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# West Coaster

JAN. 2011 SERVING THE SAN DIEGO CRAFT BEER COMMUNITY No. 3



Taps Beware:  
Melani & Jeff "Flash" Gordon  
of TapHunter.com



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West Coaster interviews El Cajon Brewing Company

Also inside:

Spotlight on Mother Earth Brew Co.

The Nameless Beermaid & Growler 101



# West Coaster

SERVING THE SAN DIEGO CRAFT BEER COMMUNITY



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The façade of the under-construction El Cajon Brewing Co. on the corner of N Magnolia & Main in El Cajon

## New Brew in East County

El Cajon Brewing Company will look to improve business district

By Mike Shess

“This is a dream that’s been in the works for awhile now,” says David Meadows while glancing to his brother, Stephan. The two men are behind El Cajon Brewing Company that’s

currently under construction in downtown El Cajon. Stephan chimes in: “We would only see each other at weddings or funerals. After the funerals began to outnumber the weddings we looked at

one another and said, ‘Let’s do this.’”

The two brothers come from very distinct backgrounds. From separate mothers, David’s mom hails from Sweden where he cut his teeth in the brewing industry by earning a degree in Brewhouse Technology at Västerbergslagens Utbildningscentrum (Västerbergslagens Education Centre), the renowned Swedish answer to the UC Professional Davis Brewing Program. Along with five other student-founders, David opened Sigtuna Brygghus as his final project. The brewery is now a major player in the Swedish craft beer scene. The school is closely connected with Spendrups, a large family-owned Swedish brewery & beverage company. David worked for the company during the summers while in school. Upon returning stateside, he consulted on the opening of the Grand Canyon Brewing Company in Arizona. No stranger to the San Diego Craft Beer Community, David has made a name for himself at Premier Stainless Systems. Premier is known for their excellent brewery equipment, and their products are installed at Mother Earth, AleSmith, and Ballast Point (to name a few).

The other brother, Stephan Meadows, is a restaurateur who opened the 11,000 sq. foot Sequoia Mining Company in 1991. Taking his skills from the field, Stephan began to scour San Diego looking for abandoned restaurant space. A hot tip led him to El Cajon. The city of

Continued on Page 5

## Mama Tierra

Vista’s Mother Earth Brew Co. Sends Good Libations

By Ryan Lamb

With their roots firmly planted a half mile off the North County beer highway that is the 78, family-owned Mother Earth Brew Co. opened its doors in early 2010. Boasting up to eight taps of “small-batch, hand-crafted beers that stimulate sensory conversation and a desire for the next sip,” MEBC has grown three times since May, now brewing on a 3.5-barrel system.

One of Vista’s best tasting rooms also doubles as a terrific homebrew supply shop, carrying sixty hop varieties, sixty bulk grains and seventy yeast strains from industry leaders White Labs and Wyeast. Co-owner Daniel Love told us, “When we opened, twenty percent of sales came from the homebrew side. Now, it’s more than forty percent.” MEBC regularly donates their space to The North County Homebrewers Association, and the kickbacks don’t sound bad: “I’ve got a fridge full of beer that homebrewers want us to try. They want our feedback just like we welcome theirs.”

Look to hear much more about Mother Earth Brew Co. in 2011. MEBC will be teaming up with award-winning homebrewer Paul Sangster for the Pro-Am Competition during the National Homebrewers Conference coming to San Diego in June. MEBC will be brewing a saison to mark the one-year anniversary of Ran-



A Friday afternoon at Vista’s Mother Earth Brew Co.

cho Bernardo’s Urge Gastropub in July, and a bottled Belgian strong to be sold at the Barrel Room right next door by the end of the year. On top of that, they will also begin bottling and selling beer on-site.

Sensory standouts like the Red Dog Rye Pale Ale and the Auld Knucker IPA are a testament to the creativity abounding from the 70’s décor-adorned space. New ideas are always cropping up: “I love brewing brown ales to get all their nuances, from macadamia nuts to crème brûlée. To get it right takes passion...and a little Pink Floyd in the background.” Being a businessman-turned-brewer instead of the other way around, Daniel

Continued on Page 5

## Local Focus

Documentary filmmaker shifts lens to San Diego Craft Beer

“From Beer Zeros to Beer Heroes” is the tagline of *Suds County, USA*, a feature-length documentary focused on the San Diego Craft Beer Community that is currently in post-production and scheduled to come out this summer. *West Coaster* got a teaser from Sheldon Kaplan, whose company Ibhayi Media is producing the film. “The rise of the local craft beer industry in San Diego over the past twenty-five years is a story I really wanted to tell,” said Sheldon. “There were a number of chance happenings that occurred over the early years that if fictionalized, no one would believe it.”

One of the film’s focuses is the early relationship between homebrewers and pro-brewers, and Sheldon told us, “When I talk to younger brewers they’re sometimes surprised at the amount of history this community really has.” *Suds* visually follows that historical timeline up to the present day, giving a new perspective on the burgeoning industry we see today. Check back with *West Coaster* in the coming months for more details on the film.

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

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FEEDBACK  
Send letters to the Editor to mike@westcoastersd.com  
Letters may be edited for space. Anonymous letters are published at the discretion of the Editor

# 2011: All Systems Go

## Happy New Year

From all of us at *West Coaster*, we wish you love & happiness in 2011.

## Launch Party

This is our third issue. We're not going anywhere, and this upcoming year looks amazing for the San Diego Craft Beer Community and thus, for *West Coaster*. We'd like to invite you to our Launch Party, and say thanks in person for supporting our little paper & website. We're teaming up with Hess Brewing & The South Park Abbey to celebrate the new year on Friday, January 21st from 6pm until close. Hess will be brewing a beer especially for us, the *West Coaster* IPA. On top of that, we're going to do a keep-the-pint night with special Hess / *West Coaster* 21oz Willi Becher-style pub glassware (the same style as the Hess pint glasses). There will also be other Hess beers on tap for those who aren't in the mood for the outrageously hoppy beer that will be the WCIPA.

The South Park Abbey has graciously given us the use of their fantastic space. Our requirements for our party were: Must have excellent beer on tap & in bottle, must be located near North Park, and must have a space for live music. The South Park Abbey delivers everything we could want in a venue. Even better: there will be food specials, and there's a full bar if you're so inclined.

Music-wise, we're asking our good friend Pete Loague Jr. to warm up the cold winter night with some smooth jams. Then, Luis & Jorge Medina aka The Office Twins will start spinning some disco funk to get everyone's head nodding.

We're aiming for an upbeat, chill vibe. We do ask that you not be a nuisance to the neighbors when leaving our party. We dig the neighborhood of South Park.

Prices will be fair, and there will be no cover charge.  
See you then.

## 2011

This is our crystal ball issue. We love speculating on how the future is going to unfold because, hell, we just might get it right. If you haven't noticed, things are happening at an incredible pace with regards to beer in San Diego. People literally cannot keep track of exactly how many breweries we have in our county lines. Here's to 2011 - let's rock it, together.

Salud,

Mike Shess  
Co-Publisher / Editor  
*West Coaster*



Publishers Ryan Lamb (left) and Mike Shess at Eleven in City Heights (elevensandiego.com).  
Photo: Kristina Yamamoto



On the cover (right) TapHunter.com's Melani Gordon and Jeff "Flash" Gordon admire the view from atop the ICON building. Photo: Kristina Yamamoto (left)



## westcoastersd.com's Month in Review

### 3 Top Brewers Sculpt Scotch Ale at Stone

12/18/10

We drove up to Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens on a rainswept Friday afternoon (Dec. 17th) to visit with Mitch Steele, head brewer of Stone Brewing Co., Chuck Silva, brewmaster of Green Flash, & Jeff Bagby, head brewer of Pizza Port Carlsbad (and overlord of Pizza Port brewing operations). The three had been hard at work on the "Highway 78 Scotch Ale" since 8 am.

Named after the infamous beer highway that is the 78 of Northern San Diego County, Jacob McKean of Stone Brewing Co. described the brew-in-progress as "a big, rich, malty beer made with all English ingredients." Mitch estimates that the ale will be 8-9%ABV, around 30 IBUs, and a deep-amber color. "It's been a couple of years in the making," Jeff de-



Jeff and Chuck, latest in a stellar list of Stone collaborators, with job-well-done shirts

scribes, "and we're excited to age some of this beer in the scotch barrels that are on order." Chuck chips in, "That's the fun part!" This will be the first Scotch Ale created at Stone.

Distribution is in the works; check back for more details as the beer should be available in early February.

— for complete article and for photos go to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 18, 2010, "Highway 78 Scotch Ale Gets Rolling"

### "Epic" DTJB Charity Fundraiser Taster

12/18/10

Sid (of Best Damn Beer Shop) had this to say following the event at Downtown Johnny Brown's: "Geoi (of South Bay Drugs) and I went through our cellars and pulled out extremely rare beers to share. Judging from everybody's response post-event, we executed pretty great."

Execute, they did. Between proceeds from the entrance fee, the outrageous raffle of over 50 items, and the rare beer silent auction, Sid and Geoi raised close to \$3,000 for Power Of Change, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping the lives of underprivileged children. "It really doesn't get any better than that at a tasting, great response for a great cause!"

— for complete article and for photos go

to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 18, 2010, "Sid, Geoi & Co. Throw Epic Charity Bash @ DTJB"

### Crashing Ladies Night

12/16/10

Patrick Rue of Placentia's The Bruery made the trip down from Orange County to share his beer at The High Dive on Dec 14. Each month, this Bay Park venue hosts "Chicks for Beer," a beer-centric social meet-up, and the perfect Girls Night Out. More than 35 ladies of all ages were on hand to enjoy a beer & cheese pairing hosted by owners Erik and Ingrid Qua. Tickets to the event were sold mostly through Chicks for Beer's Facebook page, and the group has been gaining in popularity since its inception in June.

— for complete article and for photos



Cheers to Chicks for Beer!

go to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 16, 2010, "Chicks for Beer @ The High Dive"

### Beards Rock @ KnB

12/13/10

Don't let the name fool you – KnB Wine Cellars in Del Cerro is also one of the best beer bars in San Diego, boasting 32 beers on tap and top-notch cuisine. As Saturday night (Dec. 11th) progressed, a growing number of customers started to roll in rocking Cosby-style sweaters and outrageous beards.

Their reasoning? 15 new Xmas beers on tap at a 10% discount. Ranging from The Bruery's 3 French Hens to Samichlaus '08, the selection was enough to get anyone in the holiday



Kristina and Jaclyn serve Christmas beer & cheer

spirit. Some of the ladies in attendance even got in the mix with beards of their own; all beards were judged thoroughly by a panel of KnB employees on texture, length, manliness, etc. This event was a creative way to kick off the holiday season in style.

— for complete article and for photos go

to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 13, 2010, "KnB Rocks Beers & Beards"

### And the Winners Are...

12/11/10

Congrats to AleSmith on receiving 1st Place in TapHunter.com's SD Brewery of the Year Awards. Nearly 500 votes were cast and it was no surprise to see the Mira Mesa brewery take top spot. Just like their beers, the celebratory party on Friday night did not disappoint – the tasting room was filled to the brim. Head honcho Peter Zien dropped in to check the scene before retreating to enjoy a celebratory beer away from the masses. Mel and Jeff "Flash" Gordon, TapHunter's dynamic duo, were excited to see the great turnout.



TapHunter's Melani and Jeff Gordon (far left and far right) present Michael Skubic (holding glass) and Mike Hess with the 2nd Place Award

Just a couple blocks away, the party was already underway as Hess Brewing relished their 2nd Place finish in the vote. On tap besides some great Hess selections were beers from the 3rd place finishers, Ballast Point and Stone. Tabe BBQ was on hand to provide nourishment to the growing crowd, with many coming straight from the AleSmith festivities. Although a small brewery, Hess is really making waves in the San Diego Craft Beer Scene.

— for complete article and for photos go to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 11, 2010, "Tap Hunter Awards Recap"

### Hamilton's Firkin Friday

12/4/10

Like most Fridays, the place was packed. The casks tapped every Firkin Friday are a South Park staple, and last night's proved to be quite popular – Ingrid tapped the cask at 5 pm and we arrived after our last round of deliveries to the sight of a 'tender scribbling OUT on the board. The good news: we won't have to wait long to attend more great cask beer events at Hamilton's.

— for complete article and for photos go to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 4, 2010, "Hamilton's A Hit"

### The Tall Wall of Beer

12/6/10

Organized by Tom Nickel of O'Brien's Pub, The 14th Annual San Diego Strong Ale Festival took place on the 3rd and 4th of December at Pizza Port Carlsbad. I opted for the VIP Session @ 1 pm because, after speaking with Tom, I knew what was coming.

What struck me was the simplicity of the event. Emphasis was placed on the wall of taps. Pizza Port employees stood between the wall and the table bar to transform tickets into beer. The place was packed! After a few rounds, however, everyone became your friend. Eight tasters (count 'em) was plenty for me, and made for a sleepy passenger-seat ride home.

— for complete article and for photos go to [westcoastersd.com](http://westcoastersd.com), December 6, 2010, "Strong Ale Festival"

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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 Toronado every chance he got. He started blogging about beer in early 2009 while living in Durango, Colorado. For a town of only 20,000 people Durango boasts an impressive four breweries. Jeff quickly became a part of the brewing scene and in January 2010 was invited to work with Ska Brewing Co.'s Head Brewer Thomas Larsen to formulate a recipe and brew on Ska's pilot system. In addition to his love of craft beer, Mr. Hammett is an avid cyclist and can be seen riding on the road or trails most weekends.

## Winter Warmers

By Jeff Hammett

Just because Christmas is over and temperatures in San Diego hardly ever dip below 40 degrees doesn't mean we can't continue to enjoy some winter beers for a few months longer. Most of these are released just once a year, usually in December, but most can be found for a few months longer either on local taps or on bottle shop shelves. Below are four of my favorite local winter brews and one not-so-local, unconventional winter beer.

### Parrot In A Palm Tree from Karl Strauss Brewing Co.

This Baltic Porter, aged in Port wine barrels from San Pasqual Winery, is the first in a one-a-year Christmas series of beers from Karl Strauss. Parrot In A Palm Tree, a San Diego version of "Partridge in a Pear Tree," comes in at 8.5% ABV with chocolate flavors and hints of oak. This one is available on draft and in bottles. The bottles should age well for a few years at cellar temperature.

### Winter Brew from Coronado Brewing Co.

This malty Winter Warmer is a bit lighter than many of this style, which makes it especially great for San Diego's mild winters. That's not to say this beer is at all a slouch at around 8% ABV. A dark brown mahogany color, it's malty and strong with plenty of spices and toffee flavor.

### Saint Sideburn Winter Ale from Pacific Beach Ale House

This Belgian-style Strong Brown Ale is deceptive in its appearance. Bubble gum flavors up front are reminiscent of a Belgian Trippel, which then give way to spicy clove flavors, before finishing with some malty sweetness. A surprise hit at the Guild Fest during San Diego Beer Week, PB Ale House aged some Saint Sideburn in bourbon barrels with Brettanomyces. No word on whether they'll be aging some again this year, but here's to hoping.

### Santa's Little Helper from Port Brewing Co.

There's no shortage of awesome Imperial Stouts out there, and Santa's Little Helper is no exception. Strong and dark, it has flavors reminiscent of coffee, chocolate, toffee, caramel molasses, and a good amount of hop bitterness when fresh. Batches of Santa's Little Helper are released in early winter each year with a green label. You may be able to find some Bourbon Barrel-Aged Santa's Little Helper in July with a red label, which are left over from Christmas. Pick up a bottle of each to compare what some time in a bourbon barrel will do to a beer.

### Avec Les Bons Voeux from Brasserie Dupont

This 9.5% ABV Saison has a French name meaning "With Best Wishes" and is brewing especially for the holidays from the same brewery as the classic Saison Dupont. Unlike many other winter specific beers (and all the other listed here), Avec Les Bons Voeux is light in color and sweet



Santa's Little Helper and more at the Best Damn Beer Shop Downtown

up front with a spicy finish. It masks its high alcohol percentage well; this is a great beer to share with friends. Look for it in 750ml bottles and liquor stores around town that typically carry a good selection of Belgian beers.

Once it's gone you won't find it until next fall.

Jeff writes for San Diego Beer Blog at [sandiegobeerblog.com](http://sandiegobeerblog.com), and you can also follow him on twitter @SDBeer

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## New Brew

Continued from page 1

El Cajon had long been courting the San Diego Craft Beer Community to open a brewery in their downtown business district. "The city has been nothing but good to us." To date, ECBC has received around \$350,000 in grants and loans from the city for opening in El Cajon.

The brewery itself is shaping up nicely. Located on the corner of N Mag-



Electrical going in at ECBC

nia & Main St., the square footage of ECBC clocks in around 5,700. Rough plumbing and electrical have been completed, & fermentation tanks arrived right around Christmas. The grand opening is slated for late March 2011. Stephan, the business-side of El Cajon Brewing Company, elaborates on the interior: "There



Fermenters temporarily housed in the future conference/party room

will be booth seating, an open kitchen, and a patio." The patio will add a tinge of European influence to the corner of Magnolia & Main, and Stephan describes the open kitchen as necessary because "it cuts down on kitchen tension, and ensures that things will be kept clean."

The brewhouse is located on the north side of the property, and will have a 150-barrel serving capacity with 4 fermenters. Currently, the video return slot in the brew house is the only indicator of the space's previous incarnation as a Hollywood Video. The first beer on the system will be a yeast propagator with the same original gravity as Brasserie Artisanale de Fribourg's 1047 Pale Ale. Afterwards, a 10 or 12% strong,

dark & chocolaty raspberry stout will be brewed. The trademark beer of ECBC, however, will be one of David's specialty styles – a Swedish-influenced Pilsner or Dortmunder. David hopes to use his Swedish connections to bring his friend's Scandinavian craft brews to taps in the USA at El Cajon Brewing Company, while swapping his own beers to Sweden. "Some say that Swedish beers are better than California's. We'll make those styles and put them to the test against what San Diego does best." *West Coaster* predicts that El Cajon Brewing Company will transform downtown El Cajon, and we can't wait.

## Mama Tierra

Continued from page 1

is in touch with the best strategy for the brewery to succeed: "We want our product to be pulled through the market; we're not going to push it." In 2011, look for Mother Earth's beers to get pulled to a tap handle near you.



MEBC co-owner and Daniel's stepson, Kamron Khannakhjavani

# David AND Goliath.



Hi. We're San Diego's first production nano-brewery, which is to say we are small. Tiny. Diminutive. Our beers, however, are big—giant even. Each of our beers (Kölsch, Vienna Cream Ale, IPA, San Diego Pale and Rye Imperial Stout) has above average ABV, alluring aromatics and taste teeming with character. In a recent poll conducted by Tap Hunter, we were voted San Diego's 2nd most favorite brewery.

Visit us for an honest pint or two, fill up your growler or purrowler, enjoy a tasting flight, and talk beer with beer lovers. Come to the little brewery that will slay your giant thirst with some of the best hand-crafted beer in San Diego.



We're located just off Miramar Road at 7955 Silverton Ave., Suite 1201 (turn onto Dowdy, then left onto Silverton). For hours and info visit [Hessbrewing.com](http://Hessbrewing.com) or Facebook (scan the barcode on this ad) and Twitter, but wouldn't you rather come have a beer?

Mention this ad and we'll give you a tasting flight AND one of our glasses for just \$9.

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## Who & What to Watch in San Diego Craft Beer's New Year

We recently overheard someone liken the San Diego Craft Beer Community to a Gold Rush-era Boomtown. We think it's quite fitting. Instead of old prospectors coming to stake their claim in search of gold, talented individuals and businesses in San Diego are grabbing their piece of the craft beer action by either providing a resource, organizing local events or, well, making beer. Here's our 11 that will define 2011 in the local beer scene.



Melani Gordon all smiles interviewing SDBG Pres. Adam Carbonell for NBC San Diego

### TapHunter.com



Born alongside San Diego Beer Week 2009, TapHunter.com is the product of marketing maven Mel Gordon & husband/tech whiz Jeff "Flash" Gordon. TapHunter's crowdsourced website & iPhone application help local beer lovers find where they can sip their favorite brews on tap. Their 2010 SD Brewery of the Year Awards were a hit as AleSmith came out on top; we're looking forward to see who takes the prize in 2011's vote. What will set TapHunter apart in the new year is their Straight From the Tap program. A weekly online service that will team up with a local business to provide a special coupon/voucher deal, Straight From the Tap is geared to bringing the consumer substantial, targeted savings on the beer they love. Great deals on local beer? Yes please. Signing up is as easy as having an email address and visiting their website: [taphunter.com/straight-from-the-tap](http://taphunter.com/straight-from-the-tap)



STONE BREWING CO.

### Stone Brewing Co.

The local behemoth of arrogance and innovation, Stone Brewing Co. is planning to open the Stone Company Store South Park sometime in 2011. This brilliant move will bring their palate-destroying beers closer to the greater San Diego population, while also helping define the already craft-beer saturated South Park end of 30th Street. Never satisfied or stagnant, Stone is simultaneously scouting a location in Europe to open brewing facilities. The last that *West Coaster* heard, Stone had narrowed the list of cities down to two: Bruges and Berlin. To feel what it's like to be courted by Stone, or if you're hankering to open the next big thing in Europe, check out their Request for Proposal online at [stonebrew.com/rfp/](http://stonebrew.com/rfp/)



Stone Brewing World Bistro Escondido gets in the holidays



### BrewDiego.com

Founded by homebrewer Dan Brown, SD-native foodie/teacher Eric Martin and local church pastor Josh Carter, BrewDiego.com launched back in November as an intuitive and easy-to-navigate resource for San Diego Craft Beer. Their main 2011 focus: producing high-quality videos that delve behind the scenes of the craft beer industry. Whether it's interviewing brewers, taking brewery tours, or documenting events, BrewDiego will put faces to big industry names. Their blogging and social media outlets are also being developed because, according to Dan, "we really enjoy the relationships and conversations we've had with the people who are brewing here. We want to help bridge the gap between those brewing the beer and those drinking it." More specifically, their target audience includes enthusiasts eager to learn more, those locals who previously found getting into craft beer overwhelming, and beer tourists looking for creative local resources.



Check back to BrewDiego.com as their first high-quality video will be up by the end of January

### 33rd Annual American Homebrewers Association National Homebrewers Conference

Former San Diego Brewers Guild President Colby Chandler said it best last month: "2011 is the homebrewer's year to shine! Now is the time to learn how to make beer San Diego!" Whether you're a new-comer to the homebrew scene, or a seasoned veteran, the National Homebrewers Conference is the place to be in June. This year will mark the first time the conference has come to San Diego. Another first: an opening-day Pro-Am Competition featuring San Diego's best brewery/homebrewer teams vying for bragging rights in a free-for-all, no-style-guidelines match-up. As of press time, several big San Diego names are scheduled to speak at the conference, including Port Brewing Co./The Lost Abbey's Co-Owner and Brewmaster Tomme Arthur, Stone Brewing Co.'s CEO & Co-Founder Greg Koch, Owner of O'Brien's Pub Tom Nickel, White Labs' Founder & President Chris White, and AleSmith Brewing Company's Owner Peter Zien.



Kelsey McNair's homebrew setup

### Lee Chase & Automatic Brewing Company

The talented UC Davis & Stone Brewing Co. Alumnus keeps his laboratory quietly secluded in the inner sanctum of Blind Lady Ale House. We've seen some deliciously clever beers from Lee. Examples include Automatic's ginger & coriander'd #1 Belgian Ale, Chocolate Rain Oatmeal Stout, Sex Panther Strong Ale, and most recently, a duo of Belgian White Ales - Light Whitening and Thank You Mamm (which was actually pink!). Lee's been covertly scouting and purchasing new equipment, but has been careful not to let slip what exactly he is up to. Whatever it may be, it's going to rule. Blind Lady Ale House has redefined the dinner scene in Normal Heights, and Automatic Brewing is the first licensed brewery in the craft beer-drenched uptown neighborhoods. *West Coaster* will be watching him from behind an Honest Pint-certified brew & a slice of Neapolitana-inspired pizza.



New pub glasses



Mayor Jerry Sanders officially taps SDBW 2010 at Liberty Station

San Diego Ready or not, Simply cons during 2010 500), it's di the Week's know is that gans will be know, and t will serve to is an all-aro the power S





& Gardens in  
ay spirit

## Ballast Point Brewing & Spirits

No heavy-hitters list would be complete without Ballast Point, and San Diegans should expect more big things from both brewery & spirits departments in 2011. "We are not a one-trick pony, instead driven by the roots of home brewing," assured Director of Sales Earl Kight. "We create and create again and again." Nowhere is this more true than Home Brew Mart in Linda Vista, where it all began in 1992. Watch for HBM's GM and BP Specialty Brewer Colby Chandler to continue producing interesting variations of the award-hogging Sculpin IPA, including ghost and habanero pepper versions. More key developments: bottle labels are being designed for both the highly coveted Fathom IPL (India Pale Lager) as well as the Sour Wench Blackberry Ale. Long-fin Lager, "that easy-drinking, warm-weather favorite, has a 12oz label and six-pack holder almost ready to go." Let's not forget that demand for the Pale Ale and Big Eye IPA continues to grow in the local market. With all of this planned production, the need for increased

## BALLAST POINT BREWING & SPIRITS



Photo: John Shulz @ Studio Shulz

Brewers John Maino (left) and Greg Webb take a break to strike a pose at Ballast Point Scripps Ranch.

capacity is inevitable; rumor has it that the main brewery in Scripps Ranch will be gearing up for another serious expansion this spring.



from Automatic

## AwesomeBeerDrinkers.com

AwesomeBeerDrinkers.com started with Michael Bowen and Alex McKee. According to Michael, the mission of ABD is simple: "To bring the gospel of good beer to the masses, and help support the growth of the craft beer scene in any way we can." How'd they choose their name, you ask? "The name was simple: Mike said 'we have an Awesome idea' and Alex said 'we need more Beer to Drink.'" Aside from a well-put-together website that is developing into a fine resource for all things craft beer in San Diego, what will set Awesome Beer Drinkers apart in 2011 will be their monthly tastings. The next ABD Tasting will be January 22nd @ The Beer Company in Downtown from 4-8pm. To quote them: "We will be featuring a ridiculous assortment of hand-selected craft brews provided by the Best Damn Beer Shop for your tasting enjoyment." For more details and to RSVP, visit [AwesomeBeerDrinkers.com](http://AwesomeBeerDrinkers.com)

## AwesomeBeerDrinkers



Ready to drink beer in an awesome fashion?  
Click over to [AwesomeBeerDrinkers.com](http://AwesomeBeerDrinkers.com)



## Hess Brewing

Let there be no doubt, Hess Brewing convincingly anchors the western end of the Miramar brewery circuit with a quality-over-quantity nano system. Currently, they produce 1.6 barrels, or just 51 gallons, per batch. Expect that to change in 2011. Hess just bought four new 3-barrel fermenters and is looking into some opportunities on a 15-barrel brewhouse to get beer into the marketplace. Whether that means a re-design of their current space or a new Miramar location altogether, Proprietor & CBO Mike Hess told us, "I expect that we'll have around 200 barrels brewed in our second six months. From there...who knows? That's up to our fans!" Other 2011 plans: a new growler, CU Boulder (Mike Hess' alma mater)-style FAC (Friday Afternoon Club) festivities, and more limited release beers.



Photo: Kristina Blake

Hess Brewing, always in high demand.



## Iron Fist

Iron Fist came out swinging when they opened their doors in October of 2010. Their revolutionary theme lends itself well to the line up of beers offered by this family-run brewery, as well as the brewer himself. Their brews are crafted by the youngest Head Brewer in San Diego - Brandon Sieminski. At only 23, Brandon's come up with quality brews such as the bold Dubbel Fisted and the crisp Spice of Life. His newest creation, The Gauntlet Imperial IPA, is unlike anything we've ever tasted (in the best way). Adrian Sieminski, Iron Fist's sales representative & brother to Brandon, reports that the beer is spreading across the county. We expect Iron Fist to continue pummeling palates in 2011.



Photo: Albert Rascon

Iron Fist's Rebels With a Cause.



## San Diego Beer Week 2011

Not, SDBW is back in just ten months. Considering the sheer number of events held over the countywide ten-day festival (close to its third incarnation in 2011). What we do know is the only way is up; unknowing San Diegans to learn what the beer tourists already know. The promotion of locally-produced beer to strengthen the local economy. SDBW will be a win-win for all businesses that believe in San Diego Craft Beer.

## Manzanita Brewing Company



A member of the class of July 2010, Manzanita has been growing faster than anyone expected. After expanding into an adjacent industrial suite off Prospect Avenue in Santee, Manzanita

expanded their tasting room from 90 sq. feet to 550 sq. feet. There's now a 9 1/2 foot full-size bar, and a ~30 ft. standing bar surrounding the tables & barstools that fill up the room. Manzanita will begin bottling bombers in 2011, and their production ability will expand with the upgrade from a 7-barrel system to a 20-barrel system. "We're going to start bottling 1000 (bombers) a week and see



Manzanita growlers, willing and eager.

Photo courtesy of Manzanita Brewing Company

how it goes, and expand our system as soon as we find equipment," says Jeff Trevaskis, CEO of Manzanita. Head Brewer Garry Pitman is looking to begin entering Manzanita brews into local and national competitions in 2011 as well. Watch as the unique trademark Manzanita wood taphandle carves a space in draft lineups around the county.





Sam Tierney, enjoying a Gilden Kölsch from the barrel at the Kölner Verbund Brauerei in Köln, Germany

## Getting Back to Our Roots

*Brewing student's travels reveal birth of popular styles*

By Sam Tierney

San Diego has the distinction of being one of region's big players when it comes to creating new and unique beers. Whether it's the next delicious hop-bomb of an IPA, a session ale, or some barrel-aged and blended sour wonder with three kinds of brettanomyces, two kinds of peaches, and a dash of bourbon, there are always new and exciting beers coming from local brewers. In a way, this is what the craft beer movement in the United States is all about; unbound by tradition, we are free to brew whatever our imaginations can conceive and borrow from whatever traditions we see inspiration in. No matter how experimental we get though, American beers can almost always be traced back to the traditional brewing regions of Central and Western Europe. In my travels as a student at the World Brewing Academy, I visited over a dozen breweries ranging from ultra-traditional to not-so-traditional, criss-crossing the more ethereal world of Belgian brewing in the process. This month I'm going to highlight a few of those breweries in order to shed some light on where some of our experimental creations are rooted.

Those of us on the West Coast are intimately familiar with the IPA family of beers. Single, double, triple... sometimes it feels like we can never get enough hops. Now we even have "session" IPAs so that we can get our hop fix without falling out of our chairs. Most craft beer drinkers already know the gist of the story, but India Pale Ales were originally hoppy ales brewed in England for the export market to India during the colonial era, later being adapted for the local market. While I was in England I visited several breweries, the most traditional of which was Fullers in



The tasting bar at Fullers, England

the Chiswick district of London. At Fullers, the traditional ale brewing method is still in practice, albeit with a few modern twists. Still in use is the combination mash/lauter tun for producing wort from malted marries otter barley by means of a single-infusion mash, as well as the traditional parti-gyle method of running off several worts from one mash. Fullers' range of beers is relatively widespread here, but they are wholly different beasts when served from cask on their home turf. If you've had Fullers ESB here, you probably know it for its rich English malt character. From a cask in London it's surprisingly hoppy, and they even dry hop the beer in the cask, which the export version does not get. My favorite beer of the tour might have been the Chiswick Bitter, which is a 3.5% ABV bitter with a very nice hop aroma and

insane drinkability. These beers might not be as hoppy as what we do out here, but there is no doubt where the West Coast IPA got its start.

Another West Coast favorite that is pushing the boundaries of brewing is the sour/wild ale that breweries like The Lost Abbey and Russian River are famous for. These beer have a refreshing acidity that make them insanely drinkable; once you get a taste for the unique character of brettanomyces yeast, it can seem like you just can't get enough. While in Belgium I toured two breweries that brew very different beers, but have both had a huge influence on American brewers. First up was the classic Flanders

red ale brewery, Rodenbach. These guys have been brewing wood-aged sour red ales since the 1800s when a brewer went to England to learn techniques for brewing porter (an interesting link to think about in my opinion). The dark strong beer is aged up to two and a half years in giant oak foeders (vats), undergoing a mixed fermentation with eight different yeast strains and several types of bacteria, giving it a powerful acidity and bright fruity aroma. They then blend it with young beer from stainless tanks for a uniform flavor.

The last brewery that we visited on our study tour was the Trappist monastic brewery of Orval in Southeast Belgium. I've had a small personal obsession with Orval ever since first tasting it back when I was studying abroad in Sweden. Orval is just one of those beers that speaks to you as long as you are willing to listen. As with many Belgian beers, the key to Orval is in the fermentation. Brasserie d'Orval's brewmaster Jean-Marie Rock even told us, "The malt is just to produce alcohol and some color. The flavor of Orval comes from the yeast." Brasserie d'Orval is unique among the trappist breweries for several reasons: first, they only produce one commercial beer; second, they dry-hop this one beer; and third, they add a strain of brettanomyces yeast at bottling, which allows the character of Orval to radically evolve as it ages. Orval fresh from the brewery is almost a completely different beer from Orval aged a year. At about five months in the bottle, the continued work of the brettanomyces starts to take over the flavor, giving it the wonderful barnyard, fruity, and funky aromas and flavors that wild ale devotees crave. This can be wildly (pun intended) different from the hoppy and bitter Belgian pale ale that you find in a fresh bottle. While Orval is relatively easy to find, I'm happy to see all of the brett-beers coming out of local breweries right now. There is still a massive area of exploration possible with brettanomyces-fermented beers, with the best yet to come.



Descending into the aging cellar at Rodenbach

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Guest Tap is a new column we are trying out. Think of it as an open mic with a filter. We've received interest in writing for West Coaster, so here's your shot. Shoot us 500 words with art on a topic you are knowledgeable about related to the San Diego Craft Beer Community. Understand that it may be edited ruthlessly. Controversy welcome. -Ed (mike@westcoastersd.com)

## GUEST TAP

# BeerTubers & The Transcendence of Text Reviews

By Ryan Reschan

Whether you are a beer geek or a craft beer newcomer, there's a good chance you have been on either BeerAdvocate.com or RateBeer.com, reading the text reviews or perusing the forums to gather information on your next purchase. However, reviewers can feel lost in the sea of text. Some craft beer fans have turned to YouTube to review beers, show off their cellars, interview industry member and take you on virtual tours of their local breweries.

Although aroma and taste are aspects of a beer that you can only get in person, the best BeerTubers (a self-dubbed name for the community of craft beer drinkers on YouTube) take you on a sensory tour of the qualitative parameters of a beer's character: aroma, appearance, flavor, mouthfeel and taste. The reactions to these aspects are also something you can't obtain from an ordinary text review. Grimaces from the skunked aroma of a light-struck beer or the utter joy visible upon first sip of Pliny The Elder personalize the experience, oftentimes making it more entertaining. The reviewer gets to see how the beer changes with each sip, guzzle or chug - and more often than not,



the viewer will get a much more descriptive evaluation of the beer. Text reviews can read like quickly jotted-down notes by someone trying to "tick" off as many beers as possible.

Recently, more and more craft beer enthusiasts have left their keyboards behind and rigged up their cameras. The range of reviewers runs the gamut from long-time beer drinkers and homebrewers to those newly caught up in the growing momentum of the craft beer movement. BeerTubers are all over the world, so you can finally learn how to pronounce Nøgne Ø or figure out which real ale to order on cask if you make it across the pond.

Going beyond the basic beer review, some BeerTubers have taken their cameras around to bars and breweries to help promote events, interview brewmasters, take you on tours of breweries you may never visit and point out the great bottle shops and beer bars in their area. Going beyond that, pairing beer with food has become a recent trend, taking on wine as the superior food beverage. If you've been to the dinners at The Lodge, Rock Bottom La Jolla or Churchill's Pub & Grille then you know how well beer can pair with food. Even Stone's own "Dr." Bill Sysak has taken his Master Pairings to the website to educate beer geeks on what's best to eat with their favorite styles of beer.

If you're not one willing to put your face on YouTube, check out your fellow craft beer advocates and leave some feedback on their videos. A fantastic starting point is BeerGeekNation.com, a collective of nine BeerTubers from around the world boasting hundreds of reviews to watch.

Ryan Reschan is an avid BeerTuber & San Diego Craft Beer aficionado. He frequently produces content for BeerGeekNation.com. To see his review, visit [beergeeknation.com/?cat=161](http://beergeeknation.com/?cat=161)



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## Don't Drink My Growler!

'Tis the season for holiday parties, so I hosted one. The halls were decked, appetizers made, and liquor cabinet stocked. As was the refrigerator with plenty of beer- or so I thought. Below the six pack-stuffed shelf, I placed a recently filled growler on its side. It seemed inconspicuous; an unknowing eye would not desire its contents. The next day, empty bottles cluttered my kitchen, testifying success. There was one bottle that was only half empty, however: my now-turned-upright growler. Someone wasn't as unaware as I'd hoped, instead seeing the growler for what it was: liquid gold. Thankfully, its contents were not some barrel-aged prize. Maybe then I would have cried. Instead, I just yelled, "No! Not the growler!"

What kind of world do we live in that it is acceptable to open someone else's growler without permission? An ignorant kind, that's what. This wasn't the first time I'd been faced with growler-ignorance. Almost daily, I am asked what it is, how it got its name, and why I can't fill another brewery's or brewpub's.

After cleaning my bottle-cluttered kitchen, I sought to reach the truth about this most mysterious bottle. A growler is a half-gallon glass bottle with either a screw top or gasket cap. There have been several incarnations of it, but the modern version can be attributed to Otto Brother's Brewing Company back in the late 1890s. They introduced these vessels as "to-go" containers for beers on draft, the delivery agents being young kids "rushing the growler" to their parents at home. As for the name? Many sources claim the CO<sub>2</sub> that escaped from the lid sounded like a growl.

Then, of course, there are those who believe their growler from brewery/brewpub X can be filled where I work. Whenever I decline such a request, the reaction is as though I killed a kitten. Looks of shock and anguish wash across faces, backs turn to walk out my door. People take things too personally. The real reason I can't fill it is not because I am cold-hearted, it is simply a liability issue. Think of it this way: you roll into IN-N-OUT and order a Double-Double, but instead you get a disguised Big Mac. Later, at home, you become ill and blame IN-N-OUT, but it was actually a product of McDonald's.

Those are the basics, now here are some details which may come in handy: your first growler will be the most expensive because you purchase the glass alongside the beer. Sometimes this is mistaken as a "deposit" as though, if upon return, the money will be given back...not true. When you come for a refill, a growler rinse is not promised. I recommend a prior ride in the dishwasher. Fill prices and availability are dependent on the product. If something is pricey or simply a "no-no," it is for good reason. During the summer, a delicious double I.P.A. was unavailable in growlers and someone actually offered me \$70 for a half-gallon of beer! But, being a Beermaid, I knew I only had 5 gallons left until the next run and refused. Again, it was as though I had killed a kitten!

Always make sure your growler cap is tightly sealed (done properly and the beer will stay fresh much longer), filled to the brim sans head, and—if you are planning to age it—out of reach at your next party.



Growlers being filled at Stone Brewing Co., Escondido

- The Nameless Beermaid

Want to ask The Nameless Beermaid a question? Send them to [beermaid@westcoastersd.com](mailto:beermaid@westcoastersd.com)

## Firey Fare @ The Lodge at Torrey Pines

If you dig firey food and fine beer, you're in luck - The Grill at Torrey Pines will be hosting Ballast Point for a Chili Beer Dinner on January 19th.



The Grill at The Lodge at Torrey Pines

2011. According to The Grill's craft-beer-loving manager, Stephen Kurpinsky, "Ballast Point will be infusing chilies into different beers just for us and we will be pairing them with a great menu." There's going to be a Bloody Mary/Jalapeño Yellowtail Pale Ale paired with blackened scallops & shrimp, a Roasted Poblano Pepper Yellowtail paired with jicama and cucumber salad, a Dried Mexican Chili Calico Amber Ale paired with crispy roasted quail, a Chipotle Black Marlin Porter paired with Mexican chocolate cake, & the infamous Habenero Sculpin paired with curry-spiced pork loin. The price is \$55 for this five star flamed fare - to reserve tickets, click over to [lodgetorrey.com/beer/](http://lodgetorrey.com/beer/)

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**Ballast Point Brewing Company**

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619-295-2337  
homebrewmart.com  
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**Firehouse Brewing Company**

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**Hess Brewing Co.**

Miramar, 7955 Silvertown Ave. #1201, 619-887-6453, hessbrewing.com. San Diego's first licensed nano-brewery. Tasting room hours: Wednesdays 2-7pm; Thursdays 2-7pm; Fridays 2-8pm; Saturdays 1-5pm. Groups of 5 or more - you call it and we'll be there.

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