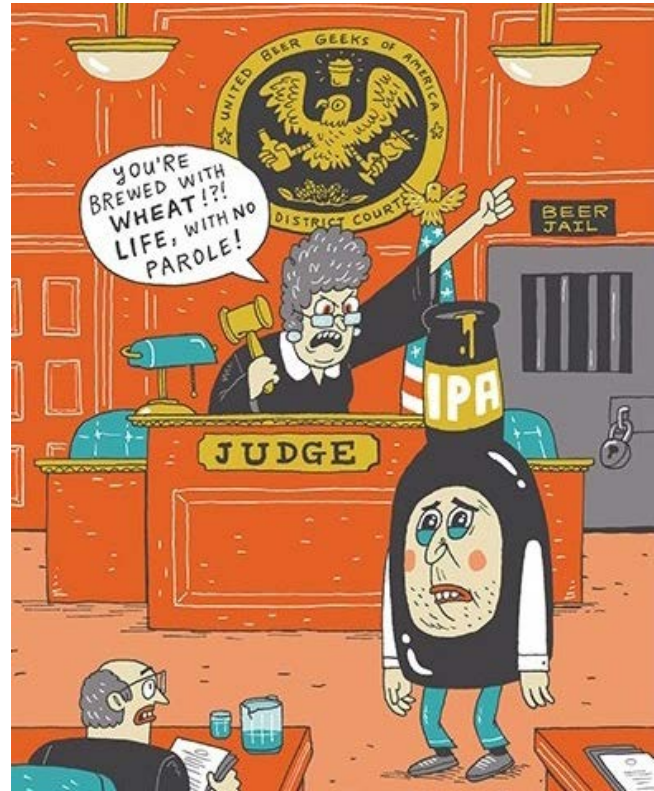
While reading it, I felt myself becoming more and more interested in rustling up whales (after reading Chapter 2, Beer: The Root of all Beer Geekery), and I could feel my disdain for frosted mugs grow ever stronger (after reading the short blurb "Damn You and Your Frosted Mugs.")

Dawson crams a truly impressive amount of stuff into this book's 192 pages (similar to the amount of ingredients in collaboration beers, of which Dawson is not a fan) including various quizzes to decide what kind of Beer Geek you are or whether or not you're a fanboy/girl for a certain brewery, ideal beer vacation spots (or beer vacations) and the best days for a truly discerning beer geek to attend the GABF. There's even a section written by Dawson's wife about being the spouse or significant other of a beer geek (something she is obviously well-acquainted with).

While the organization of the book might be a little scatter-shot, the omnipresent humor and singularity of vision from Dawson makes it an engaging, entertaining and informative read. Also, almost every page in the book has eye-catching graphics and blurbs, as well as terrific, amusing artwork from Dawson's collaborator Greg Kletsel. His cartoony portraits of some of the founding fathers of craft brewing are worth the price of admission alone, including The Beer Hunter Michael Jackson replacing The King of Pop Michael Jackson on the cover of *Thriller*.

This book has been a constant fixture on my desk since it crossed the transom, and with good reason. Dawson's sparkling prose coupled with Kletsel's kooky drawings kept me picking up *The Beer Geek Handbook* again and again for both entertainment and information.

Dawson claims that "the natural path for every gluten-tolerant adult should lead them to falling in love with beer." And while I was certainly on board with that statement before, I now agree that being a beer geek might be the purest form of that devotion, fermented into a whale-hunting, breweriana-toting fanatic.





## **United Kingdom**

*by Carolyn Smagalski*

### **Scotland's First Saké**

The UK is no stranger to imported saké, but having a domestic one of her own is a relatively new experience. In 2015, Dojima of Osaka, Japan, opened the UK's first sake brewery at Fordham Abbey Estates in Cambridgeshire, 65 miles north of London. And now, Gerald Michaluk of Arran Brewery, Isle of Arran, Scotland is about to add sake to the northern landscape through a Crowdfunding Phase II venture. By establishing Scotland's first sake brewery, Arran Brewery will create a unique presence in markets throughout the UK, Europe, and the USA. Their plans also include a craft brewery focused on lager beers.

### **Sour + Power**

Brouwerij de Brabandere of Belgium has introduced an elite six-pack of blend-your-own beers to the UK market through importer James Clay. The Petrus Sour Power Pack comprises four beers: Petrus 50/50 - a blend of foeder-aged Pale and Red Sours - plus one each of Oud Bruin and Aged Red, and three bottles of Aged Pale Sours. UK beer enthusiasts are embracing the opportunity to try their hand at "personal blending" like the pros.

### **Brits' Annual Hunt for Beer Writers**

The British Guild of Beer Writers has initiated their yearly search for the most passionate beer writers and broadcasters in the world, with prizes reaching upwards of £1000 apiece in 8 categories, and a trophy for the winner of the Corporate Communications award. Entries are due Friday, September 9, 2016, for pieces produced between Sept 1, 2015 and August 31, 2016. Awards will be presented at the BGBW Annual Dinner in December. The Overall Beer Writer of the Year receives the Michael Jackson Gold Tankard Award. Want details? Go to: <http://beerguild.co.uk/bgbw-awards-2016/>





# European Report



## Belgium

by Carl Kins

**Brugse Zot** keeps working on its international expansion. They opened the third Brugse Zot themed café in the British city of Nottingham, following in the footsteps of China and Japan. Next to that, the big news is that their underground pipeline between brewery and bottling facility is now operational.

There are already a load of beer competitions in the world, but Wallonia wanted to add one, in which it also shows the never ending struggle between region (Wallonia) and nation (Belgium). The competition is called “**Best Belgian Beer of Wallonia**” and was launched this year for the third time (after 2012 and 2014). The strap line is “C’est bon, c’est Wallon!” (it is good, it is Wallonian). 29 Wallonian breweries participated with 95 artisanal beers in six styles: wheat, blond, amber, brown, stout, and fruited. A total of 14 medals were awarded.

More and more breweries are opening up. According to beer consumers club Zythos, there are now officially **201 breweries** in Belgium. That includes the recently opened Brouwers Verzet in Anzegem, Siphon brewery in Damme, Witches Brewery, which began in the Pays des Collines region of Hainaut province with an African brewer. The first release is a sugar free beer called Freemoon, and they are working on a banana beer, Banaqueen.

Moreover, quite a few breweries keep expanding, including the breweries of Armand Debelder, who will bring all his ventures under one roof, in Lot, along with a revamped LambikoDroom.

**Eutropius** has moved from Heule to Menen, where the first beers will be brewed in June. Clearly, the major focus will be contract brewing. They currently brew 51 beers for others and they want to quadruple this by end of next year. As long as they put on the label the provenance of the beer and whether it is an original brew or a clone of something else, I do not mind too much.

**De Graal** moved to much larger premises, allowing to double the production. De Graal is also known for contract brewing,



including a special Japanese beer to accompany sushi, for which they receive a secret spice mix direct from Japan.

**'t Gaverhopke** moved from Stasegem to a farm, belonging to a castle, called Goed te Nieuwenhove in Waregem. 't Gaverhopke's old location will continue to be a brewery with a young guy jumping in in coming months.

There are also some noteworthy new alcoholic products on the market. Smiske has a novel idea. Instead of always producing the same beer over and over again, brewer Johan Brandt will each time brew something new under the same name. The beer will be called Smiske Vario and will thus differ batch from batch, and this can be in all aspects, from color to taste to alcohol strength ... The first Smiske Vario is now on the market, and is typically Oudenaarde region, i.e. a strong dark beer at 9% ABV.

**Het Anker** announced the second beer in the Indulgence-series, i.e. the Cuvée Sauvage. It is a blond beer at 9.8 % ABV, based on Gouden Carolus Cuvée van de Keizer Red, to which was added 2 and 3 year-old lambiek of Brouwerij Boon. The launch date is September 2016.

# European Report



Omer Vander Ghinste, ex Bockor recently launched Tripel Le Fort, at 8.8 % ABV, with a touch, reminiscent of Westmalle Tripel, especially because of the yeast.

At the end of last year, **Lindemans** made a special release for the birth of the daughter Goedele of one of the De Heeren van Liedekercke owners, aptly called Goedele's Bloesem, a blend of 1 and 2 year old lambic with freshly picked fresh elderflowers. It is similar but not the same as Blossom gueuze where other lambic ages and a different source of elderflower have been used.

**Stassen**, part of Heineken, created an abbey cider, called Cidre d'Abbaye du Val-Dieu.

Brouwerij De Plukker uit Poperinge has delivered one of their beers "**All inclusive IPA**" to the Dutch distillery De Pronckheer of Cothen, who turned it into jenever. Noteworthy is that the IPA is a fresh hop IPA, with the hops all grown by brewer Joris Cambie on his hop farm.

And actually, there are more new products, related to Belgian beer:

Lindemans launched **Lampas**, beer tapas that marry well with Lindemans lambiek based beers.

Apple and Android only offer a stereotypical beer glass in their emoji collection. The Belgian Brewers and VLAM have now launched 60 brand-new **beer-mojis**. The emoji are available for free download on Apple and Android. Didn't

find your favorite beer? No worries. The amount of beer-mojis will be expanded soon.

Not all is well in the Belgian brewing world though.

**Palm Belgian Craft Brewers** recently announced they were to cooperate with Dutch company Bavaria N.V. At first Bavaria buys 60% of the shares, clearly a majority stake in Palm Belgian Craft Brewers. Bavaria will gradually increase their holdings to achieve 100 % in 2021. It is mentioned there is a lot of synergy, but clearly all benefits will go to Bavaria, who gets a real strong foothold in the Belgian market, where they can sell their products, which include La Trappe. By the way, Bavaria also has a minority stake in De Molen. Finally, to avoid confusion, Brouwerij Boon is not involved in this transaction. On 30 June 2014 Palm sold the shares they had in Brouwerij Boon (50%) to the Diepensteyn Holding, the holding company that also owned Palm. The other 50% of the Boon shares rests with the Boon family.

Renovation works have started at the **De Troch** maltings in Schepdaal. The owners want to create apartment lofts in the building. This is applauded by the city council, who like the fact that after years of deterioration, finally the building's will be put to good use again. Clearly, the fact that brewery history is destroyed is not important to them. The old iconic brewery buildings of Brouwerij Eylenbosch along the same street as De Troch keep deteriorating, to such an extent that there is a spooky feel to it, attracting more and more ghost chasers.



## **Czech Republic**

*by Max Bahnson*

### **Divestive Aids**

In order to get the EU anti-trust authorities approve their merger, AB-InBev and SAB-Miller have committed to divest a bundle of SAB-Miller owned breweries in Eastern Europe, including Plzeňský Prazdroj, Czech Republic's largest brewing company and makers of Pilsner Urquell. With Heineken, Carlsber and Molson-Coors out of the game due to their respective market weights in the region, eyes have turned towards Asahi, who have already agreed to buy two of SAB-Miller's brands, Peroni and Grolsch.

Analysts, however, appear to believe that an investment is more likely to be for the Czech Republic's flagship beer, and one of the world's most iconic. Once these sales comes through, and regardless of who will be the buyer, it will be analogous to what AB-InBev did in 2009, when they got rid of a bunch of Eastern European breweries that included Pivovary Staropramen. After being acquired by a Belgian investment fund, those breweries were consolidated into a concern called StarBev that a few years later would be sold to Molson-Coors. This should be no surprise, Eastern Europe has an aging population, sales that are stagnant at best and hardly any brands of value outside their own backyards.





# *Veltins Aims to Fill the Void of American Craft Lagers*

*by Jim Dykstra*

It has become increasingly apparent that the mighty lager has been overlooked in the world of craft beer. Perhaps it's a subconscious desire to steer clear of the big boys' turf, or just the fact that it's a nuanced and technically challenging style, but the craft lager game in America is sparse. So who's going to fill the void? Those who pioneered the art form.

Traditional German brewers with centuries of experience are sending help to America in the form of subtle, distinct lagers. One such brewery, Brauerei C & A Veltins, is leading the charge bringing its unfiltered Grevensteiner stateside, along with its nearly 200 years of tradition.

The operation that would become Veltins began in 1824 as a small guesthouse brewery in the West German city of Meschede-Grevenstein, supplying Reinheitsgebot-worthy ales for the locals. It remained a local brewery for its first 30 years until burgeoning beer connoisseur Clemens Veltins, son of the town mayor, went on a six-year beer vision quest, including a journey to the American beer stronghold of Milwaukee.

Having developed a thirst for quality beer, he took over the small, local brewery in 1852, and began supplying his beer to nearby taverns. The beer made use of the local spring water, which had a soft, mineral quality uniquely characteristic of the Westphalia region. Today, the beer is as delicious as ever, with the same strict adherence to pure, natural ingredients, but the

PHOTOS COURTESY VELTINS



*A truckload of fresh Veltins Pilsener has always been fashionable, as evidenced by the confident poses of these early 20th century deliverymen.*

brewery is a little more advanced. Before we get ahead of ourselves, let's take a look at the beer.

Veltins Grevensteiner – you'll be able to recognize this traditional "Kellerbier" by its award-winning bottle design affectionately known as the Steinie, with its signature stocky bottom giving way to an elegantly shaped hump towards the bottle neck. The amber-hued contents within are brewed with traditional dark malts and fresh hops for a complex aroma "initially dominated by caramel flavors with slight undertones of honey, roasted almonds and fresh fruity notes that mostly remind of green apple," according to a statement from the brewery.

In the glass, the 5.2% Grevensteiner forms a cumulus head atop its creamy body, which, in the nature of a true "Kellerbier", is unfiltered and unpasteurized. It's made to drink fresh, and to be savored for its complexity or rapidly quaffed as a thirst quencher.

The first large technological innovation within the brewery came in 1883, when Clemens began to utilize steam to generate electricity and early refrigeration equipment for lagering – all quite advanced for its time. Clemens passed this legacy on to his twin sons

Carl and Anton, who took over the business in 1905 while still in their twenties, and gave it the official name of Brauerei C & A Veltins, which has remained ever since.

The Roaring Twenties saw ownership passed down to Carl Veltins' son, also named Carl, who would continue the quest for technically innovative production of traditional beer by turning it into a fully electric operation. This was relatively unheard of in Germany at the time, and Carl, Jr. would continue the trend of innovation, adding a state-of-the-art hand-operated bottling line and becoming the first brewery in Europe to treat its own wastewater. Now in its fifth generation of ownership with great-great-granddaughter Susanne Veltins at the helm, the Veltins brand remains a pioneer in conservation and recycling technology, producing packaging designed to be returned to the brewery for reuse.

America makes fine beers, but true masters of the craft know there's always something to learn. Veltins, and other European brewers boast a heritage unrivaled in the U.S., and as educated drinkers, it's worth exploring their work. Look for the lovable Grevensteiner on draft and in lovable Steinie bottles in bars across the U.S.

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