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SURF. SUN. STRAND.



Rich Marcello

Photo by Daniel Drennon

By Daniel Drennon

It's hard to believe that only eight years ago, Strand Brewing opened in Torrance as the first brewery in the South Bay. Yes, the same South Bay that now offers beer fans a local destination with ten breweries and another five that are South Bay adjacent. Co-owners Joel Elliott (also the brewer) and Rich Marcello (the ambassador, marketer, sales guy and, in the early years, the self-distributor) opened Strand back when city officials presumed that approving and permitting a small, independent brewery was no different than allowing yet another South Bay dive bar at which drunken patrons were bound to piss in people's front yards and end up in screaming matches or fist fights. (Full cover story on page 12)

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FROM THE EDITOR

WADING INTO UNCHARTERED WATERS

By Daniel Drennon

Beer Paper entered our fifth year in May and, throughout our run, we have been moved by the warm reception, sometimes even love, we have received from our readers, breweries, and beer bars. It is increasingly common for fans of the paper to come up to me at festivals and say how much the paper means to them and, let me tell you, that touches my heart and makes all the effort worthwhile.

I am incredibly proud that Beer Paper features the remarkable talents of Sarah Bennett, Tomm Carroll, and John Verive as senior columnists. Sarah also writes for the LA Weekly, OC Weekly, and national publications; not just about beer, but about food, music and, quite honestly, she could write about which way the wind is blowing and it would be interesting. Tomm has been writing for The Celebrator, the long-time national magazine, I think since Noah was loading the Ark. Tomm's knowledge of the history of brewing and beer is unsurpassed by anyone I know. Last but not least is Mr. Verive. John writes about beer for the Los Angeles Times as well as national publications. He has established himself as one of the leading voices on the local beer scene and it is his column in this issue that has led me to speak out to our readers and beer industry folks about the paper wading into uncharted waters.

We are, after all, a newspaper. These three journalists have earned the right to write whatever they want. I do not censor nor even edit the content of their columns. It is their voice. It is their opinion. And in the case of these three, it is a highly educated opinion. We call that free speech. We call that our beloved First Amendment. Not second. Not third. The Founding Fathers (some notable brewers) made it number one. I don't mess with that kind of magic. So, if there is occasionally a political comment you don't agree with, that is your right. But I don't censor them. If there is occasional profanity (usually in my own articles because I just get so fucking excited about great beer), then I don't edit that out either.

Back to Mr. Verive. He has been recently inspired by some fellow beer writers who have called upon the community of beer journalists to become more critical and less cheerleader (a word I just coined). It has long been a conundrum for we writers because we are enthusiastic about

craft beer. We do love to publicize the artistry of the best brewers on the planet, many of whom are in California, some of whom are right here at home in greater Los Angeles. We are surrounded and, quite frankly, spoiled by a wealth of world class brewing here in the Golden State. So, yes, we sing their praises.

What we have historically not done is write about mediocre breweries or bad beer. We have let our silence speak to that. In this issue John Verive, like a leader among beer writers that he is, calls out some problems. Not to bash anyone for the sake of bashing, but to create a dialogue that needs to be had, and to lead to education for readers. The brewers should already know when there is a problem and they know full well that even the best brewers may brew a bad batch once in a while. It is how they handle that reality that says a lot about who they are as artists. Do they dump the batch? Or do they turn it into an entirely different beer to hide the mistake and release the beer? Maybe, just maybe, that beer comes out just fine and no one is the wiser. Or maybe not so much.

By definition, opinions are subjective. The views expressed by any of our writers may not reflect the views of myself or Beer Paper. I'll be as honest as I can be when I share with you, our readers, that calling out breweries or beers makes me extremely nervous. I'm not yet convinced the benefits outweigh the potential downsides. I have always believed that beer fans speak mostly loudly with where they go and on what they spend their money.

I have bounced it off of a few brewers and, as I would hope, they have all been receptive to receiving candid reviews and even criticism as long as the criticism is warranted. We shall see.

California will soon surpass a thousand breweries. Our brewers are the best in the world. But with a number like that, the reality is that there are breweries who are turning out sub-standard beer.

Daniel Drennon is the publisher, editor and head writer of Beer Paper.

BEER PAPER

Beer Paper is an online and monthly print publication dedicated to providing and promoting news, commentary, education, and growth for the craft beer communities of Los Angeles and Orange County. Our contributors are all beer writers and industry professionals.

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PINTS & QUOTES

NO MORE MR. NICE BEER WRITER GUY. THE TIME IS NIGH TO GET REAL ABOUT BAD BEER.

By John M. Verive

Here's a secret about the craft beer industry: bad beer is more common than you think. It's everywhere.

You've probably had some bad beers recently. You might even be drinking one right now. But, if you judge the craft beer industry through the lens of modern beer writing and industry reporting, you might well draw the conclusion that there is no bad beer — that every pint poured at every taproom is, if not great, at least inoffensive enough to escape critical commentary. This is, of course, demonstrably untrue. There's an untold amount of poorly made and/or poorly handled beer out in the wild, but the industry was built alongside a critical culture that is anything but critical. Why don't we talk about the disappointments more often? Do beer writers and industry publications need to get real with the drinking public?

The issue was recently broached by Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey in Beer Advocate magazine in a thorough look at the legacy of seminal beer writer and industry champion Michael Jackson. ("The Birth of the Beer Hunter: Looking Back on Michael Jackson's Legacy," July 2017, Issue #125: www.beeradvocate.com/articles/15939/the-birth-of-the-beer-hunter-looking-back-on-michael-jacksons-legacy/) Perhaps the world's first beer writer, Jackson championed not only the traditional ales of his native Briton, but flavorful brews from around the world. Jackson traveled widely and drank deeply from the world's breweries, but he never strayed far from speaking positively of the beer he encountered. The Beer Advocate article quotes his own explanation of this "cheery beery" approach:

"If I can find something good to say about a beer, I do. Any merit or unusual aspect is, I believe, of interest to my readers... Nor since I have the whole world from which to choose, can I be comprehensive. If I despise a beer, why find room for it?"

One indelible aspect of Jackson's legacy is his cheerful and deferential (sometimes reverential) voice is aped by near every other writer covering the blossoming beer industry. Years ago, when I was just delving into the emergent craft beer industry in Los Angeles, I was more familiar with the beer writing of Portland beer writer Jeff Alworth and his Beervana blog than I was with the musings of the legendary "Beer Hunter" Michael Jackson. Alworth influenced my approach to beer writing, and his work is a frequent touchstone when I find myself struggling with some aspect of the industry or the writer's craft. It's unsurprising that I share his reasoning for taking the "cheery beery" stance over more incisive critiques. In his response to the Boak and Bailey article in Beer Advocate titled "Exposing Bad Beer" (www.beervanablog.com/beervana/2017/7/7/exposing-bad-beer), he says:

"I've largely followed Jackson's approach. There are already too many good breweries to write about... There seems little point in spending my meager energies discussing bad beer."

With so much to be excited about, and so many winning brews, why focus on the also-rans or a brewery's misstep? Furthermore, I question the need for professional critics spilling ink on bad beer when there is no shortage of beer ratings provided by the drinking public. I often see people shopping for beer, smartphone in hand frantically looking up possible purchases on Beer Advocate, Rate Beer or Untappd. These shoppers are not going to turn to Draft Magazine's professional reviews or the column by their local beer writer. Why would they? They instead have the aggregated opinion of thousands of beer geeks to base their purchase decisions on. A vicious hatchet job might be fun to read (and they can be fun to write) but does it serve the reader or the industry beyond the entertainment aspect? Do you want to read about all the bad beer that's out there?

I've heard other writers and industry folk decry the lack of critical commentary on beers, but I wonder just how much writing about bad beer helps the consumer. If I write a takedown of a beer that you love, or even of a beer from a brewery that you love, you're probably going to ignore my commentary. Why should you trust my palate to inform your sensibilities more than the accretion of anonymous internet know-it-alls?

Brandon Hernandez, a veteran beer writer and marketer based in San Diego, thinks strong, honest criticism is important. He's known for calling spades spades and for not pulling punches when discussing bad brews. (He once lambasted a new brewery in San



This beer is terrible

Photo by John Verive

Diego by saying the beer was so bad the brewers should never have opened a brewery in the first place.) He had this to say about his approach and why he takes the time to write about bad beer:

"I believe journalists reporting on an industry revolving around consumables for purchase have an obligation to their readers as a consumer advocate. I feel it is my duty, especially in a county with more than 140 operating brewhouses manufacturing wares of varying degrees of quality, to help readers avoid inferior beer when there are so many exceptional ales and lagers to spend your money on."

When Beer Paper launched just over four years ago, the industry in Los Angeles was still struggling to get off the ground. Like Jackson in the late 70s, it was more important to highlight what was good and exciting rather than shine a spotlight on the inferior products or contemptible people. Today, everything feels different. Competition is heating up and the brotherhood of craft brewers is splintering, and all the while the beer lovers are more savvy and more passionate than ever before. Perhaps it is time to start shining a light on the cracks and the blemishes in the industry. Is that something that you want to read?

In Alworth's post, he claims that he'll be changing his tack on beer reviews:

"But enough of the excuses: Boak and Bailey are right, I should be writing about bad beer more often. I'm actually going to start looking for them. Rather than just writing scathing reviews, though, I'll use it as an opportunity to discuss why I think the beer is bad, because "bad" is in many dimensions an objective evaluation."

As usual, I'm fast drawn to Alworth's position, and frustrated that he articulated the stance that I've held before I had the wherewithal to. Calling out bad experiences in the scene might be the key to furthering the collective "beer IQ" of consumers, not to mention the industry workers and brewers who can all too easily find themselves in a bubble isolated from the marketplace at large. It's past time to elevate the discourse above the eight word Untappd checkin.

I've run across plenty of bad beer over the past few months, and I'm not going to sweep those experiences under the rug anymore. Let's look at some recent bad beers, and dive into what went wrong — a story that's usually more important than beer.

John Verive is Southern California native and freelance writer dedicated to growing the craft beer scene in Los Angeles. He is a Certified Cicerone®, the founder of Beer of Tomorrow (www.BeerofTomorrow.com), and he covers the beer-beat for the Los Angeles Times. John loves lagers, session beers, finding perfect pairings, and telling the stories of the people behind the pints; you can follow him on Twitter and Instagram at @octopushat and @beeroftomorrow.

DO BEER BETTER

By John M. Verive

When the cult favorites fall flat

If you were to list the most exciting and hyped breweries in California, Fieldwork Brewing would certainly be near the top. The Berkeley-based brewery has a reputation for innovative, on-trend brews that draw big crowds. In February of this year, I made a sketchy drive over a rain battered Bay Bridge from San Francisco to Berkeley to see what all the fuss was about, and after a couple hours and a dozen beers I left scratching my head. While I'm ambivalent towards the hazy IPA style, I at least understand the appeal of those beers. The handful of hazy pales, IPAs and double IPAs from Fieldwork were a collective mess. Vegetal, tannic, muddy and lacking any of the brightness I'd expected, they were a disappointment. Worse, several of the examples had the strong flavor of Aquafresh toothpaste. Any beer that featured Galaxy hops tasted minty and astringent, and coupled with the style's beloved "juicy" quality the impression was that of drinking OJ after brushing your teeth. As I struggled to finish the second flight of beers I was increasingly confused by the increasingly large crowd gathered in the tasting room. People were taking 10 or more crows of Fieldwork beer to-go. I found it a challenge to pick one beer to take back to the hotel. Who's wrong about those beers? The lone beer writer hundreds of miles from home, or the scores of passionate fans filling the brewery?

The worst offenders

Sometimes beer is bad when it leaves the brewery, but more often something happens between the brewer's last quality control check and your glass. Day to day the most common culprit for a pitiful pint is the final few feet the beer travels. From neighborhood restaurants to iconic beer bars, dirty draft lines are endemic across Los Angeles, and as craft beer wins over more and more taps from the industrial brews, the problem only intensifies. In an ideal world, a bar or restaurant will clean their draft lines every two weeks, but the reality is most establishments leave the cleaning up to the beer distributors. Some of these companies are more vigilant than others, but none of the distributors have the kind of direct accountability that the bar operators have. Lucky Baldwins in Pasadena is infamous for poorly maintained draft lines, and I supposed I shouldn't have been surprised when my pint of Little Bo Pils tasted like watermelon. My guess is the prior keg was something like Hell or High Watermelon, and the flavor stuck around in the line to taint my pint of pilsner. (Though, for the record, it wasn't entirely unpleasant once I got over the initial disappointment — maybe Smog City should think about a summertime watermelon pils?) Even the superlative Father's Office gastropub, one of L.A.'s early champions of not only craft beer but proper beer service, served up a pair of off brews recently.

What happens if you get a funky pint and you suspect dirty tap lines? Inform the bartender or server. Their reaction will tell you a lot about how much time and money you should be spending in that establishment. In the case of Father's Office, the bartender did everything right: they immediately poured themselves a taste to evaluate and offered me something else. The last time I stopped in at 1739 Public House in Los Feliz for a refreshment, we were served an undrinkable Drakes 1500, and while the bartender did offer her a new pint (which also tasted like buttered popcorn and vomit), his disdain was obvious, and he mansplained about hops to my wife when she asked for something else. Worse, he never investigated the tap to see if there was a problem and ensuring the next person to order that beer would be disappointed too.

New brewery learning curve

Some sub-standard beer is inevitable in a beer culture that puts innovation on a pedestal above all else (Fieldwork's co-founder and head brewer Alex Tweet often says that he doesn't care about consistency as long as he's innovating). Like the example above, it's how the brewery handles the misstep that's important. Take the rookie brewery Los Angeles Ale Works' early iteration of their Full Thrust double IPA. That beer developed a diacetyl (buttered popcorn) aroma shortly after the first batch was kegged. The brewers pulled the beer from their tap list once the problem was discovered, but the new regulars at the tasting room, many who were new to the craft beer realm, were upset that they couldn't get their favorite beer. The brewers were faced with an interesting dilemma: pull a beer that wasn't up to their standards, or listen to their customers who wanted to drink it anyway. It's an anecdote that underlines the subjectivity of beer flavor, and the challenges that new breweries face. LAAW fixed their process issues that led to the diacetyl problem, and the next batch of Full Thrust was clean and potent. But how many drinkers tried that batch only to write off the brewery?

The cost of envelope pushing

It isn't just a problem with new breweries either. A recent collaboration between local favorites El Segundo Brewing Co. and Evan Price's new Green Cheek Brewing ran into a similar issue. The beer, Beginner's Luck, was a double IPA made by a dream team of IPA brewers at the El Segundo brewery. The bottle I had was so rife with buttery diacetyl that I had to drain pour the bomber. I was shocked and asked around about the beer. Everyone I spoke to said it was a good if not great expression of American impact hops, and the brew is well-rated at Beer Advocate, Untappd and RateBeer with no mention of buttery aromas. I asked ESBC's Tom Kelley about it and he was unsurprised. He explained it was an unanticipated result of changing the brewery's standard dry hopping procedure to follow Price's signature method. A large double-charge of dry hops actually catalyzed a secondary micro fermentation that produced acetolactic acid. The mostly flavorless compound is a precursor to diacetyl, and time and warm storage conditions will convert the acid into the offending flavor-active compound. I'd purchased the beer off a warm shelf at a local Hollywood bottleshop two or three weeks after the release, and I got a bad bottle and \$9 down the drain.

A bad beer does not a bad brewery make

What's the moral of these stories? It's rarely as simple as "this beer sucks", and each of the experiences above offers an opportunity to learn more about what we are drinking, who's making the beer, and how that beer is served. Quality and consistency are the two pillars of the craft beer industry, and every one of the breweries in the country has room to improve. To be effective, critical coverage of "bad" beer needs to be well considered and constructive, rather than incisive and extempore. There is a lot of anxiety about how a brewer or business owner will react to a negative opinion, and thus the negative opinions only exist in the anonymity of the internet or the comfort of a like-minded group. We, critics and drinkers alike, need to buck this trend and speak truth to the people behind the beer. How they react to considered and constructive criticism can be the defining factor in which breweries thrive and which wither in the coming years.



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NEVER JUDGE A BEER BY ITS COVER

By Brendan Megowan



Riip Beer Co. in Huntington Beach

Never judge a beer by its cover...or should you?

Beer marketing is possibly as old as beer itself. No doubt, the first fellows to stumble upon the wonders of fermentation were soon considering how to sell or trade it. In the big business alcohol world, marketing is all about branding. The keys to building effective big beer branding are to find a target market, create the illusion of a perceived need, and create a consistent product that fills that need. In many large breweries, or breweries “thinking large,” the marketing department is not only responsible for naming beers, they often decide which beer styles will get brewed at all and which styles will languish in relative obscurity.

Real brewers are a special certain kind of weird folk. Their goal, more often than not, is to create something just slightly greater than anything that ever existed. Sometimes on paper their creations don’t make sense, and the name on the chalkboard at the pub leaves you even more confused. Small brewers will toss out beer names with music lyrics, movie quotes, or one offs from the homeboy’s grandpa. It seems like you can’t even visit a brewery anymore without seeing some sort of social reference that most likely would not stand up to litigation.

This is territory that big alcohol dare not venture. They invest huge sums of money to support brands in which they desire to grow. The cycle of advertising, customer awareness, market growth, and market saturation takes time. When a large brewery decides to make a new beer, millions are invested in the brand and they expect a return.

Lost Abbey vs. Moylands and Lagunitas vs. Sierra show that even crafty fun people can be dicks. Lagunitas invented IPA and Lost Abbey invented the Celtic cross? These big legal battles were fought over intellectual property when the business these companies were supposed to be in was bringing the best beer possible to customers.

The true future of craft beer lies with neighborhood breweries, crawlers, growers, home deliveries, and personal kegs. These new small breweries don’t rely on intellectual property as a source of financial security. Their money is made from beer sales and they don’t cut a percentage to distributors either. Each batch of beer may yield only 15-30 kegs, get a funny name and never be brewed again. Cease and Desist letters glance off their impenetrable armor of never ending creativity.

With my being so vocal about it, friends and relatives often ask me how to tell fake craft from real craft. Creative ingredients, Brewer’s Association members... the new Independent craft logo? I always say go with your gut, but there are a few tell-tale signs that a brewery is true to the craft.

The easiest way to tell a brewery has fresh beers is note how often the beer names change. The small breweries that are doing well can easily sell out of a beer in less than a month

with no distributor help. They have no need to simplify product lines or consolidate advertising resources by limiting beer recipes to a few core brands.

Great brewers often cultivate a reputation for a certain character in their beer, but within the constructs of bitterness, alcohol content, dry balance, and the bright hop character demanded by SoCal beer drinkers lies a variety of beautiful flavors and aromas that can be achieved with sound processes and top ingredients. If properly managed and access to great hops, a neighborhood brewery can release a new IPA every week. Needless to say, names run short pretty quick. The resulting inside jokes and cultural references are a clear indication of a creative brewery, long on beer styles and short on names.

The elephant in the room for craft beer is the contradiction between consistency required to grow a brand, and the creative variety desired by the modern craft beer fan. The solution is not what the bean counters want to hear. Unless small breweries would like to compete in price wars with monolithic big beer, there must be a move away from the recent exponential growth model toward an environment where creativity and attention to detail are of most importance. Breweries are beginning be looked at as more akin to local sushi restaurants than beverage factories and brewers respected as local personalities. This is a movement that will not be diluted and is impossible to imitate. If you want to be a part of it, look at the menu and point to the weirdest beer name you see and don’t forget to ask the bartender’s opinion.

Brendan Megowan is a consultant in the craft beer industry and founder of Whale Face Beer Company.



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ENVIRONMENT

SMOG CITY WALKS THE TALK

By Laurie Porter

“Our individual and business members create a movement that inspires giving and sets new standards for how people take responsibility for our planet.” (1% for the Planet)

As a company, we believe that it is our resolute responsibility to make every possible effort to reduce our environmental impact and support our local community. The mantra “Recycle, reuse and reduce” is an indelible part of Smog City and our partnership with 1% for the Planet is the next step in defining who we are as a business.

As of July 1st, 2017, Smog City has officially partnered with 1% for the Planet, a non-profit founded by Patagonia’s founder Yvon Chouinard, committing 1% of our gross revenue from wholesale and the Torrance taproom to environmentally conscious non-profits including our long-time partner Food Forward, with whom we make the seasonally available, Kumquat Saison. Environmental impact is a real thing and we at Smog are committed to making this a better place for ourselves, our children and our children’s children. This is our way of showing that not only are we a brewery with intent but one that takes our social and environmental responsibility seriously.

As a company, our philosophy is that craft beer is more than the liquid in your glass. It’s about building a solid team, a great corporate culture, a supportive community and instilling genuine responsibility to the product, the customer experience and our overall brewery’s integrity in the industry. This commitment to 1% for the Planet isn’t a divergence from what we were, it’s an evolution of WHO we are.

Smog City is the first 1% for the Planet brewery partner in L.A. County, trailblazing social responsibility and environmental impact, but we hope that we are not the last. Smog has the honor of joining other SoCal 1% FTP partners, Topa Topa Brewing in Ventura and Pure Project in San Diego. Honestly, it’s a powerful thing to take a stance with likeminded owners and we look forward to more opportunities and successes along the way.

We invite you to visit our taproom, raise a glass and make a difference. Drink with a purpose!

Laurie Porter is co-owner of Smog City Brewing along with her husband, award-winning brewer, Jonathan Porter.



Photo by Laurie Porter

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COVER STORY

SURF. SUN. STRAND.

By Daniel Drennon



Rich Marcello of Strand Brewing

Photo by Daniel Drennon

It's hard to believe that only eight years ago, Strand Brewing opened in Torrance as the first brewery in the South Bay. Yes, the same South Bay that now offers beer fans a local destination with ten breweries and another five that are South Bay adjacent. Co-owners Joel Elliott (also the brewer) and Rich Marcello (the ambassador, marketer, sales guy and, in the early years, the self-distributor) opened Strand back when city officials presumed that approving and permitting a small, independent brewery was no different than allowing yet another South Bay dive bar at which drunken patrons were bound to piss in people's front yards and end up in screaming matches or fist fights.

Back then, in the olden days...oh yeah, a mere eight years ago, Elliott had to attend meeting after hearing after meeting with city officials and inspectors to slowly but surely convince them that this would be a good business for their community...an asset. And convince them he did. No doubt his achievement in doing this has made it easier on all those who have come to "brewery-friendly Torrance" after Strand. Elliott and Marcello have been generous in sharing their experience and knowledge in opening Strand with many if not most of the South Bay breweries that have followed. If they didn't pave the way for what has become a bit of a local Mecca for great craft beer, they certainly shoveled most of the dirt.

We have written about Joel Elliott in the past and he is a quiet man with a fierce sense of integrity, loyalty, and commitment to his family and friends.

But in this issue, we turn to Rich Marcello. His partner. His friend. And a guy who has always, for eight years said to us and others, shine the light on Joel.

I met Marcello eight years ago as, all across the second biggest city in America, he

was self-distributing Strand kegs, hosting a thousand pint nights, and preaching the gospel of craft beer. He was akin to a missionary way back then when, sadly, LA was the wasteland of craft beer – the subject of ridicule from our "more craft advanced" neighbors in Nor Cal and San Diego.

Along with fellow (local) pioneer, Jeremy Raub of Eagle Rock Brewery, which opened around the same time, the two men would cross paths on their delivery routes and even share the occasional pint night.

Raub says of Marcello, "The LA beer scene as we know it would not exist without Rich Marcello. As one of the hardest working, most sincere folks around, he helped lay the groundwork for the positive vibes and camaraderie that make our community great."

Once Strand's tap room opened. Marcello was well known to spend every hour they were open greeting customers, quickly turning them into friends, and soon knowing every detail about their lives. But not simply knowing those details; caring about them. Hence, Strand swiftly developed a loyal following and outgrew their original south Torrance location a couple of years ago, moving to an expansive new location just north of Old Town Torrance.

Strand brewed 350 barrels in 2009 and 6000 in 2016. Marcello calls their growth "organic."

I sat down with Marcello to discuss their journey from a friendship on the beach to a brotherhood in a brewery.

DRENNON: Strand was the first brewery to open in a South Bay that now features ten breweries, and another five bordering, a mere eight years later. Do you feel like a trailblazer?

MARCELLO: Well, we were the 1st production brewery to do what we were doing in the South Bay and with that I felt there was a great deal of pressure to represent our brand and the beer in the right way. In no way did we invent 'craft beer' – we simply brought it to an area where there was a glaring void. We definitely saw there was an opportunity here for a local brewery to be born and grow.

What was your light bulb moment in deciding to open a brewery?

When Joel (co-founder) was floating me on the idea of uprooting from San Luis Obispo back to the South Bay he hadn't yet found funding or a location. We didn't have a working name or logo. There wasn't even a working business plan. I asked him what it was going to be like and he responded, "C'mon, it's going to be fucking incredible!" Perhaps the best sales pitch ever.

How hard was opening Strand Brewing for you and Joel and what lessons did you learn?

Honestly, it was a brutal time, and typical of underfunded start-ups. No sleep, not eating properly, at a desk job in the morning and afternoon and working on the brewery project late into the midnight hours...family time gone and you get blindsided on a daily basis. I think the lesson on how to persevere and overcome obstacles is almost a necessary one and proves invaluable down the road. I don't think we would be the same company (or people) without those early struggles.

As other breweries began to open, you were incredibly generous with your time and advice in helping them get established. What was your philosophy in helping folks who, let's be honest, were to become your competitors?

At the time 2009, we were one of a small band of breweries in L.A. County attempting to get going, and it's hard to create a "brewery scene" as an army of one. I figured, why not help others come into the game if we can? We were confident in our beers and were interested to see what others had to offer. Healthy and fair competition is good a good way to help up everyone's game.



Photo by John Verive

Does Strand itself have a mission statement or philosophy?

"Premium Hand-Crafted Ales" is part of our logo. It appears on every keg collar, bottle label, can and glass. It's probably the closest thing to a mission statement we have.

Philosophically as a company – Do the right thing for the right reasons. Treat people with dignity and respect. Be confident, yet humble. Those are all on the list.

(Cover story continues on page 14)



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Joel Elliott and Rich Marcello

Photo by Daniel Drennon

(Cover story continued from page 13)

You were distributing bottles at first but now, like so many others, you have begun to can. Please tell our readers the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Bottles were a great way for us to break away from the draft accounts (bars and restaurants) and into the bottle shops and markets. It was the first time we entered into people's homes. We use a very traditional 16.9 ounce bottle, so it is sold as a single serve. I think this was a good fit for us when we began bottling (in 2013) as it allows a potential customer to try us out without the bigger commitment of a six pack or 22 ounce bomber. The bottles still sell very well. For me the can has been fun. Most craft beer drinkers can now rattle off the merits canned beer- no UV light, proper seal, lightweight...but the biggest one for me personally is that we live in an outdoor area. Beach cruisers, backpacks, golf bags, poolside and backyard BBQs. It's a perfect fit for our local market.

As one of our fans so eloquently put it recently "Strand in cans is just so fucking convenient." (He laughs).

To me, Strand has always exemplified the beach lifestyle. Where you live, work, play and raise your families is inextricably linked to the brand, am I right?

Strand is actually a German word that means "Beach" so we will always be linked to that. For us it has always been about that concrete stretch that literally connects all of the South Bay, where we spend our days and nights and have our best memories. The lifeguard tower which is part of our logo elicits such strong memories from locals and visitors. It's that iconic image of beach in Southern California.

What were your priorities before you and your wonderful wife Jenni had your three cool kids, and how has fatherhood changed you?

Overall, I think that my priorities have remained the same...and perhaps have even become more definitive. Living a healthy lifestyle, commitment to helping others with a strong sense of family and friendship. If anything, being a husband and father has helped me to achieve a greater balance and deeper understanding of what those words really mean. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

If you could take a month off and do anything, what would you do and/or where would you go?

Long surf trip with the family. Siesta in the sand...then NYC for a week of eating and drinking.

Who and/or what inspires you?

Artists with original /unique concepts, thoughts and feelings.

Between talent and work ethic, which is more important?

I've found that a little talent and a lot of work ethic goes way farther than the opposite.

If you weren't a brewery owner, what would you be?

(He laughs) Hollywood stuntman.

If you had to describe yourself in one word or phrase, what would it be?

Rich w/ Strand.



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WISHFUL DRINKING

PRE-HOPPED BEER HISTORY: THE BYOB AFTERLIFE

By Tomm Carroll

Local craft beer fans are always on the lookout for the latest brewery or taproom launch, the newest keg or bottle release, or the next beer festival, and many of the same familiar faces can be spotted again and again at these events, supporting the LA beer scene with their presence. That's the sign of a healthy and vigorous local craft beer community. But in concentrating solely on the immediate present or near future (the current opening, the upcoming tap takeover), one runs the risk of overlooking our favorite fermented beverage's past — even ancient history — the understanding of which is also a vital part of beer knowledge, appreciation and even geekdom.

Which is why it was somewhat disappointing to see barely any of LA's usual "suds-pects" in attendance at the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades one mid-July weekend (or at least the Saturday session, when this writer was present), for the latest program in the museum's occasional Bacchus Uncorked series. Normally focused on "the grape in the ancient world," the lecture/tasting event occasionally deviates from wine, and such was the case here with "The Past on Tap: Feasts and Fermented Brews in Ancient Europe."

The subject was somewhat similar to the one in "Uncorking the Past: Ancient Ales, Wines, and Extreme Beverages," a program the Getty Villa presented in 2011 featuring noted biomolecular archaeologist Patrick E. McGovern, and inspired by his 2009 book *Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages*. McGovern, of course, is best known in the beer world as the frequent collaborator with Sam Calagione on his Dogfish Head Brewery's Ancient Ale series of beers. However, the recent program featured a talk by two experts, followed by a leisurely tasting session, with appetizers, in a garden party-like setting on the patio of the museum's café.

Opening the lecture was University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee archaeologist and anthropologist Bettina Arnold, who recently returned from an international conference entitled "What Did the Early Celts Drink?" at Weltenberg Abbey, the brewing Benedictine monastery in Bavaria that was established in the 7th century. Aided by a PowerPoint demonstration, Dr. Arnold spoke on paleobotany, the study of plant fossils, as a means of analyzing and identifying ingredients found in the residue of 2,000-plus-year-old cauldrons and drinking vessels.

For instance, pollen analysis on a drinking vessel found in a Bronze-Age burial site in Fife, Scotland detected bee-borne types of pollen, revealing honey, which indicates that the beverage was a mead. Also found was evidence of meadowsweet (a perennial plant used for medicinal purposes), small-leaved lime (a deciduous tree) and heather, all of which, in those pre-hops days of brewing, were used as bittering agents, for preservation and for flavor.

Aside from honey, the other resources available to prehistoric European populations to create alcoholic beverages were various fruits, grains (barley, wheat, rye, oats, spelt and millet) and herbs like the aforementioned, as well as mint, mugwort, bog myrtle, thyme and others (many of which are ingredients in gruit, or beer without hops). Interestingly, there were no grapes grown in France or Germany then; wine wasn't even imported to the region from the Mediterranean until 600 BC.

Many of the pots, cauldrons and drinking vessels containing this biomolecular evidence were unearthed from Bronze- (3000-1200 BC) and Iron-Age (1200-1 BC) burial sites in western Europe to determine what type of feasting and funerary fermented beverages those societies consumed.

Like the ancient Egyptian pharaohs, Chinese emperors and others, the deceased elite in pre-Roman Europe were buried with their jewelry, cherished belongings, drinking vessels, food and mood-altering fermented beverages to take with them to the hereafter. "It was a BYOB afterlife," Arnold quipped.

Following Arnold, the triple-certified (sommelier, spirits specialist, cicerone) Mark Mark Keene spoke specifically about beer. "Beer and bread were originally made together, using the same ingredients," he said. "Including the yeast." Keene also talked about how hops — so beloved by today's craft beer fans, especially the IPA-obsessed — were quite late to the brewing party in the long history of beer.

"Hops weren't even mentioned in written human history until Pliny the Elder in [his *Naturalis Historia*, published in] 77-79 AD, and it wasn't until 822 AD that the first recorded history of hops used in brewing is mentioned," he explained. Keene also pointed out the irony that the region we now called Germany, the home of the Reinheitsgebot — the so-called "beer purity law" issued in 1516, requiring all beer made in then-Bavaria to be brewed with hops — did not even begin to use hops in beer-making until 1150-1160 AD.

Keene also discussed the five beverages with connections to the ancient past that he curated for the sold-out crowd to taste afterwards. Most interesting was a brand-new brew created by request of the Getty expressly for this event: a braggot (a combination of mead and ale) by Santa Monica Brew Works. The beverage was inspired by, and used the



Enjoying the braggot brewed especially for the Getty Villa event are, from left, Santa Monica Brew Works sales director Alex Josefowitz, archaeologist and anthropologist Bettina Arnold, sommelier Terri Sonleitner, Santa Monica Brew Works head brewer Drew Pomatti, and cicerone, sommelier and spirits specialist Mark Mark Keene.

Photo by Tomm Carroll

modern-day versions of, the ingredients Arnold and her team found in one of those Iron-Age cauldrons: barley malt, honey, mint and meadowsweet. (She participated in a similar collaboration brew with Milwaukee's Lakefront Brewery last fall.)

SMBW's head brewer Drew Pomatti, who brewed a 20-gallon batch, believes his brewery was chosen for the honor because it was closest to the Getty Villa. About the recipe, he says: "The braggot recipe was comprised of floor-malted Maris Otter [British pale malt], German beechwood-smoked malt — to lend a historically accurate smoky character — fresh organic mint, meadowsweet and wildflower honey. The honey and barley were about 50/50 in their contribution to the fermentable sugars. I used a clean American yeast strain because I wanted to make the braggot approachable, and not too jarring of a combination of flavors, so people would be able to taste the mint, honey, light smokiness and meadowsweet without a bold yeast strain dominating the flavor profile."

The braggot was a tasty update of prehistoric brew, splitting the difference between a beer (albeit a gruit) and a mead — sweet and herbaceous. The remainder of Pomatti's one-off batch will be on tap at SMBW's taproom in early August, if you'd like to taste it.

The other beverages tasted at the Getty event included Panting Partridge Perry, a traditional pear cider from Newton Court Cidery in Hertfordshire, England; Klapøstjer Mjød, a 21.8% metheglin (hopped mead with spices, including caraway) from Billund Denmark; and SMBW's Pale Chocolate Heaven (PCH), an amber ale (frustratingly misidentified as a porter) with vanilla, cacao nibs and lactose.

Last but certainly not least was the most unusual and distinctive beverage: Black Dog, a sour, murky-black apple cider made with blood oranges, lavender and "activated charcoal derived from coconuts" from 101 Cider House in Westlake Village. An optional shot of elderflower flavoring syrup was available, but this writer's palate found it made the cider too sweet and masked the complexity and interplay of its flavors.

If learning about beer's ancient history is of interest to you, and you didn't make it to the Getty Villa, its sister venue, the Getty Center off the 405 freeway, is hosting a related talk (with tasting) on Friday evening, August 4. Entitled "Drinking in the Past: Medieval Microbrews," the program complements the accompanying exhibition, "Illuminating Women in the Medieval World," and will cover the history of beer, ale and mead, and pair art with medieval — and modern — brews. For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit www.getty.edu.

In *Wishful Drinking*, Tomm Carroll opines and editorializes on trends, issues and general perceptions of the local craft beer movement and industry, as well as beer history. Feel free to let him know what you think (and drink); send comments, criticisms, kudos and even questions to beerscribe@earthlink.net.

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The Good Beer Co.
309 W. 4th St, Santa Ana
thegoodbeerco.com

Towne Park Brew Co
19191 Lawrence Cyn, Silverado
Towneparkbrew.com

Unsung Brewing Company
500 S. Anaheim Blvd, Anaheim
unsungbrewing.com

BREW PUBS

Brewbakers
7242 Heil Ave, Huntington Beach
brewbakers1.com

Huntington Beach Beer Company
201 Main St, Huntington Beach
hbbeerco.com

Newport Beach Brewing Company
2920 Newport Blvd, Newport Beach
newportbeachbrewingcompany.com

Ocean Avenue Brewery
237 Ocean Ave, Laguna Beach
oceanbrewing.com

Pizza Port San Clemente
301 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente
pizzaport.com

Stadium Brewing
26738 Aliso Creek Rd, Aliso Viejo
stadiumbrewing.com

TAPS Fish House & Brewery
101 E. Imperial Hwy, Brea
tapsfishhouse.com

TAPS Fish House & Brewery
13390 Jamboree Rd, Irvine
tapsfishhouse.com

Tustin Brewing Company
13011 Newport Ave #100, Tustin
tustinbrewery.com

Inland Empire

BREWERIES

Aftershock Brewing Co.
28822 Old Town Front St #108,
Temecula
aftershockbrewingco.com

Area 51 Craft Brewery
7123 Arlington Ave #A, Riverside
Area51craftbrewery.com

Black Market Brewing Co.
41740 Enterprise Cir N #109
Temecula
blackmarketbrew.com

Brew Crew Inc.
11626 Sterling Ave #G, Riverside
brewcrewinc.com

Brew Rebellion Brewing
13444 California St, Yucaipa
brewrebellion.com

Chino Valley Brewery
1630 E. Francis St #J, Ontario
chinovalleybrewery.com

Coachella Valley Brewing Co.
30-640 Gunther St
Thousand Palms
cvbco.com

Dragon's Tale Brewery
8920 Vernon Ave #122, Montclair
www.dragonstalebrewery.com

Escape Craft Brewery
721 Nevada St #401, Redlands
escapecraftbrewery.com

Euryale Brewing Co
2060 Chicago Ave. #A-17 Riverside
euryalebrewing.com

Escape Craft Brewery
721 Nevada St #401, Redlands
escapecraftbrewery.com

Garage Brewing Co
29095 Old Towne Front St,
Temecula
garagebrewco.com

Hamilton Family Brewery
9757 Seventh St #802,
Rancho Cucamonga
hamiltonfamilybrewery.com

Hangar 24 Brewery
1710 Sessums Drive
Redlands
hangar24brewery.com

I & I Brewing
5135 Edison Ave #1, Chino
iandibrewing.com

Inland Empire Brewing Company
1710 Palmyrita Ave #11,
Riverside
iebrew.com

Ironfire Brewing Co.
42095 Zevo Dr #1, Temecula
ironfirebrewing.com

Last Name Brewing
2120 Porterfield Way, Upland
lastnamebrewing.com

La Quinta Brewing Co.
77917 Wildcat Dr, Palm Desert
laquintabrewing.com

No Clue Brewing
9037 #170 Arrow Route
Rancho Cucamonga
nocluebrew.com

Old Stump Brewing Co.
2896 Metropolitan Pl, Pomona
oldstumpbrewery.com

Packinghouse Brewing Co.
6421 Central Ave #101-A, Riverside
pbbeer.com

Refuge Brewery
43040 Rancho Way, Temecula
refugebrew.com

Ritual Brewing Co.
1315 Research Dr, Redlands
ritualbrewing.com

Rök House Brewing Company
1939 W. 11th St #A, Upland
rokhousebrewing.com

Route 30 Brewing Company
9860 Indiana Ave, Riverside
route30brewing.com

Sour Cellars Brewery
9495 E. 9th Street, Unit B, Rancho Cucamonga
www.sourcellars.com

Stone Church Brewing
2785 Cabot Drive, Suite 160
Corona stonechurchbrewing.com

Strum Brewing
235 S. Campus Ave, Ontario
www.strumbrewing.com

Wiens Brewing
27941 Diaz Rd, Temecula
Wiensbrewing.com

BREW PUBS

Heroes Restaurant & Brewery
3397 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside
heroesrestaurantandbrewery.com

Lou Eddie's Pizza
28561 Highway 18, Skyforest
LouEddiesPizza.com

TAPS Fish House & Brewery
2745 Lakeshore Dr, Corona, CA
tapsfishhouse.com

Wicks Brewing Company
11620 Sterling Ave, Riverside
wicksbrewing.com



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THURS: 9PM - 11PM
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FEATURED LISTINGS

Barbara's at the Brewery
620 Moulton Ave #110, Los Angeles
barbarasatthebrewery.com

Beachwood BBQ
131 1/2 Main Seal Beach
BeachwoodBBQ.com

Beer Belly
532 S. Western Ave, Los Angeles
www.beerbellyla.com

Beer Belly
255 Long Beach Blvd, Long Beach
www.beerbellyla.com

Bierstube German Pub & Restaurant
1340 S. Sanderson Ave, Anaheim
thephoenixclub.com

Blue Palms Brewhouse
6124 Hollywood Blvd, Los Angeles
bluepalmsbrewhouse.com

Brew Kitchen Ale House
10708 Los Alamitos Blvd, Los Alamitos
brewkitchenalehouse.com

Far Bar
347 E. 1st St, Los Angeles
farbarla.com

Flights Beer Bar
5119 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne
flightsbeerbar.com

Haven Gastropub
190 S. Glassell St, Orange
havengastropub.com

The Hermosillo
5127 York Blvd., Los Angeles
thehermosillo.com

La Sirena Grill
3931 Portola Parkway, Irvine
www.lasirenagrill.com

Linx Artisan Sausage and Craft Beer
238 Chapman Ave Orange
linxdogs.com

Monrovia Homebrew Shop
1945 S. Myrtle Ave
Monrovia CA
MonroviaHomebrewShop.com

Naja's Place
King Harbor Marina
Redondo Beach
najasplace.com

Pitfire Artisan Pizza
401 Manhattan Beach Blvd
Manhattan Beach
pitfirepizza.com

Provisions & Portola
143 N. Glassell St., Orange
provisionsmarkets.com

Public Beer Wine Shop
121 W. 4th Street, Long Beach
publicbeerwineshop.com

Ragin' Cajun Cafe
525 S. Pacific Coast Hwy
Redondo Beach
ragincajun.com

Richmond Bar & Grill El Segundo
145 Richmond St, El Segundo
richmondbarandgrill.com

Riley's
5331 E. 2nd St, Long Beach
rileyson2nd.com

Select Beer Store
1613 S. Pacific Coast Hwy,
Redondo Beach

Stout Burgers & Beers
1544 N. Cahuenga Blvd
Hollywood
stoutburgersandbeers.com

Stout Burgers & Beers
11262 Ventura Blvd
Studio City
stoutburgersandbeers.com

Stout Burgers & Beers
111 N. Santa Monica Blvd
Santa Monica
stoutburgersandbeers.com

The BrewHouse
31896 Plaza Dr #D
San Juan Capistrano
thebrewhousesjc.com

The Public House by Evans Brewing
138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton
evansbrewco.com

The Stuffed Sandwich
1145 E. Las Tunas Dr, San Gabriel, CA
stuffedsandwich.com

Tortilla Cantina
1225 El Prado Ave, Torrance
tortillacantina.com

Zpizza Tap Room
5933 W. Century Blvd, Los Angeles
zpizza.com



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