

West Coaster

SERVING THE SAN DIEGO CRAFT BEER COMMUNITY



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Neva Parker, center, coming to the stage at the San Diego Brewers Guild Festival at Liberty Station, Nov. 5, 2011

Beer Week Retrospect

An Interview with San Diego Brewers Guild Event Chair Neva Parker

By Ryan Lamb

Did you enjoy yourself at this year's opening and closing San Diego Beer Week events? Meet Neva Parker, Chair of the Events Committee and Secretary for the San Diego Brewers Guild, Head of Laboratory Operations for White Labs, Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure participant, wife and mother. In the wake of SDBW's packed capstone events, West Coaster sat down with Parker to discuss the festival's growth,

and predictions for what'll be on tap next year.

Let's start by talking about Beer Week's kickoff event — the Guild Fest at Liberty Station. How many attendees were there?

The VIP session I know was sold out — that was over 500 tickets and then we sold about 2,300 for general admission. So, close to 3,000 and that's not including the brewery members, allied members, vendors, et cetera.

How many general admission tickets were sold at the door?

I know that we sold about 1,400 pre-sale online, so a little less than 1,000.

How many people were you expecting?

2,100-2,500. Our conservative estimate was 2,100 and the hope was that we'd get at least 2,500.

Do you know what the numbers were last year?

Last year I want to say we sold 1,500 tickets in total. We doubled the capacity this year.

Why wasn't the VIP section marked off like in 2010?

We decided as a committee that last year it didn't really work out very well because there was confusion and once the general admission opened nobody really hung out in the VIP area anymore. So it just didn't really seem to make sense to do it that way.

There have been a few industry members that have taken to social media to gripe that the Guild Fest used to be a smaller, more intimate event with brewers and industry members. So I guess the question there is — how do we grow the culture without watering it down?

It's a fine line and it's difficult to find that balance. I think what we've seen is that we want to grow as a Guild and we're trying some different things to help us grow. This partnership [with FM 94/9] I think was a good thing but we may also have to bring it back to what it's really gotta be about. It's important to take all that feedback and try to figure out a way to grow but also maintain all the integrity of the what the Guild stands for. I certainly don't want it to be thought of as another drunkfest. That's not what it's for.

What's one of the biggest challenges when planning the event?

It's hard because we do it once a year, so how can we really figure out what's right and what's

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Local Beer & Food Fans' Cups Runneth Over

Two new restaurants significantly boost the county's total number of taps

By Brandon Hernández

The beeriest county in the country just got 160 taps added to its already robust supply with the opening of two craft beer-focused restaurants. While similar in the most basic of senses — approachable, uncomplicated food geared toward families and singles — there are a number of differences. Geography is the most obvious; Slater's 50/50 is located at Point Loma's Liberty station development while Sublime Ale House is the newest addition to Restaurant Row in San Marcos. Despite the distance separating them, both locations are just a stone's throw from established beer venues with local history and big-time name recognition.

Slater's 50/50 — a combo sports bar, burger joint and shrine to pork fat in all its culinary renderings — found a home at Liberty Station, right across the street from Stone Brewing World Bistro & Garden's second location slated to open in spring 2012. Sublime's built-in competition is Churchill's Pub & Grille just down the street. The owners of both establishments did their research and knew their competition from the get-go; keeping with the rising tide floats all ships sentiment that's prevalent in San Diego's brewing industry, they're excited rather than



A unique atmosphere, with a lot of taps, at Sublime Ale House

discouraged by the presence of such accomplished businesses surrounding them.

Sublime Ale House owner James Limjoco believes both operations can flourish in unison, because each offers a different atmosphere and experience. While Churchill's is an

archetypal so-Cal take on a British Pub offering bangers and mash, shepherd's pie and curry dishes to go with their massive tap and bottle selection, Sublime is a modern, beer-centric pizza and comfort food emporium.

Continued on Page 17



Photo: Kristina Blake

Brandon Hernández hated beer and had never even heard the term “craft beer” until his first trip to O’Brien’s Pub in 1999. There, in a dark yet friendly space rife with the foreign smell of cascade and centennial hops, he fell into line with the new school of brew enthusiasts courtesy of a pint-sized one-two punch of Sierra Nevada Bigfoot and Stone Arrogant Bastard Ale. Those quaffs changed his perception of all beer could and should be and he’s spent the past decade-plus immersing himself in the local beer culture -- living, learning, loving and, of course, drinking craft suds. He’s since taken up homebrewing and specializes in the creation of beer-centric cuisine. A native San Diegan, Brandon is proud to be contributing to a publication that serves a positive purpose for his hometown and its beer loving inhabitants. In addition to West Coaster, he is the San Diego correspondent for Celebrator Beer News and contributes articles on beer, food, restaurants and other such killer topics to national publications including The Beer Connoisseur, Beer Magazine and Wine Enthusiast as well as local outlets including The San Diego Union-Tribune, San Diego Magazine, The Reader, Riviera Magazine, Pacific San Diego, Edible San Diego, Dining Out San Diego, Rancho Magazine, North County Times and SanDiego.com.

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The Proof is in the Bread Pudding

Karl Strauss Executive Chef Gunther Emathingier shares a pairing and bit of his past

By Brandon Hernández

Nowadays, there’s a big buzz around local ingredients, preserving, distilling and sustainability. Few locals are nearly as familiar with these concepts as Karl Strauss executive chef Gunther Emathingier. As a youth in Gasptolshofen, Austria, his family spent a great deal of time foraging for sustenance around their rural home. He has vivid memories of stockpiling food for the winter, covering rows of fresh carrots in sand in their basement to keep them viable over the cold season. It was the kind of work that took days, but as a child, it was a tradition he looked forward to, and now looks back on fondly.

One of his favorite rituals from the good old days was when his family would distill their own spirits using fruits picked by the youngest members of the Emathingier family. Even now, with his family’s certified distillery but a happy memory, it’s something they still enjoy—along with numerous time-honored recipes—during the holidays. With such a rich food and drink history, it’s no wonder Emathingier staked out to make his mark as a chef.

He’s done just that as a local beer and food pairing innovator. Heading the kitchen operations for San Diego’s first post-Prohibition craft brewery and their six restaurants, he’s been doing it longer and more frequently than anybody around. Fifteen years in, it’s clear he’s found his calling. Yet, had it not been for the fact he’s always been a bit ahead of his time, all he’s accomplished may never have been.

Two years after coming to the US in 1986, Emathingier followed his culinary dreams to San Diego, where he set up his very own restaurant on Fifth Avenue in the Gaslamp Quarter. At the time, that thoroughfare was hardly the resto-dense stretch it is today. While a few restaurants like Croce’s and Fio’s helped to revitalize the dark, downtrodden district, it still proved challenging.

Name recognition was just as important then, if not more so, than now. Most visitors to the Gaslamp would drive up Fifth Avenue until they reached the corner shared by Croce’s and Fio’s—just three doors down the block from Emathingier’s place—then turn around.

Many of the patrons who did venture the extra distance to check out Emathingier’s fare were greatly confused by his European-accented California-modern cuisine. Dishes like house-smoked duck breast over wild rice-hazelnut waffles with orange-strawberry relish and blackberry syrup—something that would sell well in today’s food-forward times—had San Diegans scratching their heads. As a result, Emathingier closed up shop. Fortunately, there was a foodie in town who both recognized and tasted the merits in Emathingier’s cooking: Karl Strauss co-founder Chris Cramer.

“After my restaurant, I was working at the US Grant Hotel and there were a lot of changes happening that I wasn’t very comfortable with. So, I was on the lookout for an opportunity,” said Emathingier. “Chris Cramer was very involved in the local chapter of the California Restaurant Association, so I gave him a call to see if he knew of any openings. He told me, ‘Actually, we’re doing something. If you’re interested, come on down.’”

Emathingier did his best *Price Is Right* contestant impression and the rest is history. He was offered the job and despite that working with beer was something new, he adapted quickly and hasn’t looked back. Neither has the San Diego restaurant scene, who are just now catching up with what Karl Strauss has been doing for years.

“The beer and food pairing trend is coming along great. It’s finally becoming more acceptable,” said Emathingier. “There’s still a long way to go before it becomes mainstream, but it’s great to see it all over the media and see some of the higher end restaurants doing beer dinners. It’s definitely becoming really trendy and there’s simply no stopping it now!”

Under the direction of Emathingier and his partner, Karl Strauss restaurant chef and R&D coordinator Corey Rapp, the pubs have pumped out hundreds of succinct pairings to go with everything from their mellow flagship Amber Lager to bold numbers like Big Barrel Double IPA and Off The Rails Imperial Red Ale.

The company’s 2011 holiday beer and winner of a bronze medal at this year’s Great American Beer Festival, Two Tortugas Belgian Quad, is the fluid component of Karl Strauss’ pairing of the month for



Corey Rapp and Gunther Emathingier take a break from the kitchen at the Sorrento Mesa Brewery Gardens

December, which features a charcuterie plate. “I love beers like Two Tortugas. They just have so many nuances of flavor—toasted, malty and fruity notes with Belgian yeast funk. There’s just so much you can do with a beer like that,” says Emathingier.

In celebration of the holidays, he’s decided to marry the dried fruit and spice characteristics of the beer with an apricot and fig bread pudding, garnished with a

beer-laced caramel sauce and raisins reconstituted in Two Tortugas. The recipe for that rich, wintry wonder is included below. Consider it a holiday gift that comes straight from the heart—and kitchen—at Karl Strauss.

—Recipes courtesy of Karl Strauss Brewing Co.

Drunken Raisins

Yield: ¾ to 1 cup

3 oz golden raisins
3 oz raisins
4 oz Karl Strauss Two Tortugas

Combine the raisins in a small bowl and cover with the beer. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Remove from the refrigerator and drain, reserving the liquid. Serve.

Caramel Sauce

Yield: 2½ cups

2½ cups granulated sugar
½ cup water
¾ cup cream
Karl Strauss Two Tortugas Belgian Quad (reserved from Drunken Raisins recipe, left), plus enough to equal ½ cup
1 tsp vanilla extract
4 oz unsalted butter

Combine the sugar and water in a large heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring often until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a gentle boil, stop stirring, and cook until the mixture turns a deep amber color. Gradually add the beer and cream (the sauce will bubble vigorously). Stir in the butter until it is completely incorporated. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla. Serve immediately.

Bread Pudding with Drunken Raisins and Caramel Sauce

Yield: 6 servings

6 extra large eggs	1 lb day-old brioche, cut into ½-inch cubes	½ cup, plus 1 Tbsp Nutella
4 oz granulated sugar	3 oz dried apricot, diced ½-inch thick	2½ cups Caramel Sauce (recipe above)
1 Tbsp vanilla extract	3 ounces black mission figs, diced ½-inch thick	Drunken Raisins (recipe above) to garnish
½ Tbsp ground cinnamon	3 Tbsp unsalted butter	confectioner’s sugar
zest of ½ a lemon		
1 cup cream		
1 quart whole milk		

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and lemon zest. In a large saucepan, bring the milk and cream to a slow boil. Slowly add the milk mixture, a ladleful at a time to the egg mixture, whisking constantly. Place the brioche and dried fruits in a separate large bowl and strain the egg mixture into it. Let stand for 15 minutes, being sure to push the bread into the mixture 3 to 4 times over that span so that the custard is completely soaked up by the bread.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter the sides and bottom of 6 ramekins. Spoon equal parts of the bread pudding mixture into the ramekins. Fill a shallow baking dish with about a half an inch of water. Place the ramekins in the dish and transfer to the oven. Bake for 45 minutes or until the bread pudding is set. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature.

Using a spoon, scoop a 1-inch deep and 1-inch wide hole out of the top center of the bread pudding. Fill the cavity with 1½ tablespoons of Nutella. Unmold the bread pudding from the ramekin. Before serving, heat the bread pudding in a microwave for 30 to 35 seconds. To serve, place the bread pudding in the center of a plate, pour caramel sauce over and around the pudding, garnish with raisins and dust with confectioner’s sugar.

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Brews in the News

News and highlights from San Diego's craft beer community

SAN DIEGO BEER WEEK, TAKE 3 –

The biggest news from November was the return of San Diego Beer Week, which officially kicked off with the Brewers Guild Festival on Saturday, November 5th. But it was the night before the big event that set the tone for the week long celebration of brewers, specifically, the launch party for “the official book of San Diego craft beer.” The **San Diego's Top Brewers** event was coordinated by Chef's Press, the book's publishers, and Tap Hunter. Fans packed into the vast Mission Brewery to gather the signatures of our town's top brewers featured in the book. Melani Gordon of Tap Hunter said that she overheard The Lost Abbey's head brewer Tomme Arthur saying something like, “This is maybe the last time this small group of brewers will be able to gather in a setting as intimate as this.” And he was right – with all the hectic schedules these brewers have, this night at Mission Brewery was truly something special.



The next night, another unique event took place at Sea Rocket Bistro. **Assembly**, a vegan beer pairing dinner put on by Chef Chad White, local fundraisers LoveLikeBeer and San Diego Beer Blog's Jeff Hammett, featured rare beers from Michigan's Jolly Pumpkin — a vegan brewery led by a vegan brewer. Veganism and craft beer, huh? Organizer Kory Stetina said, “I think the modern craft beer movement and the vegan/vegetarian movement share a common bond that is ‘conscious consumption.’ In both movements, unless your parents were able to pass on what (in their time) would have been more uncommon tastes or beliefs, most members of each community today have had to go through some period of questioning and challenging tradition — whether it be taste-muted, mainstream beer or the traditional, meat-based American diet — unlearning previous tastes, re-creating them and modifying purchasing habits with a newfound vision for what they have re-learned to be considered ‘good’ or in line with their larger purpose.” Stetina also noted that because both movements are fairly young, there's a lot of “uncharted territory for the crafts to grow and expand” through the experimentation of creative chefs and brewers. To see more about this event, visit the *West Coaster* website and search “Assembly” or visit our Facebook page for all the photos.

“The only human event during Beer Week,” according to beer baron Scot Blair, was **3rd Fling**, a disc golf tournament at Morley Field in North Park hosted by Hamilton's Tavern & Green Flash Brewing Company. The third annual event was held halfway through San Diego Beer Week, and gave sixty-four participants the chance to step out of the bars and onto the course for a day of breakfast burritos, disc flinging and meeting new

people. The after party at the sponsoring bar in South Park was a fitting way to end the day, with



the winners tapping a cask of Green Flash 9th Anniversary IIPA, the perfect pairing for chicken mole plates dished up by the Hamilton's team. *West Coaster* can hardly wait for 4th Fling next year.

Post-Beer Week, we asked readers on our website what they liked — or didn't — about the ten-day extravaganza. Out-of-towner **Brian Schmaltz** was visiting for just over 24 hours and hit-up a variety of events. He enjoyed introducing friends to “some good brews” at the Sierra Nevada beer pairing at URGE Gastropub, before making his way out to Alpine for lunch the next day. After that, he holed up at Toronado in North Park, drinking some rare New Belgium Peach Love with “Love Master” Jamie Mastin in between other solid beer choices. **Jon Kneier** commented that he couldn't remember having so much barrel-aged beer available during one week. His highlights included Dogfish Dirty Dozen at O'Brien's Pub, the Flavors of Yeast event with White Labs' Neva Parker at Sea Rocket Bistro, the selection of sour and rare beers available at Pizza Port OB, and the Night of a Million Zillion Speedways at O'Brien's. **Craig Barnett** said he very much enjoyed the Brewers Guild Festival by taking the time to talk with beer folks that worked the booths. Fallbrook resident **Bill Jackson** only made it to one event during Beer Week — the Pour it Black beer festival held on the last day at Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens. He hopes that next year there will be more beer events up in his neck of the woods. *What did you think of San Diego Beer Week? What would you like to see next year? Send your feedback to ryan@westcoastersd.com and we'll whisper in the ears of those who make it all happen.*

MORE BAR IN MIRAMAR –

Who doesn't like more bar space? Both AleSmith and Ballast Point are renovating their tasting rooms for your beer-drinking enjoyment. The AleSmith tasting room will begin its transformation in January, and will include a new, larger bar with a built-in beer engine, additional restroom, and a display area for both AleSmith awards and its growing barrel program. Stay tuned to their newsletter or *West Coaster's* website for information regarding temporary tasting room closure, and look forward to the grand re-opening party in the first quarter of 2012. Some of the tasting room changes at Ballast Point are already underway, and upon completion will include more floor space, a new look, and more taps. The tasting room will tentatively be closed right after the New Year, giving you a bit of time to get over that hangover before jumping back in the saddle.

500TH STONE UNTURNED –

Jean Newcomer, an employee of Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant in Wilmington, Delaware, along with her long-time partner Greg Weiler selected Stone Brewing Co. to be the 500th brewery they've ever visited. The duo arrived on November 15th to a surprise welcome from Brewmaster Mitch Steele who led them on a private tour of the brewing facility in addition to a guided tasting and special lunch in the gardens. Newcomer and Weiler also indulged in Stone 2010 Old Guardian Barley Wine Style Ale Aged in Bourbon Barrels, which is – fittingly – part of the Quingenti Millilitre (500 ml) series.



ELEVEN IN 2011 –

In January 2011, *West Coaster* selected 11 craft beer-related businesses or events that we predicted would make an impact over the coming year — check out that feature on our website within the Editorial tab. Now, as 2011 comes to a close, we're taking a look back, measuring up what they've done and previewing what's in store for 2012. **Tap Hunter**, featured on the cover last January, will look to relaunch their iPhone and Android apps, promote their 2nd annual Brewery Awards, and launch a new craft beer job-finding component of the website, CraftBeerCareers — all in early 2012. In March they'll speak about social media's interaction with craft beer at SXSW in Austin, and then head on to the Belgian Beer Tour with Ciao Travel in April. Tap Hunter also helped organize the first annual Beer-Con last August with fellow 11 in '11 member **Awesome Beer Drinkers**. Drinkers' frontman Michael Bowen confirmed that he's looking to extend Beer-Con to two days for next year so that the Saturday sessions are preceded by brewery tours, and a dinner event the Friday prior. Look for more breweries to be involved next year as well. And even with all that on their plate, the Drinkers will still engage in more, smaller-size and scale beer tastings in 2012. **Brew Diego** has expanded their focus from brewery video tours to other efforts, most notably beer fundraising events. “Craft Beer Gives Back,” an event held in conjunction with Awesome Beer Drinkers and graciously hosted at Monkey Paw Pub & Brewery, raised \$1000 for the Monarch School's expansion project thanks in large part to beer donors Deschutes, Hess, Marin, Widmer and Green Flash. 2012 is all about more brewing for **Manzanita Brewing Co.**, whose new 30-barrel Criveller steam-powered brewing system should be starting up in late December or early January. The new 12,000 square-foot building dwarfs the old facility a ¼ mile down the road, which is for sale as a turn-key brewery in our gift guide (pages 12-13). **Hess Brewing** has grown substantially over the past year and change.

Production in their first quarter of business, the third quarter of 2010, yielded fourteen barrels — the same amount that made it to events during this year's ten-day San Diego Beer Week, including a “tap takeover” at Bottlecraft and brewmaster's dinners at Local Habit and the Bristol Hotel. Look for more barrel-aged beer (bourbon barrel-aged Ex Umbris Rye Imperial Stout is in the works for March), a new brewing facility (rumored to be in North Park by mid-year) in addition to the current Miramar space, and the possibility of canned beer in the future. Family-owned **Iron Fist Brewing Co.** in Vista will be looking to hit their stride with production in 2012, with 3000 barrels/year the target. To help facilitate this, three 60-barrel conical fermentors and a new bright tank are joining the ranks, which means more beer for the East Coast is on the horizon. Also look for more barrel-aged beers and a 5% ABV breakfast stout made with cold-pressed coffee. We, too, are still wondering where in Europe **Stone Brewing Co.** will touch down as the first American craft brewery to head overseas, but there's less mystery surrounding Stone Liberty Station, the 20,000 sq. ft., 400-seat brewery-restaurant slated to open in late spring 2012. Stone alumnus Lee Chase and his nano-brewery **Automatic Brewing Co.** had a goal for 2011: to create six different beers using coffee. So far, Chase has completed five renditions of doubly-buzzing beer, with his sixth on the way this December. More news on the horizon for Automatic includes the possibility of moving the two-barrel brewhouse from within Blind Lady Ale House to his newest joint, Tiger!Tiger! (pending proper licensing). Given his record, we predict Chase will have plenty of tricks up his sleeve come 2012; *West Coaster's* here to keep you posted. **Ballast Point Brewing & Spirits** will continue its major expansion in 2012 by adding more tanks at the Scripps Ranch facility. Like a fighter that's moved up in weight class, the brewery will compete for the title of Champion Mid-Size Brewing Company at the 2012 World Beer Cup, hosted on our home turf this May; in 2010, BP won the award in the small brewery category. Also, look for Longfin Lager to come out in six-packs in 2012. **San Diego Beer Week 2011** boasted nearly 550 events over 10 days in San Diego County, and you can bet next year will only be bigger. The 33rd Annual American Homebrewers Association **National Homebrewers Conference** took place in sunny San Diego last June with the help of extremely dedicated individuals. You can find more coverage of that blockbuster event in the July 2011 issue, available to read online. Look forward to our **Twelve in 2012** picks out this February. Have predictions for the craft beer industry's most impactful members and companies in 2012? Email ryan@westcoastersd.com

AND IN PIZZA PORT NEWS –

Jeff Bagby, Director of Brewpub Operations for Pizza Port and head brewer at Pizza Port Carlsbad, who led the Pizza Port family to thirteen medals at the 2011 Great American Beer Festival, will be leaving the company at the end of the year to pursue his own venture. Stay tuned for more information as it comes via our website and future issues.

MAIN TAP TAVERN

DECEMBER BEER EVENTS:

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 MAIN TAP'S "A VERY MALTY CHRISTMAS" DEC 12TH - 16TH
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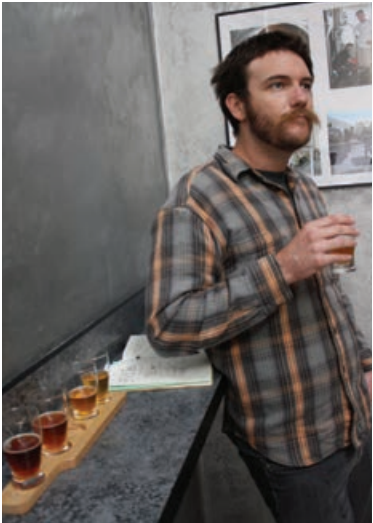
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Jeff Hammett first noticed craft beer early in college when a friend introduced him to Stone Brewing Co.'s Pale Ale. After graduating from UCSD with a degree in Philosophy, he moved to Santa Cruz where he frequented Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing and Seabright Brewery. Jeff would journey up to San Francisco to visit Magnolia and Toronado every chance he got. He started blogging about beer in early 2009 while living in Durango, Colorado. For a town of only 20,000 people, Durango boasts an impressive four breweries. Jeff quickly became a part of the brewing scene, and in January 2010 was invited to work with Ska Brewing Co.'s Head Brewer Thomas Larsen to formulate a recipe and brew on Ska's pilot system. In addition to his love of craft beer, Mr. Hammett is an avid cyclist and can be seen riding on the road or trails most weekends.

Growing Pains

Examining where the beer scene's headed and ways to improve it

By Jeff Hammett

It's no secret that craft beer is becoming big business in San Diego. Our local beer industry has grown considerably over the last year and it doesn't show any signs of slowing. Breweries and beer-focused pubs continue popping up all over the county, and San Diego's 3rd annual Beer Week grew exponentially this year from 2010, and certainly from its debut in 2009. The surge in interest and support is undeniable — but from a national standpoint, craft beer still has a long way to go before it could possibly dominate the market. In 2010, craft beer sales comprised just 7.6% of total beer sales according to the Brewers Association; however, the promising news is that sales were up 12%, with the remaining industry numbers trending downward.

From the perspective of San Diego Beer Week's booming growth in 2011, we saw that local media support goes a long way. Industry members from brewers to journalists made appearances on local television and radio in a publicity blitz aimed to inspire the masses to get out and enjoy the 10 day celebration. Thousands of people — possibly hundreds of thousands — were (if nothing else) reminded that macro beers have tasty alternatives brewed right here in town. FM 94.9, known for supporting craft beer with its weekly program Rock & Roll Happy Hour, was chosen as the main media sponsor for Brewers Guild opening and closing events. And besides spreading the good word, the station brought in notable musical acts like Matthew Sweet for the Guild Festival's live entertainment lineup.

Given the considerable leap in media fuss from the past two years, it's no wonder more people showed up ready to party in the name of our city's craft (for exact numbers and comparisons to last year, check out the interview with Brewers Guild event chairman Neva Parker on page 1). While most would agree this is a good thing, there were some grumblings within the beer community that the influx of newcomers treated the opening and closing events more like drunk-fests — a far cry from the once intimate get-togethers that celebrated brewers and offered a chance to learn more about what goes into their craft.

For next year, organization and education are two elements I'd like to see re-emphasized. In the case of the Guild Festival — SDBW's flagship



Lots of beer drinkers packed into Liberty Station for the Brewers Guild Festival

event — all of the breweries and allied pub members were placed in a tight horseshoe-shaped space on one side of the field, while the other half was reserved for music stages and other beer-industry related booths, including local media. This created a packed effect on the food and beer side and less utilized space on the other; for next year, spreading booth participants out would allow brewers more room to meet, mingle and educate drinkers, returning to the spirit of past festivals.

A simple map with the locations of all the different breweries in relation to one another would've been helpful — like the ones provided for attendees at this past June's National Homebrewers Conference. On several occasions I was at the back of a long line and couldn't see which brewery was pouring straight ahead; more clearly placed tent signage with the names of breweries would also help. Another missing element were more readily available sources of water throughout the venue, and drop buckets for unconsumed beer. This was likely the effect of an oversold crowd versus the 30-something plus breweries in attendance and their limited resources.

Aside from the Brewers Guild Festival,

if you did your homework, there was plenty to take advantage of from the plethora of SDBW events organized by individual breweries and establishments around town. Once again, this year I enjoyed going to Blind Lady Ale House for their meet the brewer series, and the event with Mark Jilg from Craftsman Brewing Company was especially educational. There were also a variety of beer pairing dinners — some expensive, some not — that reflected local chefs' creativity. "Assembly" was just that, and featured the teaming up of local philanthropists LoveLikeBeer and restaurant Sea Rocket Bistro to showcase how well vegan dishes pair with craft beer. With 542 events on the official website there were bound to be some gems — so what were your favorites? Have any feedback or suggestions for next year? Email me via jeff@westcoastersd.com. As a growing community, discussion will only strengthen SDBW's foundation, because, after all, this is only year three.

Aside from West Coaster, Jeff also writes for San Diego Beer Blog at sandiegobeerblog.com, and you can follow him on twitter @SDBBeer

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A New Year, with More Beer

The grandest event hitting our shores in 2012 is the Craft Brewers Conference & BrewExpo America, culminating with the ninth edition of the World Beer Cup. Known as “the Olympics of beer,” craft brewers from around the world will submit their entries in hopes of earning global bragging rights come May 5th. The call for entries closes December 6th, so get on it, San Diego brewers. For a complete preview of the blockbuster event, look forward to our April issue that also commemorates Earth Day. In that issue we’ll be exploring how such a grand-scale event impacts our city from an environmental standpoint.

Closer on the calendar, we’re not printing a January issue (we need a vacation!) but don’t worry — we’ll be back in February with our anticipated “12 in ‘12” feature, where we predict twelve businesses slated to make a big impact on San Diego’s craft beer scene. Last year we printed the 11 in ‘11 in January (check out where our picks stand a year later on page 4), but this year we’ll have the added benefit of seeing who kicks off 2012 with a bang. Do you have suggestions for who to watch over the coming year? Or maybe you have a lady in mind for our next Ladies of Local Beer issue, out this March. Either way, e-mail ryan@westcoastersd.com with your ideas.

Continuing with our five-question interview web series that features a local craft beer industry member each week, “The Friday Five” is open for your content ideas. Are you, or is someone you know, a local craft beer industry member? E-mail ryan@westcoastersd.com for consideration. This series of posts is a favorite of ours; we get to share the lesser known facets of the industry and provide website content you won’t find anywhere else. While you’re on the site, also make sure to check out our event calendar. Submissions are free and we’re constantly updating it with the best, thanks to you.

As we close out yet another year in beer, it’s time to set some New Year’s resolutions. Not surprisingly, mine are mostly beer-related; I resolve to be a better reporter, to learn from my mistakes (contrary to what I’d have you believe in last month’s “SD Beer History” article, Karl Strauss began in ‘89, not in my year of birth two years prior), and to increase my knowledge of everything related to the production, distribution and sale of craft beer. What do you resolve? If I could make a humble suggestion, it’d be to attend more beer education events. Beer is good, yes, but it’s better when you know *why*.

Salud,



Beer & Cured Meats w/ Dr. Bill @ Bottlecraft during SDBW was a great educational event. Taking time to learn more about beer will greatly serve you in the new year. Photo: Brittany Everett

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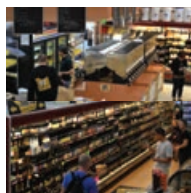
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Out of the Way, But Worth the Drive

By Tom Basinski

Depending on where you're driving from, The Brew House at Eastlake in the South Bay can seem like a road trip. But once you're settled in with a sampler of their hand-crafted beers before you, whatever the distance traveled, it's worth it.

Before The Brew House owners Doug Chase and Jim Shirey opened in late 2007, they envisioned a restaurant with a menu that would appeal to sophisticated palates along with fare sure to please everyone right on down to burger and fry lovers. Their vision came true.

Both Chase and Shirey were homebrewers for 12 years and knew their beer was good enough to put on the market. What to do next? The Eastlake community in Chula Vista was one of the fastest growing in the county. Although the brewery-restaurant is in the Eastlake Design District, Shirey and Chase found an ideal space with ample parking — and an opportunity to get started.

There was much to do with the Chula Vista Planning Department to satisfy a multitude of zoning regulations. The planning rep asked Chase how he was going to be environmentally conscious. Pressed for an answer, Chase said that his beer would be in kegs and vats. He explained that tens of thousands of bottles would not be sent to landfills. Of the few bottled beers the brewery handles, those bottles are recycled appropriately.

Chase is the primary brewmaster with Shirey handling most of the administrative duties. In addition to his years as a homebrewer, Chase completed an intensive study of fermentation science at the University of California Davis to fine-tune his brewing skills. He succeeded.

The brewing begins at an off-site location in western Chula Vista and ends at The Brew House itself, with its gleaming stainless steel vats that produce about 1300 barrels each year. The Brew House's seven original beers reflect all things Chula Vista and San Diego. Read their descriptions below.

The "Liberty Lager" is Chase's version of a Czech-style summer seasonal with Pilsner and American pale malts. The "Bonita Blonde" refers to the idyllic area just north west of where the Brew House is located and is a lighter golden ale. Chase calls it an "American interpretation of a Kolsch-style beer." "America's Finest Amber" pays homage to San Diego's city slogan, and features crystal and carapils malts with challenger hops. San Diego Bay's landmark inspired the "Star of India IPA" which has a generous hop character. The "Rolling Hills Irish Red" refers to the Rolling Hills area of Eastlake where The Brew House is located. This style of ale was originally brewed by Irish monks. Another offering is the "Wolf Canyon Wheat" that acknowledges a small canyon in eastern Chula Vista. This beer's marked by its dry, crisp finish. Otay Lakes is the venue of the Olympic Training Center and a popular fishing site in eastern Chula Vista. "Otay Lakes Oatmeal Stout" provides an excellent choice that will please lovers of stouts and beers served on nitrogen.

Come check the place out — among the obvious (beer!), amenities include a heated outdoor patio, a mix of live music and DJs, and you can catch a Pay-Per-View event on multiple big-screen televisions without a cover charge.



Brew House at Eastlake (photo: Ryan Lamb)

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Homebrew Insight

How far can you push your yeast?

By Matt Steiger

Yeast is arguably the most important element of beer. Virtually any sugar is fermentable, and there are myriad bittering agents. But there is no substitute for the magical creature that turns sugar into alcohol.

It's no surprise then that yeast is so expensive. Hops and grain for a 5-gallon batch cost about \$30; and a packet of liquid yeast averages \$8. The real crime is you usually need more than one!

To beat the system, some homebrewers (including this one) have started yeast harvesting. Yeast can be washed after fermentation, or collected from the blow-off tube, and pitched into a new batch. But yeast that has been through a brew has aged a generation; with propagation comes the possibility of mutation. So the real question of washing isn't how, but if, and when. How many generations of yeast can you reuse? As homebrewers we ask, "What do the pros do?"

Ballast Point Lead Brewer James Murray relies on strict quality control. "We try to shoot for yeast that is a minimum of 90% viable and has a cell count close to 1 billion cells/ml. We can generally get close to 15 generations per strain of yeast." This method clearly works for BP, but doesn't offer much practical advice to the homebrewer.

Smaller operations like Hess Brewing rely on knowing the patterns and behavior of their yeast. CBO Mike Hess said, "I reuse until the fermentation characteristics start to deteriorate; a day longer to start or a few missed points of attenuation. Usually the biggest limit for me is storage time. More than 2 weeks and I start getting the shakes."

Hess does have advice for cheapskate homebrewers. "Don't use old yeast. If you're worried about your yeast, you should be. Buy a new vial or source a new, viable pitch." He even offers a solution himself. "If homebrewers want yeast, we're happy to share from the bottom of our cones. Just come on by with a clean, sanitized container on yeast dumping day; contact me directly for times."

Thanks, Mike Hess, I'll be sure to get down there before this story goes to print.



Yeast in various packages (photo: Matt Steiger)

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We lend out the Guest Tap column to local industry members who've got something to say. This go round co-founder and CEO of Tap Hunter Melani Gordon ponds ways San Diego Beer Week can improve and grow. Gordon is also a member of the Week's planning committee, meaning the suggestions and ideas you send to her via melani@taphunter.com will not fall on deaf ears.

GUEST TAP

San Diego Beer Week Loses its Training Wheels

By Melani Gordon

Now that we're back to our regularly scheduled programming post San Diego Beer Week, we've had some time to reflect on how the city of San Diego and other local organizations can become more involved. Next year SD Beer Week will enter its fourth year, and the training wheels have officially fallen off. But how do we grow from here? We try to learn from others — of course.

Thinking back to Denver Beer Fest (their name for Beer Week), which is intentionally scheduled around the Great American Beer Festival, we saw a similarity to the annual San Diego Brewers Guild Festival coinciding with San Diego Beer Week. However we saw one glaring difference, Denver Beer Week and GABF are heavily supported by the Denver Visitors Bureau. During our 2011 GABF visit we witnessed first hand how their tightly ran ship attracted multinational media that showed off what Denver is all about: supporting their craft beer scene whether it be large or small, old or new.



Attendees flee the Denver Convention Center after a session of the 2011 GAB concludes (Photo: Ryan Lamb)

As part of our exploration we followed up with Deborah Park, Associate Director of Communications at VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau. She commented on why Denver Beer Fest is purposefully scheduled around GABF, "VISIT DENVER loves to have the opportunity to showcase Denver and Colorado brewers/breweries while there are beer enthusiasts from around the world in town," she says. "It's also a great way to get the community involved in the festivities, outside of the convention center since tickets are becoming harder to get for GABF."

On the organized media bus tours VISIT DENVER organizes she said, "We like to give a taste of the newest beer/brewery operations in town. We like to make sure the media gets to see some stops that they may not have seen in previous years."

San Diego Beer Week may never grow to have the tourism pull that GABF boasts (or could it?), but we can draw from a lot of what Denver is executing. With the visitors bureau playing a very active role in hosting media Denver generally comes off shining brightly. What San Diego organizations should be taking a bigger role in promoting OUR city as a beer destination?

"We're getting successful enough that we need to start OVER planning," said Colby Chandler, Ballast Point Brewing Company Specialty Brewer and lead planner of the SD Guild Fest the first 6 years at the World Beat Center. "Let's help the brewers start planning earlier...and share the stats that others are having in terms of increased revenue during this time." We're looking forward to hearing more from breweries and bars on how Beer Week was successful for them.

Another touch that made a visitor's trip to Denver great was the bike sharing program, which runs about eight months out of the year. There are more than 500 shiny red bikes and 50 stations set up around the downtown and surrounding areas. Very smart. The bikes were perfect for quick trips between

the convention center and the other hotspots like Falling Rock.

We know one local media publisher had a fantastic time cruising around the city on his rental one day. These bikes are just another added touch we could see complementing the San Diego craft beer scene. What visitor wouldn't love to grab a bike downtown and head up to North Park



Beer drinkers wait in line to enter GABF 2011 (Photo: Ryan Lamb)

to cruise 30th Street? Denver's bike program is run by an outside corporation not affiliated with the visitors bureau, you can find more information here: <http://denver.bicycle.com/>

Hey, we're just here to make suggestions and hopefully this piece gets into the hands of local associations and corporations alike. The San Diego Craft Brewing industry is here to stay and we hope 2012 plays a larger role in driving tourism and supporting these small businesses throughout the county.

Full disclosure, we are members of the SDBW planning committee. Our inboxes are open for suggestions and improvements.

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By WC Staff

Two Times the Beer



Homebrew supplies / Bottleshop

Best Damn Beer Shop / Best Damn Home Brew Shop, Downtown

Walk into family-owned Super Jr. Market right off Broadway and on your left you'll find San Diego's newest and only downtown homebrew supply shop, built from the ground up by owners Sid, Omar with the help of staffer Damien. Continue straight ahead instead and you'll start feeling the brisk air of a forty-foot cooler housing the majority of the shop's 1000+ brews, including a huge variety of specialties and one-offs. A discount applies if you mix and match your own six pack, so you're encouraged to try new flavors. Warning: it may take a minute to adjust to that kid-in-a-double-candy-store feeling. And if you want to stay in the loop, Sid does a fantastic job of keeping his customers updated on new brews, special tasting events and shop deals through his website's e-mail blast; for more up-to-the-minute info, you can find them on Facebook too.

Beer-heavy restaurant / Bottleshop

KnB Wine Cellars, Del Cerro

With 32 formidable taps, a popular happy hour with excellent tacos, and an outdoor patio, KnB corners the Del Cerro market. Stop in for an intimate pairing dinner, grab some bottles to drink on-site or at home, or simply wander through the shrine to alcohol that is KnB. You may even find an employee using a library-like ladder to procure bottles stacked right up to the building's high ceilings.

Iconic brewpub / Bottleshop

Pizza Port Carlsbad, Carlsbad

After sweeping the awards ceremony at GABF, a visit to Pizza Port Carlsbad is never a bad idea for the discerning beer drinker. Added bonus? Right next door you'll find a bottle shop overflowing with 600+ selections. If you want the best of both worlds, eat one of their renowned pizzas, wash it down with some draught beer, and then take some bottled local-rarities home with you.

Brewery tasting bar / Homebrew supplies

Home Brew Mart, Linda Vista

Many of San Diego's top brewers have either worked at Home Brew Mart, or learned to brew from its expert staff that's coming up on its 20 year anniversary in 2012. Ballast Point Brewing Company started producing beer in the space behind the retail store in 1996, and now visitors can enjoy tasters, including rarities from Specialty Brewer Colby Chandler, directly from the built-in bar. All this, while shopping for supplies and taking notes from the greats.

Upscale market / Tasting room

Olive Tree Marketplace, Ocean Beach

In the market, whole chickens playfully named "bachelor birds" are ready to take to-go — a hit with locals. But it's the great beer selection that keeps us coming back. On the southern side of the space, massive wooden doors separate grocery shoppers from the date-worthy tasting room that fills up quickly on weekend evenings. Constantly-changing flights are carefully geared toward every level of beer drinker.

Brewery tasting bar / Homebrew supplies

Mother Earth Brew Co., Vista

If you want to try some beer while doing a bit of shopping under one roof, you may have to hurry. Mother Earth will soon be moving their supplies a few suites down in order to make space for a new merchandise room and some massive pews from a Jewish synagogue for tasting room seating, procured by brewery consultant, Lee Chase of Blind Lady. Don't fret, homebrewers — they're working on a license to serve beer at the new supply shop, too.

Bottleshop / Tasting room

Bottlecraft, Little Italy

Bottlecraft is a unique venue to purchase rare bottles and then imbibe on-site, and their great selection and new arrivals are constantly updated on Facebook. The tasting room, complete with beer hall-style tables and window seating, specializes in flights that change themes daily; for example, Tuesday night is Mystery Flight Night, with the display bottles in brown bags so the goods stay secret before hitting your taste buds.

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West Coaster

Two Times the Novelty



Arcade games / Pizza parlor

La Bella Cafe & Games, Chula Vista

The sprawling facility housing La Bella Pizza Garden and the attached Cafe & Games section will make you feel at home no matter where you're from. Wander through dozens of arcade games so advanced you'll wish more of them were around when you were a kid; you can also rent an XBOX 360 game for \$7 an hour, or half that for half the time. La Bella's also got good prices on pitchers, especially on select weekdays, and owner Tony Raso is currently experimenting with pizza dough that incorporates local beer. This spot is great for families and beer drinkers looking for an escape from the norm.

Rock music / Board games

Bar Eleven, Normal Heights

Bar Eleven holds a special place in *West Coaster's* heart; it's where we used to fish for insider-info from former SDBG Presi-

dent Adam Carbonell every Sunday night, in between awesomely-loud songs on the jukebox. Live music is on tap several nights a week, and there's nothing like a good dose of rock-and-roll blaring as the soundtrack for conquering your buddies in Battleship. Victory tastes sweeter washed down with beer, and here's the only place you'll find Eleven Lager brewed by San Diego's Gordon Biersch.

Apple pies / Wood-smoked BBQ

The Bailey BBQ, Julian

Apparently you've got to head east to feel like you're back in the Wild West. Brought to you by Vince Marsaglia of Pizza Port and Tom Nickel of O'Brien's, the duo's new spot showcasing their collective grub and grog know-how. Saddle-up to a beer hall-style table and munch on tasty wood-smoked BBQ that complements a great selection of local beer. Live music is plentiful, and keeping with Julian's tradition, apple pies-to-go are a must.

Ale House / Speakeasy

Neighborhood / Noble Experiment, Downtown

Neighborhood is one of those bars that belongs on every beer-loving San Diegan's map. From the floor-to-ceiling mosaic of our skyline taking up one of the pub's walls to its great tap and bottle selection, it's a truly unique spot hugging the corner of G and 8th downtown — plus, it's East Village's first craft beer establishment. Thirsty for craft cocktails? Besides the selections available at Neighborhood's bar, if you've figured out how to book a reservation at the adjoining speakeasy Noble Experiment, push through the secret-passageway wall of kegs into the opulent space that seats around 20. Led by Anthony Schmidt

— San Diego's reigning mixologist-competition champ for 2 straight years — this place, like its sister ale house, is no joke.

Local vibe / Local beer

SD TapRoom, Pacific Beach

With everything from Chargers and Padres-themed merchandise to local cask nights on Wednesdays and events with local artists, the TapRoom is definitely not Raiders Nation-friendly. It's no surprise then that the big tap list favors hometown breweries, and on the website you can view the percentage of your favorite keg as it dwindles, inspiring you to get there fast.

Three levels / Drink Exchange

The Tippy Crow, Downtown

Whether you want to catch a comedy show or hit the dance floor in "The Underground"; play a game of Connect Four with canned craft beers in "The Main"; or lounge with a game of pool in "The Nest" upstairs, The Tippy Crow's ready to get you, well, tipsy from drink and fun. The "drink exchange," which shows beverages prices that fluctuate based on the night's crowd, will inspire you to try beers you that might not typically turn to.

Tap dancing classes / Movie nights

98 Bottles, Little Italy

An eclectic, ever-evolving event space based on booze is just what Little Italy needed. On Tuesdays bring your hard-soled shoes for a beginning tap dancing class, complete with a glass of beer to settle the nerves. Wednesday nights are movie nights; to check the schedule, visit their website.

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WINTER SAVINGS & GIFT GUIDE 2011



All About Brewing

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On the home brew equipment side, we have a great selection of brew pots, wort chillers, fermenting equipment and sanitizing supplies. We also offer three different complete beer systems for kegging, and a full selection of related hardware to complete any beer dispensing system.

The All About Brewing holiday special for December only includes 10% off regularly priced malt extract kits with this ad.

All About Brewing is located just off Interstate 8 in El Cajon, at 700 North Johnson Avenue, Suite G. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from noon to 6pm, and Saturdays from 11am-3pm.

www.allaboutbrewing.com | (619) 447-BREW (2739)
e-mail: jimallaboutbrewing@att.net

Brew Hop Beer Tours

Treat yourself to the ultimate brewery tour offered in San Diego. With a fleet of luxury vehicles that includes SUVs, stretch limousines and party buses, the size of your group determines the size of your ride. Best of all, every Brew Hop vehicle is permitted so that you can enjoy adult beverages on the road from one brewery to the next. Brew Hop is ready to deliver you and your friends to the world's best breweries in style.

Much more than a pretty face, Brew Hop offers two tour packages: The Beer Connoisseur tour is a 5-hour party experience that visits 3-4 breweries with tasters at each. The Beer Tasters tour is a 2.5 hour visit to 1-2 breweries, including tasters. Each tour group is led by a VIP tour host, and at each brewery there's a private tour of the facility, a chance to meet the brewery staff to ask questions about your favorite brews, and, of course, taster flights of beer. New in 2012, Brew Hop will be adding 10 new-to-San Diego breweries to their already killer tour-lineup.

Brew Hop was founded in San Diego and also operates in Seattle, with future sights set on Portland, Oregon. If you're looking for the best, look no further; as of November 2011, they maintain a 5 star average on Yelp.com and TripAdvisor.com.

Mention *West Coaster* and receive 10% off your next booking (tour must be booked by 12/31/11, some restrictions apply). Contact Summer for a customized party proposal and visit BrewHop.com for more information.



Home Brew Mart

Home Brew Mart has been serving brewers world-wide for 19 years now. From simple starter kits, to advanced all-grain brewing systems, the Linda Vista based shop has everything you need to brew beer. Their extensive inventory includes a wide variety of ingredients, plus equipment and kegging supplies. Friendly and knowledgeable staff back up their products and are there to help you make great beer-- Home Brew Mart's number one goal. Stop in for a visit and while you're there, try out a taster or two of Ballast Point beer at the tasting room bar. Bottles, growlers and kegs are available to-go, perfect for holiday parties. For a special deal, mention *West Coaster* and get 10% off regularly priced starter kits. Some restrictions apply: this coupon can't be combined with any other offer and expires December 25th.

regularly priced starter kits. Some restrictions apply: this coupon can't be combined with any other offer and expires December 25th.

Chefs Press San Diego's Top Brewers

"Top Brewers is the most comprehensive look at the county's craft beer scene ever published." — Peter Rowe, San Diego Union-Tribune

San Diego's Top Brewers takes readers on a personal tour of America's Craft Beer Capital. Inside you'll find behind-the-scenes profiles of 18 award-winning breweries, some of San Diego's hottest craft beer bars, and more than two dozen beer-inspired recipes that highlight great brews.

Breweries featured: AleSmith Brewing Company, Ballast Point Brewing Company, Breakwater Brewing Co., Coronado Brewing Company, Green Flash Brewing Co., Hess Brewing, Iron Fist Brewing Co., Karl Strauss Brewing Company, Lightning Brewery, Manzanita Brewing Co., Mission Brewery, Mother Earth Brew Co., New English Brewing Co., Pizza Port Brewing Company, Port Brewing Company/The Lost Abbey, Rock Bottom Gaslamp, Rock Bottom La Jolla, Stone Brewing Co.

Bars, taverns, & brewpubs featured: Blind Lady Ale House, Downtown Johnny Brown's, Hamilton's Tavern, Live Wire, O'Brien's Pub.

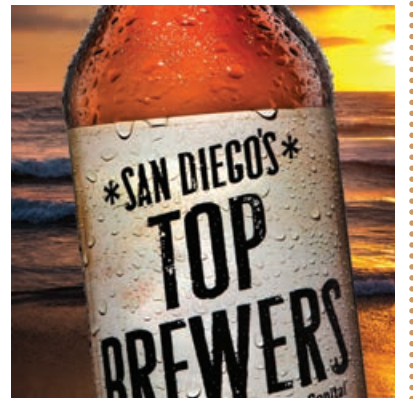
Other members of the San Diego beer community featured: Chicks for Beer @ The High Dive, Doggie Beer Bones, Home Brew Mart, PubCakes, QUAFF Homebrewers Association, TapHunter.com, *West Coaster*, White Labs.

Here's a taste of some of the recipes beer foodies will love: Black Garlic Fondue (Gunther Emathingier/Karl Strauss Brewing Company), Herb-and-Hops-Crusted Ahi (Grant Tondro/Urge Gastropub), Stone's BBQ Duck Tacos (Alex Carballo/Stone World Bistro & Gardens), Thunderweizen Steamed Mussels (Kyle Bergman/The Grill at The Lodge at Torrey Pines), Cup O'Hefen Cupcakes (Misty Birchall/PubCakes), and Rustic Horizon Beer Float (Ron Oliver/The Marine Room).

San Diego's Top Brewers also includes:

- Tasting notes from all the brewers
- Links to video tastings with all the brewers
- Beer pairings with each recipe
- Pages of essential resources for any craft beer fan or homebrewer

Published by Chefs Press, Inc., full color, 208 pages, \$24.95; www.sdtop-brewers.com; www.chefspress.com



King of Happy Hour's New Year's Hop Fest

Need a gift for someone who loves craft brew? Well now you can stop looking, because San Diego's first New Year's event for beer lovers, the Hop Fest, is on sale. Hosted under the sun and stars in the beautiful Terrace Garden at the recently renovated Handlery Hotel & Resort in Mission Valley, there's day and evening sessions on Saturday, December 31st, and a beer brunch to celebrate New Year's Day.

The Hop Fest is the anti-New Year's Eve event. No DJs, no long lines for beer or the bathroom; no expensive hotel rooms, and most importantly, no crappy beer. Sound good? It gets better. Tickets are only \$50 for either session, and brunch the following day is \$40. If you don't want to wait for a cab to show up on the busiest night of the year, no problem- rooms are available for guests at the exclusive rate of \$89.

Want to celebrate the entire weekend? The all-inclusive Hoppy Package is available for less than \$300 and includes:

- 2 Tickets to the New Year's Hop Fest with unlimited



beer tasters (day session 3pm-6pm or evening 9pm-1am) plus live entertainment. The Adam Lasher Band will perform during the evening session. (Day session entertainment TBA.) • 2 Tickets to the New Year's Day Beer Brunch (10am-1pm, tax & gratuity included) • 1 Standard Room on New Year's Eve (taxes included) • 1 Overnight Parking Voucher

Prices go up after Christmas, so get your tickets now. www.NewYearsHopFest.com

Local Habit

With a chef uprooted from Louisiana, it's no surprise that Local Habit's cuisine is a tad more flavorful than other organically-themed restaurants. Traditional California dishes are improved upon with additions pulled from the famously flavorful cooking of the South, and the result is what Local Habit likes to call "Cali-Creole" cuisine.

Executive Chef Nick Brune was raised among the spicy culture of Baton Rouge. His first experiences with food involved fishing and hunting for evening meals of fried whole bream, speckled trout, and duck and turnip gumbo, all prepared by his self-taught, Southern family. Brune is constantly whipping up an array of whatever is currently in season and available locally. He continues to develop his Cali-Creole cuisine and makes this zesty style the basis of the restaurant's fare.

Once you have your first taste of Local Habit, you



will realize that it's much more than your ordinary organic and sustainable eatery. From the strictest of vegans to comfort food lovers alike, Local Habit stands out as a dining option that serves all tastes and preferences. Everyone will appreciate Local Habit's efforts to prepare and present home-made and local offerings, from root beer to creative dishes such as House Smoked Pork Loin & Piperade pizza or Roasted Garlic and Tahini Chicken Sausage with Smoked Paprika Oil.

Beer enthusiasts will delight in Local Habit's rotating selection of California craft beers. Each tap

pours forth a fine craft beer, and as the well runs dry, Local Habit quickly gets to work replacing it with a new variety to entice an entirely new range of tastebuds. Thursday evenings turn the dial up a notch further with Local Habit's Cask Nights, offering special brews that invite you to bring in a few close friends and linger awhile longer.

Scavenger Beer Tours

Looking to try a different kind of brewery tour? Scavengers offers unique tours starting at \$89 per person. Ideal for groups of 2-18 people, Scavengers provides guided tours to world class breweries in San Diego by way of the Pinzgauer (pronounced pinz-gow-er). A Swiss Military 6x6 safari vehicle with seating for 12 and an open-air design, this 6 wheel drive BEAST is the perfect mode of transportation when you're on the road to drink great beer from the source.

A company comprised of avid homebrewers, Scavengers has developed a passion for hand-crafted beer. This passion has inspired the creation of a quality brewery tour service that highlights San Diego's scenic beauty, awesome food, and most of all - radical micro-breweries. With free pickup in North County, the tour heads off to three breweries and includes a meal. Tours can be public or private, great for meeting like-minded folks or focusing entirely on your private party. Breweries on the tour map include Stone Brewing Company, Iron Fist Brewing Company, The Lost Abbey, Port Brewing, Ballast Point Brewing



Company, and Green Flash Brewing Company, among others. Scavengers also offers mixed beer and wine tours - great for couples split on what beverage reigns supreme.

Exclusively for *West Coaster* readers, mention you heard about Scavengers in this issue and get 10% off your next tour. Some restrictions apply; valid until 12/31/11, limit one per customer. To book your tour, please call (760) 717-2551 or visit <http://brewery-toursandiego.com>

PubCakes

San Diego native Misty Birchall started PubCakes with the dream of combining her passion for baking and love of craft beer. Originally, PubCakes could only be found at local craft beer bars such as Toronado, but, as of February 2010, it set up shop on El Cajon Blvd and now these tasty treats are baked up fresh every day. With the addition of the storefront comes more unique flavors, including monthly specials.

Enter this year's holiday PubCake (pictured): AleSmith YuleSmith gingerbread cake with honey milk frosting. Available for the month of December only, be sure to get your mitts on this one quick. Also: each Saturday a special PubCake will be made



with a different winter seasonal - only during the month of December!

Simply put, if you're hunting for gifts for the craft beer drinker with a sweet tooth - there's nothing better. Purchase PubCakes with their corresponding beers and you have yourself a decadent pairing for the holidays. In addition to the previously mentioned Winter Seasonal PubCakes, don't forget the year-round Cakes such as the Irish Carbomb, Stoned Portzilla, Beer Breakfast, and Punkin' Vegan. If you mention *West Coaster*, get 10% off your next PubCake purchase! Check out <http://pubcakes.com> or visit the PubCakes storefront at 7229 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, 92115. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 10am-7pm and on Sunday from 10am-5pm.

Bottlecraft

The first of its kind in San Diego, Bottlecraft is a retail shop, tasting room, pop-up art gallery, and event space located in Little Italy. A formidable bottle shop with great prices, their selection is eclectic and constantly evolving with a good mix of local favorites and picks from around the world. Aside from beer, the shop has a great selection of t-shirts, glassware, books, and more.

What makes Bottlecraft unique is the ability to drink the beer you just purchased in its spacious tasting room. This makes for a great location to bring groups; spontaneous bottleshares happen frequently amongst friends and strangers alike. Daily flights are also available and often follow a theme. Some of those have included NorCal vs.

SoCal, summer seasonals, and even a blind tasting/mystery flight themes.

Bottlecraft also holds a variety of beer-education events, like Beer and Cured Meats hosted by Bill Sysak of Stone Brewing Co. during SDBW 2011. Along with events, the walls of the shop have evolved into a curated art gallery, showcasing local artists and culture. Look out for more original events and art coming in 2012.

For *West Coaster* readers only, Bottlecraft is offering 25% on all t-shirts, books, posters, glassware, bottle openers, and any non-beer merchandise through 12/31/11. To redeem, mention the code word "Hoppy Holidays" at the register when making your purchase.



BeerNerdz Tasting Challenges

A fun way to get involved in San Diego's craft beer scene is to participate in a BeerNerdz tasting challenge. Equipped with a scorecard that includes tasting notes, alcohol percentage, brewery, and beer names, the goal is to match each beer taster with its description. San Diego breweries will always be showcased, and guests are invited to compete against one another in a friendly atmosphere to see who can name the most correctly.

The blind tasting allows the beer novice to taste and experiment with a variety of styles San Diego breweries are producing. Exposure to multiple breweries and styles is a great way to experience first hand why San Diego is a leader on the craft beer front. It's also a fun way to discover a favorite among varieties of beers, all in a non-intimidating, social setting.

The seasoned beer connoisseur can test his or her skills in the blind tasting format, too, which helps develop a deeper appreciation for the intricacies found in certain styles. Experience the subtle flavors, nuances and characteristics each style and brewery has to offer among other beer enthusiasts that share your passion.

Participation in events includes a scorecard, souvenir tasting glass, ample appetizers, bottled water, crackers to help cleanse the palate, and of course, a sampling of San Diego beer.

BeerNerdz themed blind tasting was created by native San Diegan Eric Barajas to promote San Diego's incredible craft beer scene. The blind tastings are designed to appeal to the beer novice in a non-intimidating, social environment as well as challenge the beer connoisseur.

If you'd like more information on the next San Diego themed tasting please visit www.BeerNerdz.com. For private or corporate event bookings, e-mail Eric@beernerdz.com.



Best Damn Home Brew Shop



Be sure to check out downtown's only home brew supplier, located just steps within the Best Damn Beer Shop at Super Jr. Market. With everything you need to make beer in stock at this latest addition to the Best Damn family, shop a variety of specialty grains, hops, brewing books and more. Between the adjoining bottle shop and brew supplies, this is the Best Damn one-stop beer shop in downtown, San Diego. Mention *West Coaster* and receive 5% off all starter kits for the month of December (expires 12/31/11).

Barons Market

You've found home. When you walk into a Barons Market and anxiously ask if they've got Port Brewing's Santa's Little Helper and AleSmith's YuleSmith in, you won't be met with a quizzical look. Okay, maybe from the cashier - but they'll surely smile as they direct you to a resident beer whiz.

Barons Market specializes in seasonal, hard-to-find and allocated bottles of beer (some so rare that we can't even mention them here) from craft breweries near and far. Expect to find everything that Stone Brewing Company bottles, as well as a giant selection of beers from AleSmith, The Lost Abbey, Port Brewing, Russian River Brewing Co. and more. With a knowledgeable staff and competitive pricing, Barons Market is the go-to place for that bubbly nectar of the gods.

But wait. Do you need peanuts with that? Of course you do. Barons Market isn't a liquor store, it's a neighborhood natural and specialty food market passionate about all things local. Whether it's craft beer, locally



grown produce, grocery, deli and frozen foods from local companies, and a giant bulk section, Barons Market prides itself on carrying the best food at the best prices in town. They even have a pretty great wine selection, too (if you're into that stuff), with over 100 bottles available for under \$5.

Barons Market has four store locations in the San Diego area including Point Loma, Rancho Bernardo, Temecula and Wildomar/Murrietta. For more information, please visit: www.baronsmarket.com.

Manzanita Brewing Company

Ready to pull the trigger and go pro? There's a turnkey brewery for sale in the craft beer capital of the US - San Diego county. Located on Prospect Avenue in Santee, the property includes a 4000 sq. ft. production facility along with a 600 sq. ft. tasting room. This is currently the site of Manzanita Brewing Company, who's moving down the street to a bigger location suited for the growing demand of their beers. Everything from clamps to the forklift is yours, making this a hard-to-come-by opportunity. See below for more details:

Brewhouse includes: Custom-built 3 barrel direct-fire brewhouse controlled by Brewtroller

electronics. Mash Tun can handle 300 pounds of grain.

Cellar includes: Ten 5-barrel conical fermenting tanks, three 5-barrel secondary tanks, and one 7-barrel Bright tank. All tanks are temperature controlled using the Brewtroller hardware with Fermtroller firmware with 5 ton glycol chiller. Also included is a walk in cooler for storage and office space. Originally two separate industrial suites that were combined, everything is easily accessible via the loading dock and garage doors behind the industrial suite.

This brewery saw nearly 1100 barrels in 2011,

and estimated maximum capacity is 1200 barrels per year. It can be kept as a nano-brewery or go into full production with distribution, and former occupants Manzanita will assist in training and any questions. Note: the Manzanita name, recipes, or client list are not for sale.

Call or visit Manzanita for more details. The tentative move in date is 1/31/2012. If you buy the property, mention you saw it in *West Coaster* and receive three months of free advertising (1/6 page size). Start brewing professionally in 2012!

9962 Prospect Avenue Suite E Santee, CA 92107 • (619) 334-1757





Photo: Kayla Coleman

Sam Tierney began his love affair with great beer while studying and traveling abroad in Europe during his junior year at UC Santa Barbara. He began homebrewing shortly after, and has since won multiple awards. Sam is a graduate of the Siebel Institute, a professional brewing school in Chicago, and he is now a brewer at Firestone Walker in Paso Robles, California.

'Tis the Season

Winter beer choices to make you feel all warm inside

By Sam Tierney

The countries where beer originates get pretty cold and dark this time of year, and strong, flavorful beers can be the perfect way to increase holiday cheer. Many people think of spiced beers when this time of year rolls around, and Fritz Maytag of Anchor Brewing is a main player to thank for reviving the tradition in the US. Many other styles of hearty ales and lagers are brewed for the season, too; here's a few that are either West Coast classics, or anticipated newcomers.

This fall marks the 23rd annual release of Alaskan Smoked Porter, which has been brewed with alderwood-smoked malt from the same smokehouse since its debut in 1988. It's the single most awarded beer in the 30 year history of the Great American Beer Festival with 20 medals to date. This is the smoked porter that all others are compared to, and packs a serious smoky punch. Fans of smoked salmon will find the alderwood flavor familiar, making the two pair quite well together. Alaskan Smoked Porter is also a great accompaniment to hearty winter stews and roasted root vegetables. This is a rich, intense beer for those who aren't afraid of smoke's intensity. If you love smoked food of any kind, or other smoked beers but have yet to try this one — get on it!

Winter solstice also brings the return of the longest running American seasonal: Christmas Ale from Anchor Brewing. Brewed since 1975, it's changed recipes over the years, but is consistently brewed as a dark, spiced ale. The exact blend of spices remains a secret and changes from year to year, but considering Christmas flavors, it's easy to put two and two together. The beer isn't a heavy one, but it's packed full of flavor that makes me think of baking Christmas cookies with my mom as a kid. One fun fact about this one is that Anchor's Liberty Ale stood in as the Christmas Ale recipe before the spiced recipe became the norm. I like to grab at least one 1.5L magnum bottle to share at family gatherings, because after all — who doesn't love a giant bottle of beer?

Winter means not only two perennial favorites from Sierra Nevada, but two new releases as well. The final beer of the brewery's Ovila series collaboration with the Abbey of New Clairvaux, Ovila Quad, is out now. Sierra Nevada has proven again that they can brew anything. A huge, dark abbey ale brimming with dried fruit, chocolate, burnt sugar and gentle spices, this is another great sipper to



Anchor Brewing's Christmas Ale is only available until mid-January

have with, or as, a dessert. A little young now, and showing its 10% plus alcohol content, you might want to pick up a couple bottles to lay down until next winter and see how the flavors develop. In January a brand new seasonal rye IPA called Ruthless Rye will replace Glissade, a golden bock; I'm a little sad to see Glissade go, but I do love a good rye IPA. We'll also see the return of Bigfoot barley wine, a truly sustaining beer for the colder months, while Celebration Ale, a benchmark in the American IPA style for years, is already on shelves. San Diegans are quite familiar with IPAs that equal or even surpass this classic, but I don't think this will ever lose its place in experienced enthusiasts' fridges. IPA might seem like an odd style to brew as a holiday seasonal, but Sierra Nevada exclusively uses whole-cone hops, which are at their peak freshness just after the harvest, concluding in the fall. The brewery calls

Celebration a "fresh hop" ale because it uses hops from the new harvest, but don't confuse that with "wet hop," which is beer brewed with hops within hours of the harvest, before they are dried.

In San Diego, one of my favorite imperial stouts just hit the shelves: Santa's Little Helper from Port Brewing, an ale that might have the greatest label ever to grace a Christmas beer. I want to hang out in whatever bar that has an elf pouring Santa and Rudolf pints of this deliciously hoppy stout, brimming with dark chocolate covered fruit and a silky smooth finish. Another local brew is the rich and hoppy AleSmith Winter Yulesmith-- a hugely malty imperial red ale that serves as a darker foil to summer version of this beer. And don't forget to try out the second addition to the "Twelve Days" series by Karl Strauss, Two Tortugas Belgian Quad.

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Every Friday we ask a local industry member five questions for your craft beer-insider enjoyment. It's called "The Friday Five." Check out our website to read more about the interesting people behind your favorite craft beers.

5Q with Ken Wright

An Interview with the Minister of Evangelism and Indoctrination at Stone Brewing Co.

By Nickie Peña

If you've ever been on a tour of Stone Brewing Company, attended a Beer-U class or listened to FM 94/9's Rock & Roll Happy Hour show, you're likely familiar with the engaging proclamations of Ken Wright, "Minister of Evangelism and Indoctrination" for the powerhouse brand. Always wondered what his title actually means? That, plus his craft beer "epiphany" and more in *West Coaster's* interview.

So, can you describe a little more what it means to be Minister of Evangelism and Indoctrination at Stone Brewing Co.?

It means, first and foremost, the sacred obligation of wearing a silly hat and mandating that I be addressed by subordinates as "Your Excellency." Also, in addition to coordinating the brewery's esteemed tour program and editing the employee newsletter, I have the pleasure of spreading the craft beer gospel to fans and soon-to-be fans alike. This includes emceeing at special craft beer events, such as the Beer U classes at Stone, media appearances, providing comic relief during FM 94/9's weekly Rock and Roll Happy Hour show, and occasionally filling in on brewery tours. That last task is still the part of the job I look forward to most. Nothing better than being able to talk to people about something you love. Well, I suppose drinking something you love comes close...

Can you recall your most memorable experience "indoctrinating" a guest at Stone Brewing Co. on San Diego craft beer?

There are a lot of memorable golden moments for sure, but I think that the biggest reward I've gotten is when I hear—second hand from friends and co-workers or directly—that someone either started working at Stone or began home brewing as a result of having taken one of my tours. That's pretty damn gratifying, and it still makes me misty eyed every time. No foolin'.

What is your "epiphany" craft beer? You know, like your first time...

That's an easy one. I never really enjoyed beer all that much initially—it was just something you chugged down (usually cringing) as a means to an end. Then, when I transferred to UC Santa Cruz I soon discovered at a pizza joint just a few steps from my dorm, Anchor Steam Beer on draft. It was SO amazing! I'd no idea that beer could be so delicious and satisfy-



Photo: StudioSchulz.com

ing. To this day I still get a craving for Anchor—especially when paired with a slice or greasy garlic cheese bread. I will forever, along with beer geeks across the land, owe Fritz Maytag (the former owner, brewmaster and "resurrector" of Anchor) a profound debt of gratitude.

Every Friday listeners are able to tune into FM 94/9's Rock & Roll Happy Hour and hear you on the air on behalf of Stone Brewing Co. Can you please tell our readers a little about this segment, for those that have not yet tuned in?

If you like great, often quirky and unexpected, Rock and Roll that you'll never EVER hear anywhere else on the air while learning about fantastic craft beer, then this is a no brainer. If you can't listen live on Fridays, be sure to download it from the station's website, because it's both fun and informative—and not too serious or too silly. Each week either a local guest brewer or publican joins us in the studio with a sampling of beers in hand. We try them

and talk about them during the show (and you can drink along with us—if you're not listening on your car stereo) by visiting the website, as we post the featured beers in advance. It's really a perfect balance of beer talk and music.

What were your SDBW event highlights for this year?

Saturday's Guild Fest at Liberty Station definitely stands out. I got to perform onstage in a thrown together band with Brewmaster Mitch Steele and other friends from Stone, which was great. (At least WE thought we were great!) The rest of the day was then spent sampling great beer and food and hanging out with thousands of craft beer fans while talking to brewers and listening to some great live rock and roll. This year's Fest was sponsored by FM 94/9, and was also the station's anniversary party. Two great occasions coming together at a beautiful place on a beautiful day. What more could you ask for? Other highlights include the Rare Beer Breakfast at the Stone World Bistro & Gardens (breakfast stout AND a made-to-order truffle omelet...OMG. Chef Alex and Dr Bill know how to throw a party!) and, of course, all the beyond-one's wildest-dreams tap lineups around town.

Full disclose: In addition to interning for *West Coaster*, I also work for Stone Brewing Co.

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An Interview with SDBG Event Chair Neva Parker

Continued from Page 1

wrong from year to year? It's difficult. But like I said it's really important to take that feedback from people and that's why I always ask for it. I don't care if it's negative or positive, I want to know. I want to make it better. I want it to be something that everybody's happy with, not just because it's bringing in money, but also because it really celebrates the craft of brewing in San Diego.

Have you thought of changes for next year's Guild Fest?

Oh yea, I'm always thinking about changes, even while it's happening. I always take notes and hopefully we'll get a chance to sit down as a group and hash through it earlier on so that we can make some decisions. Also part of what I want to do too is look at different possible venues and new ways to model it after other events that happen around the country.

The Guild Fest got lucky this year by missing out on the rain. Is there potential for an indoor venue?

I like the outdoor because it's San Diego, but I know there's always going to be that risk for bad weather. I mean we're lucky because we live somewhere where it's usually pretty nice. But there's always going to be that chance so trying to build that into whatever we do is the smartest way to go about it. So, I'm not sure. I've talked to a few people about some different places that I think would be cool so we're going to look into those options and see how viable they are.

Thoughts for next year?

I don't know that's such a big question. I'm trying not to think about it right now. I just want to relax for awhile and not think about Beer Week!

You are gearing up for the Susan G. Komen 3-Day (Nov. 18-20). Did training affect your Beer Week participation?

I'd say it was the other way around -- Beer Week affected training for awhile! I definitely missed out on some training sessions, but it's Beer Week. What are you gonna do? It only comes around once a year.

So, successful Beer Week would you say?

I think so. It seems like it's getting successful. I think it's going to get to a point where it's difficult for us to manage as individuals and volunteers.

Are there plans for paid positions in the Guild?

We're talking about it, yes. There are going to be plans made, but we don't know exactly what that position would entail yet. It's going to be really important as we move ahead because it's difficult for volunteers to make the time because they all have their own jobs and busy lives, so if we really want Beer Week and the Brewers Guild to be successful we're going to have to have somebody who is dedicated to serving the Guild as an employee. I think everyone agrees it's necessary.



Neva Parker, right, with her daughter Ada at QUAFF's Big Brew Day 2011.

Do you know the number of people at the Beer Garden?

Yes, that event was sold out. I think we ended up selling a few extra tickets at the door, so it was just under 450 paid tickets.

How many paid tickets were there last year?

Last year we sold 334 tickets pre-sale and I believe it was limited to 400.

What other events during Beer Week did you really enjoy?

I actually went to a beer brunch at Terra Bistro on Saturday and it was amazing. The Flavor of Yeast event at Sea Rocket Bistro was really cool too. The setting was nice and we ended up filling up the space. I didn't know what to expect because I'd never done an event like that before. I tried speaking as much as I could about the yeast impact and the tastings. Hopefully people enjoyed it.

How do you juggle all your roles?

I'm insane, that's how. And I'm passionate about each and everyone of these things - the Brewers Guild, breast cancer awareness, my job, my family. It's not how I manage them all, but why I do. I also try to take the family out when it's Beer Week. I'll bring my daughter because she's used to being out at those places. The poor thing! We always say she's a little bar rat. We took her with us to the brunch at Terra Bistro because we live just a few blocks away, but she started getting really unruly so my husband took her and walked her home right in the middle of it! Thankfully we had someone staying at our house so he could drop her off and come back, but it was a mistake to bring her in the first place. That was the last Saturday and she'd been to every event with me over Beer Week, so you could tell she was done!

Local Beer & Food

Continued from Page 1



Nearly 3/4 of the formidable draft selection at Slaters 50/50

Sublime's menu is devoted to starters, salads, pizzas, macaroni and cheese, grilled cheese and burgers. Each section is comprised of extensive versions of each and even allows customers to craft their own creations. Mac 'n' cheese is available in ten — count 'em, ten — varieties ranging from "Serendipity" with roasted garlic and rosemary rotisserie chicken to "Infatuation" with wild mushrooms and truffle oil. While they're all remarkably different, bold flavors and an ideal consistency that's solid with just the right ooey-goey factor are present across the board.

The pizza is perhaps the most popular menu item, and for good reason. Before opening Sublime Ale House, Limjoco's time, energy and skills were devoted solely to Sublime Pizza in the North County inland community of 4S Ranch. A lover of all things yeasty, the restaurateur is also an accomplished bread maker. As such, the artisanal breads and pizza dough proofed, pounded and plated-up at Sublime are all house-made.



Cold box of Slaters 50/50

It's clear Limjoco and his staff know what they're doing on the pizza front. Sublime's crust has a great ratio of crispy-to-chew and flavor that goes well beyond the white bread blandness found at far too many parlors. Flavor combinations like the "Luau" with pulled pork, house-cured bacon, roasted pineapple and barbecue sauce, and "Mountain Summit" with wild mushrooms, artisanal sausage, caramelized onions and garlic schmear are solid. For those who prefer to choose their own toppings, there's a whopping 42 to select from, and the majority of which, like the aforementioned house-produced meats, are a cut above.

Oh yeah... and they have 48 taps dedicated to craft beer. Their opening draught line-up is quite impressive, featuring a number of harder-to-come-by offerings from locals and out-of-towners alike. There's a definite lean toward local brands, but styles from around the world are available and a still-developing, but plenty respectable bottle list helps to round things out.

A good amount of variety is also on tap at Slater's 50/50, where you might very

well think the numeric component of the eatery's name has to do with the massive number of handles located inside—100! While impressive and second only to downtown's Yard House in total taps, those fifties aren't part of a mathematical equation; they refer to the restaurant's signature burger, which includes a patty made from equal parts ground beef and ground bacon topped with avocado, pepper jack, chipotle mayo and a sunny-side-up egg.

Salivating? Owner Scott Slater is. An admitted bacon addict, he breaks (the bank) for swine, shelling out big money to purchase the highest quality bacon on the market. The thick-cut, smoked, cured staple finds its way into all sorts of dishes, from burgers to an outlandish fried chicken and pancake sandwich smothered in bacon gravy and anything you can dip into their house-made bacon ketchup. There's even a bacon brownie and a maple bacon milkshake.

An SDSU alum whose first foray into food was serving his 50/50 burgers as hangover-curing tailgate breakfast items, Slater has since established a number of successful food businesses. Slater's 50/50 is his latest and greatest. The eatery's flagship opened in Anaheim less than two years ago and has already spawned two spin-offs in Huntington Beach and San Diego. Ours has, by far, the most advanced tap system, which Slater devoted 25 percent of his entire opening budget to perfecting. And that's not all. 12 more taps, all of which are local, await you on the retractable, roof-equipped patio.

Slater says that coming into San Diego, he had to step it up on the beer front. The result is a plethora of beer options ranging from crafty one-offs and seasonals down to a small field of macros. Slater wants everyone to be able to get what they want and won't chastise patrons for ordering a Coors Light. He will, however, likely give such customers a taster of Victory Prima Pils to sway them to the craft way of drinking. Both Slater's 50/50 and Sublime Ale House should fit in just fine and bring their own charm and complex carbohydrates to America's Finest City.

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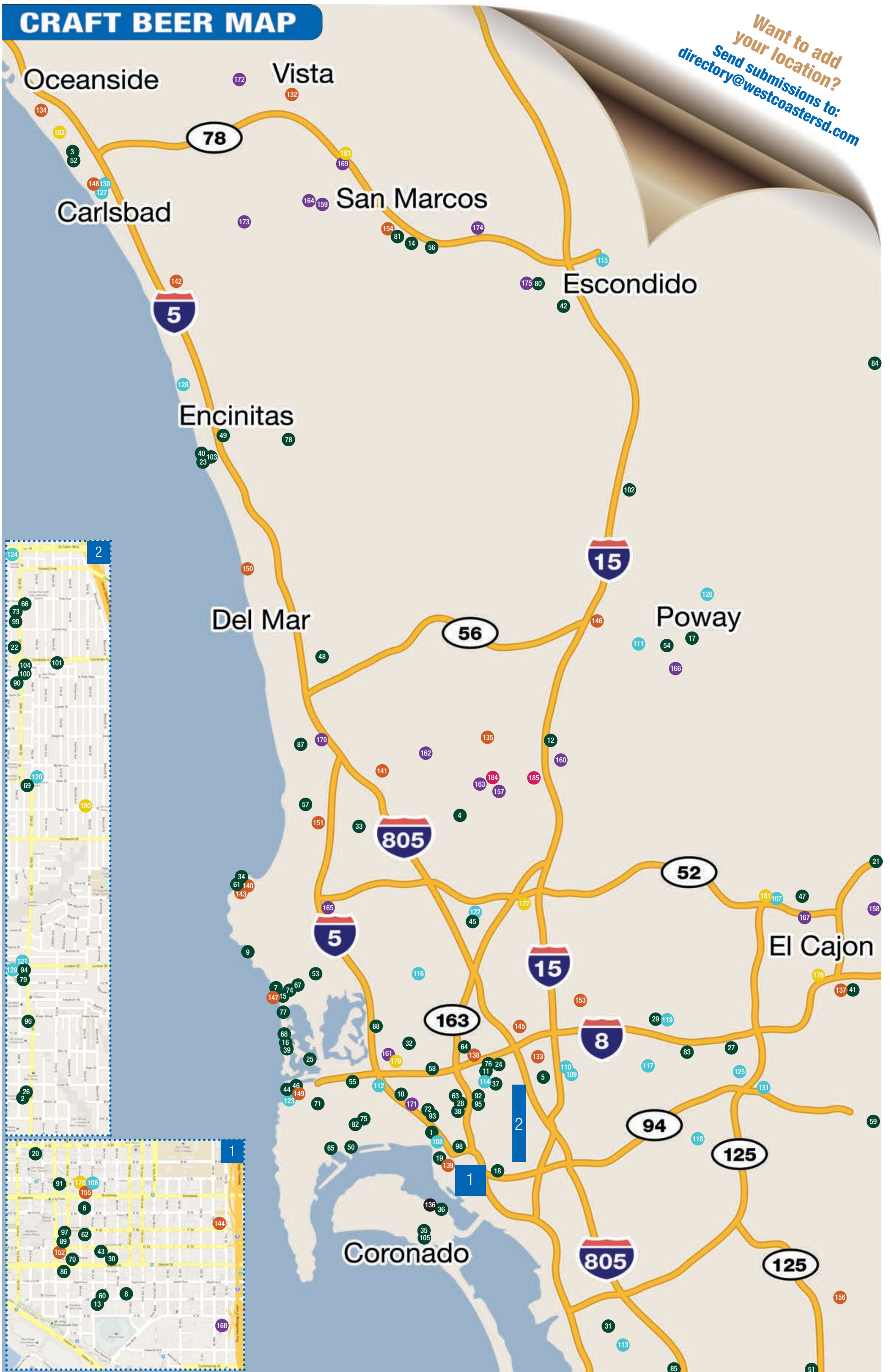
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