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Vol. 4 No. 3

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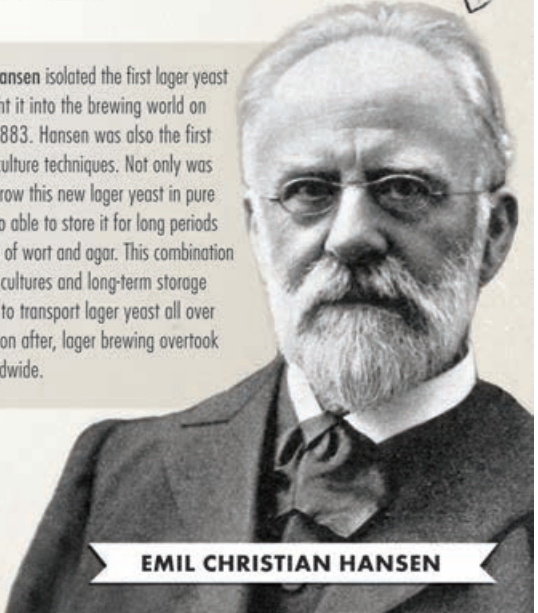
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Left: Nickel Beer Co. in Julian, CA

Below: Groundswell Brewing via Facebook



Dear Local Beer Drinker,

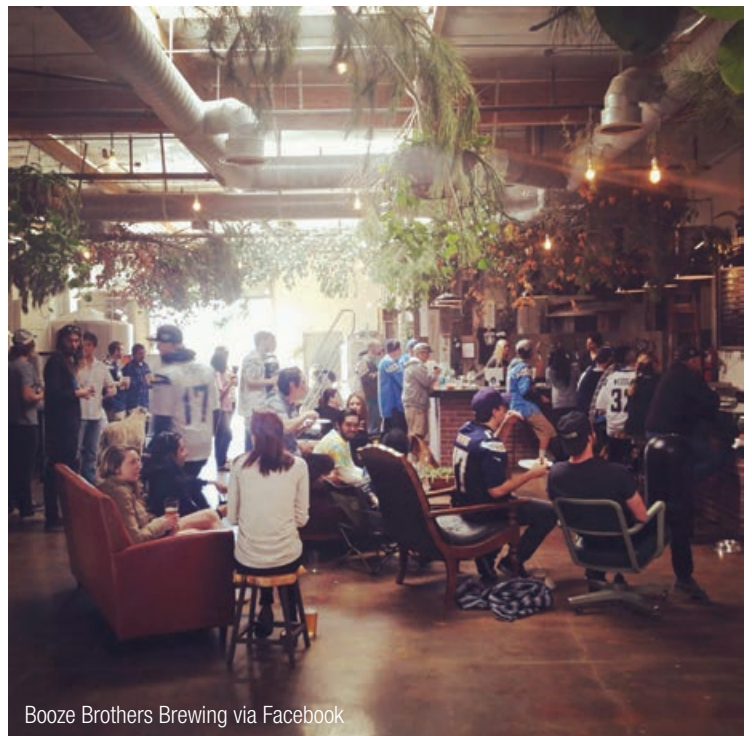
The Brewers Association (BA) announced mid-January that at the end of 2013, the number of U.S. breweries reached its highest level since the early 1870s.

The BA's staff economist, Bart Watson, wrote in a blog post that there are now 24 large breweries (annual production over 6 million barrels), 120 regional breweries (annual production between 15,000 and 6 million barrels), 1,202 brewpubs (restaurant-brewery that sells 25% or more of its beer on site), and 1,376 microbreweries (annual production less than 15,000 barrels), bringing the total to 2,722 brewing facilities.

Additionally, there were 1,744 breweries in planning at the end of December. Check out more stats from the BA on page 14, and keep supporting your local brewers!

Salud,

Ryan Lamb
Executive Editor
West Coaster



Booze Brothers Brewing via Facebook

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Letters may be edited for space. Anonymous letters are published at the discretion of the Editor.

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"No beer was wasted in the making of this publication."





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WRITERS



COLUMNIST INTO THE BREW

Sam Tierney is a graduate of the Siebel Institute and Doemens World Beer Academy brewing technology diploma program. He currently works as a brewer at Firestone Walker Brewing Company and has most recently passed the Certified Cicerone® exam. He geeks out on all things related to brewing, beer styles, and beer history.



COLUMNIST PLATES & PINTS

Brandon Hernández is a native San Diegan and the author of the *San Diego Beer News Complete Guide to San Diego Breweries* (available on Amazon.com). In addition to his on-staff work for *West Coaster*, he is responsible for communications for local craft beer producer Stone Brewing Company; an editor for Zagat; the San Diego correspondent for *Celebrator Beer News*; and contributes articles on beer, food, restaurants and other such killer topics to national publications including *USA TODAY*, *The Beer Connoisseur*, *Beer West*, *Beer Magazine*, *Imbibe* and *Wine Enthusiast* as well as local outlets including *The San Diego Reader*, *Edible San Diego*, *Pacific San Diego*, *Ranch & Coast*, *San Diego Magazine* and *U-T San Diego*.

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COLUMNIST THE CARBOY CHRONICLES

Ryan Reschan is a long time resident of North County San Diego, and he first got into craft beer during his time at UC San Diego while completing a degree in Electrical Engineering. Skipping the macro lagers, he enjoyed British and Irish style ales before discovering the burgeoning local beer scene in North County and the rest of the country. After his introduction to brewing beer by a family friend, he brewed sparingly with extract until deciding to further his knowledge and transition into all-grain brewing. Between batches of beer, he posts video beer reviews on YouTube (user: StumpyJoeJr) multiple times a week along with occasional homebrew videos and footage of beer events he attends.



COLUMNIST THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Gonzalo J. Quintero, Ed.D. is a San Diego native, three-time SDSU grad, career educator, and co-founder of the popular multimedia craft beer discussion craftbeertasters.com. An avid homebrewer, Cicerone Certified Beer Server, and seasoned traveler, Dr. Quintero takes great pride in educating people about craft beer and the craft beer culture. By approaching the subject from the perspective of a scholar and educator, Dr. Quintero has developed a passion for spreading the good word of local beer.

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A pale ale with dried Simcoe hops is prepared for the French press; read some techniques starting on page 22. Hashtag your creations with #beerinfusion and mention us (@westcoastersd) on Twitter and Instagram! Photo by Ryan Lamb



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Juan Miron and Kevin Ho from MIHO at the Karl Strauss Brewmaster's Brunch, SDBW 2013. Photo by Ryan Lamb

BREWS IN THE NEWS

MIHO PLANNING FEBRUARY DINNER SERIES

The guys behind MIHO Gastrotruck have planned a series of beer dinners through the month of February. The first will be held at Green Flash February 7. The second, at AleSmith, is scheduled for February 13. Hess is next up, on February 19. At time of press, the location of the fourth February feast had yet to be determined. As a side note, MIHO's JUKE side project inside Bottlecraft North Park is taking shape nicely, and should be open early February. For more information, visit mihogastrotruck.com and follow @amihoexperience on Instagram.

MANZANITA AND SAINT ARCHER LATEST TO CAN BEERS

In late December Santee's Manzanita Brewing started utilizing the services of Mobile West Canning to package their Chaotic Double IPA, followed by Riverwalk Blonde, Gillespie Brown, Rustic Horizon Red, and IPA; the cans are available at the brewery tasting room while supplies last. In Miramar, Saint Archer has tested out their canning line, teasing Instagram followers of @saintarcherbrew with a fridge full of aluminum (including the new White Ale), but at time of press market release was TBD.

REMODEL: KARL STRAUSS BREWERY GARDEN

In mid-February Karl Strauss Sorrento Mesa (opened in 1994) will undergo a six-week, \$1.2 million remodel in order to bring the look in line with the company's other brewery restaurants, according to the UT. In more KARL news, brewmaster Paul Segura recently flew down to Australia to brew a hoppy red ale at Sail & Anchor Brewery in Fremantle, where company co-founder Chris Cramer came up with the idea to open a brewery in San Diego.

MODERN TIMES & THE NORTH PARKER

In a blog post mid-January Modern Times Beer announced that they will be opening a satellite tasting room with 16 taps inside the under-construction North Parker complex at the corner of 30th Street and Upas Street. Modern Times will join Underbelly 2 (by Consortium Holdings) and Tacos Perla (from the same owners as The Pearl Hotel) in this project by architect/developer Jonathan Segal.

GLUTEN-REDUCED BEERS PICKING UP STEAM

Local breweries Culture, Alpine, Amplified and Automatic have all been working with Clarity Ferm, a product from White Labs that prevents chill haze while reducing the amount of gluten in the finished beer to very low levels. Ask your beer server for more information.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COLLABORATION BREW DAY: MARCH 8

International Women's Collaboration Brew Day, the brainchild of Project Venus UK & Eire, will benefit scholarship fundraising efforts for the Pink Boots Society, an organization of women beer professionals looking to advance their careers in the beer industry through education.

At time of press, Event Organizer and Social Media Committee Chair for Pink Boots Society Denise Ratfield told West Coaster that at least two local breweries have been scheduled to host collaborative brews: Stone Brewing Co. (with Stone Brewing Co. small batch brewer Laura Ulrich, Saint Archer's Kim Lutz, and Pizza Port Solana Beach's Devon Randall); and Mike Hess Brewing Company (with brewers Hollie Stephenson and Laura Mirsch, both from Stone Brewing Co.)

The hashtag for the event is #IWCB, and more information on Pink Boots can be found at pinkbootsociety.org. Want to learn more about the history of women in beer? Check out this link: bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25656701

THORN STREET ADDS CAPACITY

The North Park brewery added a 10-barrel tank in January that will act as a brite tank so that the downstairs vessels can act as serving tanks. In total the operation now has four seven-barrel tanks, one ten-barrel and one 15-barrel. Additionally, six whiskey barrels and four wine/sour barrels full of beer are patiently waiting in the wings.

"PLAY DATE" COLLABORATION

Brewers from San Diego Brewing Co. (SDBC), Manzanita and Coronado recently teamed up to create a 10.25% ABV imperial stout called Play Date. 7.5 barrels of the beer were brewed at SDBC, and at time of press the beer was still on tap at the Grantville brewpub, according to TapHunter.com.

CHUCKALEK BREWING HISTORIC BEERS IN RAMONA

For every month in 2014, ChuckAleK plans to release a porter or stout-style beer brewed from a historic recipe for their Archive Series. Each limited release will be available at the ChuckAleK tasting room, Urge Gastropub in Rancho Bernardo, Plan 9 Alehouse in Escondido, and Monkey Paw Pub & Brewery in East Village. January's beer was called 1850 Runner, a 6.3% ABV, 62 IBU beer inspired in part by the work of beer documentarian Ron Pattinson. Read more about the beer series at chuckalek.tumblr.com, and mark your calendar for the brewery's first anniversary party on February 21.

The Border X brewing system, ready for an upgrade in late January. Photo courtesy of The Hop Daddy (hop-daddy.blogspot.com)



BALLAST POINT EXPANSION WATCH

In addition to opening an outdoor patio at their Little Italy brewpub location, Ballast Point also debuted a spirits tasting room at the Scripps Ranch hub in January. In Miramar, the big German brewhouse is currently being installed for their upcoming 100,000+ sq. ft. facility.

BORDER X TO OPEN SECOND TASTING ROOM

The Otay Mesa brewery, which opened in October, is working on a satellite tasting room that should open in the beginning of March in Barrio Logan. Border X is teaming up with San Diego Taco Company and La Bodega to create the new gathering space at 2196 Logan Avenue. To help prepare for the transition, the brewery is upgrading to 100 gallon tanks.

BOTTLE & KEGGED CLOSURES

The San Diego History Center's beer-focused exhibit came to a close late January, but most of it will live on at the Del Mar Fair, including the Ballast Point Home Brew Mart brewhouse. Also in Balboa Park, the San Diego Museum of Man's Beerology exhibit continues, with a beer and food pairing event scheduled for March 20.

DRAFT MAG BEST BEER BARS

National beer publication Draft Magazine publishes a list of "America's 100 Best Beer Bars" every year. San Diego was well represented with six local beer bars on the list: Blind Lady Ale House, Tiger!Tiger!, Encinitas Ale House, Hamilton's Tavern, O'Brien's Pub and Toronado. In 2013, seven bars were included and in 2012, four.

SMOKIN'/BELCHING BEAVER FUNDRAISER

Smokin' Beaver homebrew shop and Belching Beaver are teaming up to host a "Dam Cancer" event February 23 at Belching Beaver. A special beer, Double Beaver, was brewed for the event; 100% of funds from beers and food sold, as well as the raffle, will go to the cause. The North County Firefighters Associations are also involved in the planning and funding of the event, as the beneficiary is part of our firefighter family.

Continued on page 14

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NOTE: There may be an announcement on June 8th, 2013 at:
societebrewing.com/anniversary

Continued from page 12

THE HOMEBREWER SURPASSES KICKSTARTER GOAL

The Homebrewer opened its doors in early 2012 on El Cajon Boulevard and recently announced that they are planning to expand with a three-barrel brewhouse. Their kickstarter campaign raised \$17,545 with 277 backers; \$10,000 was their goal.

SAN DIEGO SUDS SORORITY ACCEPTING MEMBERS

With meetings every second Monday of the month at White Labs' tasting room, this women-only homebrew club within QUAFF is looking to build a social network of ladies looking to brew. For more information and to join the party, visit facebook.com/sdsuds-sorority and follow @sdsuds-sorority on Twitter.



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Run by QUAFF President Larry Stein, The Ugly Dog is a new 30-tap beer bar in the College Area (6344 El Cajon Blvd.) with ciders and meads on tap as well. On February 8 there's a meet-the-brewer event with Matt Akin from Benchmark Brewing Co.

La Jolla Brewing Company, formerly known as La Jolla Brew House, reopened under new ownership on December 30, and had a grand opening party on January 30. Brett Stampf, an experienced brewer, is at the brewing helm.

Fathom Bistro Bait & Tackle celebrated one year in business with an eclectic taplist and food specials in late January and early February. Owner Dennis Borlek, a college roommate of Russian River's Vinnie Cilurzo, also served as general manager at Hamilton's for more than five years.

With a new brewhouse and tanks bringing capacity up to 2,500 barrels per year, and bottling having just started, Stumblefoot is celebrating two years in business in style early next month. At the March 8 party, they'll have their 11% imperial stout on tap, plus a limited run of the barrel-aged American sour QuadRaven available.

Blind Lady turned five on Thursday, January 30, with events stretching all the way to February 9. The Adams Avenue establishment was also named to Draft Magazine's "America's 100 Best Beer Bars" every year they've been open.

O'Brien's Pub celebrated 20 years in business in January with a plethora of great events, including tappings of O'Brien's IPA from Alpine, Sierra Nevada rye and bourbon whiskey barrel-aged O'Brien's brewed last March, and lots of Russian River beers. On January 23, members of the O'Brien's crew visited Monkey Paw to brew a smoked weizenbock called Wrathchild.

Karl Strauss' 25th anniversary party is happening at the Pacific Beach brewery headquarters on February 8. Attendees can choose from 20+ different beers in a commemorative glass, plus food, live music and a take-home bomber of 25th Anniversary Doppelbock. \$40 tickets are available at karlstrauss.com.

CRAFT BREWERS' ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION REACHES \$34 BILLION

According to a new analysis by the Brewers Association (BA)—the not-for-profit trade association that represents the majority of U.S. breweries—small and independent American craft brewers contributed \$33.9 billion to the U.S. economy in 2012.

The figure is derived from the total impact of beer brewed by craft brewers as it moves through the three-tier system (breweries, wholesalers and retailers), as well as all non-beer products that brewpub restaurants sell.

"With a strong presence across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, craft breweries are a vibrant and flourishing economic force at the local, state and national level," said Bart Watson, staff economist, Brewers Association. "As consumers continue to demand a wide range of high quality, full-flavored beers, small and independent craft brewers are meeting this growing demand with innovative offerings, creating high levels of economic value in the process." In addition to the national impact, the BA examined output of the craft brewing industry by state, as well as the state economic contribution per capita for adults over 21.

Top Five States (2012 Output)

1. California – \$4.7 billion
2. Texas – \$2.3 billion
3. New York – \$2.2 billion
4. Pennsylvania – \$2.0 billion
5. Colorado – \$1.6 billion

Top Five States in Age 21+ (2012 Output per Capita):

1. Oregon – \$448.56
2. Colorado – \$436.50
3. Vermont – \$418.57
4. Maine – \$324.36
5. Montana – \$315.37

For some or all of 2012, 2,347 craft breweries operated in the U.S., comprised of 1,132 brewpubs, 1,118 microbreweries and 97 regional craft breweries. During this timeframe, craft brewers sold an estimated 13,235,917 barrels of beer, with a retail dollar value estimated at \$11.9 billion*. The industry also provided more than 360,000 jobs, with 108,440 jobs directly at breweries and brewpubs, including serving staff at brewpubs. For additional study statistics and methodology, including state-by-state data, see the economic impact page on the Brewers Association website. For a broader set of facts and figures about the craft brewing industry, see the craft brewing statistics section of the website. *Figure updated from previous estimations based on new data.



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The poutine at Tiger!Tiger! features house-cut Kennebec potatoes topped with mozzarella curds, parsley and smoked salt, plus house-made pork sausage gravy. Photo by Ryan Lamb

6 Degrees OF POUTINE

Deconstructing Diego's
decadent delicacy du jour

BY BRANDON HERNÁNDEZ

There are few things I crave in such a primal way as a big basket of French fries. Throw rich gravy and cheese curds on top and it's absolutely irresistible. Rather than blame a lack of will power, I point to evolution. Over time, human taste buds have developed in such a way that they can detect high levels of fat in the foods that pass over them. It's a sign that such sustenance is indeed capable of sustaining the body and drives us to crave said foods. So, you see, I'm programmed to love the super nacho equivalent of fried spuds that is poutine...and so are you.

This explains why this Canadian-bred delicacy has become so popular in the US and such an increasingly omnipresent staple throughout our own San Diego County. From brick-and-mortars to gastro-trucks, poutine is widely available in various iterations, from traditional to regionally inspired to just plain out-there. But the dish is actually quite easy to make from the comfort of one's own kitchen. I mean, we're talking about gravy-laden cheese fries here—this isn't exactly rocket science. And that's what this column is all about: demystification.

You don't even need to know how to cook to get your poutine fix. Those going the anti-gourmand route can simply defrost fro-

zen fries, warm up a can of brown gravy, sprinkle on the cheese curds and, voila, French Canadian decadence achieved! Can't find cheese curds? That's not surprising. Despite AleSmith and CheeseSmith owner, fromage fashioner and forlorn Minnesota native Peter Zien's unrequited yearning, those chewy, salty wonders have yet to take seed in Southern California. I find crumbled Mexican queso fresco and cotija cheese to be a good, if not occasionally superior, substitute for that rare dairy offering.

Of course, this is a column designed for home cooks, so I come equipped with some recipes for readers to take their homespun poutine adventures to the from-scratch level of their choosing. Mine is also a monthly feature devoted to cooking with beer, so if you opt against canned gravy, your frites will be smothered in beer gravy. But first, let's tackle the literal foundation of this dish—the French fries.

There's more than one way to skin a cat, and there are tons of ways to fry a humble potato. Many, myself included, contest that the most effective methods involve dual dips in the fryer. For this particular recipe, I'm including a method that involves frying the potatoes, first in oil, then in rendered duck fat. Yes, you read that correctly—the molten goodness of arguably the planet's most delectable form of poultry. Where will you acquire said duck fat? It will be the incredibly delicious byproduct of your home-made duck confit, should you choose to go that route. (If not, standard canola or vegetable oil will do just fine for the fries.)

The term confit refers to a cooking method in which proteins are slow-roasted in their own fat to produce tender, succulent meat that falls off the bone. Now, sure, it's nowhere near a traditional poutine topping, but that doesn't mean it's not a brilliant addition to this dish. And it's far from the last innovative twist you'll have at your disposal. Remember that beer gravy? Simply adding some beer will do quite nicely, but so will adding in chipotle peppers, smoked jalapeños packed in spicy adobo with a gravy-like consistency of its own. Depending on your personal tastes, you can go with something as mild as an English-style brown ale or something as bold as an imperial stout. If going with the latter, this is a terrific opportunity to use up an aged Russian imperial that's past its prime and exhibits umami or soy sauce-like flavors. Personally, I go for a savory oatmeal stout as devoid of sweetness as possible.

With chlie-heat introduced and (unless you know Peter Zien) Mexican-style cheese, it's easy to usher this recipe in a direction that conveys even more flavors of our border town. Just get a hold of some nice, ripe Haas avocados, whip up a quick batch of tempura batter and fry the best green ingredient that isn't a hop to simultaneously crisp-and-creamy perfection. You already have the fryer out and, so you might as well make good use of it.

At this point, those with the culinary resolve to come this far are guaranteed a platter full of potatoes unlike any they have ever had. Rich flavors, varied textures and even a little beeriness thrown in for good measure. It doesn't get much better than this and presents the opportunity for a great deal of fun in the kitchen, no matter how much or how little each individual cook wants to take on. No matter what, have fun and remember—nothing with a name as fun to say as poutine should be anything but fun to make and consume.

Basic Poutine

Yield: 4 servings

24 ounces bag frozen French fries
1 can brown gravy
1 ½ cups cheese curds (cotija cheese or queso fresco, to substitute)
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preheat oven and bake fries per manufacturer's instructions. Transfer gravy into a small saucepan over medium heat and cook until warmed through. Remove the fries from the oven, season with salt and pepper and place on a platter. Evenly top the fries with gravy, garnish with cheese curds and serve immediately.

Advanced "Southern California-Style" Poutine

Yield: 4 servings

24 ounces Duck Fat-Fried Frites (recipes follow)
2 cups Chipotle Beer Gravy (recipe follows)
2 cups Duck Confit (recipe follows)
12 slices Tempura Avocado (recipe follows)
1 ½ cups cheese curds (cotija cheese or queso fresco, to substitute)
¼ cup cilantro leaves

To serve, place the fries on a platter. Evenly top the fries with gravy and top with duck confit, avocado, cheese curds and cilantro. Serve immediately.

Duck Fat Fries

Yield: 8 servings

6 cups canola or vegetable oil
4 russet potatoes, peeled, washed, patted dry and cut into ¼-inch by 2-inch slices
4 cups reserved duck fat and lard (see Duck Confit recipe below)
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Heat the oil to 325 degrees F in an electric fryer or large pot over medium-high heat. Place 2 potatoes' worth of the fries in the fryer at a time and cook for 6 minutes. Remove from the fryer and drain on paper towels. Heat the reserved fat and lard to 375 degrees F in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Split the fries into 2 batches and fry, one batch at a time, until the fries are golden brown, about 8 minutes. Remove from the fryer and drain on paper towels. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Tempura Avocado

Yield: 12 slices

canola or vegetable oil for frying
1 cup Wondra flour
1 cup ice-cold water
1 egg
2 Haas avocados, cut into ½-inch slices
salt to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F in an electric fryer or large pot. Whisk together the flour, water and egg until smooth. Dredge the avocado in the batter and fry until golden brown and crispy, about 1 minute. Remove from the fryer and drain on paper towels. Season with salt and serve immediately.

Chipotle Beer Gravy

Yield: 2 cups

1 Tbsp olive oil	subtler sauce, or a similarly
¼ cup yellow onion, chopped	non-sweet imperial porter or
2 Tbsp garlic, minced	stout for a richer sauce)
½ tsp freshly ground pepper	½ cup Worcestershire sauce
¼ tsp salt	3 bay leaves
1½ cups chicken stock	2 cups heavy cream
½ cup savory oatmeal stout (or low-hop brown ale for a	2 Tbsp chipotle adobo
	1 Tbsp unsalted butter

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic, season with pepper and salt and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the stock, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaves, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand for 15 minutes.

Strain the mixture and transfer into a small saucepan over high heat. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce until it thickens to a syrupy consistency (roughly ¼ cup). Stir in the cream and adobo and let simmer for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the butter and serve immediately.

—Recipes courtesy of Brandon Hernández

Duck Confit

Yield: 8 servings

8 duck legs, excess fat trimmed and reserved	10 cloves garlic
3 Tbsp salt	4 bay leaves
1½ tsp freshly ground black pepper	1½ Tbsp black peppercorns
	4 cups lard

Season the duck legs with 1 tablespoon of the salt and the freshly ground black pepper. Place 4 of the duck legs in a 10-inch by 10-inch baking dish. Place the garlic, bay leaves and black peppercorns atop the duck legs. Lay the remaining duck legs over the duck legs. Place the reserved fat around the duck legs and sprinkle the remaining salt atop the duck legs. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 12 hours.

Preheat oven to 200 degrees F.

In a large sauté pan over medium-low heat, melt the lard. Remove the dish from the refrigerator. Transfer the duck and place it skin-side down in a rectangular baking dish. Add the reserved fat to the dish and pour the lard over the duck. Cover with aluminum foil and place the dish in the oven. Bake until the meat is tender and pulls away from the bone, 12 to 14 hours. Remove from the oven and let stand. When the duck has cooled to room temperature, strain off the fat and reserve. Shred the duck meat from the bone and set aside.

San Diego Chefs Salute
Tommy Gomes

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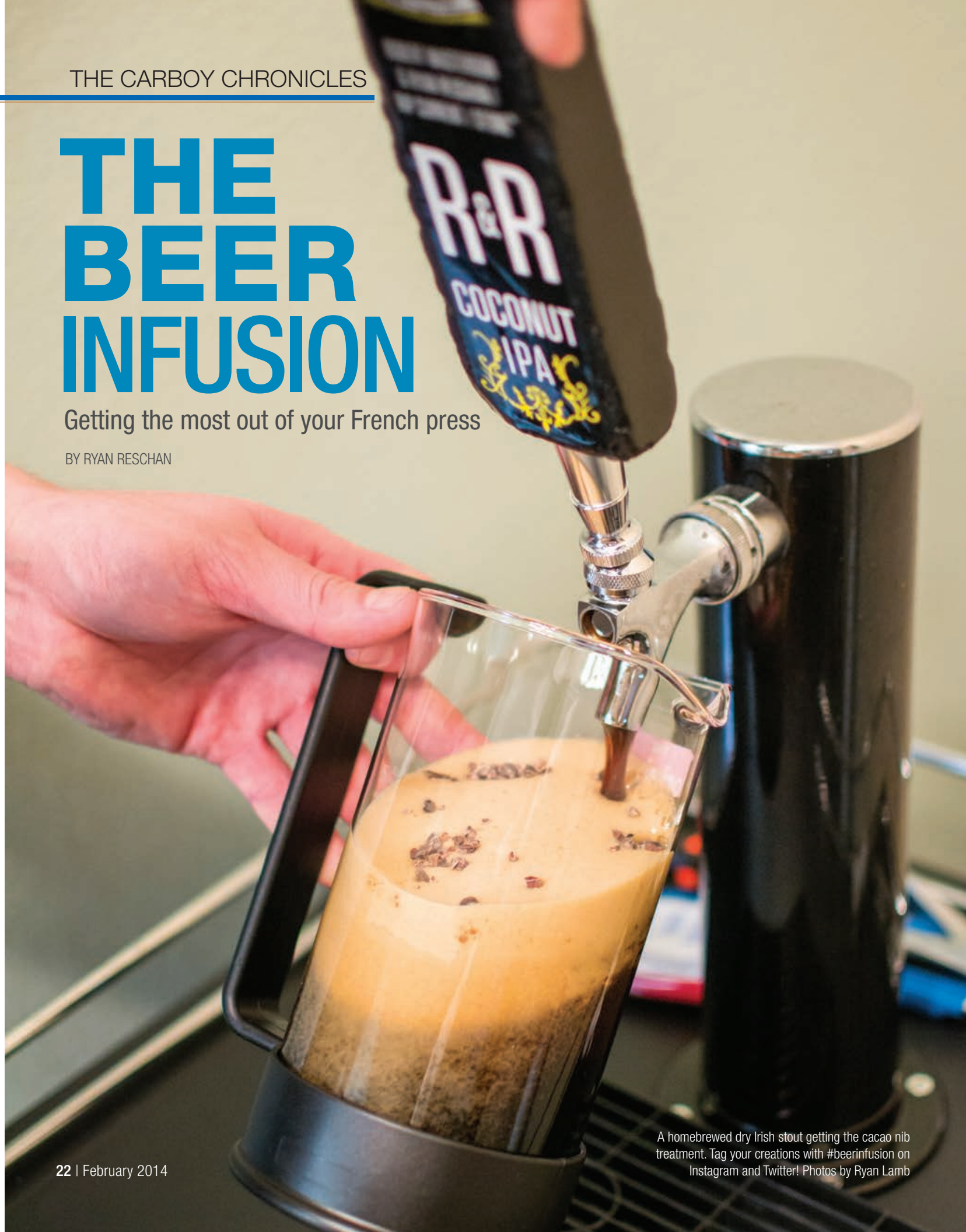
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THE BEER INFUSION

Getting the most out of your French press

BY RYAN RESCHAN



A homebrewed dry Irish stout getting the cacao nib treatment. Tag your creations with #beerinfusion on Instagram and Twitter! Photos by Ryan Lamb

The French press, also known as a press pot, coffee press or plunger, was patented by Italian designer Attilio Calimani in 1929. The press is a simple way to make coffee or tea. For homebrewers, it's a great way to make coffee for a coffee-infused beer, by either pressing the beans with hot or cold water. You can easily explore different temperature ranges to find one you like best; keep in mind that the hotter the water, the quicker the extraction will be. Cold steeping can take hours, and you might even want to let the extraction take place overnight. But why stop there? A press can do much more than make coffee for your latest batch of beer. It's time to get creative!

Think of the French press as a brewing tool that allows you to infuse wort or beer with just about every ingredient imaginable. While many production breweries have pilot systems to test ingredients and experiment with different recipes, homebrewers can use this everyday kitchen item.

Because a French press works with liquids from near freezing to near boiling, you can test hot side or cold side brewing additions. A typical screen on a press should be able to filter out most of the ingredients you'll want to use, but how much of the infusion ingredients you add will depend on the type of ingredient, the temperature of the wort/beer, the strength of the beer, and the amount of time you allow for the infusion to go. Higher alcohol beers will extract flavor much quicker than lower alcohol beers, while warmer temperatures will work more quickly than cooler temperatures.

A good place to start is with beer that you have already completed and are familiar with. Perhaps the beer didn't turn out exactly how you wanted, and it's missing something that could elevate it to a higher level. This is a great time to get out a French press and try out additional ingredients. If the beer has been kegged, it might not

Think of the French press as a brewing tool that allows you to infuse wort or beer with just about every ingredient imaginable.

be too late to make alterations based on your experiments. But if you've already bottled the beer, then experimenting with the press could help improve the beer the next time you brew the recipe. Recently I made a dry Irish stout that didn't turn out as well as I'd hoped. The beer has too much dryness and gives the impression of having a thin mouthfeel. The beer has a nice coffee character from the roasted barley, but I imagined that pressing the beer with cocoa nibs would add a nice chocolate character and improve the body of the beer. To increase the sweetness, I also added vanilla powder. So while the ingredients took the beer out of the dry stout category, the quality of the beer improved with the additional ingredients. In this instance, two cold pints of the 4.8% ABV stout were added to one ounce of cacao nibs and one teaspoon of vanilla powder, and steeped in the press for an hour and a half to gain a nice character.



Cacao nibs are just one ingredient that you can use in a French press beer infusion; try hops (whole leaf and pellets), orange peel and coriander, etc. Tag your creations with #beerinfusion on Instagram and Twitter



Now what if you brewed up a pale ale, IPA, or double IPA and you're not sure what kind of hops to use for dry-hopping? Transferring the beer to a French press with different hop additions could help dial in the aroma you'd like on the beer. Remember that pellets hops are much more intense than whole leaf hops; half an ounce of whole leaf hops should provide the same intensity as just a few pellets. But give both a try, and judge the results for yourself.

Even before fermentation takes place, ingredients can be tested by adding hot wort (not boiling) to a press to simulate a knockout/flameout/zero minute addition in the boil kettle. Ingredients like hops, spices, chocolate, coconut, nuts, or any other adjunct you might want to add to your beer could be steeped for flavor and/or aroma.

Noting the ratio of wort to ingredient/adjunct can give you an idea of how much you'll want to add to your boil kettle for the full batch of beer.

Whether you are an extract or all grain brewer, you're likely familiar with the types of grain that can be steeped instead of mashed to extract sugars and flavor. Such grains include all crystal/caramel malts, chocolate malt, roasted malt, black malt, and a few other malts (often with 'cara' in the name). With maltsters coming out with new malts all the time, using a French press to steep a small amount of grain can give you an idea of what kind of flavors and color the grain will add to your beer. And if you're good about keeping the temperature somewhat constant, you could even perform a mini-mash of grain as well.

For infusions with finished beer, I like to over-due the flavor of the infused ingredient(s); that way, you can blend in some carbonated base beer to give the resulting liquid some life after the press degasses the beer. Add the small amounts of base beer until you find the balance you like, and make sure that the additions get good contact with the beer. Sometimes you'll have to swirl around the beer to get a good mix, or press the beer a few times to get a good infusion.

These are just some ideas to start. The ingredients and methods you use will only be limited by your imagination. We'd love to see your photos; tag @westcoastersd on Instagram and Twitter with the hashtag #beerinfusion to show us what you've made. So get a French press and get creative!



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Q & A

with **FINN PARKER** **BEER BUYER, BROTHER PROVISIONS**

BY MARC FIGUEROA



Finn Parker at Brothers Provisions. Photo by Marc Figueroa

Finn Parker hasn't been in the beer business long. But since breaking into the industry as a part-time server at Urge Gastropub in Rancho Bernardo about four years ago, he has quickly become one of San Diego's most enthusiastic ambassadors for craft beer.

He recently became the beer buyer for Brothers Provisions (Urge's sister location a few blocks away), and is ramping up its beer program. But that's only one piece of the puzzle, as he also hosts monthly beer dinners at Urge and is a serious beer trader, regularly traveling to other beer cities to share his collection with friends... and strangers.

The guy is passionate about beer to say the least, and the *West Coaster* recently caught up with Finn to chat about his favorite subject – over a beer of course.

WC: You recently walked away from a good-paying corporate job at a securities litigation firm to work in craft beer full-time. Was it tough walking away?

FP: I admit it granted me a different type of lifestyle, being able to travel all the time and doing what I wanted. But it was a stressful job that gave me insomnia, and it wasn't a passion of mine. So going from that to the craft beer industry was an easy jump. This industry is really about hospitality and creating a kinship with people. And that's something that I wanted to be involved in. It's amazing the friendships I've developed. When you have those relationships with people that want to share, not even extraordinary beer, but just beer, that's what is so great about this community.

You host "Finn Parker Presents" beer dinners regularly at Urge. How did that get started?

It basically started because I had way too much beer in the cellar and in my house. I figured I'd just share it with people. It's simple really – we sit down, have a great meal and share and talk beer. We serve beers that normally people can't get their hands on. Grant (Tondro, who co-owns Urge, Brothers and the Barrel Room with Zak and Nate Higson) and I really wanted to start sharing exceptional beer with people in a great way. It's a very intimate setting – just 10 people. We share bottles and discuss beer, often getting into deep conversations. For me, it's all about sharing great craft regardless of what it is.

So how much did you have before this started?

Easily over 400 bottles. But I had a conversation with a friend who said, "If you keep beer in the cellar, you don't get to share it with anybody." That stuck with me, so now I just take a lot of beer with me wherever I go. As much as you think you can drink a whole bottle of (The Bruery's) Black Tuesday, it's probably not the smartest decision. Beer is a product that is meant to be shared with friends and strangers.

You have become a serious beer trader. Why are you so into it?

That was easy to get into because when you have something that

other people don't have, you want to share it. If I've already tasted it, I have no problem parting with it. It's fun sharing with people who really appreciate it. It's fun because breweries around the country are doing amazing things. I got beer from Kentucky recently that was just amazing. I drank an IPA from New Jersey that I could drink all day. Beer is everywhere and people are making great stuff. The craft beer community is a kinship. Once you get that, beer becomes something other than a commodity or something you do on a Friday night. It becomes about sharing.

What's the rarest beer you've been able to get your hands on?

It's subjective because what's rare to one person is not rare to another. But it was pretty cool when some of us put together a tasting of (Goose Island's) Bourbon County Stout with every vertical from 2006 on. But now that I think about it, the rarest beer I ever had was the last one I shared with my dad before he died.

Brothers Provisions has a different vibe than Urge. It's more intimate, certainly quieter. What's your vision for the craft beer program at Brothers?

We want to be the premier bottle shop in this area. We want to provide beer for everyone and then have specialty beer for the beer geeks. We love sharing and educating people about beer. That's why we do a sour beer and cheese pairing once a month. Pairing sours with cheese really elevates the beer. We've been talking about starting a regular beer education class. The more people know about beer, it helps them make better decisions about the bottles they want to buy or the breweries they want to visit. Getting the community excited about beer and pushing their palates is something we love doing.

Those who know you recognize you have a ton of energy. You talk fast, you think fast, you only sleep about five hours a night, and you're always juggling a number of projects. What's driving you?

Beer! I just like to stay busy and I do have my recharge moments. But there's something about this industry – whether it's the passion or the friendships – that makes it so easy. When you find something that you really, really enjoy it's not work. I love to share beer. I love to talk about beer. It's not work when it's something you love. I don't want to deliver flowers, so beer it is.

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Outside the Three Tiers

BY GONZALO J. QUINTERO, ED.D.

When you think of bootlegging, the word might conjure up images of Prohibition and scenes of Al Capone facing off with Eliot Ness. Or maybe the word reminds you of a current reality show where outlaws are shown concocting various illegal moonshines in the backwoods of the American South. The word apparently came into general use in the Midwest in the 1880s to denote the practice of concealing flasks of illicit liquor in boot tops when going to trade with Native Americans. In this day and age, in the craft beer world, these caricatures of the bootlegger are inaccurate.

When conducting research about bottle shares several months ago, individual bottle shop and bar owners wanted to talk to me about a disturbing and newly-emerging trend they were observing first hand: bootlegging of beers. I was a bit confused as to how a business could bootleg beers, and what the incentive was. In the context of the traditional three-tier system of beer, from production to consumption, the system does not easily lend itself to black market behavior. The system starts with the brewer, the producer of the beer itself, who sells to a wholesaler, who then distributes the beer to a retailer. You, the craft beer drinking consumer, can then buy from the retailer.

How can the legitimacy of this process get thwarted? Many of the aforementioned industry professionals shared a similar perspective: some businesses play by the rules of the three-tier system, and some do not. Most businesses buy core beers from breweries and distributors,



Al Capone around 1935, via Wikimedia Commons

build up the prestige of their accounts, and earn the right to limited and rare beers from said breweries and distributors. There are other individuals that don't adhere to the three tier system, but rather, buy beers in various ways and then put them on their shelves or taps. So what? What risks, if any, are there to bootlegging? What are the rewards? Does the three tier system help or hurt the consumer?

I talked to three high profile individuals from the San Diego craft beer

community, a publican and bottle shop owner (Brian Jensen from Waypoint Public House in North Park as well as Bottlecraft beer shops), a bottle shop owner (Geoi Bachua, owner/operator of Bine & Vine in Normal Heights), and a brewer (Bill Batten, Senior Brewer and Sales Representative at AleSmith Brewing Company in Miramar). I asked these three industry professionals the same set of questions in hopes of learning more about the modern iteration of boot-

legging, and the effects it is having on the craft beer industry.

What are your thoughts on the three tier system? What benefits does the three tier system have for breweries, bars & restaurants, bottle shops & liquor stores, and the consumer?

Brian Jensen: The three tier system helps with accountability. Every link in the chain between the brewery and customer is responsible for treatment of the beer - which is a perishable product. When that structure is clearly defined and known, those within it can be held liable to the proper care of the beer.

Geoi Bachua: As a bottle shop owner with a business in California, it's frustrating at times having to deal with a distributor when they're the only option of me reselling a particular product. The three tier system helps government collect taxes and also puts forth structure on how alcohol is distributed; a set of rules all of us in the industry have to go by. From a retail standpoint, it simplifies who and where we can purchase products from to resell.

Bill Batten: The three tier system has its advantages and disadvantages and can be based on the size of the distributor, the backing entity of the distributor, and the overall market perception of said distributor. We (AleSmith) are extremely fortunate to have Stone Distributing as our representation. They don't create back-room deals, they respect the craft and allow the products represented to speak for themselves on the merit of the quality, and not what will be given to an account if they carry a product.

Have you ever observed bootlegging of beers in our community?

Brian Jensen: Sometimes customers come

to me and asked why we don't have certain beers that they have apparently seen across town, which is frustrating.

Geoi Bachua: Many liquor stores following this craft beer "trend" are purchasing beers directly from breweries, outside the three tier system, without the permission to resell the products from the breweries, and they'll proudly display said products in their shop. In some instances, the store's operators will join a brewery's membership club in order to obtain the products for illegal reselling. Word gets around via social media, so we'll get customers requesting beers that weren't available locally because they've seen them available elsewhere.

Bill Batten: I have seen a couple of stores around town bringing in bootlegged product. Most of the time it is obvious as they are products that can only be gotten through legitimate beer trading. It seems pretty obvious when a store owner requires a customer to purchase four or five other items to then be eligible to purchase a bootlegged product at a much higher price than its suggested retail price. There have also been cases where AleSmith brewery-only releases have shown up at locations that had obviously sent mules to pick up the product from us.

What is wrong about bootlegging beers?

Brian Jensen: It is immoral, and it often focuses more on the "hype" rather than the beer. I would imagine brewers want their beer to go to those who appreciate it, not to those who just want to turn around and resell it for ridiculous amounts.

Geoi Bachua: Quality and freshness of the product can be a concern. Also, breaking trust of the distributor and the producer is an issue. Typically, a bootlegged product will be priced much higher than what the

brewery had it for. Most consumers don't care though; they're just happy to have access to the product.

Bill Batten: A problem with bootlegging beers is the quality assurance of the product. Was the beer abused in transit? Is it stored properly at the retail location? Without proper distribution there is no one to monitor the account. The issue then is when the customer, who may or may not know the beer has been bootlegged, gets a product that may have degraded, and assumes that it is the brewery's problem. That creates a bad taste in their mouth for that brewery's products. And if the price is too high, that can also cast a shadow on the brewery, potentially jeopardizing future legitimate sales.

So, the modern day bootlegger is not a dapper mobster, nor a rough and rugged hillbilly. In reality, or at least in the context of our craft beer community, a bootlegger might look like your local restaurateur, publican, bottle shop keep, or liquor store owner.

What is the responsibility of the consumer in this equation? In our pursuit of new and innovative beers, of bragging rights, of "ticks" off our lists, we might be less concerned with the consequences. But does the end justify the means? We must realize that the three tier system, even with its cold and faceless name, is a mechanism that connects people: brewers, distributors, publicans, bottle shop keeps, bartenders, servers, and others, all of whom have a livelihood that is threatened by bootlegged beers. Consumers can therefore vote with their dollar, with the notion that their actions will ripple throughout the local, national, and international craft beer communities, shaping them for years to come.

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QUALITY ON TAP

PART 2

Quality Control and Assurance in the Brewery

BY SAM TIERNEY



In my last column, I discussed the factors that influence beer quality once it has left the brewery. Proper storage and serving of beer are key to high quality and are the most visible to you as a beer drinker. While sitting at the bar, you can see if the bartender is pouring a whole glass of foam down the drain in order to get you a full pour of beer, or if there is residue on the inside of your glass causing clusters of bubbles to form under the surface of the beer. While the effects that these quality parameters have on your beer are often readily apparent, quality control at the brewery is not so straightforward. Oftentimes, the only thing you can say about a beer is that you don't like it, or that you don't think it is very good. But why?

Quality control in the brewery is broadly based on the goal of avoiding off flavors and producing consistent beer. This involves checks at every point in the process to ensure that raw ingredients, processes, wort, and beer fall into specification. A deviation at any point in the process can result in off flavors or inconsistent beer. A controlled process will result in a beer that meets the specifications set forth by the brewery, and is free from any off flavors.

Quality control starts with the incoming materials in the brewhouse. Malt must be of the proper quality, which involves modification level, protein level, and color. Under-modified malts will lead to poorer extract and clarity and require more intensive brewhouse mashing processes, while higher protein levels will also require more work in order to avoid haze and filtration issues further down the line. Color can be problematic, especially in specialty malts from smaller maltsters that can sometimes vary considerably from batch to batch. A good brewer reviews the specification sheet from the maltster for every batch of malt received, and either rejects malt that does not meet specification, or alters their recipe or process in order to arrive at a wort that is still within their range.

Hop selection is of the utmost importance to brewers, especially those producing hop-forward beers in larger quantities. Every lot of hops from each year's harvest will be different. Cascade from one farm in Yakima can vary considerably from another

farm several miles down the valley, much less the Cascade from a farm in the Willamette Valley. Experienced brewers sample the freshly dried hops at harvest time and know exactly what they are looking for, and what that character will lend to their beer. Once delivered to the brewery, hops should be stored in the cold room, and once opened, pellets especially should be used as soon as possible. If exposed to air and stored this way, open hops will degrade in aromatic quality in a matter of days. Luckily, hop producers package hops in vacuum-packed or nitrogen-flushed bags that can stay fresh for months or even a couple of years after harvest. Once opened, however, the clock is ticking.

Although often overlooked, water quality has an enormous impact on the quality of finished beer. The mineral content and

A good brewer reviews the specification sheet from the maltster for every batch of malt received, and either rejects malt that does not meet specification, or alters their recipe or process in order to arrive at a wort that is still within their range.

pH of brewing water will influence the brewhouse process and lead to harsh, tannic flavors if pH during the process is not controlled for. Minerals also influence all of the main flavors of beer, and are very influential on how we perceive bitterness and maltiness in beer. Breweries should keep up to date on the quality of their incoming water supply and might have to subsequently add or remove minerals to maintain consistency. Municipal water will also often have chlorine aromas that need to be removed prior to the brewing process in order to avoid phenolic off flavors in beer.

Quality control in the wort production process is all about consistency of process and reacting to measurements taken throughout the process. The brewhouse process starts with milling malt and is the first place where things can go awry. In order to get proper mash conversion and maximum efficiency, the coarseness of the crush must be precisely controlled. Too coarse and you lose efficiency and might not get full conversion of starches to sugars; too fine and

you can have issues with liquid separation in the lauter tun or over-extraction of phenolic compounds.

Once the brewing water (referred to as hot liquor) has been mixed with the crushed malt, which is called grist, the resulting mash needs to be controlled for temperature, pH, and thickness. Variations in any of these control parameters can result in inconsistent sugar profiles in the wort, or extraction of unwanted compounds from the malt. Thickness is as simple as measuring the volume of water added in ratio to weight of malt, but is important for achieving optimal enzyme performance. pH is also important for optimizing the performance of the enzymes in the mash as they go to work converting starches into sugars. A properly calibrated pH meter is an absolute necessity starting at this point in the process. Brewers

usually target a mash pH in the range of 5.2-5.6, which is moderately acidic. Achieving a proper pH depends on the ion content of the brewing water, and the malts and adjuncts used in the mash. In many cases, the pH achieved is slightly higher than this optimal range, and brewers will add calcium ions in the form of calcium sulphate or calcium chloride salts, or food-grade acid such as

phosphoric or lactic acid to bring the pH into the correct range. If a high percentage of dark grains are used in the mash, it may be necessary to add carbonate ions in order to counter their acidifying effect and raise the pH into the proper range. Dark beers with too low of a pH tend to display harsh, acrid flavors.

Temperature in the mash must also be precisely controlled for. The malt enzymes that are activated in the mash are very dependent on temperature, and achieving the desired profile of proteins and sugars at the end of the mash depends on these enzymes working at the correct temperature. American brewers commonly let the mash rest at a single temperature, in the range of 145-160F, which is the range in which alpha and beta-amylase enzymes can effectively break down starches into sugars. Higher temperatures in this range favor alpha-amylase and produce a wort that is less fermentable, while lower temperatures favor beta-amylase and a more highly fermentable wort. Brewers also sometimes raise the

mash through multiple temperature steps, with lower steps being used to activate enzymes that break down other compounds such as proteins and glucans.

At the end of the mash, it is important to confirm that there is no unconverted starch left, which will lead to flavor stability and haze issues of allowed to remain in the wort. In order to test for conversion, brewers add a liquid mash sample to a white plate and then add several drops of iodine solution. If the iodine remains brown, there is no starch present, but if it turns a deep purple/black, there is still unconverted starch and the mash must be left to rest for a longer period.

Once the lautering process has begun, and liquid wort is separated from the spent grain in the mash, it becomes necessary to test for the density of the sweet wort that has been extracted, which tells us what percentage of the solution is sugar. Brewers use several methods to test the density of wort. The most basic method is a hydrometer, which is a calibrated float that has

markings that indicate the density based on how high it floats in a sample of wort or beer. A refractometer is another instrument that measures density based on the degree of refraction of light as it passes through a sample of wort. The most sophisticated method is a densitometer, which oscillates a sample in a special chamber and compares it to known standards in order to achieve a reading, which is displayed digitally. Whatever method is used, it is important to know the density of the first wort in order to judge extract efficiency and maintain a consistent process. Brewers also want to know the density of the final runnings at the end of sparging, as this indicates how much sugar is being left behind in the spent grain. The pH of the final runnings is very important as well because it will rise slightly as the density of the runnings decreases, and the runoff must be stopped before it gets too high.

Once the runnings have been collected in the kettle, another density sample is taken. A brewer will know the evaporation rate of

their kettle, and thus deduce if more water must be added or if the boil must be extended in order to achieve the desired density at the end of the boil. This number is very important to commercial brewers because beer labeling laws only allow a 0.3% deviation of alcohol in either direction of what is stated on the label. If you are not starting fermentation at the same density for each batch, you will always struggle to end up with the proper alcohol level. The pH level in the kettle is also monitored, and if too high, acid can be added to bring it into the optimal range, which optimizes hot break formation, flavor consistency, and promotes healthy yeast growth at the outset of fermentation. Hop utilization is also affected by pH, and boiling at a controlled pH level allows brewers to more consistently isomerize alpha acids during the boil, leading to consistent IBU levels in the beer. If the brewery has a lab capable of testing IBU levels, samples of wort can be taken and analyzed to make sure that levels remain consistent. IBU levels should also be measured in finished beer as they will drop considerably during the fermentation process due to lower alpha acid solubility as pH drops, and absorption by the cell walls of yeast cells occurs.

Once wort of a standard color, pH, IBU level, and density has been produced, it must be cooled and aerated before yeast is added to begin fermentation. Consistent temperature and aeration levels are key control parameters at this step. Temperature is fairly simple and is measured in-line from the wort chiller to the fermentation vessel. The flow of wort through the chiller can then be adjusted to achieve the desired temperature. It is important to start fermentation at a consistent temperature, because yeast will react differently and produce different flavors depending on the temperature at which they



A refractometer at Alpine Beer Company.
Photo by Ryan Lamb

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multiply in the first phase of fermentation. Aeration is typically achieved through the injection of sterile oxygen directly into the cooled wort in-line as well. The amount of oxygen added is also key to healthy yeast growth and thus affects flavor accordingly. Too little oxygen and yeast health suffers, leading to poor fermentations and possible off flavors like acetaldehyde (green apple or latex paint aroma), or diacetyl (butter aroma). Too much oxygen, and yeast tend to produce more fusel alcohols, which give beer harsh, boozy flavors and aromas. The duration and flow rate of oxygen injection must be consistent in order to achieve proper dissolved oxygen levels in wort. Larger brewers will also commonly use in-line dissolved oxygen meters that allow levels to be precisely controlled. Dissolved oxygen levels are typically targeted in the range of 1 part per million per degree plato of the wort, as yeast generally need more oxygen to ferment stronger worts. The actual optimal level is heavily dependent on the yeast strain and can vary widely. Some strains, like those used to make Bavarian-style hefeweizen, will require much less oxygen

for optimal performance, and many lager strains will require higher levels. Like any point in the process, brewers will adjust accordingly to achieve the desired fermentation performance and flavor.

To begin fermentation, yeast must be added to the cooled, aerated wort. Brewers have to figure out the optimal amount of yeast to pitch based on a number of factors. Proper pitching rates are again key to achieving a desirable, consistent flavor profile in a beer. Under pitching will commonly lead to poorly-attenuated beers with excess residual sugars, and multiple possible off-flavors. Consistently over pitching can damage yeast performance over time and also lead to off flavors. Pitching rate is determined by yeast strain, yeast slurry density, yeast health, and wort density. Ale yeast strains are commonly pitched at around .75-1 million cells per milliliter of wort per degree plato of wort density, and lager yeast strains can be pitched at around 50-100% more than that. Again, this is heavily dependent on the specific strain. To determine by weight or volume how much yeast to actually pitch, you need to be able to measure

the density of the yeast slurry to know how much is yeast and how much is beer, then you need to know how much of the yeast is viable. Some yeast in a slurry harvested from a previous batch of beer will always be dead cells, and pitching rates need to be calculated based on only the amount of living cells in the slurry. To determine the percentage of dead cells, a sample of yeast is stained with a dye like methylene blue, which dead cells will absorb. Checking the sample on a hemacytometer under a microscope allows you to count the amount of dead versus living cells. Once you know how much living yeast you actually have in a measurable amount of slurry, you can use the density and volume of wort to calculate the amount to pitch based on your desired pitching rate.

Once fermentation has begun, brewers will take measurements at standard intervals to monitor progress. Tracking the reduction of density, lowering of pH, and amount of yeast cells in solution is an indicator of the health and progress of fermentation. Brewers look for a steady drop in density to see that fermentation is progress-

ing as usual, and they'll continue taking readings to determine when fermentation has finished, hopefully at the correct final density specification for the beer, which will mean the target amount of alcohol and residual sugar has been reached. Measuring pH is another way to track the health and progress of fermentation, as yeast produces organic acids that lower the pH from about 5-5.2 at the beginning, to about 4-4.5 at the end of fermentation. Tracking the finishing pH of beers over time is important



A refractometer at Alpine Beer Company. Photo by Ryan Lamb

to achieving consistent flavor profiles and proper pH leads to more microbiologically stable beer. Using a hemacytometer and microscope, brewers can count the amount of yeast cells in solution to confirm that enough yeast was pitched and to track how much yeast growth occurs. Yeast cells multiply asexually by budding, and will do this several times during the course of a fermentation. At a certain point, the amount of cells in solution hits a plateau and then starts to decline at the end of fermentation, as yeast cells react to the lack of food left

in the beer and start to go dormant. They then clump together, a process referred to as "flocculation," and fall to the bottom of the fermentation vessel. Keeping track of cells in solution, pH, and density over the course of each fermentation allows brewers to ensure that nothing is out of the ordinary, or if it is, allows them to react to fix any deviations.

Once fermentation is complete, brewers will chill the beer for clarification, lagering, or packaging. Before this can be done, however, it is necessary to ensure that maturation has proceeded to a satisfactory extent. Beer maturation is the continued activity of yeast to reabsorb and reduce unwanted compounds in the beer, such as acetaldehyde and diacetyl. This can take up to several days after the density of the beer has stabilized at its final level. Testing for maturation is usually based on the level of potential diacetyl left in the beer, as this is a good indicator of overall maturation. Testing can be as simple as heating a sample of beer to convert all present acetolactic acid (the chemical precursor to diacetyl) and then smelling the sample next to another sample right from the tank. If there is no detectable diacetyl aroma in either sample, it is safe to chill the beer, which will retard any further maturation. More complex lab analysis techniques include measuring potential diacetyl via gas chromatography or high-pressure liquid chromatography, both involving equipment that is too expensive for most small brewers to afford. Luckily, trained testers performing the smell test can be nearly as accurate. It is imperative that the sample of beer is heated to force the conversion of acetolactic acid. Even if the beer smells fine right out of the tank, any remaining acetolactic acid will convert over time in packaged beer, and especially as beer warms up after it has been poured, possibly leading to a buttery diacetyl aroma in a beer that might have smelled and tasted just fine when sampled out of the tank.

Throughout the fermentation process and all the way to the finished package, sterile samples of beer are taken and tested in the lab in order to ensure that there are no unwanted microorganisms present that could cause spoilage. Wild yeasts and genera of bacteria like lactobacillus and pediococcus can easily contaminate and multiply in wort or beer and cause off flavors. Taking samples at different points in the process allows brewers to determine the possible point of contamination if any exists, and to quaran-

tine the beer before the contamination can spread or the beer can go to market. Luckily, no known human pathogens can survive and multiply in finished beer, though some spoilage organisms like *Megasphaera* and *Pectinatus* bacteria can certainly produce aromas and flavors offensive enough that you would never want to drink another beer from the brewery in question again. Contaminated beer is one of the fastest ways to turn away customers, and this quality control step is essential for preventing compromised beer from being sold. If a brewery waits until off flavors are apparent via sensory analysis, it is likely too late to take necessary corrective measures.

As I discussed before, age and resulting oxidation are perhaps the single biggest destructive force that beer has to contend with. Every beer will eventually succumb to oxidation, even the hardiest of barley wines and gueuzes. Lighter beers like pale ale, koelsch, and witbier will suffer after a much shorter time. Hop aroma-centric beers like IPA are perhaps the most susceptible to oxidation because hop oils, which provide the wonderful aroma that we all love in IPAs, are incredibly fragile and among the earliest compounds to break down with age. What seemed like the best IPA in the world one day can be nothing special a couple weeks later.

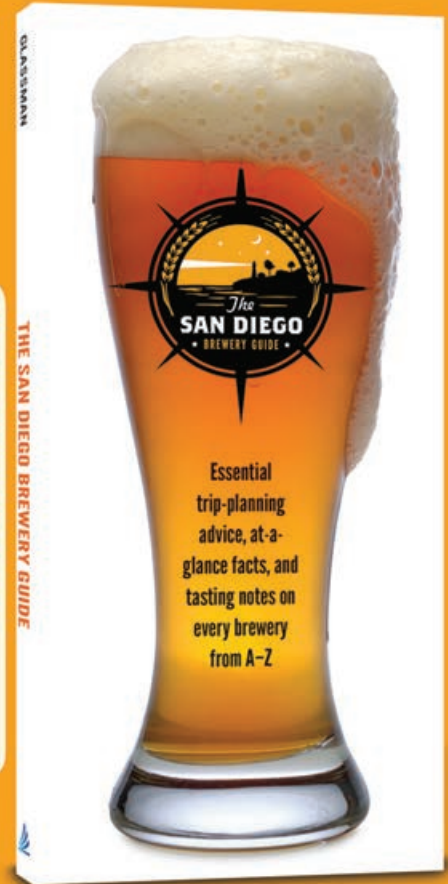
Oxidation is inevitable in packaged beer, but the speed with which it progresses is dependent on quality control points in the brewery. During fermentation, the yeast absorbs all of the dissolved oxygen in the wort and produces a large amount of carbon dioxide, which pushes out any air in the tank and creates an oxygen-free environment. Proper cellaring and packaging of beer depends on introducing as little oxygen to the finished beer as possible. Every time oxygen molecules contact beer, they partially dissolve into solution and oxidize compounds in the beer, leading to staling. Breweries monitor dissolved oxygen in beer with special measuring equipment that either measures samples in-line during transfer, or by taking samples off tanks or packages. Monitoring dissolved oxygen content at every step of the post-fermentation process is an important quality control step that allows brewers to ensure their process is optimal, and that their beer will stay fresh as long as possible.



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CRAFTING SAN DIEGO:

Lessons from Napa's Wine Industry

BY VINCE VASQUEZ

(This op-ed is part a series of essays on ideas to transform San Diego into the #1 craft beer market & tourist destination in America.)

With breweries opening more frequently than ever in San Diego County, it's important to consider how growth and diversity will impact the marketplace image of local craft brewers. Borrowing a concept from Napa Valley's wine industry could help elevate consumer awareness of local craft brewers to a global level.

It's well known that Napa Valley's reputation within the wine industry took generations to build; manuscripts from the late 19th century reference grape growing in the region. Interestingly, it was not until 1981 that Napa was formally recognized by the federal government as a grape-growing area. Though Napa Valley was the first region in California to receive an American Viticultural Area (AVA) designation, consensus on building a "regional brand" within the Valley would come much later.

As Napa Valley grew, so too did the ambitions of its local vintners. Some growers sought equal recognition for their unique growing area within the county's vast 43,000 acres. They were fully within their right to do so; while federal law designated Napa Valley as a viticultural area, the law also provided for designation of smaller AVAs within counties. Some vintners began to worry about consumer confusion, and whether smaller AVAs could ultimately impede regional branding efforts (Napa County would eventually become home to 16 distinct sub-AVAs). Key leaders in the Napa growing community, particularly vintner Robert Mondavi, articulated that the regional brand has power, consumer value, and deserved preservation.

Proposals emerged to uniformly label all local wine with the region of origin. Pro-

ponents argued that by printing the words "Napa Valley" on the front label of every bottle, the greater Napa wine "brand" could be simultaneously protected and promoted. This concept, also known as conjunctive labeling, was new to the United States, but not to the wine industry; France and Italy have enforced conjunctive labeling laws since the mid-20th century.



The Napa Valley Vintners Association (NVVA), the regional industry trade association, began a multi-year process to study and discuss the issue in open meetings. A diverse array of stakeholders were brought together. Local and federal options were explored. Ultimately, the NVVA decided to draft legislation and pass conjunctive labeling into state law, becoming the first region to do so in California.

With support from the Napa Valley Farm Bureau and other local and state industry groups, the NVVA sponsored a state bill in early 1989 that required any vintner located within Napa Valley, including those with sub-AVAs, to print "Napa Valley" on their labels (to a certain minimum size). The proposed legislation did not seek to create

a new model for the state, only a solution for the region.

The NVVA argued to state lawmakers that the attention of the consumers "must be on a scale large enough (such as the 'Napa Valley' can be – but not any of its districts) to support the continuance of good will for this valuable California agricultural resource." Still, they struck a fair balance with smaller AVAs. The bill allowed sub-appellations to continue to be used, and did not impose on their use in any way. Proponents touted conjunctive labeling as a constructive, "no loser" solution. In fact, the California Association of Winegrape Growers supported the bill in part because it did "not hinder the development and recognition of distinctive sub-regions."

Napa's conjunctive labeling law was passed unanimously in the State Senate and signed by the Governor on September 20th, 1989. The law reads that "it is necessary to require wines produced within the Napa

Valley to be labeled as being derived from that valley...in order to preserve consumer identification and understanding of the name 'Napa Valley' and to protect...wine products derived from that area." For the first time, Napa brought the American wine industry into conformity with the international practices of regional wine labeling. Conjunctive labeling laws have since been passed for other wine growing regions in the state, including Sonoma, Lodi and Paso Robles.

Today, it's easy for consumers to purchase Napa Valley wine at any store, bar, or restaurant in the world, because the bottles are uniformly labeled. The consistent placement of "Napa Valley" on wine bottles has contributed to Napa's success in becoming

the most widely recognized wine region in America. It wasn't a sure thing that Napa vintners would come to consensus on that decision, or whether there was enough political support for the idea to pass, but they ultimately prevailed, and have since kept themselves 15 to 20 years ahead of the competition.

In some respects, San Diego's craft brewing community is now on a similar plane as Napa Valley was in the 1980s. There is currently no consensus on how local beer should be labeled. Some brewers do not reference San Diego County anywhere on their labeling or packaging. Those brewers that do print the words "San Diego" do so with different text sizes and in different ways. While this is not per se a problem, it's a big missed opportunity to do something greater with the incredible talent and creativity that emerges from our region.

Could conjunctive labeling be useful for San Diego craft brewers? What are the pros and cons of having "San Diego County" featured on every beer bottle produced in our region? These are questions worth asking.

The benefits are clear. Conjunctive labeling helps build a regional brand with consistency across brands and time. It improves consumer education and marketing at a minimum cost. It will increase sales through marketplace visibility, and improve consumer confidence of product quality. To be sure, many local brewers have worked hard to develop brands associated with local cities and neighborhoods. Geography matters, and so too does the one all brewers share.



What Napa was able to achieve through conjunctive labeling was perhaps said best by John Newmeyer, vintner and founder of Heron Lake Vineyard, who spoke in favor of the NVVA bill. In a letter dated May 9, 1989, Newmeyer noted he was one of the original applicants for the Wild Horse Valley AVA designation, a sub-AVA within Napa County. He stated that "we believe that small districts in the Napa area, such as ours, can possess great distinct viticultural virtues which are of great interest and meaning to the connoisseur of fine wines. But we are all part of the overall family of Napa Valley grapegrowing, and we need to retain this identity, for it has meaning far and wide to all those who enjoy good wine."

Napa took risks, fostered consensus, and ultimately built the solidarity they needed within their region to become a national leader. Napa continues to lead the nation in wine production. Let's not miss an opportunity to share our regional brand with millions of consumers, and create a powerful competitive edge in the marketplace. Rather than wait for Portland, Denver, or another brewing region to take the initiative and reap the rewards, let's start the conversation that we now need to have.

Vince Vasquez is the Senior Policy Analyst at the National University System Institute for Policy Research, an economic think-tank based in San Diego.

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LET'S GO CLANDESTINO

Baja Beer & Food Tours

BY RYAN LAMB

Angel Mirón, a Hamilton's employee for more than six years now, was born in San Diego and raised in Tijuana until he was 18. While earning his Bachelor of Arts in Latin American Studies from SDSU, Mirón would take friends across the border on day trips for fun.

But soon he realized that to really make San Diegans aware of the craft movement happening in Mexico, he'd have to start organizing large groups.

Through his website letsgoclandestino.net, Mirón has already put together nine beer and food tours -- five public, and four private.

"I would love for the region of San Diego, Tijuana and Ensenada to be more united on a craft beer level, do collaborations and form bonding relationships," Mirón told WC.

His next monthly public tour is February 23rd from noon - 9 p.m. Attendees will be transported on a chartered bus from Hamilton's Tavern in South Park to greyhound races at the historic Agua Caliente racetrack, a beer tasting featuring Silenus Cerveza Artesanal, and a few spots in between.

In March, Let's Go Clandestino is planning another tour of Valle de Guadalupe. E-mail letsgoclandestino@gmail.com for more information or to book a tour spot.



Above: Angel Mirón with Eugenio Romero, owner of Wendlandt Brewery in Ensenada. All photos courtesy of Let's Go Clandestino



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www.BareBackGrill.com
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www.BubsSanDiego.com
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675 W Beech St. | 619.269.2202
www.Craft-Commerce.com
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1220 3rd Ave. | 619.232.8414
www.DowntownJohnnyBrowns.com
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www.KnottyBarrel.com
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777 G St. | 619.446.0002
www.NeighborhoodSD.com
- Ogawashi**
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www.Ogawashi.com
- Quality Social**
789 6th Ave. | 619.501.7675
QualitySocial.com
- Queenstown Public House**
1557 Columbia St. | 619.546.0444
www.BareBackGrill.com/Queenstown
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611 5th Ave. | 619.233.7327
www.Searsucker.com
- The Field Irish Pub & Restaurant**
544 5th Ave. | 619.232.9840
www.TheField.com
- The Hopping Pig**
734 5th Ave. | 619.546.6424
www.TheHoppingPig.com
- The Local**
1065 4th Ave. | 619.231.4447
www.TheLocalSanDiego.com
- The Tippy Crow**
770 5th Ave. | 619.338.9300
www.TheTippyCrow.com
- Tin Can Alehouse**
1863 5th Ave. | 619.955.8525
www.TheTinCan1.Wordpress.com

BOTTLE SHOPS

- Bacchus Wine Bar & Market**
647 G Street | 619.236.0005
www.BacchusWineMarket.com
- Best Damn Beer Shop (@ Super Jr Market)**
1036 7th Ave. | 619.232.6367
www.BestDamnBeerShop.com
- Bottlecraft**
2161 India St. | 619.487.9493
www.BottlecraftBeer.com

BREW PUBS

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2215 India St. | www.BallastPoint.com
- Karl Strauss Brewing Co.**
1157 Columbia St. | 619.234.2739
www.KarlStrauss.com
- Monkey Paw Pub & Brewery**
805 16th St. | 619.358.9901
www.MonkeyPawBrewing.com
- The Beer Company**
602 Broadway Ave. | 619.398.0707
www.SDBeerCo.com

BREWERIES

- Mission Brewery**
1441 L St. | 619.818.7147
www.MissionBrewery.com

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4223 30th St. | 760.703.0433
www.BelchinBeaver.com
- Bourbon Street Bar & Grill**
4612 Park Blvd. | 619.291.0173
www.BourbonStreetSD.com
- Carnita's Snack Shack**
2632 University Ave. | 619.294.7675
www.CarnitasSnackShack.com

- Counterpoint**
830 25th St. | 619.564.6722
www.CounterpointSD.com
- Cueva Bar**
2123 Adams Ave. | 619.269.6612
www.CuevaBar.com
- DiMille's Italian Restaurant**
3492 Adams Ave. | 619.283.3153
www.DiMilles.com
- Coin Op Game Room**
3926 30th St. | 619.291.1859
www.ElTakeltEasy.com
- Farm House Cafe**
2121 Adams Ave. | 619.269.9662
www.FarmHouseCafeSD.com
- Hamilton's Tavern**
1521 30th St. | 619.238.5460
www.HamiltonsTavern.com
- Live Wire Bar**
2103 El Cajon Blvd. | 619.291.7450
www.LiveWireBar.com
- Nate's Garden Grill**
3120 Euclid Ave. | 619.546.7700
- Polite Provisions**
4696 30th St. | 619.677.3784
www.PoliteProvisions.com
- Ritual Tavern**
4095 30th St. | 619.283.1618
www.RitualTavern.com
- Sea Rocket Bistro**
3382 30th St. | 619.255.7049
www.SeaRocketBistro.com
- Small Bar**
4628 Park Blvd. | 619.795.7998
www.SmallBarSD.com
- Station Tavern**
2204 Fern St. | 619.255.0657
www.StationTavern.com

- The Haven Pizzeria**
4051 Adams Ave. | 619.281.1904
www.TheHavenPizzeria.com
 - The Rose Wine Pub**
2219 30th St. | 619.280.1815
www.TheRoseWinePub.com
 - The South Park Abbey**
1946 Fern St. | 619.696.0096
www.TheSouthParkAbbey.com
 - Tiger!Tiger! Tavern**
3025 El Cajon Blvd. | 619.487.0401
www.TigerTigerTavern.com
 - Toronado San Diego**
4026 30th St. | 619.282.0456
www.ToronadoSD.com
 - True North Tavern**
3815 30th St. | 619.291.3815
www.TrueNorthTavern.com
 - URBN Coal Fired Pizza**
3085 University Ave. | 619.255.7300
www.URBNNorthPark.com
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2215 30th St. 3 | 619.501.3342
www.StoneBrew.com/Visit

BREW PUBS

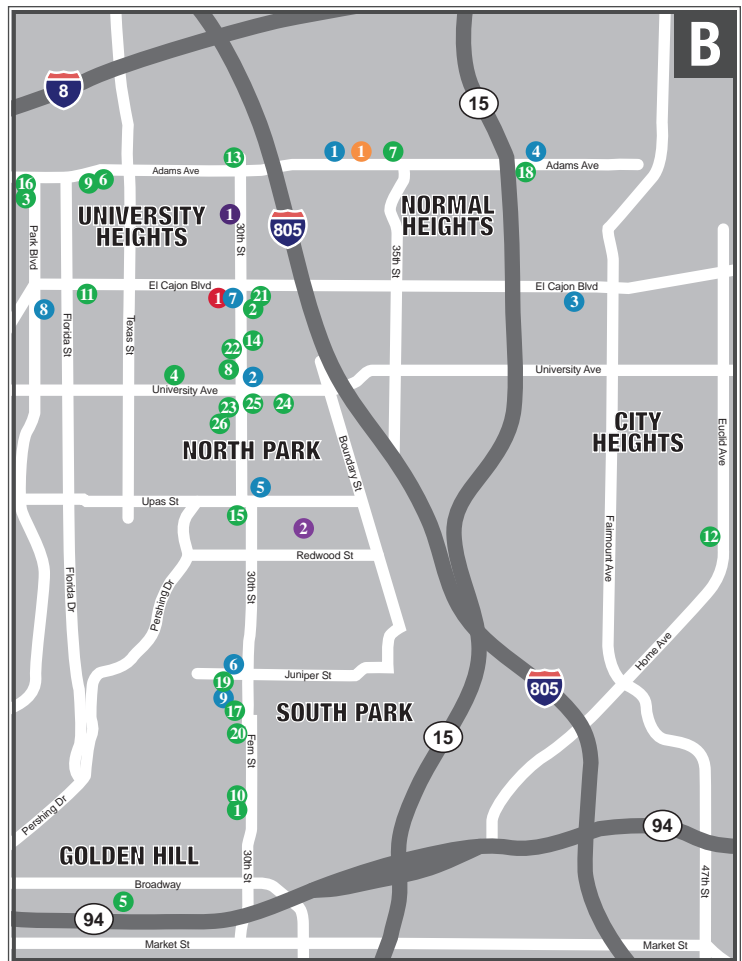
- Blind Lady Ale House/Automatic Brewing Co**
4175 Park Blvd. | 619.255.2491
www.BlindLadyAleHouse.com

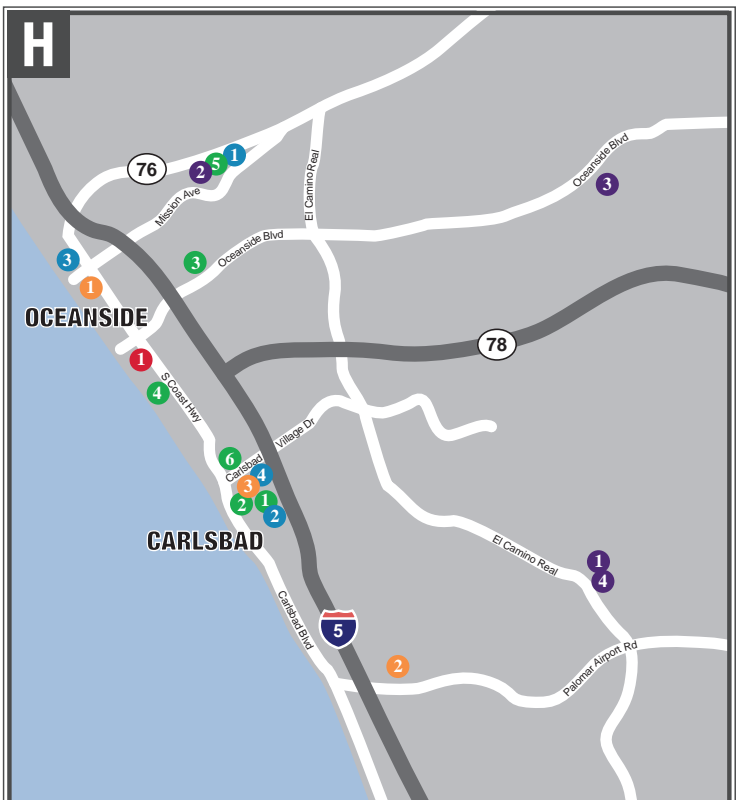
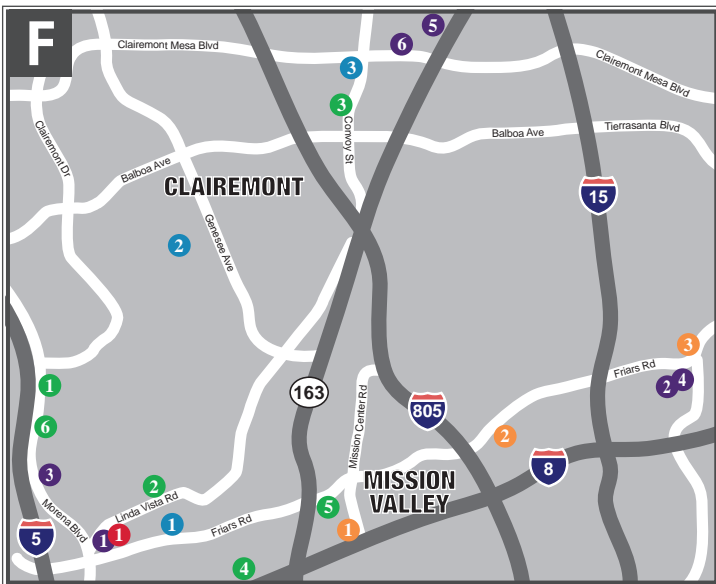
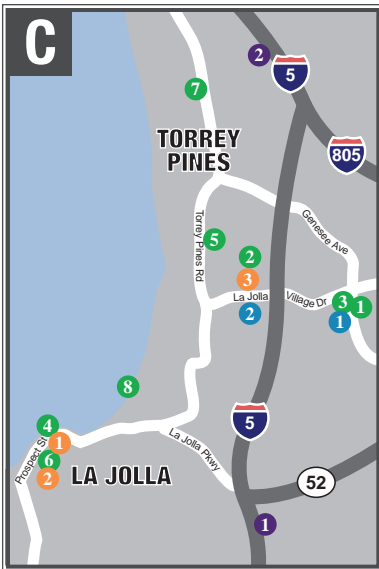
BREWERIES

- Poor House Brewing Company**
4494 30th St.
www.PoorHouseBrew.com
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3176 Thorn St.
www.ThornStreetBrew.com

HOME BREW SUPPLY

- The Homebrewer**
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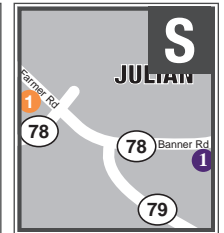
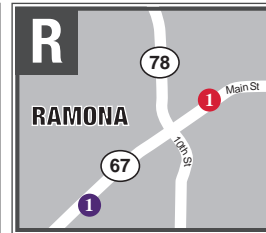
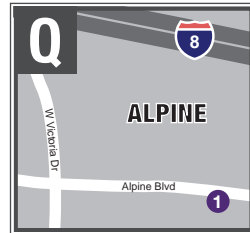
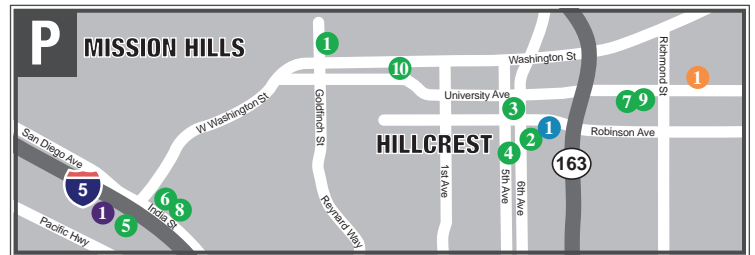
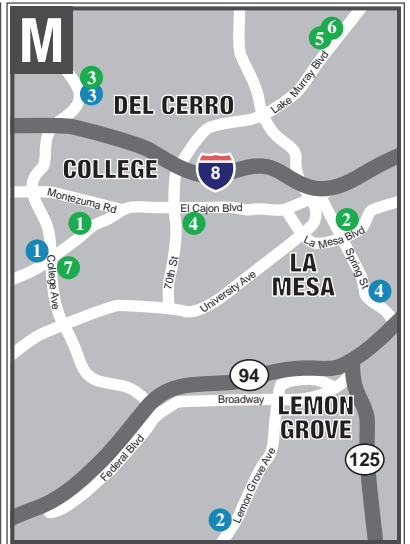
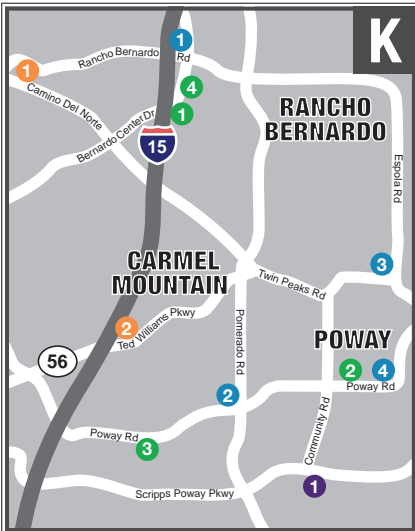
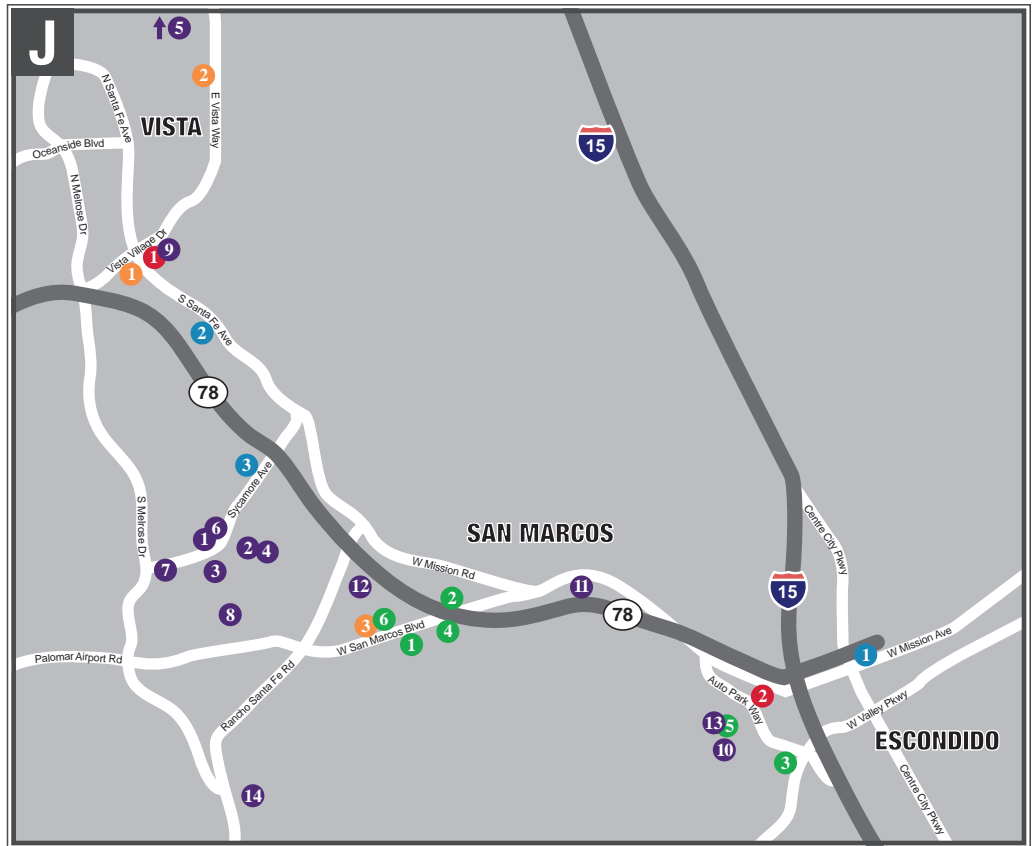
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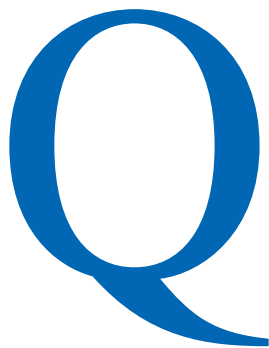


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is for Quaff

This glossary of terms comes straight from the beer educators at CraftBeer.com, with San Diego items listed in **bold**

Quaff - To drink deeply.

Quaff is also an acronym for Quality Ale and Fermentation Fraternity, a group of men and women dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of homebrewing and beer evaluation. They're the largest club in San Diego, and they meet the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at All American Grill in Hazard Center. Dues are \$25 per year, and guests are always welcome.

R

Racking - The process of transferring beer from one vessel to another, especially into the final package or keg.

Real Ale - A style of beer found primarily in England, where it has been championed by the consumer rights group called the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Generally defined as beers that have undergone a secondary fermentation in the container from which they are served and that are served without the application of carbon dioxide

Regional Craft Brewery - As defined by the Brewers Association: An independent regional brewery having either an all malt flagship or has at least 50% of its volume in either all malt beers or in beers which use adjuncts to enhance rather than lighten flavor.

Reinheitsgebot - The German beer purity law passed in 1516, stating that beer may



only contain water, barley, and hops. Yeast was later added after its role in fermentation was discovered by Louis Pasteur.

Resin - The gummy organic substance produced by certain plants and trees. Humulone and lupulone, for example, are bitter resins that occur naturally in the hop flower.

Rip Current Brewing - Helmed by homebrew icons Paul Sangster and Guy Shobe, Rip Current brews beers of all varieties, with a special emphasis on ultra-precise water chemistry.

Rock Bottom Brewery Restaurant La Jolla - Brewmaster Marty Mendiola, a former San Diego Brewers Guild President, took home three medals at the 2013 Great American Beer Festival for his Porter, Irish Red, and English Brown.

Rough Draft Brewing Company - This local brewery's "Weekday IPA" was named in the top 25 beers of the year from Draft Magazine.

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ironfistbrewing.com



Aztec Brewing Co
2330 La Mirada Ste 300
aztecbrewery.com



Prohibition Brewing Co
2004 E. Vista Way
prohibitionbrewingcompany.com



Indian Joe Brewing Co
2379 La Mirada Dr
indianjoebrewing.com/



Latitude 33 Brewing Co
1430 Vantage Ct Ste 104
lat33brew.com



Belching Beaver Brewing Co
980 Park Center Dr Ste A
belchinbeaver.com



Barrel Harbor Brewing Co
2575 Pioneer Ave. Ste 104
barrelharborbrewing.com



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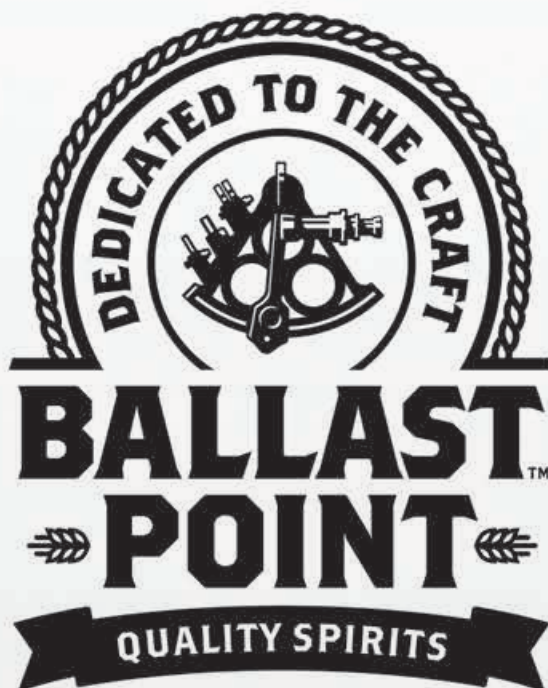
Fifty Barrels Winery
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