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Breckenridge's Todd Usry Weighs In

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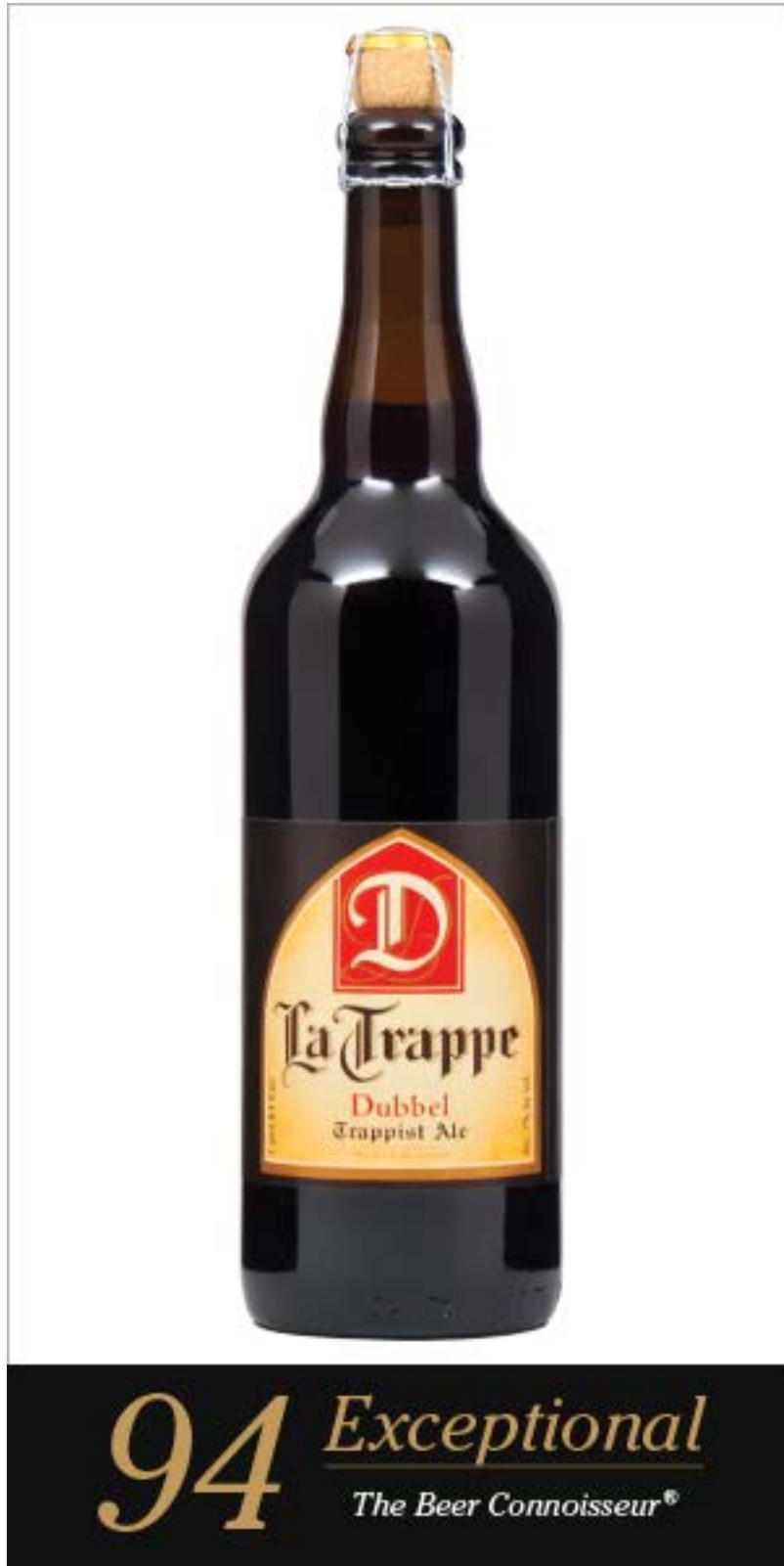


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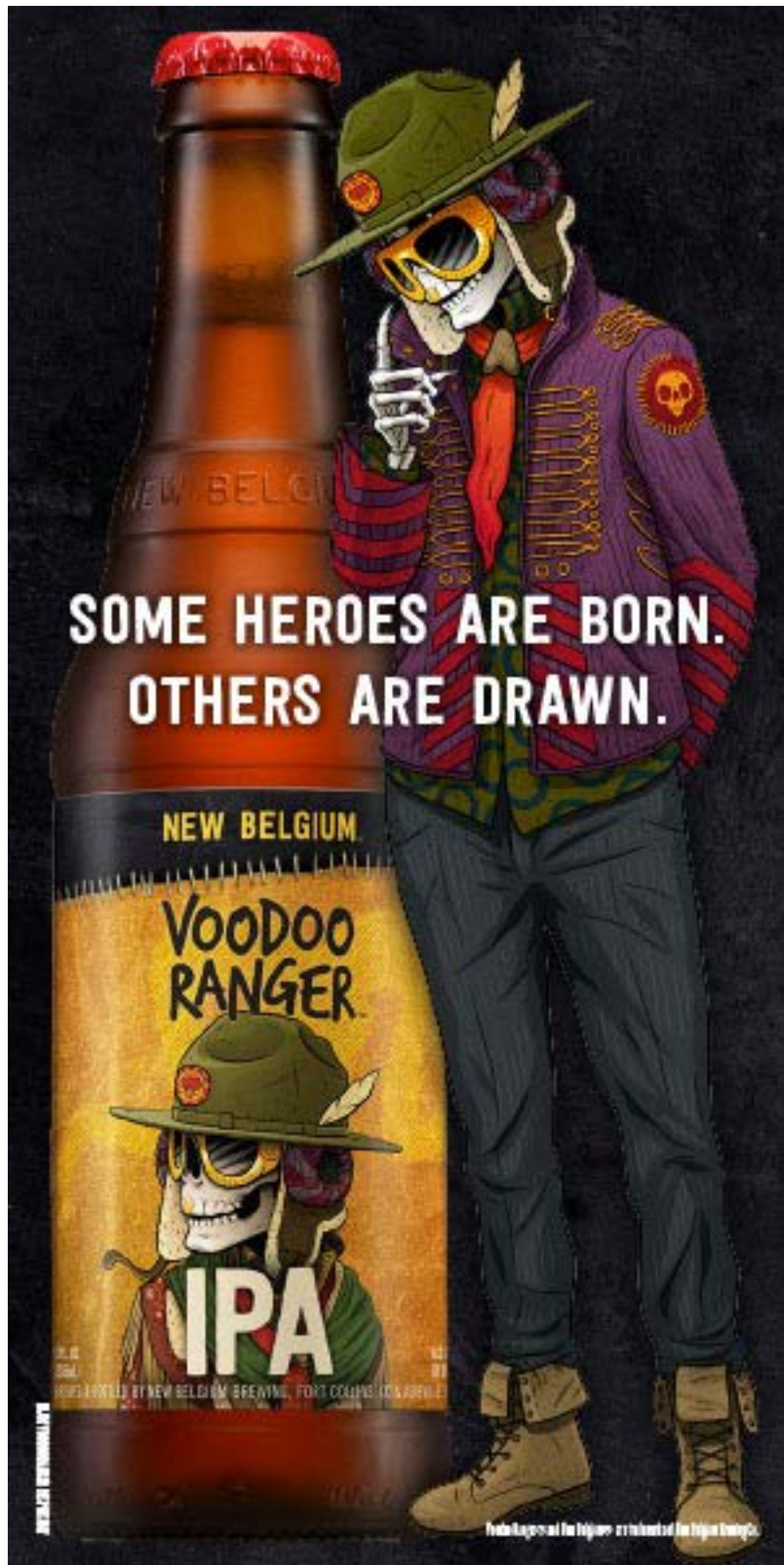
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From the Editors



If you've ever turned the dial to your local public broadcasting television channel, then you're probably acquainted with the worldly travel guru and Bill Gates doppelganger Rick Steves, who has made it his mission to travel the globe and show Americans the faces and places they have never encountered.

Mr. Steves contends that everyone should see the world, and by doing so, will see their preconceived notions of other cultures melt into fascination and appreciation. When we break bread and clink glasses together, we're reminded of the common threads that bind the fabric of humanity. Walls crumble when glasses are raised in collective celebration.

With these thoughts in mind, we bring you our May/June edition, which emphasizes the exploration of aspects of culture outside of our own. Sherry Dryja returns with a traditional three course Japanese feast (brews included) that can transport you around the world without leaving your dining room, and Jonathan

Ingram checks in with the low down for beer travel and transport, or "the other kind of flight".

Next, we give you the skinny on the FDA's updated nutrition facts and what they mean for beer, so you can stay light on your feet before trekking into the wild west of beer law, also known as Utah.

We know travel is easier said than done. It's expensive and exhausting, and downright impossible for some, which is why we've still got all the reviews, Brewer Q&A's, news, and insight from industry leaders you need to survey the world of beer from the comfort of your own bar.

Wherever you are, we hope our 30th Issue, the May/June Edition finds you well. Pop a bottle and let it take you to a place of peace.

Cheers!

Jim & Chris



Flying Saucer

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Mike Hagan of Mike-Ro-Brewery and Keith Schlabs of Flying Saucer hoist a glass to craft beer in 2017.

KEITH SCHLABS: CRAFT BEER IN 2017

STORY BY: CHRIS GUEST | PHOTOS COURTESY FLYING SAUCER

Keith Schlabs is an eminent figure in the world of craft beer entrepreneurs as the founder and CEO of the Flying Saucer chain of craft beer-centric restaurants.

If you read our cover story on Schlabs last year, you'll know about his background and his history of creating beautiful spaces where delectable cuisine and dope craft beer collide for all patrons and fans.

In this issue, we talked to Schlabs about a few more big-picture questions in the world of craft beer, and particularly, how those craft beer conundrums affect the greater restaurant business in general. Schlabs is forthright and creative, and most importantly, he knows his beer.

How do craft beer-centric restaurants differenti-

ate themselves now that most restaurants offer good beer?

As a beer drinker I am certainly excited to see many of my favorite restaurants paying attention to their beer lists these days. While some restaurants have come a long way from those homogeneous beer menus of the past, many still have a ways to go. I think the key to differentiation is a thoughtful menu full of consistent product that offers something interesting for various palates and that is handled with respect. Not simply and superficially putting a few "high end" or local beers on your menu and labeling it "craft" because that's what customers want. There needs to be a respect there. Our restaurants put an educated beer director in charge of the program and give them the tools they need to succeed. It's important



Keith with Flying Saucer Dallas GM Andrea Smith and Maui Brewing Co. founder & CEO Garrett Marrero.

to offer a diverse portfolio and support the breweries that have a consistently exceptional product. While we rotate beers regularly, we do not pick up beer from just any brewery that comes along. They have to be vetted first. I think it's also key to know what styles to order and when. Checking date codes and knowing what to cellar is important. We pay attention to line cleaning as well as line replacement and how long a beer has been on line. As a consumer, it is a painful thing to receive a beer that is long in the tooth or has been poorly treated. I think we work tirelessly to make sure we serve the beer the way the brewers intended.

Obviously it's important for restaurants to have their pulse on what's trending in the craft beer world. How does Flying Saucer stay ahead of the game in that aspect of the business?

We have a beer director who has worked with us for over 20 years and has learned this industry from the ground up. He is in touch with most of the breweries around the U.S. and abroad so that we can maintain a strong relation-

ship with those breweries that are important to the craft beer world. We have to plan and program months ahead and anticipate brewer's release calendars. He has become very diligent with maintaining the integrity of our offerings. I believe our Beerknurds have come to trust our judgment when it comes to our beer decisions.

What's trending in the restaurant business?

That seems to differ in each market we occupy, but we are certainly seeing a higher and higher quantity of [restaurants]. Almost every developer that approaches us is filling space with restaurants rather than retail. It is a very competitive market these days. And as we've been discussing, more and more restaurants are trying to tap into the craft beer culture – whether by investing in their beer menu or tailoring their food menu towards beer.

How is Flying Saucer staying relevant in the craft beer world with such ever-shifting trends and styles?

We have a good team of beer-loving managers who have



Keith with the Flying Saucer San Antonio Crew.

worked with us for many years. We don't franchise and we keep our culture strong. We talk every week about beer and what's happening in our market. While we appreciate and understand what consumers are trending towards, we also try to stay grounded by offering true craft beer from many of the great pioneers that brought us to this point. We have recently launched a new menu with strict oversight from our beer director. We pay homage to the breweries who we feel produce world-class examples of each style of beer. We have a Ghost Gauntlet program that allows new start-up breweries or breweries that may have been lost in the shuffle to get their product in front of people without pretense. We put their beer on tap and don't tell the customers what they are. Customers are given the chance to blindly taste and rate them on our app and if a beer receives favorable reviews, it generally makes the menu for a bit.

Did you foresee just how big (and how quickly) the craft beer business would grow?

Not entirely, but I have told many of our distributors over the years that this was not a passing fad. I always knew craft beer was here to stay. I think many of us are still surprised at how many breweries are coming on line. They are coming at us so fast that we have to say no more often than not. As much as we love to support local, I can't justify taking a world-class national beer off of our menu for each new brewery popping up. We like to stay loyal to the breweries that got us here. I think a lot of us in the on-premise side are still trying to wrap our brains around the idea that we are now competing with those local breweries that we once helped get going. How can we continue to help each other grow and carry the banner for craft beer so that there's enough pie for all of us?

Any advice for burgeoning restaurateurs/entrepreneurs?

Raise more money than you think you will need and use a little of your own.

Do you have a favorite historical beer, perhaps one that isn't made anymore?

I was once a big fan of Young's Special London Ale and have fond memories of visiting with John Young at his family's historic brewery in Wandsworth, London.

What about current beers?

I appreciate Orval & will always consider Sierra Nevada to be among the very best. Don't judge me, but I can't get enough of Deschutes Sagefight Imperial IPA [brewed with sage and juniper] right now.

Any big plans in the works for Flying Saucer – new locations, menus, etc?

We have recently renovated our historic site in Nashville, TN and launched a new food menu that includes some burgers from our award-winning Rodeo Goat Ice House. We are planning on releasing our new beer menu there very soon as well. Memphis is undergoing renovations as we speak and will have an incredible burger menu along with our new beer menu release. And as I mentioned, we've recently launched a new menu where we truly give the best of best the place to shine. You'll find some old favorites on there, but you'll also notice see top-notch offerings from brewers inspired by and following in the footsteps of the pioneers that you might not have noticed before.

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Todd Usry of Breckenridge Brewery

STORY BY: CHRIS GUEST | PHOTOS COURTESY: BRECKENRIDGE BREWERY

Breckenridge Brewery's founder and CEO Todd Usry has seen his fair share of change and growth in the craft beer industry. With his brewery now a part of AB InBev's High End line, Breckenridge can be found in more and more locations throughout the country with impressive variation in its portfolio.

With a striking new brewery in Littleton, Colorado, Breckenridge has a beautiful new space where the brewers can experiment with all sorts of interesting styles and barrel-aged creations, including the canned Nitro series, the 471 IPA barrel series and the limited-release Brewery Lane series, featuring interesting style experiments, such as the recent Imperial White IPA.

We sat down with Todd to discuss the present and future of Breckenridge, as well as the ever-

shifting Coloradan craft beer scene. We focus on the brewery's recent new releases, including its exciting collaboration with Ireland's Boundary Brewing – the most recent Nitro Series release.

HOW'S LIFE ON BREWERY LANE?

Couldn't be better. We've got some excellent new recipes we're releasing this summer and fall. We're gearing up for our Hootenanny and other summer concerts here in Littleton. We just installed a new hopback in the brewhouse, added some equipment to our lab, and we're currently expanding our warehouse space. Our Farm House beer garden is about to open for the summer, and our pub up in Breckenridge is getting ready for the summer tourist season too.

COLORADO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A HAVEN FOR CRAFT BEER. WITH MORE WIDESPREAD

“We at Breckenridge just installed a new hopback in the brewhouse, added some equipment to our lab, and we’re currently expanding our warehouse space.”



ACCEPTANCE OF QUALITY CRAFT BEER, HAS COLORADO’S ROLE CHANGED?

Colorado continues to be a pillar of the industry in terms of innovation and new brewery growth. I believe we’re approaching 400 breweries in the state, and now more than ever, quality is key to survival. Colorado brewers have been at this for a long time, and I think they will continue to raise the bar on innovation and excellence.

HOW HAS THE BREWERY LANE SERIES BEEN RECEIVED BY CRAFT BEER FANS?

Extremely well. We’re pleased with the amount of response, especially considering its limited distribution – people understand how special these beers are. With the Brewery Lane Series, I just cut the cellar guys loose to create and experiment. It’s allowing them to grow as individuals and brewing professionals, and the products are amazing.

BRECKENRIDGE WAS ONE OF THE PIONEERS OF CANNED NITRO BEERS. WHAT NITRO BEERS THAT YOU’VE RELEASED HAVE BEEN THE MOST POPULAR?

Nitro Vanilla Porter is our leading Nitro Series beer, but we’ve also received numerous accolades on our nitro seasonals, like Pumpkin Spice Latte, Chocolate Orange Stout and Dry Irish Stout. We’ve had a good time coming up with these new recipes in the seasonals line.

TELL US THE STORY BEHIND THE NITRO DRY IRISH STOUT.

When we started planning the spring Nitro seasonal, we honed in on this style of beer because it’s appropriate for the time of year, and it has a history of being served from a nitro tap. We knew our nitro cans could help make that Irish pub experience more accessible.

Authenticity of style was really important to us, so we partnered with Boundary Brewing Cooperative of Belfast, Northern Ireland. It’s a young brewery that’s winning all kinds of awards, and they make great stouts. We collaborated on the recipe long distance, and their brewer, Matthew Dick, ordered the Irish ingredients. He then flew over here to brew the beer with us. All in all, we’re extremely proud of the outcome. The beer is truly delicious, and our brewers learned a lot in the collaboration process.

BY EXTENSION, HOW DID YOU MEET UP WITH BOUNDARY BREWING?

Our Director of Sales and Marketing, George O’Neill, is from Northern Ireland, and he knows Matt through a family connection. They’d actually talked about doing a collaboration beer for quite a while, and the pieces just fell into place with this release.

WHAT OTHER NEW RELEASES ARE ON THE BRECKENRIDGE HORIZON?



“We honed in on the Dry Irish Stout style of beer because it’s appropriate for the time of year, and it has a history of being served from a nitro tap.”

With Todd at the helm, Breckenridge has experienced considerable growth with an impressive range of new releases over the years – including helping to introduce the nitrogenation movement into modern craft beer with its flagship Nitro Vanilla Porter. The porter, as well as Nitro Lucky U IPA, have been consistently popular and help to showcase Breckenridge’s – and Usry’s – devotion to experimentation and consistency.

“We’re working on several new IPA recipes. In addition, we have two new summer seasonals that we’re about to release, and our 471 IPA Barrel Series and Brewery Lane Series have more 2017 variations to come. Our brewpub up in Breck continues to experiment with ingredients and techniques, so there’s always something new and different on tap there, and we bring some of those kegs down here to share in our Farm House in Littleton.

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Breckenridge is set to experience even more growth in 2017 as the brewery adds more beers of all kinds – including seasonals, Nitro beers and the Brewery Lane series – and Usry couldn’t be prouder to be at the forefront of the Colorado craft beer scene.

Breckenridge is set to experience even more growth in 2017 as the brewery adds more beers of all kinds – including seasonals, Nitro beers and the Brewery Lane series – and Usry couldn’t be prouder to be at the forefront of the Colorado craft beer scene.



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The advertisement features a dark green, pixelated background. At the top left is the New Holland Brewing logo, which consists of a stylized hop cone and the text 'NEW HOLLAND BREWING'. To the right of the logo, the words 'NEW HOLLAND BREWING' are written in a bold, orange, blocky font. Below this, two brown beer bottles are shown, each with a hop cone on its label. The bottles are positioned as if they are about to be launched into a hop-themed video game. The game's title, 'HOP TROJIX', is written in large, white, blocky letters with a yellow-to-green gradient shadow. Below the title, the words 'DOUBLE IPA' are written in a purple, blocky font. A central text block reads 'HOP UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH THE EYE-POPPING FLAVOR OF MOSAIC HOPS!' in white. At the bottom, a rectangular frame contains a hop-themed video game interface. The interface shows a grid of hop cones, a central hop cone with a starburst effect, and a hop cone at the bottom center. The website address 'NEWHOLLANDBREW.COM' is written in white at the bottom of the advertisement.

ENJOY BEER SOUVENIRS, AVOID STICKY LUGGAGE

STORY BY: JONATHAN INGRAM

We all love a good beer vacation. But what about bringing home some of your favorite beers that are not available in your home state?

If you're traveling by air within the U.S., there are several options. One is legal and the rest are a mixed bag.

The not-so-legal route – and more expensive – is to ship yourself the beer in a package by the usual carrier services. Although many give a nod and a wink to this particular law without repercussion, it is illegal to ship alcohol via the U.S. Postal Service without a license. That's why people rely on UPS or FedEx, where it's merely against the company policy to ship alcoholic beverages without a license. (Don't ask and don't tell.)

The biggest drawbacks of this method are the cost and treatment packages can get, making it more likely bottles or even cans could be damaged despite efforts to protect the contents during packing. The best rule of thumb is to



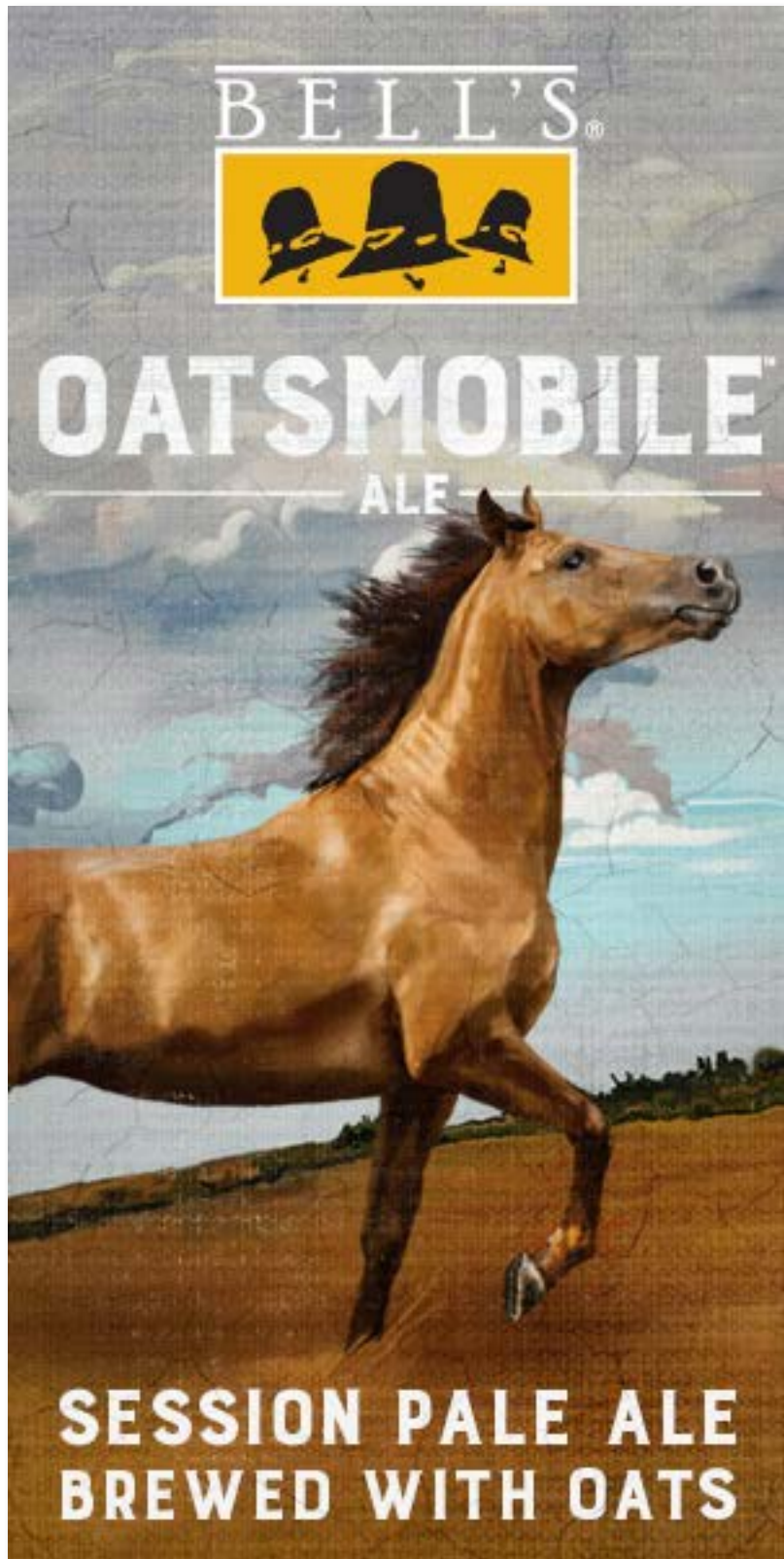
There's risk in all things air travel and cans are no exception... Thanks TSA!

use the same Styrofoam inserts used by those who ship wine. Otherwise, given company policies, imagine making an insurance inquiry about those rare 750-milliliter bottles of barrel-aged sour beer that failed to make the journey...

The legal, cheapest and best option to bring beer home is via checked luggage. (We should pause here to acknowledge sometimes people like to take beer from home to their destination. We know of at least one craft brewer who lives on the East Coast who packed a couple of cases of his own canned beer for a family vacation to Hawaii – because the beer on the islands is relatively expensive and his own brand wasn't available.)

Wine lovers have been flying with bottles for years, which has spawned a variety of special luggage made expressly for carrying up to 12 bottles in a checked bag. Manufacturer of hard-sided luggage generally create padded foam inserts, such as the VinGarde Valise, or pre-established compartments such as WineCruzer. There are makers of

Advertisement



<https://bellsbeer.com/brands/54-OatsmobileAle>



Wine lovers have been flying with bottles for years, spawning a variety of special luggage made expressly for carrying up to 12 bottles in a checked bag. (Photo Courtesy VinGarde)

soft-sided roller bags with special inserts to protect the contents such as Lazenne.

But do you really need special luggage for bottles? Maybe so, if you're intent on bringing back shelf whales in bomber bottles. A more practical method is to ship your favorite beer in cans inside your regular luggage. Of all the advantages that cans bring to craft beer, the portability on airplanes may be the least appreciated.

The regulations for U.S. flights limit alcohol in checked luggage that exceeds 24 percent ABV to five liters. Beer doesn't fall into this range, so the only limit is the 50-pound maximum on weight per passenger – and even that is negotiable if you're willing to pay an additional fee. Not only are cans manageable, aluminum is lighter than glass.

There's risk in all things air travel and cans are no exception. While luggage compartments are generally pressurized, they undergo some pressure changes during flights. Those who pack cans in regular luggage report some crinkling around the top of the cans. Wrapping cans to protect other contents in the luggage in case of a leak is a bit impractical, since the idea is generally to bring as many cans as possible. There are some semi-reliable methods such as plastic wrap or cardboard.

Can leaks result from poor seams where the top is affixed during the canning process. A poorly sealed can is far more likely to leak during air travel. But most craft brewers or companies that offer portable canning lines now use tiny cameras to check the overlapping aluminum to be sure the seals are proper to prevent the loss of carbonation during distribution. (If buying directly from



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a brewer, you may want to inquire about how the seams are checked during canning.)

When it comes to bottles, homebrewers are the pioneers of shipping either via checked luggage or by the package delivery method. In either case, they always advise plenty of cushioning and wrapping in plastic in case of breakage. The product known as The Jet Bag is the most reliable method to prevent leaks or breakage. It can absorb up to 750 milliliters of liquid without spilling and may be re-used for at least 12 months before the zipper function might begin to wane.

Because it is hard-sided and potentially modular, the VinGarde Valise is very reliable and useful, if relatively expensive at more than \$200. We know of one frequent beer traveler who uses his to transport various containers of beer by re-arranging the foam inserts – traveling with different bottle sizes and 16-ounce cans. Bear in mind, too, that this bag is easily divided into sections for clothing as well as beer.

One word of caution, whether transporting bottles or cans in checked luggage. The law allows the Transportation Safety Administration to check the contents of any luggage before it is put on a plane. It is not unusual for checked bags with bottles or cans to be inspected. As long as they are in the original packaging, beer is not a problem. But if you are unsettled by those TSA notices that your bag was opened and looked through, then perhaps it's best to try another method. (A traveler we know once found a TSA notice among his packed cans and some peanuts irreverently tossed into his bag as well...)

What about bottles in checked luggage when returning from a foreign country? The packing methods still apply and the rules are only slightly different when bringing back beer from other countries to the U.S. The maximum amount of alcohol in checked bags is the same for any FAA flight. After landing, the customary response from U.S. Customs is to allow up to a case of wine, i.e. 12 bottles, for personal use – hence the usual capacity of specially manufactured luggage. This rule of thumb for duty free alcohol also applies to beer, i.e. up to 12 bottles. Regular travelers to Europe report good results at Customs with the special luggage designed to hold 12 bottles.

Sending beer home from Europe in packaging sold by

brewers is also an option. In Brussels, for example, Cantillon sells a shipping container that holds three bottles. It can be dropped off at a nearby postal station and beer lovers report excellent results according to one of our friends in the beer tour business.

Whatever your chosen method, do not attempt to bring a packaged beer on board a plane in carry-on luggage. You're most likely to lose it during pre-boarding inspection. If you are amazingly clever and lucky enough to get it on board, flight personnel are the only ones allowed to open and pour an alcoholic beverage by FAA regulations. Given recent events with airplane security personnel, it's highly advisable to put that beloved beer in checked luggage so both you and your favorite beverage arrive safely!

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PREPARING FOR BEER TRANSPARENCY

Your knowledge of what's in a beer is about to get FDA'ed up.

STORY BY: JIM DYKSTRA

Depending whether you're a snifter half-full or half-empty kind of person, your future pints may come with a side of regret. As of May 5, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will require nutrition facts and calories to be listed for all standard bar and restaurant menu items, both on individual menus and menu boards. This includes beer menus. All businesses are required to comply by July 26, 2018 (or July 26, 2019 for those with less than \$10 million in annual food sales).

All chain restaurants or similar retail food establishments with 20 or more locations in the U.S. must disclose this information, along with many grocery and convenience stores, bowling alleys, movie theaters, sports venues and vending machines, according to the Beer Institute, a Washington D.C. based trade organization which represents the majority of brewers, large and small, in North America.

The logistics behind making such a switch is no small task. The FDA will require separate calorie disclosures for each individual alcoholic beverage offered, including beer, meaning specialty craft beer bars have their work cut out for them. Calories listed must be specific to either the beer or its style, along with each serving size offered. It doesn't stop there. If a discerning patron requests, restaurants

must supply calories from fat, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars and protein.

Where does the burden fall for supplying and listing this information? It's easy to see harried restaurant managers demanding brewers supply the necessary information.

After all, the product's creator should know best. For most breweries, especially larger breweries with dedicated lab teams, this won't be an issue. Many breweries have already committed to the Beer Institute's Voluntary Disclosure Initiative, designed to "disclose ingredients on either the label or secondary packaging via a list of ingredients, a reference to a website with the information or through a QR code," according to the BI's website. Those that have signed on include Anheuser-Busch, MillerCoors, HeinekenUSA, Constellation Brands Beer Division, North American Breweries and Craft Brew Alliance, which combined produce over 81 percent of all beer sold in the U.S.

But the Voluntary Disclosure Initiative is voluntary, after all, and while the brewers listed above account for the majority of beer produced by volume, they are but a few amongst thousands of microbrewers, whose fewer resources make the prospect

of divining such information, updating packaging and supplying it much more daunting.

Those who have volunteered are also likely in it for a bit more than the warm fuzzy feeling they'll get for their efforts. To put it plainly, they are largely light beer producers whose sales won't suffer, and may grow, from releasing such information. Low calories are light beer's biggest selling point. For imperial stouts, this couldn't be farther from the truth, and will likely be at least mildly detrimental to darker and stronger beer sales. Founders KBS has an estimated 336 calories, and The Alchemist's revered Heady Topper has 240. When compared to Guinness, which rings in at just 125, the calories kind of kill the buzz, and decision-making might change. It's safe to assume some smaller, niche breweries making bigger beers may be dragging their heels on the Voluntary Disclosure Initiative.

Having testing done on beers is an ordeal in itself. White Labs, a well-respected fermentation sciences lab offers nutritional analysis packages for \$635. Not bad if you make two or three brews, but experimentation is a key aspect of craft brewing, and it's not uncommon to see a bootstrapped microbrewer pumping out 20 to 30 different brews a year, which translates to serious outgoing



As a participant in the Beer Institute's Voluntary Disclosure Initiative, Blue Moon now lists calories, carbohydrates, protein, fat and alcohol by volume on its packaging.

cashflow. Thankfully, the Brewers Association, champions of the small brewer, stepped in with a solution.

After striking a deal with the FDA, the BA partnered with the Scandinavian School of Brewing to create a beer nutrient database that reflects average nutritional values for more than 40 craft styles, and is available to all of its members. This information will allow brewers to supply accurate information based on style and gravity measurements, replacing the need to shell out big bucks for each new beer's nutritional analysis. Small brewers take note: if you haven't joined the BA, this database is worth the price of admission and then some.

Since none of us subsist solely on beer, let's take a brief step back and look at how nutrition labeling is changing in general. Perhaps most importantly, serving sizes are changing according to packaging.

For example, a 20-ounce beverage and a 12-ounce beverage will both be considered one serving, as they are both usually consumed in one sitting. Obviously, the nutrition information will vary according to package size, and something that can't be finished in one sitting, like a box of cereal will still be broken down into multiple servings. Serving sizes and calories will be larger and more easily visible, and daily values will change to reflect the first updates to the food pyramid since the 90's. Added sugars will be separate from naturally occurring sugars, though both will be listed, and calories from fat won't be listed at all, as research has shown that the type of fat matters more than the amount. Lastly, packaging will now state exactly how much of each nutrient is in the product rather than a percentage of daily value, and vitamins A and C have been removed and replaced with Vitamin D and potassium, which people generally are in more need of.

So, while these nutritional listing mean big changes for the brewer, those changes are mostly accounted for. What remains to be seen is how third parties will wrangle the required information, how it will be enforced, and most importantly, how you will be affected. To that end, I offer a general health tip: the quality of ingredients you ingest, inhale, imbibe, impart unto yourself is more important than the quantity – **within moderation**. Am I doctor? No. Can this information be misconstrued? Of course. Just remember, not all fats are bad, and carbs aren't a terrific indicator of health. Quality over quantity is a defining tenet of the craft beer ethos, and one that can be applied to just about any area of life. Take that, run with it, and if the nutrition facts check out, celebrate with a beer.

Japanese Delicacies in a Breeze

Fresh fare from the Land of the Rising Sun,
Paired with Golden Ale

STORY & PHOTOS BY: SHERRY DRYJA

A dinner menu inspired by the fresh flavors of Japan is a fun way to travel to the other side of the world without leaving your own kitchen. Our menu abides by the traditional flavors of Japan while being mindful of what's in season closer to home. For instance, our version of Kenchinjiru, a vegan vegetable soup, uses asparagus in lieu of the traditional burdock root as a way to take advantage of the abundance of the season. This earthy soup can accommodate almost any combination of vegetables, so you can enjoy it every season of the year. It works well as an appetizer before the meal, as a hearty lunch, or even as a filling dinner on its own.

Our Teriyaki Salmon is another way to bring Japanese flavor to the table this time of year, especially if you're itching to dust off the grill. This recipe is as easy as whisking together a marinade of five simple ingredients and marinating the salmon for an hour or two before cooking it up on the grill or in the broiler. The end result is salmon that is sweet and savory as well as moist and tender.

Just before cooking the salmon, slice up a couple of cucumbers to create our bright Sesame Cucumber Salad. It only takes a minute to mix the vinegar dressing. Pour it on the cukes and by the time the salmon is ready, so is this creamy, refreshing side.

All three recipes are best suited with golden ales or crisp lagers. The Pike Brewing Company's Pike High Five Hopped Honey Ale we tried enhanced the earthier notes in the soup, boosted the sweet and savory flavors in the salmon, and brought out the sweetness in the cucumbers.

Tasting the flavors of Japan from the comfort of home can be a delicious way to explore this culture for the first time or bring back fond memories of past travels. Pairing those flavors with a locally brewed craft beer makes those exotic flavors taste like home.



Kenchinjiru (Vegetable Soup)

This hearty vegan soup uses stock made from kombu seaweed and mushrooms. Earthy and bright, it is packed with vegetables and flavor. Gobo or burdock root is a traditional ingredient for this soup but it can be switched out with other vegetables if it is difficult to find. We used asparagus in ours to keep with the season.

Ingredients:

For the Dashi Kombu (Seaweed Stock):

4 cups water
5-inch piece kombu (seaweed)
3 whole shiitake mushrooms
2 tablespoons sake
2 tablespoons mirin
½ teaspoon sugar
2-1/2 tablespoons soy sauce

For the Soup:

4 dried shiitake mushrooms
2 cups boiling water
3 large parsnips
2 medium daikon radish

2 medium carrots
3-4 asparagus stalks
1 tablespoon sesame oil
8 ounces tofu
1 cup frozen edamame (shelled)
3 tablespoons sake
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons soy sauce
Black pepper
1 chopped scallion
Shichimi Togarashi (Japanese Seven Spice), optional
Japanese sansho pepper, optional

Directions:

Make the Dashi Kombu

Dust off the kombu—do not wash—and add to a large pan with the water and mushrooms. Soak for at least 1 hour.

Put the pan over high heat and just before the water starts to boil, remove the kombu and discard.

Bring the kombu water and mushrooms to a boil. Stir in the sake, mirin, sugar, and soy sauce. Turn the heat to low and simmer for five minutes. Remove the mushrooms and discard. Set aside the stock or store in the fridge or freezer for later use.

Make the Soup

Place the dried shiitake mushrooms in a bowl with the 2 cups boiling water. Soak for 25-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the vegetables. Peel, rinse, and chop the parsnips, daikon radish, and carrots into bite-size, 1-inch pieces. Rinse and chop the asparagus as well.

Remove the mushrooms from the water and slice. Keep the mushroom water to add to the soup later.

Heat the sesame oil over medium-high heat in a large stockpot or dutch oven. Add the mushrooms, parsnips, daikon radish, carrots, and asparagus to the oil and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 to 10 minutes, until heated through.

Crumble the tofu into the vegetables and stir for another minute.

Add in the dashi kombu and mushroom water to the pot and bring just to a boil.

Turn the heat to simmer. Add in the edamame. After about 10 minutes, add the sake and salt and cook for another 10 minutes, or until all the vegetables are tender. Add the soy sauce and pepper. Skim off any foam that rises to the top if necessary.

To serve, ladle into bowls and garnish with chopped scallion. For spicier flavor, sprinkle Shichimi Togarashi and Japanese Sansho Pepper, to taste.

Serves 6.



Sesame Cucumber Salad

Don't let the ease of this recipe fool you. It only takes a few minutes to prepare but it is packed with flavor. The fresh cucumbers, in combination with the bright vinegar dressing, create a crisp, fresh flavor worthy of warm summer days.

Ingredients:

2 cucumbers
1 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 tablespoons sesame oil
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Directions:

Slice the cucumbers into 1/4-inch slices. Place in a bowl and mix in the salt, making sure the slices are coated evenly with salt. Set in the refrigerator to marinate for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine the sesame oil, soy sauce, rice vinegar, and sugar in a small bowl and whisk until the sugar is dissolved.

Pour the dressing and sesame seeds over the cucumber slices and mix well.

Serve immediately.

Serves 4.



Teriyaki Salmon

Teriyaki is a method of Japanese cooking where food is marinated in a soy sauce-based marinade and then grilled or broiled. This dish has both sweet and savory flavors that keep the salmon moist and tender.

Ingredients:

4 medium salmon steaks
½ cup soy sauce
2 tablespoons mirin
2 tablespoons sesame oil
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon ground ginger

Directions:

Place the salmon skin-side-up in a deep dish.

In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, mirin, sesame oil, brown sugar, and ginger until the sugar is dissolved. Pour over the salmon making sure the fish is well coated in the marinade.

Place in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 hours to marinate.

When ready to cook, preheat the grill or broiler. If grilling, place the salmon skin-side down on the hot grill. Grill for about 4 to 5 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fish. Flip the fish with a spatula and grill for another 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from grill and allow to rest for 10 minutes before serving.

If using a broiler, place the salmon on a broiler pan and broil on each side for about 2 to 4 minutes, or until cooked to preferred doneness. Remove salmon from pan and allow to rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Serves 4.





Photo Courtesy: Stone Brewing Co.

Brewdoku: Craft by the Numbers

STORY BY: JIM DYKSTRA

IRI Worldwide is a market research firm which tracks category-wide sales trends of beer sold in numerous retail outlets and then produces a monthly report of its findings. These findings can be used to provide realtime insight into the ever-changing beer marketplace, both craft and macro. To save you the spreadsheet trawling, we've pieced together the most important changes in the world of beer over the first quarter of 2017. These findings can help you make more informed choices as a consumer, and can help commercial brewers adapt to the marketplace. Sometimes, it's just fun to see what's hot and what's not.

Before we begin, here are a few things to keep in mind – these numbers are on a national level,

and may not represent specific states accurately. The numbers also do not represent beer sold on-premise, which would likely skew the numbers in the favor of smaller brewers, who are far more likely to see profits from onsite sales. They track sales of packaged beer only, from a few different sources, including convenience stores (think gas stations), a general “food” category (grocery stores, etc.), and a combined multi-outlet and convenience (MULC) store category (a combination of grocery, drug, Wal-Marts/Sam's Clubs, dollar stores and military stores, among others). We will focus on the MULC category. While not all-encompassing, it's a great, well-rounded resource. Let's look at total beer sales.

As of March 19, the IPA category's dollar sales are up 17.1 percent year to date. Craft brewers acquired by big beer have seen extraordinary growth in this category, which may be contributing to the gradual simmer of recent craft growth.

Right off the bat, it's clear that IPAs remain at the top of the heap. As of March 19, the IPA category's dollar sales are up 17.1 percent year to date. Craft brewers acquired by big beer have seen extraordinary growth in this category, which may be contributing to the gradual simmer of recent craft growth, which saw single-digit growth in 2016 (6 percent volume share) for the first time in many years. The consensus is that double-digit growth was unsustainable, and while the slowing of growth is not a cause for alarm, it should be taken into account when making business decisions.

There are a few reasons IPAs remain thunderous in general. For one, they're an extremely broad style, with a wide palette of flavor to paint onto your palate.

Brewers Association Chief Economist Bart Watson pointed out that "IPAs are white, black, and red. They're American... English, Belgian, and German. They're hazy, clear, and everything in between. They come with fruit now. They range from 4% (or less) to 12% (or more)." Watson continues, "If IPA were a single brand, it would be the eighth largest by dollar sales in IRI Group scan data [year to date]."

Undoubtedly, big brewers are as hip to this fact as the rest of us, which explains why just about all of the growth from big beer's craft brands are coming from IPA's. They compete on all levels, and help turn the tables back on craft, which has been steadily pulling market share from the stalwart domestics with flavor and character. The numbers seem to indicate this strategy is working, at least in the short term. Elysian's Space Dust IPA has more than tripled its sales in the past year.

Perhaps it's hard to keep track of who's "legit" in the craft world, and who's macro-backed but cloaked in micro-sheep's wool, but it's likely that the people buying macro-backed craft could care less. After all, if it tastes good, many don't care where it's coming from. If nothing else, it may be in the interest of craft brewers to pursue styles other than IPA, as variety and adaptation have always been strong points of the smaller, independent brewer.

There are a few categories showing strong growth that might be good places for microbrewers to jump into, if they haven't already. Golden Ales are up 47 percent in dollar sales year to date, and in the first quarter of 2017. This increase is a combination of more category entrants, more volume and more consumer interest, but the majority of growth is coming from newly introduced brands, indicating that craft beer palate is shifting in favor of this style.

In a similar vein, the "Other Pale Lagers" category, which encompasses a variety of less common lager styles, is up 15 percent year to date, with both new and existing brands showing growth.

From a bird's-eye view, the growth of these categories demonstrates that the lines between hop-heavy brews and smooth drinking lagers are being blurred. These styles, along with craft pilsners, account for the majority of craft growth outside of IPA's, and represent fertile ground for craft brewers. Just as big beer is honing in on IPA, craft can occupy the smooth, light-drinking ground commonly associated with big beer.

Of large craft brewers, the most notable changes have come at the expense of large craft brewers like Sierra Nevada and Sam Adams, all of which saw significant revenue loss. The companies are down 7.7 and 13.1



SPACE DUST IPA

Just about all growth from big beer's craft brands are coming from IPA's. Elysian's Space Dust IPA has more than tripled its sales in the past year. (Photo Courtesy Elysian Brewing Co.)

percents respectively. For the record, IRI does not place the same distinctions of what is and isn't craft as the Brewers Association. Therefore, brands such as Goose Island IPA (up almost 40 percent this quarter) are considered craft.

On the other hand, well-established, financially backed brands such as Lagunitas, Firestone Walker and Founders are up double digits – (13.7, 27.8 and 42 percents.) Stone and Bell's are showing similar upward trends, making a strong statement for savvy distribution, placement, and strategic growth.

Variety and seasonal pack sales are down significantly, which could point to a heavier focus on building individual brands, and/or a shift in consumer interest and knowledge. From a firsthand perspective, variety packs aren't as exciting or varied as they used to be, often featuring "afterthought" beers that don't sell well individually, or multiple variations of IPA, rather than representing a balance of dark, light, strong and sessionable styles.

Though fruited varieties continue to bolster sales of many different styles, the flavored cola trend seems to be fizzling, marked by a near 70 percent dip in sales of Not Your Father's Root Beer, and similar numbers

for AB's Best Damn Root Beer. We can all breathe a collective sigh of relief.

So what can we take from all of this? Craft brewers should keep experimenting, because variety can breed success, keeping in mind where consumer's tastes currently reside. New categories can see extreme, rapid growth, only to tail off just as quickly. Fruit and hops in places they may not be expected have potential, as the average palate has expanded, but variety must be rooted in reality.

Craft beer is still thriving, but it must continue to adapt to consumer interest, and to big beer strategies designed to own tap and shelf space. To this end, creative, authentic and agile production and marketing initiatives are the friend of the small brewer. Partner with a local sports team or arts venue. Build loyalty through consistency and humanity. Commune directly with your constituency. If it all works out, you might have a place in state politics (Hickenlooper, anyone?).

And for the consumer? Keep drinking what interests and excites you, because when it comes to number crunching, your wallet trumps words.



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Demographics, specifically religious demographics, are a key factor in Utah's wonky legislation. (Photo Credit: Justin Fincher)

A Lack of Buzz In The Beehive State

Utah's restrictive liquor laws range from heavy-handed to puzzling.

STORY BY: JIM DYKSTRA

Draconian. Peculiar. Embarrassing. These words are trending in regard to much legislative decision-making of late, but in the world of beer, they are best applied to the state of Utah's liquor laws, which have become a mire of 20th century Prohibition-era restriction. In short, it's a battle of "Mormon" versus "More Money".

Ever heard of a Zion Curtain? Probably not, unless

you're a drapes connoisseur or resident of "The Beehive State," as Utah is known. It's a seven foot long "solid, translucent and permanent" partition, usually made of frosted glass, that blocks customers from seeing their drinks being prepared. But why? The stated reasoning is to combat "excessive drinking by keeping alcohol out of sight of restaurant patrons who choose not to consume alcohol", which seems a bit paradoxical.

cal, and to protect minors from the demons of alcohol.

Up until this year, Zion Curtains were mandatory for restaurants and pubs, despite being a point of increasing contention as the rest of the country forges ahead with alcohol reform. Now, a venue can choose to remove the Zion Curtain so long as it maintains a 10-foot buffer zone between a bar area and a restaurant where minors are not allowed, or a five-foot zone with a barrier at least 42 inches high, earning these options nicknames such as “Zion Moats” and “Zion DMZ’s.” These changes, along with many more, are coming courtesy of H.B. 442, which was signed in March by Governor Gary Herbert and will take effect in July.

Think Zion Curtains are odd? They’re just the tip of the iceberg, but let’s take a look at how and why these rules came into effect in the first place.

Demographics, specifically religious demographics, are a key factor in Utah’s wonky legislation. As you likely know, Utah is the home of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as Mormons. The LDS Church’s health code, as decreed by founder Joseph Smith, condemns the use of alcohol, tobacco and “hot drinks”, specifically coffee and tea. Over 60 percent of Utahns count themselves as members of the LDS, with around 40 percent considering themselves active members. These demographics also translate to positions of power – as of 2014, 88 percent of Utah legislators were Mormon, setting the stage for a state largely against the consumption of alcohol.



A Zion Curtain is a seven foot long “solid, translucent and permanent” partition, usually made of frosted glass, that blocks customers from seeing their drinks being prepared.

Multiple attempts to make Utah a dry state failed, but the sentiment remains, resulting in a perennial battle between those advocating for freedom to sell and drink alcohol as they please, and those seeking to restrict the right to do so. Recently, Utah passed legislation taking effect in 2018 lowering the legal limit from 0.08 blood alcohol content to 0.05 BAC, the lowest in the country – and low enough that one drink might put you over the limit. While many are outraged, it’s worth noting that Utah was also the first state to adopt the 0.08 standard in 1983, its decision is backed by the National Transportation Safety Board, and that many European nations have adopted the 0.05 standard. To be fair, it can help to save lives.

Other major aspects of Utah’s laws that deviate from the norm include its designation of what constitutes beer and who can sell it – grocery and convenience stores may not sell anything above 3.2 percent alcohol by weight (4 percent ABV), and beer above that threshold is considered liquor. Full-strength beer, wine and liquor may only be sold through state-run liquor stores and smaller package agencies, of which there are 41 and 111 respectively, or sold by the glass in restricted amounts at licensed restaurants. However, to wine you must dine and not stray far from your table, and make sure you do it between the hours of 11:30am and 1:00am, or you may be penalized.



Utah brewers are well aware of the state's eccentric legislation and cultural history. Some breweries like Wasatch have learned to embrace Utah's idiosyncracies, while others have moved on to greener pastures.

From the Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's website: "Alcohol beverage service in a licensed restaurant requires that you order food with your drink, that your beverage be delivered to your table or counter by your server, and that you consume your drink at or near the table or counter."

Until 2013, you weren't even allowed to order a drink before ordering food, a policy affecting untold legions of awkward first daters hoping to loosen up. That law was rewritten after a number of controversial citations were issued to restaurants who chose to serve anyways.

While these rules seem a bit authoritarian from a consumer perspective, businesses are the ones "losing

big", and many would argue the state of Utah itself, especially in prospective tourism dollars.

Scott Beck, president and CEO of Visit Salt Lake, has been quoted saying would-be visitors' perceptions of Utah keep it from maximizing its earning potential: "We are told there are not enough restaurants and nightlife to keep the visitors occupied outside of [business conventions], because they can't get a drink. We call it nightlife, but we're not talking about nightlife in terms of strip clubs and gaming; we're talking about nightlife like [restaurants and dance clubs] – places where visitors can network or socialize with their friends and peers... Our liquor laws create a sense, and in some cases a reality, that you can't do that in Utah.



Visitors to Epic Brewing’s Salt Lake facility can enjoy tastings the “Tapless Taproom.” To guarantee easier growth, the company’s expansion brewery was built out of state, in Denver.

And we lose hundreds of millions of dollars a year in delegate spending because of that perception.”

Chain restaurants may choose to avoid Utah to save on expensive liquor licenses and remodeling concerns to account for Zion-related construction, and brunch restaurants often stray due to the inability to sling bloody marys and mimosas before 11:30am, though that will change to 10:30am come July 1, 2018 (but only on weekends and holidays).

Perhaps the most direct example of lost business comes from Epic Brewery, the state’s first “strong-beer” microbrewery, which opened in Salt Lake City in 2008. When it came time to expand in 2013, Epic

took its multi-million dollar facility to Denver. “Who knows,” co-founder David Cole said, “what things they’ll dream up next to punish an industry that pays millions of millions of taxes in this state. [Utah’s alcohol laws are] going to change a lot slower than we are as a company.”

Whether the LDS-centric state will shift to a “latter-day sláinte” is still undecided, but legislation such as H.B. 442 marks a step in the right direction. As the past decade’s craft beer renaissance continues to incise into outmoded thinking, one can only hope that the Beehive state will become a more friendly place to buzz.



Co-founders: Hagen Dost and Bill Wesselink

Dovetail Brewery Tour

STORY BY: CHRIS GUEST | PHOTOS COURTESY: DOVETAIL BREWERY

Chicago's Dovetail Brewery features a slogan that excellently encapsulates their ethos: We Brew Like Monks (Minus the Vows).

As an American craft brewery, celibacy is not a requirement – unlike the Trappist monks whose styles have influenced the entirety of modern craft beer with their flavor, dedication to high-quality ingredients, exacting brewing standards and devotion to the craft. Just like their century-old brethren, the main focus of Dovetail is on all-natural, high-quality ingredients.

For Dovetail Brewing Company's founders, owners and brewers Hagen Dost (not to be confused with the similarly monikered ice cream brand) and Bill Wesselink, they want to express the power of the natural world in order to create wonderful, exciting flavors with just four ingredients.

By celebrating the history and craftsmanship of Trappist brewing history, Hagen and Bill are flying in the face of the direction modern craft beer is taking, as the ancient German beer purity law, the Reinheitsgebot is being made almost completely obsolete due to crazy ingredients being used in more and more complex and high-alcohol beers. But Dovetail downplays this obsession with overstuffed ingredient lists and mysterious “natural flavorings,” with brewer Wesselink proclaiming that “nature is what created beer in the first place.”

The brewers are proud that their beers feature the Reinheitsgebot stamp of approval on ingredient lists for their beers; only including barley, hops, water and yeast, just like the Trappist masters of yesteryear.

Highlighting their focus on all-natural ingredients

and harkening back to the Trappist monks who inspired them, Dovetail's delicious beer offerings underscore the focus on a wide range of styles using only a narrow avenue of natural ingredients.

Dovetail's impressive craft creations showcase the heritage and history of their inspirational Trappist styles, offering numerous stellar brews of various styles. Notably absent from the brewery's oeuvre is the omnipresent and vociferously adored American IPA. Because this bitter, hoppy beer is a far more modern invention, Dovetail's focus on the historically significant and technically challenging Trappist styles eschews this traditional American craft brewery powerhouse.

Dovetail's website highlights only four styles, but all four are Reinheitsgebot-approved and technically complex creations. With no catchy names or gimmicky ingredient lists, Dovetail lets its beers do the talking, starting with its Hefeweizen.

Described as a "rich, yolky-orange wheat beer, featuring the aroma of clove and fruit in perfect balance," on Dovetail's website, the Hefeweizen is a refreshing, zingy wheat beer with citrusy, mandarin-like acidity, excellent balance and a frothy, effervescent head that leaves (fittingly for a Trappist-inspired brewery) beautiful Belgian lacing along the sides of the glass.

A popular style for many beer connoisseurs, Dovetail Brewing's Rauchbier is a smoky, rich and flavorful bacon-esque dark beer. Dovetail's stellar online encapsulation captures the spirit of the beer well: "As you bring it to your nose, you feel like you are eating a bar of chocolate in a smokehouse, full and rich with generous hopping to balance the flavor of beechwood smoked bacon."

Rounding out Dovetail's offerings are a pair of easy-to-drink but hard-to-brew lagers: one simply called Lager and the other being a Vienna Lager.

The Vienna clocks in with a slightly heavier, malty body and the regular Lager is a more creamier, swift-sipping offering. Both of these beers hover around the 5 percent ABV mark, making for excellent warm-weather quaffing.

Chicago is a burgeoning craft beer hotspot, with various popular breweries popping up regularly. Most rely on the modern craft beer drinker's insatiable desire for lupulin-laden IPAs, but in the Windy City, only Dovetail trumpets the cause of Reinheitsgebot-approved lagers and flawlessly-crafted brews featuring only the finest natural ingredients.



Dovetail's founder and brewers Hagen Dost and Bill Wesselink want to express the power of the natural world by making beers using only four ingredients: barley, hops, water and yeast.



WORLD CLASS



THE HIGHEST-SCORING BEERS FROM OUR PANEL OF JUDGES.

Meet our judges at BeerConnoisseur.com/judges

Judging Process

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

Score Breakdown

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

96

by *Sean Coughlin*

Cursed Kettles

Upland Brewing Co.
& Prairie Artisan Ales

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
39 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Cursed Kettles by Upland Brewing Company (and Prairie Artisan Ales as a collaborating brewery) is a barrel-aged fruited sour ale which is being evaluated as a Wild Specialty Beer (2015 BJCP Category 28C) from the BJCP guidelines. Dark cherry notes are complimented by toasted malt, lactic twang, and a small hint of oak. The aroma is complex to the point of making you return to it between every sip to continue exploring. The beer is light brown with an orange hue and some haze. A tightly packed light khaki head holds together well for a sour. The flavor offers great complexity as well, featuring raisin and cherry, with a hint of leather,

rich melanoidin malt flavors, a well-balanced tartness, and a refreshingly dry finish. The oak character is minimal in flavor and lends a light tannic presence that accentuates the beer's dryness. The body is medium and the carbonation is lively. An excellent example of a Wild Specialty Beer that puts the focus on the fruit with supporting roles from complex malt and fermentation profiles without letting the barrel character get in the way. A bit more acidity would be welcome but overall this is an exceptionally well thought out and brewed beer.



96

by *James Link*

Fruitage

Brouwerij Rodenbach

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
39 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Poured from what appeared to be an eight-ounce bottle into a nine-ounce snifter and subsequently reviewed.

A complex blend of aromatics delight the nostrils upon first pour. Dark cherries are first evidenced and combine pleasantly with a light lactic tartness and just a touch of *brettanomyces*.

Burgundy in color and capped with a light pink head this beer reflects a slight haze which one might attribute to fruit pectin extracted from the cherries omnipresent here.

The flavor profile manifests a quintessential balance of fruity character and tartness along with oaky notes while the malt remains

complementary. The body is thin and leads into a dry finish while alcohol is present at subdued levels which enhances the refreshing quality of this effort.

A truly one of a kind easy drinking sour that delivers a complexity of flavors and aromas without the use of higher alcohol levels.



95

by *Tracy Hensley*

Wild Turkey Bourbon Barrel Stout Anderson Valley Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40
Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

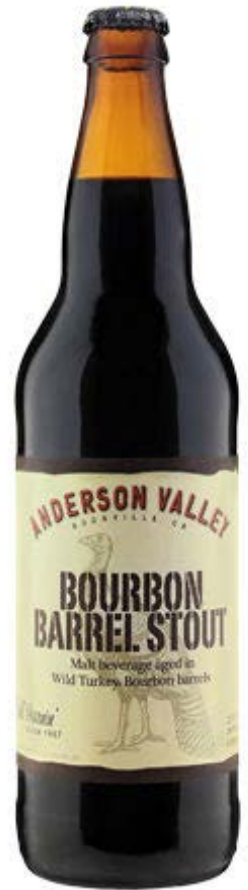
Anderson Valley Wild Turkey Bourbon Barrel Stout is a Bourbon Barrel Stout, and was evaluated as a specialty wood-aged beer (2015 Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Category 33B) offering according to BJCP guidelines. For this style, one looks for an affinity between the base beer and wood contact characteristics. Anderson Valley Wild Turkey Bourbon Barrel blends these two characteristics with a subtle complexity.

The beer was poured into a snifter from a 22-oz bottle. Strong aromas of warm-toasted vanilla whipped cream were followed by smooth dry roasted dark cocoa that lack a bitter character. At first, it is reminiscent of a dark velvety chocolate mousse. Secondary notes of lightly roasted warm almond evolve into smooth molasses and espresso foam with hints of dark dried red cherries.

Visually, the Stout is an opaque charcoal brown color with

dark amber edges, maintaining a light brown frothy head with fine legs. The flavors support the aroma with a smooth, velvety creamy chocolate. Bringing to mind a chocolate truffle melting in your mouth. The Stout showcases integrated chocolate and tropical vanilla flavors, with a pleasing structure from the soft wood tannin and hop bitterness, finished with a sweet coconut barrel flavor. The body supports the aroma and flavors and feels like sweet cream, with a silkiness balanced by carbonation, smooth alcohol (6.9%), and subtle dryness.

This beer is all seduction. Often that word is used to mean gratuitous. Here it is the perfect white t-shirt with the perfect pair of jeans. There are many Bourbon Barrel Stouts that are often aggressively barreled or charred and therefore poorly done, but this one shines with its subtle complexity and blending of flavors, highlighting the pros of producing barrel-aged beers at lower alcohols.



95

by *Richard Wong*

Mo Honey Mo Problems Mockery Brewing Co.

Aroma:
24 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40
Mouthfeel:
8 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Definition (Braggot) : An ancient medieval drink comprised of mead made with honey and barley malt. It typically uses 1/3 malted barley, but can have as much as 1/2. Can have hop bitterness in the recipe.

The beer poured a wonderful light golden straw color that was hazy and unfiltered with very little carbonation. The aroma had wonderful hints of honey and pear and no hops detected. The initial and overall flavor was wonderful – more like a light mead. Again, this is due to the light ratio of barley malt used in the recipe, anywhere from 1/3 to 1/2. I detected flavors of honey (obviously) and subtle pear juice in this braggot. It had

a nice sweetness due to the honey and little hop bitterness that finished a little dry. The body and mouthfeel was light, with spritzzy carbonation. Very nice and smooth finish with a slight sweetness and dryness. There's a little alcohol warmth in this braggot (13.5%) ending with a nice slight burn in the finish. Wonderfully made!



94

by *Michael McGuire*

Mystery Ship

Southbound Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40

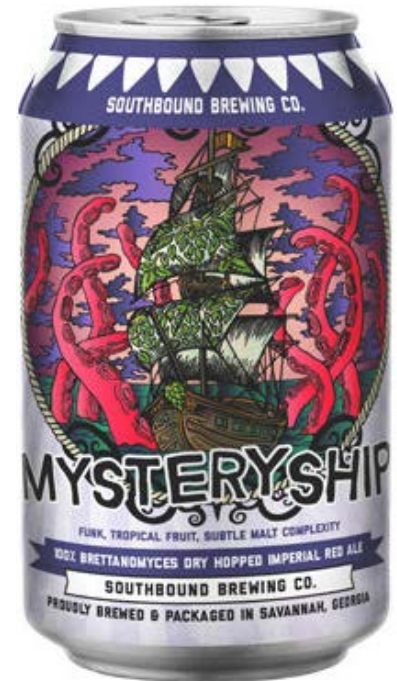
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Mystery Ship is a red ale brewed with Brettanomyces yeast (Brett) and dry-hopped. As such, by definition it has both distinctive sour and “funky,” and intensely hoppy, aromas and flavors. It poured brownish-red and hazy into the glass, sporting a thick tan-white head with good retention. The aroma featured both of its title components in ample portions: citrusy hop notes and complex acetic sourness with mild barnyard notes. The flavor profile included these signature elements and, to a lesser degree and later in the taste, alcohol and malt (whose sweetness was overwhelmed by the Brett sour funk). Palate sensations mirrored the flavor: alcohol warmth, astringency from both Brett (puckery, vinegary)

and hops (dry finish). This complex brew had many strong elements that were balanced and blended harmoniously together for high drinkability and a memorable drinking experience.



94

by *Sean Coughlin*

Paradise

Holy City Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
39 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

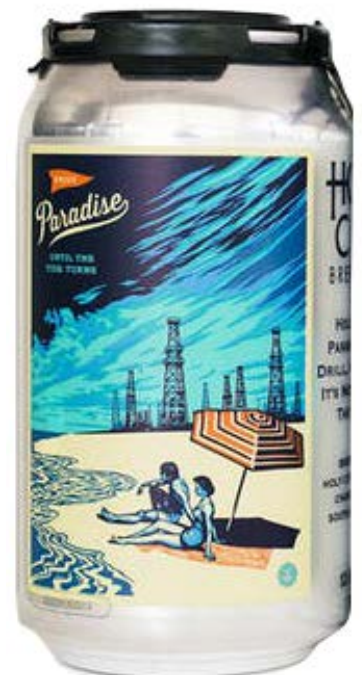
Judge's Notes

Holy City Brewing's Paradise is being evaluated as an American IPA (Category 21A) with session strength according to the BJCP guidelines. Session India Pale Ales have become very popular in the market over the last few years with their high levels of hop flavor/aroma and lower alcohol. They can be perceived as similar to modern American Pale Ales with a higher level of bitterness in the balance and lower alcohol content.

The aroma for this beer is reminiscent of a cup of freshly pureed passion fruit. A large tropical hop presence takes center stage with no initial malt or fermentation characteristics. As the senses adjust to the explosion of passion fruit emanating from the glass, there is a subtle Pilsner-like malt presence underneath adding an aroma of bread dough.

The beer is light blonde with moderate haze and a small white head that disperses quickly. The flavor follows the aroma with a bit more complexity than anticipated from the hop profile. Passion fruit mingles with notes of guava, cantaloupe, and a hint of lemongrass. The bitterness is moderately high for the size of the beer but well balanced for the style. The malt profile does a good job of staying out of the way allowing for a high level of tropical hop expression.

The body is medium-light and avoids coming across as thin, which can upset the balance in a session-strength IPA. The carbonation is moderate and high enough to highlight the dry finish of the beer, aiding in overall drinkability. This beer would be a wonderful warm weather drinker that has enough hop complexity to hold your interest even after the third or fourth glass.



94

by *Dan Preston*

MC²

Equilibrium Brewery

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

MC2 by Equilibrium Brewery is a DIPA, but is very much in the NEIPA style, so it is better suited to BJCP 2015 category 21B (Specialty IPA), versus the typical double IPA style (BJCP 2015 Category 22A). As such, this beer should be all about the hops, and it certainly fits the bill.

MC2 pours a deep golden honey that is very hazy, so much so that it is nearly opaque. It has a smallish white head that sticks around, which would expect to be much larger if not from a growler fill. The aroma is extremely fruity, with lots of mango as well as some pineapple, guava, citrus, tangerine and a little catty dankness in the back – very citra like. The fla-

vor is very similar, extremely hop forward. As continue you to drink it, more of the tangerine, orange, & peach notes come through. There is a light doughy wheat and toast malt way underneath. This leads into a very soft mouthfeel that is smooth with very little alcohol warmth and just a touch of hop bite. A great example of a NEIPA style DIPA



94

by *Joseph Formanek*

Insurrection

Fulton Beer

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Insurrection by Fulton is being evaluated as a Double IPA (Category 22A) from the 2015 BJCP guidelines. Having just judged this category in the Chicago region of the 2017 AHA 1st round Nationals the previous weekend, I felt that my palate would be prepared for the hoppy onslaught of this beer. This one did not disappoint, and truly pushes the envelope in respect to explosive dank hop character!

Upon opening the bottle, an extremely dank hop aroma is immediately evident, with Mosaic and Nelson Sauvin characters being in the forefront. Pineapple, turpentine, pine and earthy dankness dominate the aroma, with little malt noted. A touch of floral ester is in the background. The beer is a deep golden to amber color with expected levels of clarity and a solid rocky

off-white small bubble head with lace that persists throughout the drink. It is quite an attractive product.

The flavor mirrors the aroma quite well, with ultra dank hop flavors dominating over the malt. The base malt backbone is quite light up front, building a bit and complementing the hop character to a certain extent in the middle and finish. The body is a light medium. Hop bitterness is quite high which is appropriate for the style and lingers well into the finish. As the guideline suggests, there is not a lot of malt complexity here, instead being a showcase for hop expression. The finish is quite clean and dry.

Overall, this brew is truly a dank hop-lovers dream, being a relatively straightforward hop dominant offering with not much else present to distract from this goal. Cheers and enjoy!



93

by *Rick Franckhauser*

Orange King of Hop Starr Hill Brewery

Aroma:
21 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Inviting orange zest aromatics are intermingled with some pink grapefruit to dominate over the low level sweet malt impression. My mouth is watering in anticipation but I linger a little longer and pick up some esters from the alcohol and a lingering sweet orange. Nothing is off or harsh. The beer is a clear golden yellow with a very creamy long lasting head. Sweet navel oranges are pronounced in the flavor as well but balanced by a nicely rounded bitterness. Additional citrus of tangerine with a hint of pine resin to keep things interesting. The balance is decidedly bitter but the malt sweetness is joined by some candy-like sugar

to keep it from being harsh or biting. Warming alcohol and a slight hop astringency are noted in the mouthfeel but it remains smooth. The warmth continues into the finish as does a touch of pine. When all is said, and done, you know you've been drinking an orange infused IIPA. The orange fruit accentuates the citrusy hops, adds interest and helps the malt bring some sweet balance to the bitterness. The overall sweetness may be a touch high for the style but eminently drinkable as it should be. Seek it out.



93

by *Joseph Formanek*

Standard Lager Fulton Beer

Aroma:
22 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Standard Lager by Fulton is being evaluated as an International Amber Lager (Category 2B) from the 2015 BJCP guidelines. As such, it is expected to be a relatively simple mild beer with a touch of interesting caramel malt character. This beer fits that bill quite well. This is an unassuming, yet clean and refreshing brew with enough character to pique the interest of the drinker.

The aroma demonstrates a mild, light Vienna malt caramel sweetness, with a slight sulfury note. The fermentation is very clean. This deep golden light amber colored beer exhibits outstanding clarity and an exceptionally firm white small bubble head with lace that lingers quite well into the drink. A solid head appears to be a hallmark of this brewery. This

is a very attractive brew!

The flavor mirrors the aroma quite well. There is a medium level of caramel Vienna malt flavor on top of a solid base malt backbone. Low levels of noble hop flavor are present. The hop bitterness is on the low to low-medium side, actually pushing towards to higher end of the style, delivering a somewhat dry character to the middle and finish. The moderate carbonation helps amplify this dry perception in a good way. The finish has an attractive balance of Vienna malt character with enough hop bitterness to clean the palate in preparation for the next sip.

Overall, this is a very nice approachable and refreshing brew that has enough character to make it quite memorable. Cheers and enjoy!



93

by *Brian Eichhorn*

Dragon's Milk Reserve Triple Mashed New Holland Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24
Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
38 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

This beer was reviewed as a Wood-aged Imperial Stout (Category 33A with 20C as declared base style) under the 2015 BJCP guidelines. A big and brash base beer aged in wood is the expectation, and it is certainly met!

Upon presentation, the beer is a deep reddish brown, just shy of black, with a thin off-white head, giving a Porterish appearance. The nose is very pleasant and quite perfumey, with a distinct bourbon barrel prominence. The alcohol is quite aromatic and clean, with some low fruity esters & vanilla. A low floral note follows with some dark fruit (fig) & a cherry stone quality. Very pleasant, if a touch hot/boozy.

On tasting, it is loaded with chocolate & vanilla and a light burnt note that works here. Deeply fruity,

again with cherry and fig from the combination of darker malts & fruit esters. The cocoa notes are almost sweet, suggesting possible vanilla additions. On top of this is a distinctly big & burly/boozy beer. Bitter black malts finish up the beer. It has a very full body and is quite bitter, which keeps the sweetness in check. Big and boozy, with an alcoholic finish that's slightly hot & prickly. This all made sense once I learned that this is a bigger version of Dragon's Milk, tipping the scales at 17%, though it never seems that big!

Super cool beer and a neat take on the original Dragon's Milk. While not totally a stout, it comes off as a blend of a barleywine and Imperial Stout. A touch of age could do wonders to soften some of the alcohol top notes, but really stellar stuff!



93

by *David Sapsis*

Vladislav Russian Imperial Stout Diebolt Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24
Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40
Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Judged as BJCP category 33. Wood Aged Russian Imperial Stout.

Poured into a tulip snifter, the beer appears black-opaque, with a light brown moussy foam that is beautiful while it lasts – about three minutes. Such is the ephemeral nature of young love.

The nose presents a huge black coffee and butterscotch start that trails off to dark fruits (plums, dates) and a big woody-vanilla hit that has angles of both ethanol and dark sugar/molasses. Strong, lush, and darkly fruity with a bit of faintly burnt overall.

The flavor starts with strong dark espresso and a bit of burnt malt, but immediately transitions to a complex of dark chocolate, toasted nuts, dark dried fruits (candied plums, dates), a big shot of blackstrap molasses, and... wait for it... ethanol.

Bitterness is very restrained. Late palate has bourbon, oak and vanilla in spades, and it blends nice with the roasty and fruity-sweet remnants of the ferment. Most of the drying bitterness seems roast malt derived, possibly accentuated by some mineral character from the brewing liquor. The finish is off-dry, bordering on sweet, with lingering dark fruits and a tiny bit of reemergent bitterness that is welcome in it cutting the sweetness of both residuals and alcohol. Mouthfeel is very big and fat, with no real astringency despite the depth of roastiness that is often tempered from barrel-aging. Conditioning is medium and helps to keep the beer from being cloying. This is a boozy and roasty stout, but has complexing fruit, woodiness, and dark, cooked sugar going on as well. Would go great with some fresh oysters, and yet I can only imagine that this beer is relatively young, and the roastiness will subside and the beer will age into something different but still wondrous. A little like young love.



92

by *Michael McGuire*

Roxanne

Southbound Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
19 / 20

Judge's Notes

Roxanne by Southbound Brewing Co. is an American sour ale brewed with "tart" (presumably sour) cherries and aged in oak barrels. It was judged as a Specialty Fruit Beer (BJCP sub-style 29C). It poured dark reddish-brown into the glass where it set up slightly hazy with a moderate but short-lived tan head. Its aroma consisted primarily of dark cherries with secondary complementary notes of wood and non-funky tartness. The flavor also showcased sour cherries and vanilla, presumably from conditioning in oak barrels, from first sip through dry oaky after-taste. The contributions of hops and specialty yeast were neither apparent nor necessary. The finished product featured some alcohol warmth and considerable complexity from

such humble beginnings. Given how few flavor elements contributed to the beer, they were assertive, well-balanced and harmoniously blended via barrel aging. The resulting drinkability was high but better described as sippability to encourage full appreciation.



92

by *Dan Preston*

Casey

Equilibrium Brewery

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
36 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Casey Farmhouse Ale by Equilibrium Brewery is an American Wild Ale (BJCP 2015 Category 28B). When one talks about a farmhouse ale, they typically mean a saison. In the US, it seems to have become a variation of a classic saison using more citrus/tropical hops as opposed to the earthy noble varieties or having a bit of wild funk/sourness to it. Casey doubles down and employs both of these which take over much of the saison character.

The beer pours a deep straw color with a faint haze lending to golden notes and a bright white head with some Belgian lace. The aroma has a moderately strong lactic tart/funk (green apple, lemon) up front similar to that of a young lambic. This leads into a fruity/tropical hop-like character and some crackery, doughy malt underneath. Finally there is a bit of the classic saison character with

some light spice (white pepper, ginger, anise) and earthy notes. The flavor is similar with the fruity hop character (white grapes, mango) and lactic tartness at forefront. Despite the hoppy character, there is very low bitterness, but the dry slightly puckering finish holds back any sweetness. It is rather cider-like in how it sits on the tongue.

This beer does a wonderful job of marrying the hops to the sourness, but it leaves the farmhouse behind at the alter. Saisons can have a bit of tartness and hops to them, but this exceeds those levels, especially on the sour front and would better suited just calling it what it is, a dry hopped sour ale. If you popped this bottle expecting a saison you'd be pretty disappointed, however you'd get over it pretty quick because of how good it is.



92

by *David Sapsis*

Postcard Porter Diebolt Brewing Co.

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Judged as BJCP category 20A American Porter.

The beer is presented in a classic Cologne stange after a solid pour of half the beer: a big 2 inch mixed foam stand of medium beige, above a dark brown, almost opaque but distinctly ruby cast beer. Looks great, and the foam lasts for most of the time it takes to review. Bonus!

The aroma is pretty complex, with a front of light (almost milky) cocoa, followed by roasted nuts, dark chocolate, and dry, savory herbs, for an overall dry but lightly roasty nose. A faint caramel sweet note with highlighting ferment fruit esters emerges as it warms.

The flavor is pretty big, malty, and roasty-sweet in the front, with modest bitterness that seems to slowly increase in presence as the malt character drops off in the mid palate.

Late palate is surprisingly dry, with cocoa and light coffee backstopped by some savory-type herbs and lingering caramel. It makes for a long balance to the mineral finish, that while not ashen, seems to bring back the hop bitterness in a nice way. Mouthfeel is medium full, with faint astringency. It's pretty elegant in its roast presentation – a dark beer firm in roast character but still somewhat delicate, with angles of light english/herbal hops tones and just a tad of residual sweetness (beer measured at 3.5 degrees P). While not nearly as deeply roasty/chocolatey as some robust porters, the beer does roast malt proud, while still holding on to its basic British ale roots.

A very nice and drinkable dark ale; One that I'd like to try with a good hamburger or a nice plate of charcuterie: something rich and a bit fatty that this beer would cut right through and bring those smooth roasty notes to light.



92

by *James Link*

Double D Double IPA Fordham & Dominion Brewery

Aroma:
24 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
36 / 40

Mouthfeel:
8 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Poured from a 12-ounce bottle and reviewed from a pint glass.

Not unexpectedly hops come to the forefront upon initial pour. Piney and citrus notes manifest themselves in a fresh and clean wave of aromatics. A light malt sweetness is faintly evident. Burnt orange in color with a rocky white head that caps a brilliantly clear ale.

Resinous hops persist in the flavor and are followed by a solid bitterness that is well pronounced without being harsh. Malt was of a sweet caramel-like nature and helped keep the balance in check, although hops remain dominant as the style would demand.

Alcohol lends its warming contribution in appropriate levels and alerts the imbiber to its strength.

This was a well conceived and cleanly brewed Double IPA that was easy on the palate and a true representation of the style.



92

by *Jason Johnson*

Independence Pass Ale Aspen Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
8 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20



Judge's Notes

If you are a craft beer lover in today's market, you are very familiar with this style. We are going to evaluate this beer against category 21A, American IPA. If you are not familiar with this style, it should be a decidedly hoppy and bitter, moderately strong American Pale Ale. It should showcase the hops, have a clean fermentation, be a bit on the dry side, and have a solid supporting malt profile for the beer.

In the aroma, I get tropical fruit aroma from the hops, mostly papaya, but also some citrus-like notes as well. The hop aroma is quite pleasant. The malt profile is toasty and bready, and complements the hop profile nicely. Overall the aroma is clean and does present some light alcohol aroma.

The color is a dark gold, with a with a light haze but is mostly clear. The haze is suggestive of dry hopping, which is OK

for this style. The head is sticky and clings to the glass nicely, the color is off-white with very good retention.

In the flavor I get slightly sweet and toasty malt, some bready character as well. The hop flavor is medium-high and again hints at papaya and grapefruit. The bitterness is medium and not sharp or bracing, which I find pleasant. The balance is solidly leaning on the hops, but the malt does support the flavor profile well. The finish is semi-dry with just a hint of sweetness.

Mouthfeel is medium-full and the beer is moderately carbonated. I didn't detect any hop astringency. It does have a light creamy texture and low amount of alcohol warmth.

Overall this beer is a very good IPA, well worth drinking. It may benefit from a slight boost in bitterness, but I found the malt and hop profile pleasant overall and the beer was clean.

92

by *Tracy Hensley*

Barney Flats Oatmeal Stout Anderson Valley Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
36 / 40

Mouthfeel:
10 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20



Judge's Notes

Barney Flats Oatmeal Stout is an Oatmeal Stout, and was evaluated as an oatmeal stout (2015 Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Category 16B) offering according to BJCP guidelines. For this style, characteristics of complimentary roast, malt, and pleasing silky oatmeal character are supported by hop bitterness. Barney Flats Oatmeal Stout is all silky, smooth chocolate and creamy oatmeal, while missing the characteristic supporting hop bitterness.

The beer was poured into a pint glass from a 12-oz bottle, though cans and 22-oz bottles are also available. At first there are complex and smooth aromas of chocolate syrup, creamy oatmeal, dried dark fruit, and lightly roasted briquette. Over time, a pleasing nutty, raw almond, walnuts-in-their-skins note with light cocoa butter, roasted non-descript wood aroma, and malty multi-grain bread characteristics emerge. Overall, well-integrated and

evolving aromas.

Visually, when poured, it has a low persistent tan head, with fine carbonation. The beer is an opaque buckwheat honey brown, with clear ruddy amber brown edges. Consistent with the aroma, the flavors are a smooth chocolate cream with a lingering light roast, nutty, slight mineralty with a mouth-drying chalk in the finish. Notably, the flavors evolve overtime. The aftertaste is of smooth roasty cacao and coffee beans but lacks bitterness. An appropriate slight slickness on the tongue with a very low alcohol presence is livened up fine carbonation.

Overall, Barney Flats is a smooth and creamy oatmeal stout. All the flavors are succinct and not overpowering. The stout lacks characteristic fruit flavor and supporting hop bitterness, however it is a great introductory beer for someone starting to explore and enjoy stouts.

91

by *Joseph Formanek*

Culture Two Fulton Beer

Aroma:
22 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Culture Two by Fulton is labeled as a Golden Ale aged in oak barrel. It was evaluated as being a 28C Wild Specialty Beer in the 2015 BJCP Guidelines. As such, there should be a marriage of flavors from the wild fermentation as well as from the wood aging. In this case, the wild fermentation characteristics, even if not particularly complex, dominate over the wood. Instead, it is a moderately soured ale that is quite refreshing.

The aroma has earthy tartness with subtle barnyard notes in the background. There is also a bready yeast character that comes through along with the typical metallic acidic nose-puckering sharpness of a sour. No woody notes stand out. The beer pours a hazy golden color with a thin wispy head that dissipates quickly, which is not altogether uncommon for beers of this style.

The flavor is moderately tart with cherry and peachy fruity esters along with a moderate Brett barnyard character, but is not particularly complex. As in the aroma, a somewhat bready yeast flavor comes through in the background. Malt character is light to non-existent, and the oak character is extremely subtle. This brew has the overall character of a somewhat tart Chablis, and as such, would be a great pairing with fish or fowl. There are some evident metallic notes that arise in the middle and finish, as typical in a sour. The finish and aftertaste retains the same moderately tart somewhat fruity character as is up front. The body is a light-medium, and the carbonation is at a light-moderate level.

This brew is simply a very approachable rather clean, easy-drinking tart ale. This is one of those offerings that fills the need if high intensity sours are off-putting to you. Culture Two has enough character to make it interesting and would be a great option as a Summer refresher. Cheers and enjoy!



91

by *John C. Tull*

Blueberry Oatmeal Stout

Buffalo Bill's Brewery

Aroma:
21 / 24

Appearance:
6 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Blueberry Oatmeal Stout is being evaluated as a Fruit Beer (29A) in the 2015 BJCP Guidelines.

A mix of blueberry fruit and a back note of roast grains dominates the aroma. There are also hints of stone fruit, although whether from strength of the malts or the mixing of the fruit and grains is indeterminable. The color is nearly black and nearly opaque with garnet highlights when held to a light. A tan, light head persists on top. The flavor belies not just the blueberry fruit, but alcohol flavors that indicate a beer that is stronger than your typical oatmeal stout. Rich roast malt flavors and, again, some stone fruit character

is quite apparent. The mouthfeel is medium-full, possibly from the use of oatmeal in the grain bill. The dark grains lend some astringency that balances well with the residual malt sweetness and the blueberry flavor. The strength of the beer works well with the fruit addition, lending a balance between relatively intense dark grains, alcohol, and fruit character. This is a fruit beer that can work for everyone, unless you happen to despise blueberries, stouts, or both. If that is not you I would recommend trying this beer for its creativity and fermentation quality.



91

by *John C. Tull*

Funke Hop Farm Sudwerk Brewing Co.

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
36 / 40

Mouthfeel:
9 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

A saison-base beer with a plethora of aromatic features: dank hops, pungent spice, grapefruit rind and citrus oil, and a touch of malt sugars (a menagerie, yes, but not at all off-putting). The color is a tannish straw with moderate haze. There are only the faintest of bubbles on the surface that quickly disappear as new bubbles constantly rise to the surface from within. The flavor is massively citrus dominated: grapefruit flesh and rind, lemon juice and zest. A sweetness from malt, likely wheat, is detectable as a background note adding some complexity. Acid flavors and sensations come forth in the finish. A little bit of tropical fruit becomes more appar-

ent as the beer warms. A hint of saltiness also is detectable. The mouthfeel is medium-full, but the citrus notes and acidity make it seem more dry in the finish. A little alcoholic heat is coming through as well. Overall, this beer is a strong expression of lemon and grapefruit that is likely the product of "wild" fermentation rather than from additions or hops alone. Frankly, it quickly grows on you as something quite refreshing, almost like enjoying a glass of slightly tart lemonade after a strenuous activity in the outdoor heat of summertime.



91

by *Rodney A. Tillinghast*

Kolschy Clouds SØLE Artisan Ales

Aroma:
23 / 24

Appearance:
5 / 6

Flavor:
37 / 40

Mouthfeel:
8 / 10

**Overall
Impression:**
18 / 20

Judge's Notes

Its billowy white head held firm in my snifter as its tawny gold undercurrent frothily bubbled. Those bubbles released notes of freshly grated lemon zest, crackers, and pink grapefruit. A soft malt character was supported by a very smooth and pleasant citrus hop flavor. While it featured a solid hop flavor, it was very tame in the bitterness area, which contributed to a light malt sweetness. This also featured a light, smooth finish, with substantial carbonation pulling the flavors off your palate, thus enhancing its drinkability. Overall, while the hop profile does stray from the traditional Kolsch style (Style guideline 5B – Kolsch), this seems to be a quality sessionable brew to enjoy.



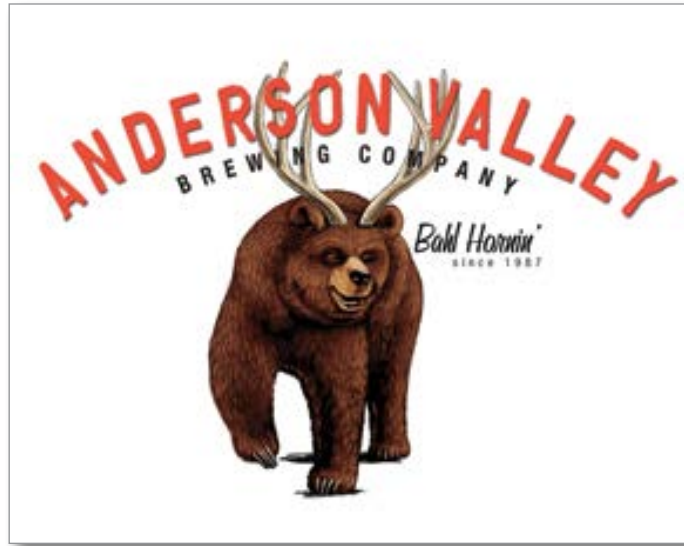
Very Good (90-86)

- 90 | **Razzleblaster Busey, Sun King Brewery** *by Pat Mulloy*
- 90 | **Pachanga, Sun King Brewery** *by Pat Mulloy*
- 90 | **Mango Habanero King of Hop, Starr Hill Brewery** *by Rick Franckhauser*
- 89 | **Crash Zone IPL, Fordham & Dominion Brewery** *by James Link*
- 89 | **Ee Tah! IPA, Anderson Valley Brewing Co.** *by Tracy Hensley*
- 89 | **Naked Yoga, SØLE Artisan Ales** *by Rodney Tillinghast*
- 89 | **Blood Orange Imperial Ale, Buffalo Bill's Brewery** *by John C. Tull*
- 89 | **Megawheat Double IPA, Stone, Marble and Odell Brewing Co.** *by Michael Moore*
- 88 | **Desert Dawn, Southbound Brewing Co.** *by Michael McGuire*
- 88 | **Brett the Hopman Tart, Mockery Brewing Co.** *by Richard Wong*
- 88 | **Campside Session IPA, Upland Brewing Co.** *by Sean Coughlin*
- 87 | **Farmers Market Citrus Gose, Sudwerk Brewing Co.** *by John C. Tull*
- 87 | **Bourbon Barrel Aged Koffi, La Quinta Brewing Co.** *by Nelson Crowle*
- 86 | **Biere de Triomphe, Diebolt Brewing Co.** *by David Sapsis*
- 86 | **Eureka Nerd, SØLE Artisan Ales** *by Rodney Tillinghast*

Average (85-75)

- 85 | **Alrye'd Alrye'd Alrye'd, Sun King Brewery** *by Pat Mulloy*
- 85 | **Marzen Amber Lager, Sudwerk Brewing Co.** *by John C. Tull*
- 83 | **Orange Blossom Cream Ale, Buffalo Bill's Brewery** *by John C. Tull*
- 83 | **Old Town Honey Wheat, La Quinta Brewing Co.** *by Nelson Crowle*
- 82 | **Hoptronix, New Holland Brewing Co.** *by Brian Eichhorn*
- 82 | **Marion the Agrarian, Upland Brewing Co.** *by Sean Coughlin*
- 82 | **Ripper Pale Ale, Stone Brewing Co.** *by Michael Moore*
- 82 | **Generation Boomerang, Mockery Brewing Co.** *by Richard Wong*
- 81 | **There and Back Again, Equilibrium Brewery** *by Dan Preston*
- 80 | **Poolside Blonde, La Quinta Brewing Co.** *by Nelson Crowle*
- 80 | **Coffee King of Hop, Starr Hill Brewery** *by Rick Franckhauser*

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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.

Cursed Kettles - Upland Brewing Co. & Prairie Artisan Ales - 96 Rating

Responses from VP of Brewing Operations Pete Batule.



L-R: head brewer Matt Wisley, VP of Brewing Ops Pete Batule, Quality Manager Adam Covey

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

This was a collaboration beer with our friends at Prairie Artisan Ales. Matt Wisley and I from Upland, along with Michael Lalli and Todd Holder from Prairie, developed the process and recipe.

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

The initial aroma is a nice differentiation from many of our other beers. Right away, you get aromas of dark cherries with biscuit and raisin notes that comes from a spectrum of toasted malts. The acidity is also really nice and balanced, making it very drinkable. It has a refreshing tartness and mild funk of Brettanomyces while the finish is dry and tart with lingering dark fruit.

Brewer Q & A

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

The name Cursed Kettles is a play on some of the hurdles each brewery had to overcome during the brewing process. The first batch was brewed in Oklahoma with the Prairie team, and there was an issue with one of their steam traps causing the brew day to be extended. When the second batch was brewed in Bloomington, we also had an issue with one of our steam valves not working properly, which extended the brew day as well. After sharing some beers and recapping our experiences, we kept joking that our kettles were cursed, hence the name “Cursed Kettles.”

BC: Is this your “desert island beer?”

If I were stranded on a desert island, I'd love to have this beer along with a nice pilsner like Champagne Velvet.

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

Dark cherries, biscuit, fig, tart, funky, and dry finish.

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

This project grew out of a mutual interest and admiration between our breweries. Each brewery was interested in exploring a territory that the other was familiar with - namely Upland's barrel-aged sour program and Prairie's experience with kettle souring and Brettanomyces. We decided to brew two different beers, one at each location, with the same method of production. Each would be soured in the kettle with lactobacillus from Prairie, fermented with 100% Brettanomyces, then barrel aged with Upland's house microorganisms. For Upland's version of the project, we decided to give the beer a secondary fermentation on a small amount of mission figs and dark cherries, which we felt would complement the dark fruit character of the malt profile.

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

Salad with vinaigrette, grilled beef, blue, cheddar, or camembert cheeses, red velvet chocolate cake.

Brewer Q & A

Fruitage - Brouwerij Rodenbach - 96 Rating.

Responses from Rodenbach master brewer Rudi Ghequire.

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

I came up with the recipe for RODENBACH Fruitage, after visiting the US and talking to consumers about wanting an approachable, easy drinking offering - yet still being distinctively Rodenbach in balance, flavor and taste.

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

To start, it's delicious. The fruit flavors in the beer make it extremely refreshing, but it's also perfectly balanced and distinctively sour, the way all our Rodenbach beers are produced.

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

Because all RODENBACH beers are aged in oak foeders (some for as many as two years), we took the concept of our aged beers, combined with fruit to arrive at the name "Fruitage."

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

It's certainly a great option for warm climate conditions; it's refreshing and delicious. I could be very happy being stranded on an island with nothing but RODENBACH Fruitage.

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

Approachable, balanced, flavorful, light and downright refreshing.

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

All of our beers are very personal, but what I love is seeing consumers enter the world of RODENBACH through this beer. Watching them - for the first time - be surprised and delighted by a balanced sour beer such as Fruitage is always a pleasure to witness.

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

This beer is terrific with a variety of foods and is very versatile. Try it with barbecue, meats & cheeses. It's also perfect to take the cans along on any picnic, as it pairs well with a variety of finger foods and sandwiches.



Responses from Rodenbach master brewer Rudi Ghequire.



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Brewer Q & A

Wild Turkey Bourbon Barrel Stout - Anderson Valley Brewing Co. - 95 Rating

Responses from Anderson Valley brewmaster Fal Allen.

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

The Wild Turkey IS the Barney Flats Oatmeal Stout aged in Wild Turkey Bourbon Barrels – so the answer is the same plus the idea to put the Barney Flats into Wild Turkey whiskey barrels, which was our owner Trey White's idea.

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

The smooth silky mouthfeel. The chocolate, vanilla & coconut flavors that the bourbon barrel adds to the Barney Flats.

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

We use Wild Turkey barrels exclusively for this beer – so the name seemed like a natural.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

No, although I Love this beer and it is one of my favorites for both drinking and cooking, it is a bit more robust than I would want as my only beer on a hot desert island.

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

Smooth roast, chocolate & vanilla with bourbon overtones, hint of oak (yep, 11 words again.)

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

This beer makes the most awesome vanilla ice cream float.

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

WTBBS pairs really well with meat, especially roasted meats or BBQ and they pair well with chocolate or desserts.



Responses from Anderson Valley brewmaster Fal Allen.

Brewer Q & A

Mo Honey, Mo Problems - Mockery Brewing Co. - 95 Rating

Responses from Mockery owner and brewer Zach Rabun.

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

Our brewing team brainstormed up this recipe. We have been stretching the limits on what a beer can be and found the wonderful Braggot style to be a perfect match for our goals.

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

It's unique. With nearly half of the fermentables coming from honey, Mo' Honey, Mo' Problems has a truly distinct flavor profile. We use a mix of 275 pounds of orange blossom and 275 pounds of wildflower honey from some great local apiarists, which gives this beer a really great floral, sweet aroma which is followed by a well-balanced and complex flavor.

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

An homage to one of our favorite tracks from one of our favorite artists.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

I don't see why not! Light, dry, and very refreshing, this beer is perfect for a sandy beach. And at nearly 11% ABV, it will keep you warm through the chilly nights. Also, pairs well with toasted coconut macarons, lobster tail, and loneliness.

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

Colorado honey shines in this cauldron of rich flavors, mmmmm.

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

We were able to connect with our friends at Saucony Creek in Kutztown, PA and collaborate on a version of this braggot. We aged the braggot in brandy barrels and added pear juice. So this beer has connected people from over 1500 miles apart.

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

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



Responses from Mockery owner and brewer Zach Rabun.

Brewer Q & A

MC² - Equilibrium Brewery - 94 Rating

Responses from co-founder and brewer Pete Oates.

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

Equilibrium's Co-founder Pete Oates.

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

Its balance of drinkability and big flavors; its well-rounded soft juicy taste, touch of sweet, and moderate bitterness combine to give the olfactory experience of dank mango juice.

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

This beer is extremely drinkable for 8% ABV. When it was brewed at my house on our-now-pilot system, it got the nickname of "Strangers In the Morning"... I would often come out to the living room in the morning with strangers laid about on various couches. This behavior was then the inspiration to brew our pale ale called Photon, which is "light"-er in the ABV department. When we eventually started making commercial batches, we realized we had essentially squared Photon's hopping rate with this DIPA (The speed of a photon in MC² is denoted by the variable "C", which is squared). $E = MC^2$ has always been my favorite relationship in physics: It's simple and says all matter is related as energy, which is a still a mind-blowing concept. With its reinvention through Photon, it is now known as MC² and nicknamed "Energy in a glass."



Responses from co-founder and brewer Pete Oates.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

No... Survival on a desert island would not be aided by a crushable 8% ABV beverage... absolutely not... unless the desert island had refrigeration and the beer could be produced fresh with fresh hops. A desert island without said conditions would destroy this beer in the matter of days. Please keep beers like this cold and drink them fresh. This is exactly why beers like this need to be produced and consumed locally or the consumer will not get the drinking experience as we have intended.

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

Crushable succulent mango juice loaded with chewy hop resins... or photon squared.

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

Probably how this beer was named is the most appropriate story that I can tell publicly. If I were a better business person I would have rented out my couch for «power blackouts». Events were missed. Loved ones were forgotten. It can be a dangerous beer if not handled with care. Please drink responsibly and balance with some Photon.

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

Bourbon-brisket-Thai tacos (or other flavor forward dishes).

Brewer Q & A

Paradise – Holy City Brewing – 94 Rating

Responses from Holy City head brewer Chris Brown.

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

Chris Brown with help from our Head Brewer Sean Guidera and Assistant Jack Pitts.

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

Aroma, the big Citra and Mosaic dry hop make this beer what it is.

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

We brewed this beer originally for the Don't Drill movement to try and help stop oil drilling off our coast. Shepard Fairy did the original art work. Since then we have been brewing it for the Coastal Conservation League. It's a beer to help preserve Paradise (Charleston).

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

I would have this in my cooler. With a low ABV you could have a few.

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

Citrusy, hoppy, crisp, clean, balanced, IPA.

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

Seafood.



Responses from Holy City head brewer Chris Brown.

Brewer Q & A

Insurrection - Fulton Beer - 94 Rating

Responses from head brewer Mikey Salo.

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

Insurrection is based off of one of the first double IPA recipes I ever made back while I was homebrewing in college. There have been a few minor tweaks over the years but the recipe is nearly identical to when it was brewed for the first time in a five-gallon batch.

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

Aroma. I have a mild obsession with Nelson Sauvin hops and love the way that they work with Mosaic hops. The malt backbone is great but this beer is all about the aromatics.

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

Fulton is well known for making very balanced & approachable beers. This beer is an aggressively hopped, strong double IPA. The first time we brewed this beer on a larger scale it was meant to "shake up the (Fulton) establishment" a bit and quickly became a staff (and fan) favorite.

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

Nope. It's just a delicious juicy double IPA.

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

Insurrection is all about doing things that make you happy even if it's not what everyone wants you to do. Shake things up. Be aggressive every once and a while. Make things that you want to make.

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

This beer needs bold flavors to stand up to it. Thai food and curry work very well with this beer.



Responses from head brewer Mikey Salo.

Brewer Q & A

Standard Lager - Fulton Beer - 93 Rating

Responses from head brewer Mikey Salo.

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

Creating the recipe for the Standard Lager was a very collaborative effort for our brewing team. One of our brewers, John Woodford, has a lot of experience with lagers and was very influential in creating this recipe but nearly everyone on the brewing team had a hand in getting this beer to its final form.

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

The balance of malt & hops along with the extremely clean yeast character make it very easy to drink.

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

The name works in a couple ways. One, it's a reliable, everyday beer that you can drink on any occasion, or at any place – it's your standard, go-to beer. It also is meant as in “setting the Standard”, a benchmark for quality. More broadly, the name Standard also signifies that it's a beer about drinking for drinking's sake, for the sake of what you're doing at the time and who you're with – not to be endlessly dissected and discussed and described. Sure, we all love doing just that from time to time, but when you get down to it, if all you ever talk about over a beer is the beer itself, aren't you missing the point of having a beer in the first place?

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

Mashing up the two taglines on the packaging sum it up well: “Extraordinarily uncomplicated, all-malt lager.”

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

We have plenty of stories revolving around Standard, but none that we want to see in print.

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

Standard Lager is a very versatile beer but pairs especially well with BBQ.



Responses from head brewer Mikey Salo.

Brewer Q & A

Vladislav, Baby Don't Hurt Me - Diebolt Brewing Co. - 93 Rating

Responses from Diebolt head brewer Jack Diebolt.

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

Look no further fella, you found him.

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

The aroma is my favorite aspect of this beer; it's very complex with dark fruit, bourbon, bittersweet chocolate. As the beer warms up though, more subtle, nuanced aromas of espresso, coconut, vanillin and vintage port join the party.

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

This beer was originally known as The Commodore but an amicable trademark snafu with a certain beer behemoth led us to Vladislav. The full name is Vladislav, Baby Don't Hurt Me, giving a nod to a popular 80's movie, a 90's pop song, our current political climate, and everyone's favorite Russian dictator... er, I mean Russian President.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

This is definitely not my "desert island beer"... unless I'm trying to forget I'm on a "desert island." Then perhaps this beauty would do the trick. Now if you were talking "dessert island beer", then the answer is yes.

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

Vlad-Is-Lav? Baby, we think you're holding a glass of it!



Dan (L) and Jack (R) Diebolt yuck it up in front of the brewery.



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Brewer Q & A

Orange King of Hop – Starr Hill Brewery – 93 Rating

Responses from Starr Hill head brewer Robbie O’Cain.

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

We developed the original King of Hop recipe in 2014, but I think it’s all about who executed it more than who wrote it! Chalk another up to the Starr Hill Brewing Team.

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

Love that citrus aromatic and how it blends with the hop flavors.

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

We love us some music, so got to give it up to the King of Pop. He actually used to be featured on the bottle artwork before we rebranded.

BC: Is this your “desert island beer?”

No, but it is my cool, crisp spring night porch beer. Also goes great for grilling season.

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

Citrus, fresh, balance, flavor for days.

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

The brewing staff loves making this beer because it only takes 4 or 5 hours to hand zest all of the oranges (which are actually easier than the other citrus as a random fact).

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

This goes great with Steak and Bleu Cheese Pizza! We also recommend Chicken Satay with Spicy Peanut Sauce, Sharp Cheddar, and Lemon Shortbread Cookies.



Responses from Starr Hill head brewer Robbie O’Cain.

Brewer Q & A

Casey - Equilibrium Brewery - 92 Rating

Responses from founder and brewery owner Pete Oates.

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

Equilibrium's co-founder Pete Oates

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

The balance of tartness, dryness, full bodiedness, and the minimal amounts of barnyard funk while remaining complex and pleasant.

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

Casey is my girlfriend who has supported many an insane idea to the point of them becoming realities. Opening a brewery with co-founder Ricardo Petroni has been the latest adventure, which had her traveling from Texas to Vermont, standing in lines ranging from 104F to -22F, allotting her free time to coordination and travel, all while not really preferring beer as her go-to adult beverage (she prefers tequila). When she told me she had tried a high-end sour beer and drank the whole bottle, I knew immediately that I had to make a tart farmhouse ale as tribute for everything she had done for me. Consequently, Casey is a farmhouse ale built by the inspiration to share beer with people close to heart.

BC: Is this your "desert island beer?"

Absolutely yes... Especially if there was a recent shipwreck with chardonnay barrels for extended aging. This beer ages extremely well (if properly cellared) and the flavor and aroma profile continue to evolve over time due to the presence of proprietary *Brettanomyces* strains, which allows for a different drinking experience depending on the age of the beer. This ale also has a very bright but gentle acidity that is particular quenching in hot desert island weather.

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

She is pale, tart, delicate, complex with some pleasant funk.

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

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

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

Desert island seafood enjoyed with someone close to heart.



Responses from co-founder and brewer Pete Oates.



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