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+ more beer n' food

- +farmers' market pairings
- +slow food picks up steam
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The menu for The Grill's March 19th beer dinner with Firestone Walker was comprised of all local ingredients. Pictured: Chicharones salad with roast shallot vinaigrette and delicata squash, paired with Double Barrel Ale. View all the photos @ [facebook.com/westcoastersd](https://www.facebook.com/westcoastersd)

Peas in a Pod

Daily farmers' markets offer bountiful pairing options

By Schuyler Schultz, Culinary Director of AleSmith Brewing Company

San Diego craft brewers offer many high quality beers in a variety of styles. Those who frequent the local pub circuit know that great food can be an important part of enjoying these fine beers. By learning a few basic concepts about "food-friendly beers," one can easily create extraordinary beer and food experiences at home.

A beer termed "food-friendly" is one that can be successfully paired with a wide variety of foods. Complexity equals versatility. A high degree of complexity offers many flavor facets which can be highlighted by many different kinds of food.

Beers with a lot of dimension possess enough character to stand on their own as a focal point of a meal but can also work together with fine foods so that each can build on the other. A beer with a complex, well-structured body also has the ability to be flexible across diverse gourmet preparations.

Certain beer styles with very strong flavors, which are certainly quite complex as well, are food friendly, but only within certain categories of food. Those with strong malt profiles are versatile for pairing with a wide variety of meats, for instance, including beef, lamb, pork, and

game. Beers with intense hops flavors and bitterness can work well with rich, deeply-flavored food preparations like stews, curries, braises, and a wide variety of aromatic, bitter greens and herbs. Belgian-style beers, which can possess some acidity, or wood-aged characteristics, are likely to be very food friendly among foods which themselves have complex flavors.

San Diegan farmers' markets are the ultimate source for locally-produced, seasonal, sustainable, natural, whole foods. Check out this website for the most accurate information regarding locations, dates, and times: sdfarmbureau.org/BuyLocal/Farmers-Markets.php. Here are a few quick, basic suggestions for utilizing the season's bounty:

- Salads with a variety of mixed greens, bitter chicories, and aromatic herbs in a light vinaigrette work very well with IPAs.
- Roasted, caramelized root vegetables such as parsnips, rutabagas, turnips, and carrots, along with sweetpotatoes, winter squash, and fingerling potatoes are a natural match for porters, stouts, and brown ales.
- Braised greens like chard, collards, kale, and mustard greens can be matched with nearly anything, but pale ales and ambers work very well.
- Grilled, marinated eggplant, summer squash, onions, and heirloom cherry tomatoes contrast nicely with malty Scotch ales or strong red ales.
- Cauliflower, romanesco broccoli, and Brussels sprouts are all fantastic slightly charred in a sauté pan with brown butter. The nutty, slightly mustardy flavors pair very well with Belgian-style beers with complex, spicy fermentation profiles.

Euro-Trance

North County Brewers Blend Old and New Worlds

By Jeff Hammett



Cases of newly-bottled Red Poppy, March 11

The Lost Abbey

The Lost Abbey/Port Brewing Company was started in 2006 as a slight spinoff from the Pizza Port brewpubs (Lost Abbey/Port are connected to the Pizza Port chains, but they are separate entities). Founded by the owners of Pizza Port Gina and Vince Marsaglia, as well as Tomme Arthur (Pizza Port's Director of Brewery Operations at the time), and an unnamed fourth partner, they quickly earned their place in San Diego's brewing community.

The Lost Abbey and Port Brewing Company are the same brewery, separat-



Tasting room open Friday and Saturday



Delivery van license plate: BIGMALT

Lightning Brewery

Located in an indelible business park in Poway, Lightning Brewery is as European as they come in San Diego. Their two year-round, German-style beers (Elemental Pilsner and Thunderweizen Ale) follow the Reinheitsgebot, the 500+ year-old German Beer Purity Law regulating beer to only malted grain, hops, water



Beer & Pretzels @ Iron Fist

Iron Fist

Vista's Iron Fist Brewing Company, opened in October in 2010, is the new kid on the block. *West Coaster* named them one of the 11 to watch in San

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Upcoming Events

- APR 02: Shipyard BeerBQ @ KnB
- APR 06: L.A.B. @ TapRoom Pacific Beach
- APR 09: CityBeat Festival of Beers
- APR 12: Tap that Cask @ The Topsy Crow
- APR 13: Sierra Nevada 5 course pairing @ URGE
- APR 14: Firestone Beer & Food @ Press Box
- APR 15 & 16: Pizza Port Real Ale Festival
- APR 17: Backstreet 7th Anniversary
- APR 19: Beer & Chocolate Dinner @ Stone
- APR 20: - MIHO @ Home Brew Mart
- DrinkAbout!
- Ballast Point pairing @ Sea Rocket
- APR 21: Deschutes Beer Dinner @ Churchill's
- APR 27: Maui Brewing Night @ URGE
- APR 30: 30th on 30th
- MAY 01: Primordial Release @ MEBC



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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.

No. 6

Half a year

With April's issue, we've been printing for 6 months. We're just getting warmed up. Thank you to the businesses that have supported us thus far through advertising. Thank you to our loyal readers for giving us feedback and support. We're learning and improving with each month, and we'd value your input.

Reader Survey

We would like to know more about you, dear reader. If you could please take the time to complete our online reader survey, we will use the information you supply to better ourselves. Visit westcoastersd.com/rs to complete the survey.

Changing of the guard

We at *West Coaster* want to voice our satisfaction with the performance of Carol Sherwood. Carol helped my father start North Park News nearly 20 years ago, and Carol helped us start *West Coaster* over six months ago. If anyone needs an experienced art director with tremendous talent and an impressive portfolio, please consider Carol. Her email is sherwoodnewsletter@gmail.com

Our new Art Director is Brittany Everett. I've known Brittany for close to two decades, and she has helped us create the *West Coaster* brand you see today. Thus, it makes complete sense for her to pick up the torch. Brittany's work speaks for itself throughout this April issue.

That's all for now, visit westcoastersd.com for the latest.

Salud,

Mike Shess
Executive Editor/ Co-Publisher
West Coaster

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Inside IPA

World history behind a predominant local style

By Sam Tierney



Sam Tierney, Toronado San Francisco. Photo: Kayla Coleman

Sam began his love affair with great beer while studying and traveling abroad in Europe during his junior year at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He began homebrewing shortly after, and has since won multiple awards. Sam recently graduated from the Master Brewer Program at the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago, and is currently seeking employment in the local market...

If you've been paying attention to the local beer scene for some time now, you've probably noticed that IPA is, well, kind of a big deal. People know it. I wouldn't go so far as to say that its apartment smells of rich mahogany, but sometimes the beer itself smells a bit like fresh cut coniferous trees. Maybe you yourself are a fan; maybe you have heard tales but have yet to experience its magnificent flavor; maybe you just don't get it. If you are any of these things, you deserve to know more.

The idea of IPA is simple enough. Hops preserve beer through anti-microbial properties. Back in the days before sanitation, the more hops you added, the longer your beer was likely to keep. In the 1700s it was well known that beers exported from England to warm climates needed to be fortified with extra hops to keep them tasting good after the long and harsh sea voyage.

A brewer by the name of George Hodgson at the Bow Brewery in London took over the trade of beer to the colonies in India in the late years of the century. He sent multiple styles of beer, including porter, which was the most popular London beer at the time.

However, it was his bitter pale ale, called "October beer," which became the most popular in India. It just so happened that this highly-hopped pale ale matured perfectly on the 3-4 month voyage, just as if it had been sitting for over a year in a cool English cellar. The beer was a hit and Hodgson grew wealthy from the Indian trade.

Fast forward to the early 1820s and Hogson's heirs at the Bow Brewery made a few foolish business decisions that put them at odds with the East India Company, who decided to find other suppliers of pale ale to send to India. They approached Samuel Allsopp of Burton upon Trent, England, who in turn produced an even finer pale ale than Hodgson had. It turned out that the hard water in Burton, especially high in gypsum, was perfect for brewing pale, hoppy beers. The Burton brewers had previously been known for their strong, sweet Burton ales, but the new hoppy pale ales turned out to be an even better fit. Soon other Burton brewers such as Bass got in on the market as well, and Burton pale ales became highly favored in India.

So what was this beer like? Well, a pale, hoppy beer essentially. It was often of moderate strength for the time, which was roughly 6-8% alcohol by volume. Drinkers in India seemed to prefer lower alcohol versions, as I would imagine they would have been more refreshing in the hot climate. There are records of drinkers in India asking for less alcoholic versions, but brewers would not make them any lower than 1.054 original gravity (about 6% ABV) because of a tax break that kicked in for export beers at that strength. The beers were also very dry from a high level of attenuation (a measure of how much sugar in the wort is converted into alcohol) during fermentation. It was believed that this also aided in preserving the beers because there was less residual sugar in the beer for spoilage organisms to consume.

The original export beers were usually massively hopped and meant to mellow considerably before being drunk, but once the style became popular at home it was often brewed with about half the hops so that it could be drunk younger and have a similar flavor.

By the middle of the 19th century, IPA was being brewed all over Britain, even by the Scots (who are usually known for their less hoppy scotch ales). Whether most of these beers adhered to the Burton model or were simply the result of brewers slapping the name on one of their pale ales to cash in on the trend, we can't really be sure.

Once WWI hit, the strengths of almost all styles of beer in Britain declined drastically and IPA was no exception. IPA became barely distinguishable from lower-alcohol session beers like ordinary bitter. It's still common these days to find draught pale ales of lower alcohol that carry the IPA moniker, though there are some British brewers getting back to the older style of hoppy, medium-strength beers.

When craft brewing got going again in the US in the late 70s-early 80s, American brewers discovered new flavors by liberally adding American hop varieties like Cascade to their pale ales. This set them apart from the typical flavors of English pale ales, and a new style of beer was born. Looking back to the IPAs of the 19th century, American brewers created stronger, hoppier pale ales than what they had previously brewed based on




Karl Strauss Brewer Lyndon Walker dry hops the Tower 10 IPA with a blend of Cascade and Centennial hops, bringing out a floral citrus aroma. Photo: Kristina Yamamoto

the more contemporary English pale ales. The beers that we call IPA these days are basically a tribute to the idea of the originals. Instead of aging them for months, they are meant to be drunk as fresh as possible, which preserves the more delicate hop aromas and flavors that start to fade once the beer is bottled or kegged. Refreshing bitterness is still an important element, but hop aroma and flavor have become just as, if not more important, in modern examples.

As of press time, ratebeer.com ranks 4 of the top 10 IPAs in the world as made in San Diego County: AleSmith IPA, Ballast Point Sculpin IPA, Stone IPA, and Alpine Nelson. We are lucky to have so many outstanding examples. San Diegan IPAs also tend to be closer to the originals, coming in on the paler, drier, and hoppier end of the modern style spectrum than IPAs elsewhere.

If you have not tried any of these beers, don't pass up the opportunity to do so soon. The same goes for any local IPA for that matter. What sets many of the best American IPAs apart is the generous use of American hops to create big hoppy aromas and flavors that are reminiscent of tropical fruit, citrus, pine, mint, grapes, and stone fruits. Bitterness is still usually on the high side, but this is often balanced well with just the right amount of malt flavor.

One of the beautiful things about IPA is how well it goes with certain foods. The citrus aromas and flavors from American hops complement regional foods like spicy Southeast Asian and Mexican dishes. At the same time, the higher bitterness lets the beer stand up to the heat and not simply turn into a flavorless palate cleanser. Hops are also great at cutting through the acidity in tomato sauces in pasta dishes and pizza, as well as the fat in sharp cheeses like aged cheddar. Whether you are looking for a refreshing and flavorful beer to drink on a hot afternoon, or the perfect pairing to some spicy enchiladas or Thai curry, check out one of the many awesome IPAs local breweries and brewpubs have to offer.

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Tasty on Wheels

MIHO Gastrotruck rolls to local beer spots

By Brandon Hernández

Thanks to a new wave of mobile gastronomists, the term “roach coach” is fast fading from the American vernacular. Two of the leaders driving that influential gourmet food truck movement on a local level are Juan Miron and Kevin Ho, the owners and operators of the MIHO Gastrotruck. Friends and former co-workers with a shared zeal for food and cooking with an emphasis on locavorian values, the duo’s mission is to bring good, morally-sound food to the masses via their kitchen-on-wheels.

“First and foremost, we are committed to a local, organic and sustainable food philosophy,” says Ho. “We source our produce from local, family-owned farms, all of our meats are naturally raised without any hormones or antibiotics and we make all of our food by hand without any processed or pre-packaged ingredients.”

While immobile eateries are coming to adopt a similar underlying ideology—some because they are truly moved to do so and others to keep up with a sustainability-minded status quo that’s been on the rise here for the last half decade—it’s business as usual for MIHO and one of the reasons this year-old business has gained so much notoriety among foodies who understand the work Miron and Ho put in to put out restaurant quality food from their humble yet honorable motor coach.



MIHO outside the Whistle Stop in South Park

Cooking up dishes from scratch for an ever-changing merry-go-round menu is time-consuming enough, especially without the luxury of the sizeable kitchen brigades typical of traditional restaurants. Throw in hours of commuting to get their hands on top notch ingredients from places like Suzie’s Organic Farm in Imperial Beach and Crow’s Pass in Temecula, with spots like Bread & Cie and Catalina Offshore Products scattered in-between, and time begins to take on a sky-high value akin to black truffles. Thank goodness for producers who deliver like Petaluma Creamery (cheeses) and Vande Rose Farms (premium Duroc pork) or the pair might never sleep.

Given all the extra work, even the most dedicated of folks has to raise an eyebrow and the obvious question: Why go to all the trouble?

“In our eyes, the reasons are really endless,” says Ho. “The industrial food system is ultimately unsustainable—for our Earth, for our own health and that of animals, for our economy and for our peace of mind. Large-scale factory farms and confined animal feeding operations are polluting the environment and destroying our soil, processed foods are ruining our bodily well being and buying food grown overseas is exporting our money rather than keeping it in our community. On top of all that, sustainable food just tastes better.”

Thanks to the MIHO guys and their dining industry contemporaries, many are not only grasping these concepts, but clinging to it and pitching in to help spread the word. Countless members of the brewing industry are among that sect, including Colby Chandler, Ballast Point Brewing Co.’s specialty brewer, manager of Home Brew Mart and long-time friend and admirer of Miron and Ho. Colby invited them to pull their truck up to the back door of Ballast Point’s Linda Vista location in November to serve patrons food designed to pair with singular beers in the brewery’s tasting room.

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The Lost Abbey

ing brands based beer style differences. Housed in the original Stone Brewing Co. location, the Port half features a lineup of fantastic beers, while The Lost Abbey name is reserved for their unique, and often award-winning, Belgian-inspired beers.

With a solid lineup of year-round and seasonal releases, it’s The Lost Abbey’s barrel-aged and sour beers that have made them so sought after among beer enthusiasts. Beers like Cuvee de Tomme, Red Poppy, Duck Duck Gooze and The Angel’s Share don’t stay on the shelves too long after they’re released. But all this popularity doesn’t come without its problems. Stories of beers infected the flavor-altering yeast strain *Brettanomyces* and over/under-carbonated bottles often come up when discussing The Lost Abbey. Only a small amount of their beers have had problems, but it’s the negative experiences that stick out. With a few recent changes The Lost Abbey hopes to fix things: they’ve recently expanded adding a new lab and a brand new bottling line. The company also hired Gwen Conley, formerly of Flying Dog in Maryland, as head of Quality Assurance and Quality Control.

Lightning Brewery

and yeast. Their other two year-round beers are English-inspired ales: Amber Ale, a high gravity ESB and Fair Weather Pale Ale, a UK style Pale Ale.

Their seasonal beers include a high gravity Biere de Garde (Electrostatic Ale), a highly-hopped UK Baltic Porter (Black Lightning), a German style doppelbock (Fulminator Lager) and their Old Tempest Ale, a traditional UK Strong ale made with only UK malt, UK hops, UK ale yeast and with water adjusted to be similar to Burton-on-Trent well water.

When asked why their beer lineup is so different from other San Diego breweries, Lightning founder Jim Crute responded, “We are crafting beers that others do not usually take on.” Brewing traditional styles isn’t the only inspiration Lightning has borrowed from European brewers. “We also ferment our own lactic acid from sweet wort like large continental breweries. This is used at the latter stages of wort boiling to drop the pH just a bit to encourage more vigorous yeast growth and fermentation, while also inhibiting bacterial growth.” Crute emphasized their use of style-appropriate, historical brewing methods. “Our Elemental Pilsner is step mashed just like large German breweries, and our Thunderweizen Ale is double decoction mashed to increase dramatically its body and maltiness.”

Lightning does brew one beer that isn’t entirely European inspired: Ionizer Lager, which is a Pre-Prohibition style American Lager. In this writer’s opinion, American breweries themselves were more Euro-centric back then, and as Crute says, “Ionizer Lager is European in style with a bit of American flair mixed in.”

Iron Fist

Diego’s 2011 beer scene, and they’ve lived up to the billing, having recently signed a distribution deal with Stone Brewing Co. that ensures their beer can be found in bottle shops, bars and restaurants all over town.

Four of the five beers available when they opened were Belgian-inspired, with the fifth being a German-inspired Kölsch. They have since added two more traditionally American craft beers to their lineup: Velvet Glove, a 9% ABV Imperial Stout and The Gauntlet, a 9.5% ABV Imperial IPA. However, don’t think they’re forgetting their European inspired roots - the release of The Resistance, a Belgian-style Wild Ale with *Brettanomyces*, is currently being planned.



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GOOD FOOD

goes hand in hand with craft beer. With increasing popularity, restaurants are beginning to subscribe to the farm to table philosophy. Simply put, this style of food service focuses on keeping all ingredients local, minimizing distance between origin & consumer, and supporting local businesses. Sustainability is key, as the movement strives for minimal environmental impact. It's no surprise then that these restaurants flock to local brews when formulating their beverage lists. In North Park's 30th Street Corridor, there's a handful of restaurants that serve fine local brews alongside fine local fare.

April 20th: DrinkAbout! Once a month, two buses serve a route to 30th Street in North Park and South Park from 7-11 pm. Choose your own adventure and alternate stops between food & beer. Also, don't drink and drive! For news, restaurant/bar bus stops, and upcoming DrinkAbout dates visit sddrinkabout.blogspot.com

April 30th: 30th on 30th On the 30th of each month, numerous establishments on 30th Street serve up special food + beer menus. More and more, restaurants are picking up on the farm-to-table philosophy. For a full list of participating restaurants and more info, keep checking 30thstreet.org, which is the official event webpage.

THE RITUAL TAVERN



Mike Flores and his crack team at The Ritual Tavern serve farm to table cuisine in an old world environment. Located at 30th & Polk, the Ritual enjoys bringing local food and beer together whenever possible. Mike cites Niman Ranch and Suzie's Farm as just a few of his favorites for meat & vegetables. The food is meant to be creative, simple, and elegant, all in a dining atmosphere that faithfully replicates European pubs. 10 taps, 1 cask engine, and over 40 bottles make up the Ritual's constantly changing beer offerings. For upcoming events, current menu and beer selection, visit their website. 4095 30th Street, San Diego, CA (619) 283-1720 ritualtavern.com

THE LINKERY



The Linkery opened in 2005 and formally established the farm to table movement on 30th Street. I sat down with Jay Porter and asked him his thoughts on why the local craft beer and local craft food movements dovetail together so nicely. "Dave McLean of Magnolia Pub & Brewery in San Francisco said it best: 'Craft beer without craft food doesn't make sense.'" The menu is ever-changing, and recent offerings included whey-fed pork chop from Santa Margarita farmers Christine and Jim Maguire. The Linkery has five constantly rotated & cleaned taps that do a commendable job of covering the gamut of beer styles concisely, while a 30-strong bottle list provides a succinct local, regional, national and international beer selection. The Linkery also hosts many craft beer events. 3794 30th Street, San Diego, CA - (619) 255-8778 - thelinkery.com



EL TAKE IT EASY



Head North on 30th Street and you'll find what happens when The Linkery concept looks South. Jay (who owns both the Link & EZ) describes the culinary influence behind the menu as "Baja-Mediterranean." In a recent 'Z dish, blood oranges from Schaner Farms in Valley Center, microcilantro from Suzie's Farm, Octopus from Ensenada, and olive oil from Guadalupe were used to create an Octopus Carpaccio dish. The beer selection philosophy mirrors the Linkery's: 5 frequently rotated and serviced taps that cover the range of beers, and ~15 bottles. 3794 30th Street, San Diego, CA - (619) 255-8778 - eltakeiteasy.com

SEA ROCKET BISTRO



On the Southern tip of North Park's 30th Street lies Sea Rocket Bistrot. Their seafood choices rely heavily on the local San Diegan and Baja markets; GM Elena Rivellino cites the Mexican market as a reliable, quality source. They also don't often offer shrimp because of the local industry's destructive harvesting methods. Although named after a locally-growing coastal plant, Sea Rocket Bistrot isn't just a seafood joint. The menu is diverse, extensive, constantly changing, and has something for everyone. The mains are divided by "Seaworthy", "Veggiecentric", and "Carnivorous". The veggie dishes can be made vegan on demand. For April's 30th on 30th, the Rocket will pair three small plate specials with three Ballast Point beers (at least 1 of which will be pepper-infused). 3382 30th Street, San Diego, CA (619) 255-7049 searocketbistro.com



BYOB: BREW YOUR OWN BEER

HOMEBREW SHOPS

2011 has been called the "Year of the Homebrewer" in San Diego. With the upcoming National Homebrewers Conference in June, many San Diegans will be looking at the art of homebrewing and local beer for the first time. There's no time like the present to start brewing, San Diego. Here's a list of top shops in town. Each shop is very welcoming to complete newcomers, so stop in to get started!

AMERICAN HOMEBREW SUPPLY



(Kearny Mesa) Vance Hiler opened up American Homebrew Supply in 1996 because he wanted to stay in San Diego. With over 25 years experience homebrewing, Vance took his background in business management and combined it with his passion of beer. What separates American Homebrew Supply from other shops in town? "Knowledge and expertise," he claims. Vance is also the avid conversationalist, and he especially enjoys helping newbies - either by talking them through the steps of brewing or answering any questions. 9295 Chesapeake Drive, Suite E, San Diego, CA 92123 - (858) 268-3024 - americanhomebrewing.com

HOME BREW MART



(Linda Vista) Colby Chandler, current Home Brew Mart GM, claims that many professional San Diegan brewers got started in his store. The grain selection is pre-loaded in dispensers, and the shop is very well laid out and maintained. There's a tasting room in the back, and because Home Brew Mart serves as Ballast Point Brewing Company's experimental craft beer laboratory, you are bound to see some delicious, seldom-seen beers on draft, cask, or nitro. The staff is a Mötley Crüe of characters, all of whom are knowledgeable and friendly. 5401 Linda Vista Rd # 406, San Diego, CA 92110-2402 - (619) 295-2337 - homebrewmart.com

HYDROBREW

(Oceanside) Hydrobrew opened in Oceanside in 2004. Lars Gilman co-owns the shop with his wife, Sonya. He is a graduate from the respected Siebel Institute of Technology brewing program, and has also worked as a brewer for Stone. Lars currently works as the head brewer of Breakwater Brewing Company. Like Home Brews & Gardens, Hydrobrew caters to the gardener as well as the brewer. The store offers free homebrewing classes the first Sunday of every month, and claims customer service as a main strength of the staff. 1319 South Coast Highway Oceanside, CA 92054 - (760) 966-1885 - hydrobrew.com



MOTHER EARTH BREW CO.



(Vista) This family run shop offers delicious cold pints and homebrew supplies. Located in what we refer to as the Sycamore Circuit (the breweries that are located near Sycamore Avenue in Vista), Mother Earth hosts both craft beer events and homebrewing classes frequently. With a loyal following and fantastic, laid back tasting room, Mother Earth's beer isn't bad either. The release of their flagship Primordial IPA will be celebrated with a party on May 1st. Come for beer, food & music 12PM-5PM. 2055 Thibodo Road Suite H, Vista, CA 92081 - (760) 599-4225 motherearthbrewing.com



HOME BREWS & GARDENS



(North Park) Located just east of 30th in the sleepy Thorn Street business district in North Park, Home Brews & Gardens offers essential supplies for the homebrewer and gardener in everyone. HB&G offers monthly classes in their large open air venue behind the store. Pictured to the left is a hop rhizome from HB&G, taken March 19th. Hop rhizomes are available to homebrewers each spring, so why not grow your own full-sized hop plant? For a full listing of upcoming events at the shop, visit their website. 3176 Thorn Street, San Diego, CA 92104 - (619) 630-2739 - homebrewsandgardens.com



Jeff Hammett

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

Can Cool

Making a taste case for canned beer. Who in SD will make the leap?

By Jeff Hammett

Now that it's spring and the weather is warming up – I like to pretend that it wasn't 80 degrees out just a few weeks ago – many people will take their drinking outside. Whether it's tailgating at a Padres game, camping, boating, golfing or just a backyard barbeque, canned craft beer may be the way to go.

In a press release reporting craft beer's growth in 2010, released just before the Craft Brewer's Conference in late March, Brewers Association Director Paul Gatza stated, "We also found that three percent of craft brewer barrels, by volume, are distributed in cans, confirming a growing trend."

So what's the big deal about cans you might ask? One benefit is that they're completely opaque, so there's no worry about UV light damaging the beer during transportation or storage (even slight sun exposure creates a skunky taste). Some might be concerned about a metallic flavor, but modern cans have a food-grade lining so the beer isn't in contact with any metal. While this is good for the beer, this lining does contain Bisphenol A (BPA), more commonly known as "that plastic that Nalgene bottles used to be made from." The jury is still out on how harmful BPA is, but Sierra Nevada's Brewing Communications Coordinator says that they have been told BPA-free beer cans are in the works, and will come within the next few years.

The case for cans is compounding. Another benefit is their reduced weight, leading to both energy and cost savings during distribution. Dave Thibodeau, Co-Founder and President of Ska Brewing Company, the second craft brewery to start canning (or as they like to say, the "first craft brewery to copy Oskar Blues by canning") says that they can ship 39% more beer in the same space, for the same amount of money, and with the same amount of fossil fuel.

The main drawback to cans is that aluminum is much more energy-intensive to mine compared to its dark green counterpart. That being said, recycling rates for aluminum are much higher than glass, and recycling used aluminum cans into new cans is much better than recycling used glass bottles into new bottles. It's a tough call. Small brewers also take a big leap moving to cans because unlike bottles, cans come pre-printed with the labeling. Minimum order sizes are very large and not every brewery can easily fill one order with one brand of beer.

Cans probably won't ever overtake bottles in terms of sales, but having more craft beer available in cans is a benefit to the beer drinker when it comes to those situations where glass just isn't an option. Below the photo is a list of a few canned craft beers that are available in San Diego; you'll notice none of them are made by local breweries. I for one can't wait to see who the first San Diego brewer to start canning their beer will be.



Staff writer Sam Tierney visited Uncommon Brewers in Santa Cruz as they canned their Siamese Twin Ale, a Belgian dubbel brewed with kaffir lime leaves, coriander, and lemongrass. Empty cans are loaded onto the filler tray via forklift, filled, seamed, rinsed, and then put into four-pack holders by hand.

Craft Cans - Quick Overview

- Oskar Blues is the first craft brewery to can their beer, and has six brands available. Dale's Pale Ale, a hoppy pale, is especially good and Ten Fidy, an imperial stout, will be like nothing you have ever had out of a can.
- Avery Brewing Co. has four beers available in cans including the ever-refreshing Joe's Premium American Pilsner, perfect for summertime drinking.
- TailGate Beer, technically a San Diego company, brews its beers in Minnesota. Their Blacktop Blonde and Hefeweizen are both available locally.
- Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. recently announced they'll start canning their Pale Ale later this year. While not out yet it's bound to become the most widely-distributed canned craft beer.
- Maui Brewing Co. was founded by an Encinitas resident, and currently ships cans of craft out of Hawaii. The most oft-seen is their Coconut Porter, and it's available in many places around town.

Jeff writes for San Diego Beer Blog at sandiegobeerblog.com, and you can also follow him on twitter @SDBeer

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GUEST TAP

Savor Your Beer – Slowly

The Slow Food, Craft Beer Connection

By Kate McDevitt

We've all had *that* beer. You know the one. It's the one you want to savor. You sip slowly to make it last. Well, believe it or not, there's an international movement that encourages you to take this kind of unhurried pleasure in the delectable bounty of sustainably-made, local food and beer: it's called Slow Food. Have you heard of it? The Slow Food movement was founded in Italy in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, our diminishing interest in the food we consume, where it comes from and how it tastes. As a movement, Slow Food works to link the pleasure of food with a commitment to the environment and the local community by providing education on how our food choices affect the rest of the world.

Here in San Diego we are lucky enough to serve as a mecca for thriving food, farming and brewing communities. As such, it's perhaps no surprise that San Diego is home to not one but two Slow Food Chapters: one in North County (Slow Food San Diego) and the other closer to downtown (Slow Food Urban San Diego). As a member of the Board for Slow Food Urban San Diego, and a devout lover of the San Diego beer scene, I can assure you that both chapters fully support and celebrate our craft beer community.

Slow Food Urban San Diego regularly puts on events to showcase the important work of our talented

local brewers. These have included a beer class with Tomme Arthur from The Lost Abbey, a beer tasting class at the Cooks Confab Craft Beer dinner, and a series of mixers at Slow Food-minded restaurants that highlight locally-sourced beers, wines and produce. AleSmith Brewing Company's Peter Zien has even come out to teach Slow Food Urban San Diego members about his second passion: cheese-making. Keep an eye out this Spring, as Slow Food Urban San Diego is in talks with Ballast Point to host a homebrew class using local hops. You heard it here first, *West Coaster* readers.

Up in North County, Slow Food San Diego has a strong connection with Stone Brewing Company, whose CEO and Co-Founder Greg Koch serves as a Board Member Emeritus. Stone Brewing World Bistro and Garden's Executive Chef, Alex Carballo, has made extensive efforts to support local farmers and even grows some of the restaurant's produce on their property. They have been great advocates and have generously hosted a number of beer-focused events in support of the Slow Food movement.

What San Diego beer enthusiasts can be sure of is that if they show up to a Slow Food event around town, they will be in good company. The Slow Food community has a true appreciation for the brewers' craft and their important and delicious local products.



L to R: Slow Food Urban San Diego Special Projects Chair Kristen Goodrich, Slow Food Urban San Diego Food Justice Chair Kate McDevitt, Slow Food member Diane Hennelly. To get involved, visit Slow Food's websites: slowfoodurban-sandiego.org, or slowfoodsandiego.org (North County). For event info, join their Facebook page: [Slow Food Urban San Diego](https://www.facebook.com/SlowFoodUrbanSanDiego)

MIHO Gastrotruck

Continued from Page 5.

"I'd been to beer dinners Juan and Kevin had put on at home for 30 or so people, so I had a lot of confidence they would do a good job," says Chandler. "I have a real love of beer dinners, but there's a gap between what you can do at home and having a three-hour sit-down meal at a restaurant. Having the option of getting eight-dollar food paired with one-dollar beers, plus beer-infused yogurt from Fiji Yogurt next door makes for a reasonable, casual, unpretentious experience. And how often do you get to hang out and eat at an operating brewhouse or in a barrel room?"

Since the initial "Behind the Brewery," which drew a decent crowd that went forth and spoke well of the first run, MIHO and Ballast Point have held three other events, the latest of which took place on March 2 and drew nearly 200 people. The entire facility, from the main floor of Home Brew Mart to the brewhouse and the barrel room, was teeming with smiling consumers enjoying Creole-spiced shrimp skewers and creamy grits paired with chipotle-infused Ballast Point Black Marlin Porter. The pairing was stellar, as was the opportunity for fans of the food and beer to offer kudos directly to the cooks and brewers responsible for the evening's offerings.



Order up! @ Home Brew Mart March 3rd



A welcome sight to famished beer drinkers

The Behind the Brewery events have proven so successful that they are now slated as monthly occurrences and have prompted MIHO to team up with another high-traffic craft beer spot—Normal Heights' Blind Lady Ale House (BLAH), which hosts a largely foodie and beer nut clientele.

When asked how it came about, Ho replies, "We already knew the BLAH family and we all wanted to make some magic. It's cool for them because they don't serve food on Mondays. I know the kitchen crew loves having the break. And our [fans] get to eat our food in an awesome setting with one of San Diego's best beer lists."

Upcoming collaborative events for MIHO include the latest iteration of Behind the Brewery at Ballast Point in Linda Vista on April 20 from 4 to 7 p.m. The gastrotruck will also occupy curb space at the Subtext Gallery in Little Italy on April 15, providing edible art to go with a show called "Plug Me" featuring new works by artist Mark Murphy; their art circuit continues with an event at the Mingei Museum on April 21. There will also be stops at the National Homebrewers Conference when it hits America's Finest City in June and the San Diego Brewers Guild Festival in November. HOMIs (the playful term created to describe MIHO devotees), you've been notified.

And speaking of notice—venues of all types, be aware that MIHO is open and eager to partner with anybody who shares their vision and belief in responsible gastronomy. "It's one of the coolest things about being mobile," says Ho. "We want to collaborate with anyone bringing quality, forward thinking and class to San Diego."

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San Diego: The Libation Destination

Sunday morning means a sticky floor, grumpy me, and a quiet brewery – save for Johnny Cash singing overhead. I roll in around 10:30, eyes like slits from last night’s fun, and a less-than-eager attitude. The haze will lift by noon and that’s okay because I won’t get my first customer ‘til two. Except that isn’t true anymore. A year ago, yes, but now... I have customers at 10:40, bright eyed and “brewery”-tailed. I chug my coffee in hopes of regaining the energy I expelled Saturday on four groups of thirty that all decided to show up at the same time to my brewery. Welcome to my weekend.

Something shifted. It didn’t use to be like this. My tasting room didn’t use to host 75+ people at once. My tasting room didn’t use to have a line of people waiting to get in while most are still at church. If you saw my tasting room – which remains a mystery for the fun of it – you’d see how shocking this really is. During the summer we had our share of tourists, spanning from Phoenix to Sydney. You’d expect as much, though,

right? Spend a week in sunny San Diego – see Shamu, take a Segway tour through Balboa Park, and drink some local beers. But it’s not summer and something strange is happening: MORE tourists are coming. Not just on the weekend, either. People are making San Diego a destination. They are driving all night from Vegas on a Tuesday for a taste of Sculpin. They are honeymooning in Escondido because they don’t care about ocean views, only about The Lost Abbey’s latest release. They are even bribing their kids with the newest Nintendo DS all so they can savor the taster flight from a brewery which isn’t being distributed in their Midwest state.

Last Saturday, two dudes from New Hampshire spent their entire afternoon with me. I had too many tabs to remember names, but I would call out “What you need, New Hampshire?!” and they’d grin like kids in a candy store. Towards the end of their visit, they were trying to buy a bottle to go. The line was long and their tab was already settled, so I said, “Don’t worry about it. It’s on me.” I



Hamilton's Tavern during 2nd Saturday event with Karl Strauss (February 12th). This month (April 9th), Sierra Nevada is coming to town. Complimentary food for all patrons: Jamaican Jerk Chicken, Smoked Hocks and Greens, Crawfish Mac Salad, and Red Velvet Cakes

might as well have been Ed McMahon with Publisher’s Clearing House. I had made their life with a bottle of beer. “Are you serious? It’s for a friend back home?” I was in a ham-it-up kind of mood: “What’s his name, I’ll sign the label.” And sign it I did. This Sharpie-laden task earned me not one, but two, kisses on the cheek. For a second I was a celebrity. All thanks to San Diego’s crazy-amazing beer scene.

– The Nameless Beermaid

Agree? Disagree? Let The Nameless Beermaid know what you think: beermaid@westcoastersd.com

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COORS LIGHT	\$2.00	25% (0.50%)	\$2.67	\$2.00	\$2.00	247
BUD LIGHT	\$2.00	25% (0.50%)	\$2.67	\$2.00	\$2.00	219
MERGEN	\$4.50	25% (1.13%)	\$6.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	345
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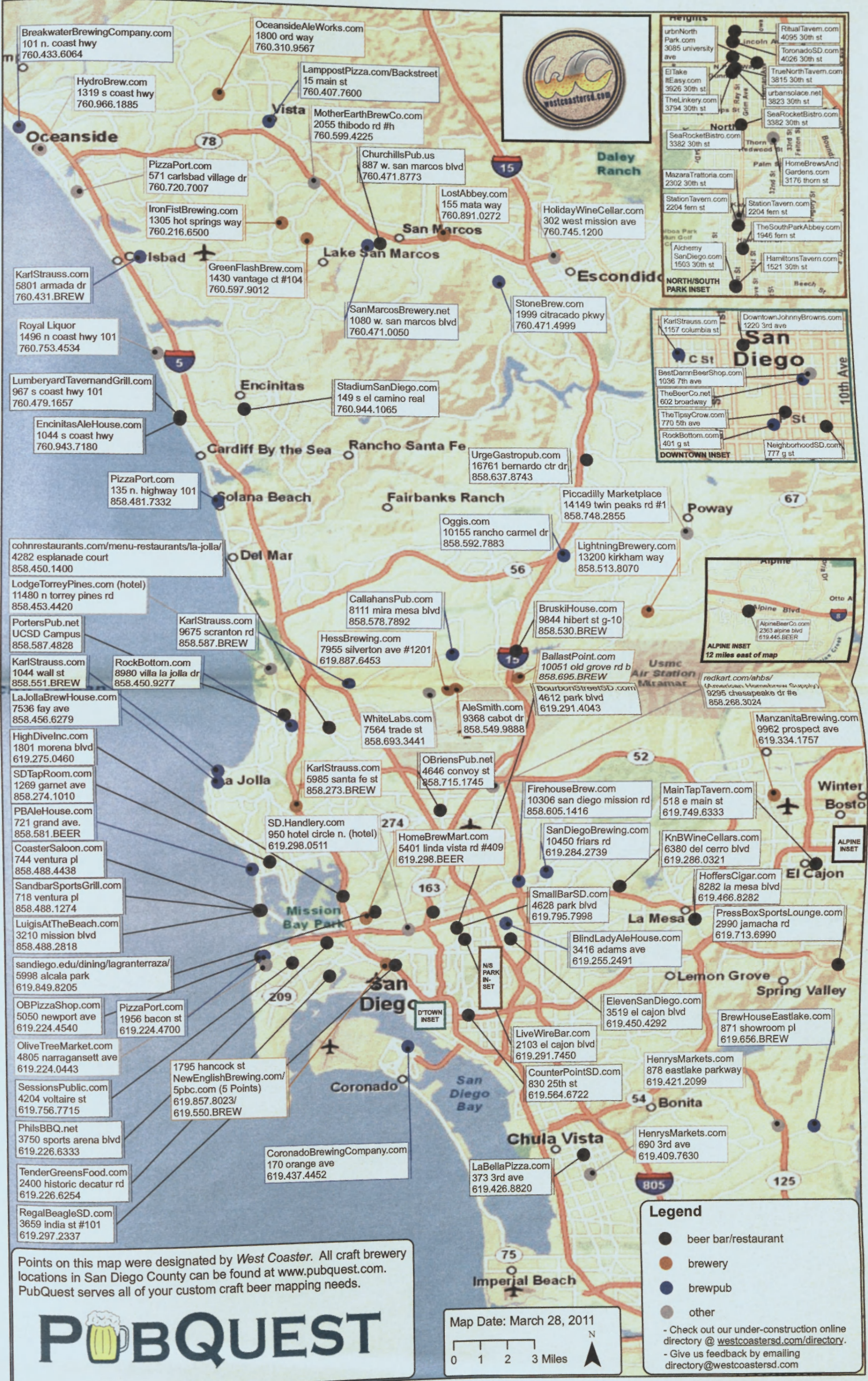
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