

West Coaster

AUGUST 2020 | SAN DIEGO BEVERAGE NEWS |



CITIZEN BREWERS & CREATIVITY

FIVE SUITS OPENS

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL BEERS



WE MADE A HUGE MISTAKE.



Truth be told, we've made thousands of them.

You see, every Stone is the result of trial and error and error and error until all that's left is the best damn beer we can brew. We sweat the small stuff, constantly pushing the boundaries of independent craft beer.

So no, dear West Coaster reader, these upside-down labels aren't a mistake. They're the visual manifestation of our most deeply held belief.

Because in the pursuit of craft beer perfection, we

LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED





DRINK GOOD BEER

AT HOME!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT.
CHEERS & STAY SAFE!**

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BOTTLECRAFT.COM**

**LITTLE ITALY
NORTH PARK
LIBERTY STATION
SOLANA BEACH
SORRENTO VALLEY**

DEAR READER,

We hope that you're having a pleasant end of the world. I don't think I really need to explain why we paused production nor how crazy this year has been. I will instead focus on how stoked we are to be back. Like always, *West Coaster* has existed because we've had a lot of help over our ten years of existence. If it's a random news tip from a Facebook comment, or a T-shirt purchased, or by picking up this magazine, you've helped us. Thank you.

That said, we needed a lot of help to get this issue going. We were getting closer to throwing in the towel when Stone Brewing Co. reached out and inquired about advertising. I gave it to them straight, and said things were bleak because we didn't have any money to print. The stars aligned, as Stone was keen to include us in their 'Leave No Stone Unturned' campaign. When they heard we might not survive, Stone offered to foot the production bill for this issue you're reading. We are honored to have the one of the global standard bearers of craft beer believe in us enough to do such a thing.

Our relationship with Stone began more than ten years ago, before we printed our first issue in November 2010. Both myself and magazine co-founder Ryan Lamb wanted to make sure this publication was a good idea before we went into business. We reached out to Stone Brewing Co. in the hopes that someone would give us the time of day, and were surprised when Greg Koch responded personally. He invited us to lunch at Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens - Escondido (pictured on the cover) with Stone's then Social Media Coordinator Jacob McKean (who has since founded and run Modern Times). This meeting was inspiring, to say the least. Stone's a huge brewery, but they've never been too big for their britches. Stone's always been down to help out. We're just one example of this fact.

With a gargoyled patron helping us kickstart the engine that is *West Coaster*, we stand a fighting chance to survive. Combined with reader donations, government assistance, and encouragement from all sides, our sense of duty is renewed. We will keep telling stories from our hometown beer and beverage communities that deserve attention.

Be well,
Mike

Thank you to everyone who has supported us through Patreon — www.Patreon.com/WestCoasterSD — including Alejandro R., Andrew M., Ben E., Bob S., Brian G., Carolyn B., Chris L., Gaaron V., Ian B., Jason V., Judith D., Larry S., Matt P., Miguel L.B., Nick L., Nick P., Robert F., Sage O., Sean F., Stacey C., Steve H., Tom B., and Vince V. You've helped us through trying times! Thank you very much also to Kevin C., Edward C., Doug F., Randy D. for your donations through Venmo and Zelle.

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MASTHEAD

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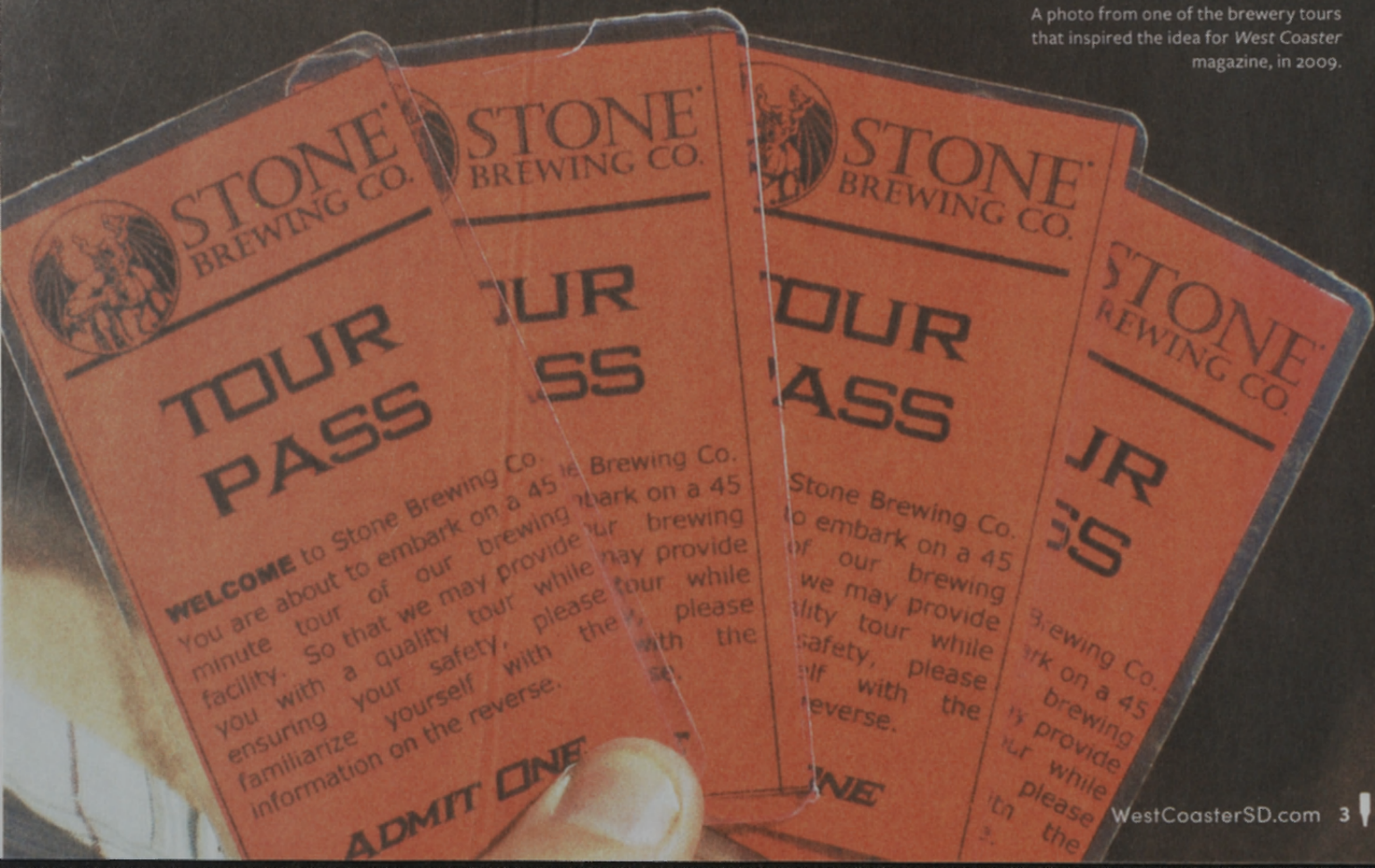
ON THE COVER

These upside-down labels started popping up in July, confusing some customers. The Leave No Stone Unturned campaign is another example of the company bucking the status quo.



WC Publisher Mike Shess (middle) with (l-r) Dr. Gonzalo Quintero (National City Councilmember), Greg Koch (Stone Brewing Executive Chairman), Omar Passons (Director, Department of Integrative Services, County of San Diego) and Vince Vasquez (Independent Economic Analyst) at the North County Craft Brew Symposium in 2014. Photo by Tim Stahl.

A photo from one of the brewery tours that inspired the idea for West Coaster magazine, in 2009.



Lifting the Rock:

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED CAMPAIGN

I've had a unique view of the local brewing industry since I started *West Coaster* with my business partner Ryan Lamb. As Stone Brewing Co. has always been the largest craft brewery in town, they've drawn a lot of my attention. Verily, the inspiration for this magazine can be traced to Phil McNitt (now with *Modern Times*) giving a tour in 2009 to me, Ryan, and future magazine team members Sam Tierney (former columnist, who is now head brewer at Firestone Walker's Propagator brewpub) and Kayla Coleman-Tierney (former magazine art director).

Throughout the years, they've always been the Moby Dick to my Captain Ahab, as they wouldn't advertise. So, what changed? A lot of trial and error, is my take. It is in Stone's failures that I see the greatest source of inspiration to this Leave No Stone Unturned marketing push. This is a brewery that pretty much ignores everyone and does what they want. Sometimes it doesn't work out, but it's always very interesting to watch. It's also usually delicious, even if fleeting.

Nobody was asking for a brewery in Berlin, but Stone wanted a brewery in Berlin. So, they swung for the fences and made it happen. Stone Brewing Berlin took a lot of time, effort, and money. It didn't work out. It happened, though, and for a brief period of time, it was glorious.

Not content to simply serve local food in their restaurants, Stone wanted to grow their own food. Thus, 19-acre Stone Farms was born. And while that project is no longer running, the farms hosted live music performances, beer dinners, a CSA program, and much more. Anyone who visited gained an appreciation for local agriculture and the hard work it takes to produce.

When Stone grew tired of people ragging on how they only made hoppy beers, they got really weird with it and released *The Stochasticity Project*. Always kind enough to send us sample beers, I remember opening the box and trying to pronounce the beer named Hibiscuscity, a 7.4% Belgian-style ale brewed with wheat, hibiscus, and orange peel, brewed by an outfit called Stochasticity Project (Stone didn't attached their name to any of the beers at first). Those beers aren't around anymore, and I still don't know how to pronounce any of the names, but they were tasty.

It's pretty appropriate that in the rollercoaster year of 2020 Stone decides to start advertising. It's in character. To quote Hunter S. Thompson, "When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." Stone's been consistently weird for as long as I've known them. It's nice to see their billboards around town as a reminder that no matter how strange things get, at least we'll have good beer.

- Mike Shess



Stone recently teamed up with several local breweries to craft a beer benefitting the San Diego Brewers Guild.

Beverage Briefs

➡ RIDING THE ROLLERCOASTER

“What do rollercoasters, blenders, and yo-yos have in common?” asked Mo Nuspl, a co-founder at Deft Brewing, in a June 30 e-mail to supporters. “They all accurately represent our emotions over the past few months here at Deft.”

Bay Park-based Deft, which shares tasting room space with the second location of Lost Cause Meadery, was relatively well-positioned for the July 1 reinstatement of “stage 2” coronavirus restrictions, which required the sale of food alongside alcohol for on-premise consumption; the beverage businesses boast a partnership with on-site Italian kitchen Cucina Caprese.

Lost Cause had been planning a grand opening for the new tasting room in March; as the situation developed, the event was temporarily remarketed as a “Super Safe & Sanitary Soft Opening” before they were forced to postpone it indefinitely.

➡ RECENT CLOSURES (TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT)

At time of press, several beer-related businesses closed for good, or went MIA, in the months since we last printed an issue.

In early March, the Tennessee-based corporation operating the Rock Bottom chain of brewpubs notified the La Jolla location’s employees that the business would close, with the company’s chief marketing officer Josh Kern noting that it was “purely a business decision as we continue to focus on other CraftWorks Holdings locations throughout the country.” In its twenty-plus year run, Rock Bottom La Jolla saw a cast of characters brewing, including Johnny “O” (who moved on to Coronado Brewing and White Labs), Marty Mendiola (Second Chance Brewing’s co-founder), Carli Smith (who’s now brewing in North Carolina), and Dan Anderson (former brewer at Gordon Biersch Mission Valley).

North County-based Culture Brewing announced in mid-March that they planned to close their Ocean Beach satellite tasting room in mid-April. The space had been open since November of 2014, hosting monthly art shows and other community events including frequent fundraisers. In its place, Chula Vista-based Novo Brazil will bring their brand to the beach community storefront.

Vista-based Iron Fist Brewing closed both of their locations in late March. Co-founder Eve Sieminski told WC, “It is with heaviest of hearts that we are making this announcement. After almost ten years our doors are closing permanently. It has been a pleasure getting to know you all and serving you the best beer we could. The friendships

we made will last a lifetime and we want to thank you for being part of the Iron Fist family.” The family-founded company was instrumental in developing the Vista beer scene, including the Vista Brewers Guild. In 2015, the Sieminskis opened a satellite tasting room in Barrio Logan, hosting community events like art shows and firefighter benefits.

On May 2, Escondido Brewing announced they would be closing that same day (although they briefly opened again for a one-day anniversary/farewell event on June 20). Opened in 2017, the company was well known for their Hopcondido IPA. In 2019, that beer was “crowd favorite” by a landslide at Green Flash’s charity-driven Brew Down Beer Festival. On their last day, Ketchen Smith provided *West Coaster* with this statement: “It was not an easy decision, but a bunch of things happened all at once and the major culprit was our to-go restrictions from COVID. EBC was designed for on-site sales with little distribution. Running out of growlers and cans very quickly became an issue. I am trying to be positive and look at this as an opportunity for growth. I worked very hard to make my passion job a reality and it resulted in amazing friendships, especially in the community and the brewing industry. Those connections will not go away, nor my experience as an owner and brewer. I will brew again and hope to share tasty brews with San Diego in the future.”

In late May, Thunderhawk Alements’ co-founder Jonathan Barbarin took to Facebook to announce the impending closure of the Miramar brewery. In the post, Barbarin did not mention the pandemic but rather a falling out in the ownership ranks. In October of this past year, Thunderhawk won a silver medal at the Great American Beer Festival for the American-style Black Ale “Bowie Knife.”

On June 30, Temecula-based Black Market Brewing (BMB) announced the temporary closure of their SDSU-area brewpub. “BMB SDSU will be temporarily closed until Fall 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions and the effect it’s had on the hospitality industry,” the company posted on Instagram. “These factors make it difficult to staff and nearly impossible to focus on our beer program. Our customers deserve our best and we just can’t deliver in this current climate.” Black Market still plans to open their Temecula taproom.

The fate of some others, like Vista’s Indian Joe, is currently uncertain. The following was posted on Facebook on June 16: “Many of you have been reaching out about us re-opening. We hope to, but at this time it is still unclear as to when. We really appreciate your continued understanding and support!”

Bagby Beer in Oceanside closed “until further notice” on March 16, and

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Jamaica
Lime
09 Jul

Lemon
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16 Jul

Watermelon
Black
Pepper
23 Jul

Cherry
Soursop
30 Jul

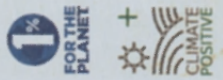
Grapefruit
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Kelsey McNair,
North Park Beer Co.

explained their reasoning in a blog post titled “The Impossible Choice,” which, among other details, pointed to the safety of their employees and called for elected officials to create long-term plans for small business support. On May 22, Bagby posted that the company was gearing up for a “Season 2” but that they weren’t quite ready: “And, for us, we are not cool with exposing our guests, employees or ourselves to danger, so that is holding us back, still. We also care a lot about how we are able to interact with you. Imposing a bunch of new rules on you, for us to monitor and police, just doesn’t seem like the right thing to do just yet. We are standing by, taking in all the info, feedback, and best practices we are seeing around us so that we really nail it when we do reopen.”

➡ **STRUGGLING WITH CUSTOMER COMPLIANCE**

As if county and state-imposed restrictions weren’t tough enough, many brewery owners are enduring extra headaches from some of their customers. North Park Beer Co. stopped offering on-site drinking on July 1 due to concerns over staff safety. The following comes from company founder Kelsey McNair:

“We re-opened for dine/drink-in for nearly two weeks and ultimately became exhausted by many guests who treated our staff like crap and made them feel unsafe.

“We observed consistent non-compliance with the Public Health Order. Many patrons would walk in without face masks on and/or they would neglect to put their masks back on when walking to/from restrooms. We observed several large groups arrive who appeared to be bar hopping. At one point over the weekend we had a group of 15 (!) arrive and many in the party tried to order ‘Jack & Cokes’ (we don’t serve liquor...). On a couple occasions, patrons tried to pick fights with managers over not wanting to wear their masks. We saw several progressive meetups where over the course of hours people would come and go from tables, all in all just very irresponsible behavior.

“There were plenty of good customers too, who would diligently abide by our house rules, but when one person doesn’t follow the rules, the damage is already done. We ultimately felt overrun and my staff completely demoralized. All the while we were utilizing a host with a scripted dialogue about our rules, assigning tables, using aggressive cleaning and sanitizing all high-touch surfaces... we were doing everything as right as we could.

“The real problem is that you can’t control the actions of the public, even in your own space. It is impossible to provide good hospitality in this environment when at the same time you’re forced to be the face mask police. This is a really fucked up time to be in the service industry where many business owners are worried about their livelihood and the longevity of their business.

“However, the safety and well-being of our staff is our absolute highest priority even if it causes us a financial burden. If we can’t keep our staff safe, then we have no reason to provide on-site indoor drinking service even if the county allows it.

“We’ll be operating with beer to-go, local delivery, and statewide shipping for now. We’re now investigating options for installing an order window and utilizing the public right of way outside our space as a place for guests to enjoy our beer in a safer setting without causing our staff to feel unsafe.”

➡ **ANGRY PETE’S NEW HOME IN KENSINGTON**

Detroit-style pizza maker “Angry” Pete Harbison has been working with Kensington Brewing to build out a kitchen since last year. After coronavirus-related delays, in mid-June, he debuted the on-premise concept that had previously existed only as a pop-up servicing breweries around the county. Currently, Angry Pete’s Pizza at Kensington Brewing is operating Wednesday through Sunday for patio dine-in and to-go orders.

Harbison also recently started offering par-baked pizzas as a to-go option at multiple locations, including a few select grocery stores like the two Valley Farm Markets in La Jolla and Spring Valley.

“As a small startup catering company, we are lucky that we were able to adjust our business model quickly during these strange times,” Harbison said, adding that he’s interested in developing a partnership with a local brewery in the East County area for another full-time location. “We see the brewery model that works: one main production location with several tasting rooms; we’re planning on using this model for our pizza as well.”

➡ **COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN PINE**

Oceanside’s Northern Pine Brewing turned to their fans to crowdfund a cowler machine in early May, setting a \$7,500 goal on GoFundMe. “While we’ve been closed, we’ve been balancing paying bills with trying to invest in operations that will allow us to get our beer to the public despite the shutdown and bring us a new revenue source when we reopen,” said Anne Ortega, company co-founder. “Getting this one piece of equipment will provide us an entirely new system that accomplishes our goal in a safe, easy, and convenient method for both Northern Pine and our customers.” Crowdfunders reached the goal within 24 hours, and at time of press had raised a total of \$11,870; on May 29, they fired up the brewhouse after a three-month hiatus in order to fill those cowlers.

➡ **ROULEUR SIGNS NEW DEAL WITH H.G. FENTON**

Carlsbad’s Rouleur Brewing spent nearly two years looking for a permanent home away from their turnkey Brewery Igniter space. In early 2020, they’d actually found a site, but plans were terminated when COVID-19 struck. “The pandemic and subsequent forced closure of all food and beverage establishments caused Rouleur’s primary SBA lender to halt nearly all lending operations to the hospitality industry,” Rawley Macias said in a press release. “It became apparent that breweries who were overextended and burdened with large leases and debt payments were the most at risk of closure.”

With the current climate and uncertainty of the industry going forward, Rouleur decided to approach its landlord, H.G. Fenton, about exiting the Brewery Igniter program and converting its current facility to a



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TABBERER
IPA
Brewed with WLP008 East Coast Ale Yeast
INDIA PALE ALE
Tropical | Citrus | Hazy
5.7% ALC by VOL | One Pint (473 mL)

standard lease agreement (at standard market rates). In late May they came to an agreement, with Rouleur also buying the equipment onsite and expanding into the neighborhood suite.

⇒ EXTENSION GRANTED FOR MHB: IMPERIAL BEACH

Mike Hess Brewing's Imperial Beach location, open since March of 2019, is still a work-in-progress. Hess & co. had been planning an ambitious second phase of construction, and were given a green light in February of this year, before COVID-19 threw a wrench in the plans.

By June, the company needed an extension on their permit. On June 15, Mike Hess wrote on Facebook that the new schedule foresaw construction starting the Tuesday after Labor Day and finishing in October. He'd hoped to continue operating, "keep the 25+ local IB peeps employed all summer, and try to recover from the devastating effects of the COVID shutdown which has crippled us. For a while, it was unclear how long we'd be shut down, whether we'd survive as a business or be able to ever do what we loved to do again - make great beer, and provide a great venue for people to gather 'round." With public support through a signature-gathering campaign, an extension was granted on Wednesday, June 17.

⇒ LOOKING FORWARD WITH THE LOCAL LEGION

San Diego Legion, our local Major League Rugby (MLR) franchise, joined forces with Ballast Point to release the American-style Legion Lager in early July. Starting today, the special release beer will be available in pints, crowlers and growlers at Ballast Point locations in Southern California, including Home Brew Mart, Little Italy, Long Beach and Miramar.

"San Diego is the 'Capital of Craft Beer,' and we wanted to partner with a local craft brewery to create a delicious beer that lives up to this accolade," said SD Legion President & CEO Ryan Patterson. "Much like Ballast Point is regarded as one of the brewing industry's pioneers, our team and the rest of the MLR are paving the way for professional rugby in the U.S. We're proud to call them our 'official craft beer partner' for the 2021 season."

⇒ BREWERS ASSOCIATION NOT IMMUNE

The Brewers Association (BA), the not-for-profit trade association representing the nation's brewers, had laid off 35% of their workforce (24 employees) in two rounds by early July, citing the cancellation of their 2020 events (reportedly 70% of their revenue).

As noted by website Good Beer Hunting, the BA was ineligible for government assistance "because it's classified as a 501(c)(6), meaning it's a non-profit focused on the business interests of members, largely through marketing and lobbying." The site also noted that "a survey the BA sent this week soliciting feedback around a virtual event indicates that an online version of CBC 2021 is a strong possibility;" CBC, or Craft Brewers Conference, is currently scheduled for March 29 to April 1, 2021, here in San Diego.

⇒ WHITE LABS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Miramar-based yeast manufacturer White Labs started off their twenty-fifth year in business with some big plans, including giving away trips to three Brewers Association conferences or festivals as part of a customer contest; because of COVID-19, all those events ended up getting cancelled.

In better news, White Labs released their first canned beer in early July: Tabberer IPA. The four-packs include two beers with WLP001 California Ale yeast and two with WLP008 East Coast Ale yeast; all other ingredients are the same.

The company, founded in 1995 by Chris White after graduating from the UCSD with a Ph.D. in biochemistry, has mainly focused on producing pitchable quantities of liquid brewer's yeast for homebrew stores and professional brewers.

"I love talking about the science of yeast and its impact on beer aroma and flavor. Opening a brewery was the way we could show this impact. But not everyone can visit our San Diego Tasting room or Asheville Kitchen & Tap brewpub," said White. "Our first can release beer furthers our company mission and allows consumers to experience the impact of yeast and fermentation in their own homes."

Tabberer IPA is named after Horace Tabberer Brown, a British chemist, who shared a passion for science and brewing. While working as a brewer in the late 1800s, he set up a small lab on-site, which became the first record of a scientist using a microscope in a brewery. Our most popular beer blends science with craft in this interpretation of east meets west style duo of India Pale Ales.

In other company developments, a new monthly YouTube series called "The Pitch" will explore every aspect of homebrewing, from recipe development to brew days, beer styles, equipment, and more. "We are hoping to target all levels of beer geeks and brewers with an emphasis on homebrewers," said Erik Fowler, White Labs' education & engagement manager.

Additionally, White Labs just joined MetroConnect, an international sales accelerator program run by World Trade Center San Diego and co-underwritten by JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Procopio (plus support from more than a dozen local and international businesses and organizations).

Now in its fifth year, MetroConnect participants receive a \$5,000 grant, a one-year subscription to premium translation software (courtesy of program sponsor SYSTRAN), discounts on international travel, executive workshops on export-related topics, and access to a global mentor and service provider network.

"We applaud White Labs for taking the next step in going global," said Nikia Clarke, executive director of World Trade Center San Diego. "Amidst a global shutdown caused by COVID-19, ongoing trade negotiations with key trading partners, and rapid changes to global supply chains, it is more important now than ever to give local small and medium-sized enterprises an edge in the global marketplace by equipping them with valuable resources."

WORKING TO DISMANTLE BIAS

ONE PINT AT A TIME

BY BETH DEMMON

San Diego beer prides itself on its history of breaking boundaries, setting high bars for quality, and cultivating a community unlike any other. But despite these accolades, well-earned as they may be, we as an industry have forgotten, ignored, downplayed, or even defended the problematic history of our region.

Like the entirety of the United States, San Diego occupies land stolen from Indigenous people, including bands from the Mission Indians and Kumeyaay Nation. Southern California's well-documented history as a hotbed for white supremacist groups like White Aryan Resistance and the Proud Boys has also stealthily (as well as openly) nurtured prejudiced attitudes against Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). Claire Trageser reported for KPBS that after reviewing police records from 2001 to 2020, San Diego police officers are much more likely to shoot people of color (65%) vs. white people (42%).

These are not things that happened a long time ago or far away. These things are happening now, right here. *The San Diego Union-Tribune* reported a 15% increase in hate crimes in 2017 after reviewing data from the FBI and California Department of Justice. COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities in access to healthcare, financial assistance, and small business ownership. Tangentially, *The New York Times* recently revealed the Black Lives Matter movement is likely the largest social movement in history, in spite of (and partially in thanks to) the pandemic. San Diego remains impacted both in the past and in real-time by both of these events. And we'll never look the same.

HOW THIS RELATES TO BEER

Historically, beer has been touted as an everyman's beverage: accessible and enjoyable by everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, or income. Brands have capitalized on that utopian vision for marketing purposes throughout generations, but arguably have only recently—as in within the last few months—begun to question the flimsy foundation on which the industry is built.

While more than 1,000 breweries worldwide are participating in the Black is Beautiful collaboration to protest against police brutality

towards the Black community, another victim-blames a Black man for his own murder because he acted like “a thug,” or tells a person of color not to discuss compensation when they ask why they make less than their white counterparts of comparable experience (which, incidentally, is completely illegal for employers to ask of employees). Beers are crafted in the name of LGBTQ+ Pride while others satirize Black Lives Matter as a beer name. Women are hired for production roles, but male coworkers still scream at their female supervisor “I don't need you to mommy me!” when given direction.

These are all true stories from the San Diego craft beer community. I've left them vague for a number of reasons: privacy for those who have shared their experiences with me, their fear of retribution (physically, legally, or emotionally), as well as to cause readers to think “Do I know who this is?” You may, you may not. Either way, it demonstrates the pervasiveness of problematic behavior within our own industry and highlights the need for every single one of us to actively work towards correcting it.

WHAT #SDBEER HAS ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR

Progress is being made within the broken system. In late 2019, the San Diego Brewers Guild (SDBG) launched one of the first Inclusion Committees in the country (of which I am a member), dedicated to providing guidance to brewery and affiliate members on how to promote equity in all aspects of operation. Every economic impact report from California State University San Marcos has reported millions of dollars in annual charitable contributions from the craft beer industry. Just last month, with the help of Border X Brewing and Bread & Salt, the Mujeres Brew Club (MBC), a woman-centric, Latina-run beer education group, announced an ambitious training program and operational brewery in Barrio Logan that will give women and people of color the opportunity to learn professional skills in the beer space.

“Border X believes that our nation is at its best when we embrace *all* cultures, backgrounds, and traditions as equally valuable and awesome,” says David Favela, co-founder of Border X in an email to *West Coaster*. “Our breweries (and now MBC) are located in underserved

communities because we believe that regardless of your income level, identity, or religion, we all deserve a safe, clean, culturally rich space to enjoy together."

These are phenomenal initiatives that have the potential to change the face of San Diego beer. But they're just the first step. Timothy Parker, owner and co-founder of Chula Vista Brewery, describes the climate he navigates daily as a Black man, which has taken a different tone since nationwide protests condemning police brutality against Black people began. Prejudice as a culture and silence towards it in beer are inextricably linked.

"When does the community step up and say, 'This is wrong?'" asks Parker. "That's been the biggest problem—people tend to look away at all these issues because they don't affect them. When you look away, that's just as good as saying, 'This is okay.' People want you to just stick to beer because they want you to be silent."

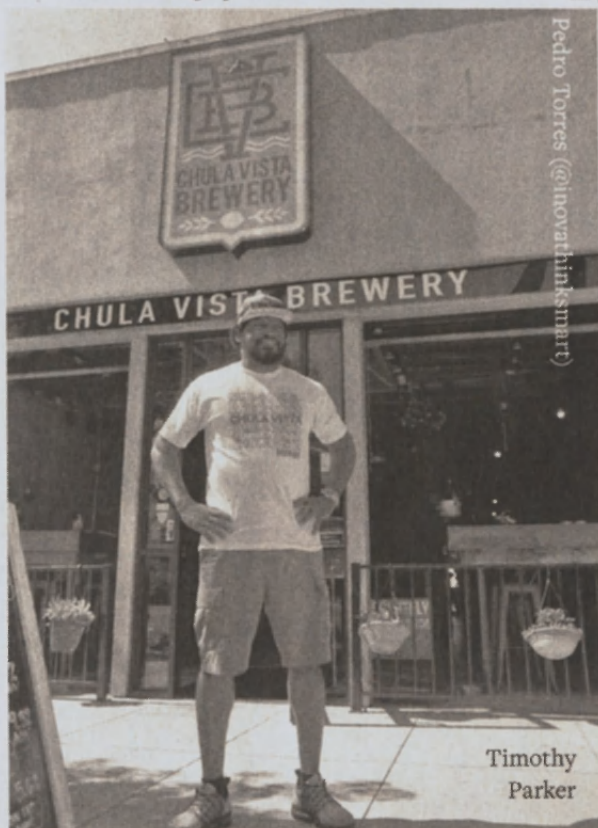
THE RACIAL REALITY WE FACE

According to the latest census, the racial demographics of San Diego County are 64% white, 32% Hispanic/Latinx, 10.9% Asian, 5.1% Black, 0.9% Native American, 0.5% Pacific Islander, and 13.6% identifying as other. (The census allows people to choose more than one racial identity, which is why these numbers don't add up to 100%.)

But if you look at the hotspots of San Diego beer—places like Miramar and North County—the numbers of white residents tend to swing even higher.

"There are natural and organic processes in place that perpetuate a culture centered on white males, and many are oblivious to their own bias and benefits," says Favela. "They are the taste makers and their definition of what is 'great' is the standard they set. Anyone trying to introduce a different style or flavor is considered 'not true-to-style' and 'gimmicky.' Let's actively begin to dismantle the barriers for all of us to succeed and overcome these pre-existing processes and structures that shut so many of us out, and stop us from bringing our *best* to share with everyone."

Currently, San Diego has one Black-owned brewery (Chula Vista Brewery) and a few with women as co-owners (Second Chance, AleSmith, and Pizza Port), but none solely owned by a woman. There's a smattering of non-white-owned breweries as well (Latinx: Border X and Thr3e Punk Ales Brewing Company; Asian: Savagewood Brewing Company; Hawaiian: Pacific Islander Beer Company; and Native American: Rincon Reservation Road Brewery), but when held against San Diego's 150+ craft breweries, this doesn't even come close to reflecting the area's demographics as a whole.



Timothy Parker

Do we really believe this disparity is because non-white people just don't drink beer—or because we've been content in our apathy towards a traditionally hostile space for anyone perceived as other? "The industry has kind of a stigma, the idea that minorities don't drink craft beer as much, which is hilarious because we *do* drink craft beer," says Parker. "We only have five or six different places in South Bay right now total. I can tell you we're taking at least half a million dollars a month away from North Park and everywhere else that used to get that income." He laughs. "You just cut out half your market just assuming they don't drink craft beer!"

STEPS TO TAKE

It doesn't make sense to strive for racial equality when the base numbers aren't equal; rather, racial equity should be the goal. That means providing the same opportunities for entry for both consumers and employees. The Inclusion Committee is currently working on a toolkit to share with SDBG members, but the Brewers Association's Diversity Ambassador Dr. J. Nikol Jackson-Beckham currently has a list of resources available on her site CraftBeerForAll.com.

In the meantime, if your brewery posted any solidarity to Black Lives Matter, the next step is to carefully examine your operations to uncover any potential areas of bias. Chances are astronomically high you'll find some. When is the last time you posted a non-white face on any marketing materials? Do your job postings contain gender-specific or ableist language that would deter prospective applicants from even applying? Have you ever collaborated with a non-white business? It will take time and effort to begin anti-racism initiatives, but a fear of failure is guaranteed to come true if you fail to even try.

"You can't tell me that out of 10 Black people who came in and asked for a job, you couldn't find space for one of them," says Parker. "That's when you can look and say, 'Hey, what are my hiring practices?' Some people just don't know they have a slight bias... but it happens. People aren't even aware that they're doing it. It's that awareness that needs to happen."

Even progressive groups like the women's professional beer organization Pink Boots Society and the Inclusion Committee have been charged with continuously evaluating their own operations. PBS recently laid out a long-term diversity plan on their website, and the Inclusion Committee currently lacks Native and Asian members representing community interests. (If a beer professional from either community would like to add their experience to the committee, please reach out to info@sdbeer.com for more information.)

Finally, for the love of all things holy, *stop* objectifying women or appropriating Black/

Hispanic culture on beer names or labels. It is so supremely uncool to see these “jokes” continue to be made at the expense of marginalized groups across craft beer. “All we need is just to start having respect for one another,” says Parker.

San Diego is unquestionably a leader in the beer community, both in our numbers and in our tight-knit community. Let’s not exclude any potential participants in that community for the sake of a cheap laugh or sheer laziness. It’s time to acknowledge that craft beer has

been built on a foundation of inequality. San Diego is not exempt from that, but our past missteps should only drive us to embrace the reality that yes, beer is political. Beer is economic. Beer is unifying. Beer can be better. We can be better. We *will* be better. ☺



Some of the members of the Mujeres Brew Club. Photos by Josue Castro.

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 Ruth Vela Jimenez | 3 Mina San Miguel | 5 Lauren West | 7 Nikki Lopez | 9 Fio Rossel |
| 2 Luz Ruby Lozano | 4 Patricia Coleman | 6 Iridian Larrinaga | 8 Deann Mendoza | 10 Judith Downie |

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LOCAL BREWERIES

CONTINUE FIGHT FOR

RACIAL EQUALITY

At time of press, more than 1,000 breweries (covering all 50 U.S. states plus 18 more countries) are participating in the Black Is Beautiful initiative started by Marcus Baskerville at Weathered Souls Brewing in San Antonio, Texas.

In San Diego, breweries that signed up are beginning to roll out their releases. AleSmith and Horus Aged Ales received national attention from *Forbes* for their "Mega Collaboration" which included brewers from Abnormal, Automatic, Bagby, Belching Beaver, Burgeon, Fall, Harland, Helia, Mason, Modern Times, North Park, Original 40, Pure Project, Resident, Second Chance, SouthNorte, Stave & Nail, and TapRoom Beer Co. San Diego-based Marea Coffee provided Geisha coffee for this 12.5% ABV Imperial Stout.

"I reached out to AleSmith for many reasons. They're great friends. They were one of the original breweries that got me into craft beer. And they have an iconic history here in San Diego," Harrop told *Forbes*. "I really wanted to make sure we did this somewhere that would represent San Diego and its quintessential brewing culture from the past, present, and future."

Proceeds from the beer will be donated to San Diegans for Justice. Will Izor, the warehouse supervisor at AleSmith, told WC why they were picked:

"The issue of equity and police accountability is at the forefront of conversations not only in San Diego but around the nation. They're working to create a transparent process to absolve officers of any wrongdoing or hold them accountable, which is a win/win for the community and law enforcement."

Izor, who's a good friend of Weathered Souls' Baskerville, said that "as a Black man in the beer industry, there aren't many of us. I think representation is key, and we as an industry need to realize that there is an untapped market of Black folks who drink craft. We see craft beer adopting the monikers of Black culture and hip hop, but sometimes we want that appreciation of the culture to also be reflected in the industry by bringing in more people of color who have the same love of craft beer that I and many of my friends have."



Kyle Harrop, founder (Horus Aged Ales) and Will Izor, warehouse supervisor (AleSmith Brewing). Photo by Brian Hernandez.

"Since we are talking about equity, there are times when I walk into a brewery or beer pub and get side-eyed or treated unfairly," said Izor. "I know a lot about beer, and sometimes people judge me and my friends, as if we aren't up on craft, or will serve everyone but us even though we've been waiting at the bar longer than people who get immediately served."

Brandon Montgomery, a certified beer server and beer judge who works part-time at Second Chance on top of his engineering job, participated in the brew at AleSmith. Izor mentioned that Montgomery is "taking

the lead on getting Brothas in the industry." Montgomery runs @BlackBeerTravelers and its Diversify Your Palate Map, which highlights breweries, wineries, distilleries, and other brands with diverse backgrounds.

"I would say right now is a time when people are pushing forward to diversify their situation and understand that there's another way to look at things that they may have not been aware of," Montgomery told *Matador Network*. "I found there's a lot of action going on now, but it took a lot of time for people to act and break down that wall."



AleSmith's "Black Is Beautiful" collab brew attendees. Photo by Tim Stahl.



Further, he said that "today you are frequenting these Black-owned, Asian-owned, women-owned establishments. But also continue to do that next week, next month. Talk about it with your friends. Change the general narrative. Have discussions and make it as if it's nothing special to do this; it's just understood that's what you do."

More local breweries participating in Black Is Beautiful with their own brews include Amplified Ales, Ballast Point, California Wild Ales (with 13 Point), Chula Vista, Five Suits (with Thunderhawk), Karl Strauss, Mikkeller SD, Stone Brewing, and Two Roots.

Bill Batten (TapRoom Beer), Will Izor (AleSmith), and Brandon Montgomery (@BlackBeerTravelers). Photo by Tim Stahl.

In late June, Coronado released a small-batch run of a new double IPA called Untitled, with 100% of the proceeds going directly to the Know Your Rights Camp and The Sentencing Project. The double dry-hopped beer clocks in at 8.1% ABV with Mosaic, Vic Secret, and Citra hops.

“We chose these two non-profits because of their outreach and involvement in the

black community on a number of key issues. Their platforms directly impact the black community and provide the resources to help improve their daily lives,” said Eddie Buchannon, the vice president of business development at Coronado Brewing.

Buchannon is leading the charge to diversify the company. “The first step for us was putting together a leadership team to devise


and implement an action plan that continues to push diversity and inclusiveness, not just here at Coronado, but the industry as a whole. In order for the craft industry to continue to grow, we must find more ways to bring more people in from different backgrounds and different ethnicities in order to build a community of beer lovers that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.”



Eddie Buchannon of Coronado Brewing.

Breweries such as Pizza Port and Modern Times took to social media to announce steps they're taking. Pizza Port's plans include continuing to deliver training to all employees on their zero tolerance policy on all forms of racism and discrimination; mandating implicit bias training for all hiring managers and supervisors; and establishing a diversity and inclusion committee.

In Modern Times' blog post "Our Next Steps" the company outlined their plan of action, including holding anti-oppression staff training; pursuing collaborations with Black-owned breweries and roasters; developing caucuses representing BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and female employees; leveraging political influence and supporting grassroots movements; hiring a diversity, equity, and inclusion manager when the company lifts its pandemic-related hiring freeze; supporting voter registration drives and seeking values-aligned vendors; printing Black Lives Matter on the bottom of Modern Times cans; and creating a BIPOC internship program. 🍻



FIVE SUITS RESHUFFLES IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

Q&A W/ NICK CORONA

PHOTOS BY DAN GOMEZ

While winning nearly every homebrewing medal and title that's out there, Nick Corona was also slowly planning how to "go pro" for years. He and wife Kandy ultimately worked out a deal to purchase Vista-based Barrel Harbor Brewing, and at the beginning of this year they were looking forward to a June grand opening of their tasting room. That all changed, however, due to COVID-19. We spoke with Corona about what it's like to plow ahead and "open" during a pandemic.

What business model changes did you make because of the coronavirus?

While we were looking to hold off on packaging for a bit, we really didn't have a choice. It's abundantly clear that breweries with packaging operations in place were the ones best suited to survive this pandemic. We don't foresee a return to the societal norms that we're all accustomed to for quite some time, so exploring canning options has now shifted from a year two or three priority to something we'd like to accomplish in year one.

In the meantime, we've opted for a seamer and some crowlers. Everything packaging-related seems backed up, which is easy to understand, as not only breweries are trying to sell packaged beer,

but restaurants as well. We even grabbed some glass growlers when some were available.

Beyond that, expanding to satellite tasting rooms was also in our long-term plans. We still see a place for that, but lease prices and availability are bound to shift significantly, so we'll wait and see how that market shakes out before putting our money down.

As a new business, none of the stimulus packages were available to us, so we're just keeping our fingers crossed that we aren't going to see many more months of this.

What changed with your brew schedule?

Changing our anticipated brewing schedule was one of the first things we did. In fact, we held off on our brew days for a full month as we learned that a lot of breweries were either stuck with full tanks or slashing prices up to 50%, plus they're dealing with a constantly changing situation at bars and restaurants. Some breweries were even releasing rare beers at discount, so we knew that as a new brewery, we simply wouldn't be able to immediately compete with that. And instead of dumping a bunch of money on hoppy beers, we decided to save those for later, once there was some light on the horizon.

What beers have you made so far?

The first commercial batch was a session IPA brewed to raise funds for the Pink Boots Society. That was followed by a simple SMASH (Single Malt And Single Hop) beer, as I wanted to get a feel for the system and verify numbers. We used 100% Golden Promise malt and Mandarina Bavaria hops, a couple of my favorites.

Since then, we've made a coconut and vanilla stout, as well as a Vienna lager that can hold for awhile. The next few batches were a hazy, a West Coast-style IPA, and finally, my Hefeweizen.

Co-owners Shane Smith, Kandy Corona, and Nick Corona.



What safety precautions are you taking?

We've been using temporal thermometers for our staff regularly (the current guidelines don't require their use outside of employees), but we're prepared in case that changes. We're confident that we can deliver a safe environment by following all mandated protocols, but we're also not taking any chances, as we have also taken some additional precautions by adopting some of the recommendations set forth by the CDC and SD County health officials. Motion activated faucets, soap dispensers, and flushers are being installed in the restrooms and we'll have masks and gloves available for anyone in case they forget a mask or would like to wear gloves. Masks will be required unless someone is seated.

There are some relatively simple rules to follow that, by now, most people are pretty understanding of. We're doing our best to ensure we can meet up to any further mandates that might be required if this situation continues to get worse. Sadly, shutting down is the one mandate that would hurt the worst. So to all those mask-wearing, selfless heroes out there, much love!

What's surprised you about the situation? What's been positive?

One of the things that's continued to surprise me throughout this ordeal is the resolve and compassion that I still see from so many industry folk who have the deck stacked against them right now. In a time where it would be reasonable to assume that spirits are down and focus is on surviving, I've personally benefited from their seemingly endless generosity. It's incredibly humbling and a huge part of why I decided that I wanted to be a part of this industry.

There are plenty of positives coming out of this, as long as you have the right perspective. With the mask requirement, I haven't had to shave and I've grown a pretty hideous Super Mario Bros mustache, so there's that. The extra time that we had when the world came to a halt actually allowed me to tear apart the brew house and focus on our water purification system. That was a biggie. I use different water profiles for each style of beer, so installing an RO system and putting new media in the carbon filter made an immediate difference in what I've been able to do. We also had a lot of time off from work, so we cleaned, and we cleaned, and we cleaned. ABC has implemented a lot of regulatory relief as well, so we're hoping some of those changes allow us to open with some expanded outdoor seating, if we can secure the approval for it. No matter how bad life gets, you've got to harness in the good energy, block out the bad. Feel the flow.

Any final words?

All in all, it's still been exciting, and my passion for delivering some outstanding beer has carried me through. Every once in a while, you stop and think about all that's going on and you get a very surreal feeling. Any time that happens, I think about two things: family and beer. Both of those things bring a big smile to my face, and I get back on the grind.

One thing's certain in all of this: we're all going to have one hell of a story to tell our grandchildren. As a business starting up in the midst of this, I just keep thinking about the potential for an incredible startup tale.

Nick Corona is a highly decorated Homebrewer with hundreds of awards won at the local, state, and national levels. Nick's titles include National Homebrewer of the year, National MCAB Grandmaster, CA State Homebrewer of the Year, and San Diego Homebrewer of the Year. ☼



MORE BREW SPOTS OPENING DURING COVID-19



Matt De La Cruz (@brewstills)

Recouping investment on a new venture can be difficult even during the best of times, but these spots are now doing so in the face of a pandemic and restrictions on their intended business models. Pure Project Carlsbad's tasting room thankfully has an outdoor patio, and at time of press the company was working on food options to allow on-site beer competition; Puesto's Mission Valley brewpub opened on July 7 with two outdoor patios to serve veteran Doug Hasker's brews; and Santee brewery Three Frogs expanded into their parking lot in addition to offering their small-batch brews to-go. ☼



Déjà Brew

MCILHENNEY BREWING TAKES OVER ALPINE SPACE

BY BRANDON HERNÁNDEZ

Photo by Tim Stahl

Though currently out of the beer biz, Alpine Beer Company's familial brewers, Patrick and Shawn McIlhenney, have maintained a strong presence in the San Diego beer community. Much of that has come via collaboration beer projects they've engaged in throughout the county. But if all goes as planned, soon, the father-son team will be hosting collaborative brewing sessions at their own facility, the very same one they owned and operated from 2002 to 2014 in the unincorporated town for which they named their business.

"We have formed a company called McIlhenney Brewing," says Pat. "We have a lease on our original brewery and tasting room in Alpine. We will be up and running as soon as possible after the current tenant vacates."

The current tenant is Green Flash Brewing Co., which purchased Alpine Beer Co. from the McIlhenneys in November 2014. It followed roughly a year of Green Flash contract brewing some of Alpine's beers at its Mira Mesa headquarters to help the McIlhenneys better meet demand for their products. At the time, it was envisioned as something of a teaming of two local entities, with Pat and Shawn remaining on staff to maintain quality and company heritage as a sub-brand of Green Flash.

But in March of 2018, with Green Flash in the midst of massive declines, the company was foreclosed on by Comerica Bank, which had previously issued a loan to owner Mike Hinkley. Comerica then sold its assets

(including those of Alpine Beer) to a newly formed investment group called WC IPA LLC. That spelled the end for Pat's involvement in the company, and this March, the parent company laid off Shawn and other members of the Alpine team.

Per terms of the aforementioned lease, Green Flash has until June 30 to vacate Alpine's original location or incur additional charges. Meanwhile, the McIlhenneys are negotiating on the potential sale of brewing and cellar equipment at that facility.

Note: When Pat and Shawn refer to family members, they spell their name McIlhenney, but when it comes to their business or the originating surname, it's McIlhenney. Via SanDiegoBeer.News ☼



McGhee with a new hazy IPA custom-built for a customer.

Harnessing Creativity

AT CITIZEN BREWERS

Citizen Brewers, a “brew-on-premises” business in Grantville, used to rely on groups like friends and co-workers brewing and bottling custom fifty-liter beer batches to pay the bills. When it comes to brewery operations, owner Judd McGhee is a one-man show, other than the occasional helping hand.

By the middle of June, McGhee had started to get a feel for his new operating procedures—including “COVID cleaning” after small-group brews—that added an extra hour to each day. (Before coronavirus, he’d sometimes have multiple groups brewing at once, to maximize efficiency.)

When reached June 26, McGhee was keeping his fingers crossed that he wouldn’t have to close again. But on June 29, the reinstatement of California’s stage 2 restrictions threw another wrench in the gears.

“If I have six guys in to brew a beer, why would I bring in a food truck for just six plates?” McGhee asked rhetorically. “It doesn’t make sense for me or for them.” He added that sometimes he learns of new regulations through customers, since he’s too busy with other tasks to tune into press conferences or peruse social media.

In early July, McGhee had no choice but to go back to brewing by himself because of further restrictions, so he pivoted to selling bottles to-go.

Like many brewery owners in this climate, he vacillates between hopefulness and helplessness.

“This situation presented me with opportunities I hadn’t capitalized on before, like working with the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) to sell bottles to-go,” he said at one point, but later admitted, “It’s hard to wake up every day and champion it when all these walls get put up. And the margins are so thin anyways; I’m just trying to get through this and keep the door open.”

McGhee said that he’s lucky that he can diversify his already unique model enough to keep the lights on, mentioning a series of collaborations in the works with previous neighbor Kensington Brewing, who moved to Adams Avenue. McGhee bought two of their small stainless fermenters, and because Kensington has a new food license, they can tap Citizen Brewers guest beers.

In the end, McGhee is optimistic about what will come from all this.

*“People are so tenacious, and radical,” he opined.
“They’ll do amazing things.”*



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