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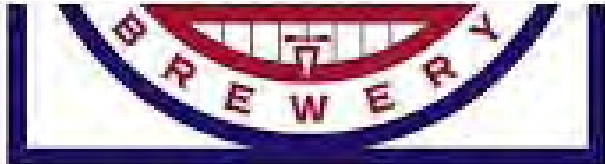
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VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 9 | February 2019 | FREE!



## THE ANDY BLACK UNFILTERED



Andy Black of Yorkshire Square

Photo Credit: Tomo Tany

### By Daniel Drennon

A mere stone's throw from the can release lines at Monkish, you can find a young man conditioning and serving beer the old-fashioned way...the traditional way...the British way. Now you may ask yourself, what kind of stuck in the last century, nay, the century before that, or even the century before that, um, luddite (to be fair, right?) opens a cask-focused British brewery in the middle of our super modern, super hop-obsessed California beer culture.

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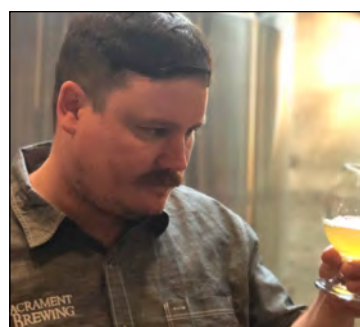
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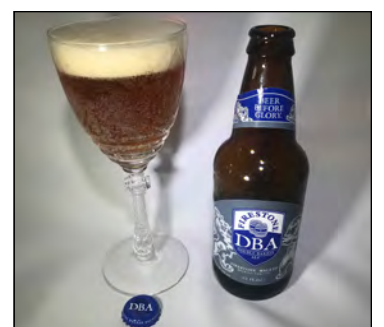
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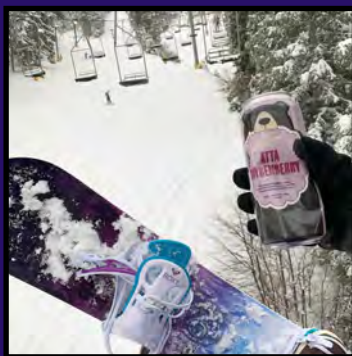


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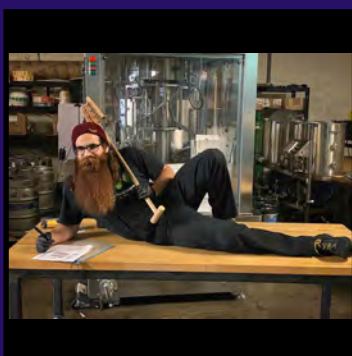
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## PROFILE

# BARBARA'S AT THE BREWERY TURNS 20

by DANIEL DRENNON

On Saturday, February 23, from opening at 11 am to close, Barbara's at the Brewery will celebrate twenty years of brilliant beer and fantastic food.

I know, I know. I'm a journalist. I'm supposed to be objective. Yada, yada, yada...yawn.

I have long been on record... apparently now two decades worth of long, that Barbara's at the Brewery is one of my favorite beer bars on this or any other planet. Located in the epicenter of the country's largest artists' colony – home to actors, musicians, painters and photographers – Erik Huig, the owner and beer buyer for Barbara's is an artist in his own right. His twenty-beer tap list is a thing of beauty.

Any given day, you will find the best breweries in California represented on Erik's always-superb tap list: Beachwood, Craftsman, Green Cheek, Highland Park, Mumford, Russian River and Societe to name a handful. But perhaps just as impressive, is how damn good those beers will taste at Barbara's. Huig is obsessive about cleaning his own lines and having a world-class draft system. So much so, that after building his own system and tinkering with it constantly with his keen eye and savvy palate focused on the perfection of the pour, he even launched Huig Systems and has built several of the coolest draft



Erik Huig of Barbara's at the Brewery

Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

systems around the Southland for both breweries and beer bars.

The ambience at Barbara's is another huge plus. The main bar is dark and cool and also offers a nice selection of wines (Huig's mom Barbara, yes that Barbara, is herself a chef and wine connoisseur). There is also a full bar with a lovely selection of whiskey curated by bad ass musician and Barb's manager James Slay. The main dining room is bright and expansive and there are not one, not two but three outdoor patios that give you that SoCal "best

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Chef Joey Gibson Rivas at Barbara's

Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

weather in the world" advantage of day or night drinking with your pals.

Barbara's kitchen is helmed by Chef Joey Gibson Rivas, #eastlacheef. Rivas delivers delicious "daily specials" along with an eclectic everyday menu that has something for everyone and that pairs perfectly with Huig's sublime taplist.

So, if you are a beer fan and you haven't yet had the pleasure of a trip to Barbara's, the all-day anniversary party on Saturday, February 23 is just the ticket (but no ticket required). Huig is sure to have a taplist that might blow your palate, but will definitely blow your beer-loving mind. I suggest you get there early while the night is still Younger.



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## WISHEFUL DRINKING

THERE'S A DRAUGHT IN HERE  
HI—LO LIQUOR MARKET TAPS INTO A TASTING PROGRAM

by TOMM CARROLL



Photo of Hi — Lo Store interior

Back in 2006, when America's craft beer revolution was really starting to take off, the notion of a bottle shop catering to adventurous beer drinkers' tastes was just that — a retail store at which could be bought refrigerated or room-temperature bottles, and a few cans, of brew. But that was the year it all changed, at least in California, when San Franciscans Craig and Beth Wathen managed to convince the powers that be to allow a retail beer store to let patrons open and drink beers on premises (for a corkage fee) and to offer tastes, and sell full pours, of beers on draught.

After all, wine shops had been doing that seemingly forever, including the one several doors down Folsom Street from where the Wathens opened the state's first bottle shop-cum-tasting bar, City Beer Store (since moved to a larger location on Mission Street). And once that type of venue became a reality, they began popping up everywhere, including in LA over five years later (when we finally had a craft beer scene), led by Echo Park's Sunset Beer Co. and Redondo Beach's Select Beer Store.

A decade after City Beer broke through the beer store/taproom barrier,

a new spin on the concept called Hi — Lo Liquor Market (*hiloliquor.com*) quietly opened its doors in late December 2016 on Washington Blvd. in Culver City, not far from the second Father's Office beer bar/restaurant. It's a combination bottle shop/liquor store/convenience market. A draught beer area was planned for it but bureaucratic red tape, courtesy of the city, necessitated opening the shop tapless, according to Christopher Harris who, with partner Talmadge Lowe, founded the business.

"We always had the intention of opening a tap area," Harris told *Beer Paper* in an interview at the shop in early January. "But we ran into a permitting delay with Culver City. That took about a year and a half of zone text amendments and permitting to work out. We finally just opened our tap counter in late December."

Indeed, a few days before Christmas last year, Hi — Lo got the okay to begin serving draught beer from the five tap handles, including one that can accommodate nitro, to the public — two full years after the shop opened. This is not a simple kegerator setup; the beer is served through glycol-chilled beer lines that run beneath the

floor to the cold room/beer cooler, with separate pressure controls for each line. It's not a bar, but rather a "Counter," as Harris calls it, from whence the shop's tastings — beer, wine and spirits — are served.

A special event to officially launch the Hi — Lo taps was scheduled for January 31. Expect there still to be some fresh, local craft on draught. (During *Beer Paper's* visit, a lineup of Beachwood Brewing's beer was pouring.)



Christopher Harris, left, and Alvin Haruthunian toast the opening of Hi — Lo's new tap counter.

Harris and operations manager Alvin Haruthunian explain that the shop actually has four liquor licenses to enable them to do what they're doing: Type 21, for general off-sale, allows Hi — Lo to sell beer, wine and spirits to go; Type 86, an instructional license, permits beer/wine/spirits vendors to visit and pour people small samples; Type 42, similar to a wine or beer bar license, grants the right to sell beer and wine (but no spirits) by the glass, in-store at the tasting counter; and Type 58, a catering license, provides the ability to serve beer and wine (again, no spirits) remotely, such as tastings at events around town or at people's homes.

## Taste This

"We sell three styles of pours — four-ounce taster pours, flights of four tasters and by the glass, pint or whatever size is appropriate," Harris explains. "We love tasting customers on stuff in the store. It's all about drinking good beer with good people. You can choose from any of the roughly 500 beers we have in the fridge, anything from the stock or the taps. You buy the beer or wine if you want to open it, and the wine can be corked and taken home. We have great local brewery support — LA, California, the US, really — and great kegs coming in all the time."

Photo Credit: Tomm Carroll

“That’s what makes the tasting counter so compelling for people who come in here and crack a beer,” he continues. “They can just grab a single can of something awesome, like Brouwerij West, Belching Beaver, Evil Twin or whatever.” To which Haruthunian adds, “The single cans are very popular. And we’ll break up packs into single cans, so people can mix and match, make up their own six packs.”

Hi — Lo began a “very active” tasting program last year, inviting beer, wine or spirits vendors on Wednesdays and Fridays to do tastings. “We are now transitioning those tastings to the tap counter model, where we’ll be opening up really cool bottles,” Harris reveals. “Now you won’t have to buy these bottles; we’ll do tastings in flights. You’ll be able to get a flight of four-ounce tastes from four different 750ml bottles, which you wouldn’t be able to do otherwise.”

What happens to the beer left in the bottles at the end of the evening? Replies Haruthunian, “Let’s put it this way: No beer goes to waste!”

Harris hopes that eventually they will be able to offer draught beer to go. “We really want to help change the law

so you can get a growler or crowler of something rad on tap to take home,” he offers. “We have some good friends in the brewers guilds, as well as lawyers who interface with them regularly and are customers here, and we’ve been talking to people about that. I think it’s a whole new model — a retail shop that provides a great experience for people who want to try beers, and then take some home.”

More imminently, however, Hi — Lo will be opening two new locations — one in Long Beach, expected to be ready by fall, and later another in DTLA’s Arts District, which will feature an outdoor patio.

And the shop’s moniker? “We were kicking around names, and asked ourselves, ‘What are we about?’ We’re kinda about range,” Harris explains. “We want to serve the whole community, not just the craft beer nerds, even though that’s who we are. We carry a little bit of everything and don’t focus on the most or least expensive stuff. So it’s Hi — Lo. There’s a long dash in the middle of our name/logo because we focus on the middle.”



“Drink Well” tile and shoes

Photo Credit: Nicki Sebastian

“The customers love us,” Haruthunian reports. “We had one who found the product selection great and the staff really engaging. And she actually said, without realizing the pun, ‘I’ve searched high and low for a place like this...’ It’s what we call the ‘Hi — Lo miracle.’ It’s the feedback and input from the community that really gives us an idea of where to go next.”

And customers are literally made aware of the shop’s ethos before they even enter; the small black-and-white

hexagon tiles outside the front door spell out Hi — Lo’s motto: “Drink Well.”

Award-winning beer writer Tomm Carroll, a longtime contributor to *Celebrator Beer News*, was shortlisted for a British Guild of Beer Writers Award in 2018. He’s been a fan of bottle shops with taprooms since visiting *City Beer* early in its history, and especially enjoys shopping for beer while drinking it. Contact him at [beerscribe@earthlink.net](mailto:beerscribe@earthlink.net).

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brewheim.com

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macleodale.com

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## **Naja's Place**

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najasplace.com

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provisionsmarkets.com

## **Riley's On 2nd**

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rileyson2nd.com

## **Skyland Ale Works**

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## REVIEW

# A SEA MONSTER IN SAN GABRIEL

by JAVI GONZALEZ

Ryan Edell and Jason De La Torre, owners of San Gabriel's very first independent brewery, Ogopogo, went through a long process before deciding to drop anchor. "It was definitely a long search... a year and a half to find a spot. We visited a lot of different places in different cities and for whatever reason nothing seemed to fit," said Ryan. "Then we found this warehouse in San Gabriel. We liked the place and went to the city and they were very enthusiastic about having us here."

That excitement is definitely evident on weekend nights when the tables are filled with young and old alike sharing pints of good beer and great stories, giving Ogopogo a very communal vibe. I asked Jason how the reaction has been since opening and he responded, "It's been amazing. We had always talked about how we wanted to be a part of the community. That was always part of the business plan. It's really nice to see people coming here, making new friends and then finding out that they end up hanging out just based off of meeting here."



Jason de la Torre & Ryan Edell

Photo Credit: Javi Gonzalez



Allie Mize, Ryan Edell & Jason de la Torre

Photo Credit: Javi Gonzalez

Ryan knows more than most about chasing your dreams. He grew up playing America's past time. "I remember being five and playing tee ball all the way to getting drafted by the Indians in the minor leagues. I played there for five years, eventually ending with the Phillies." When he wasn't busy crushing it on the field, he was brewing during his off season, a hobby he picked up while visiting his brother in San Diego. He soon bought a beer kit and made his first beer, a Nelson Pilsner. This hobby soon grew into a post-baseball career prospect when he completed the UCSD Brewing Science program and began running the lab over at Saint Archer.

There he hired De La Torre, who had little lab experience, but who had been working at Golden Road. "We soon realized that we both had the same idea. We wanted to open a brewpub in the LA area and one day Ryan just said, lets do it together." Teamwork makes the dream work is a phrase I seldom put much thought into, but it's clear when you walk in to the cozy taproom, adorned with umbrellas suspended from the ceiling, that this place is a multi-layered expression put on by a couple of talented and passionate human beings.

Allie Mize, the Ogopogo taproom manager, tells me, "It was really hard to imagine what this place would

look like. I remember the first time we came down here and it was just an empty warehouse with some pipes and support beams. Not gonna lie, it was really daunting. But once it started to come together, everything made sense. It was like a flower blossoming and it was amazing to witness that." She went on to explain that in process of building the brewery, Ryan learned welding and built the furniture, and Jason learned how to lay tile, which gives Ogopogo a very unique and very homegrown feel.

Of course, making solid beer and having chill personalities isn't enough for a brewery to be successful. It has to have an identity, something unique that creates a lasting impression on people and a name like Ogopogo is bound to inspire a little curiosity. I asked Jason about the name and, after taking a short pause and a sip of his beer, he said, "While we were working together at Saint Archer, we were throwing out ideas in terms of names. At the time Ryan was into palindromes, which I thought was a terrible idea. And he was just reading a list while we were dumping yeast and he said Ogopogo which immediately caught my attention."

I must admit that I had to Google Ogopogo, which turns out to be a sea monster from Canadian folklore which resides in Okanagan Lake, British



OgoPogo Tap Room

Photo Credit: Javi Gonzalez

Columbia, Canada. Once they settled on the name, the sea and monster elements would serve as themes for the names of the beers themselves. Their porter (admittedly one of my favorite beer styles) is named Ninki Nanka which is a creature from West Africa, and Vodyanoy is a water spirit from Slavic mythology. “We were initially going to try to stick with sea

monsters or water-based monsters but that proved to be too difficult,” Ryan explained with Jason adding, “There will be some that won’t exactly follow that model. Eventually we might start making up our own creatures.”

San Gabriel Valley has had local gems like the historic Stuffed Sandwich or the very cool 38 Degrees in downtown

Alhambra. And over the past several years we’ve seen breweries like Mt. Lowe and Pacific Plate starting to make some noise in Monrovia, but the Mission City itself has never had its own local brewery.

As I left the interview, I was filled with a warm sense of hope and pride in knowing that San Gabriel finally

has its own unique, charming brewery that’s run by locals for locals.

*Javi Gonzalez is a freelance writer, Assistant Brewer with Pacific Plate Brewing, and runs with his right-hand girl Piper, the worlds most dangerous Dalmatian. He’s on Instagram as @Javibrews and on Twitter as @ThatBeaner*

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## COVER STORY

## THE ANDY BLACK UNFILTERED

by DANIEL DRENNON



Lalo Toledo, bartender and notable Cher fan, lectured to tears by curmudgeonly brewer, The Andy Black

Photo Credit: Tomo Tany

A mere stone's throw from the can release lines at Monkish, you can find a young man conditioning and serving beer the old-fashioned way... the traditional way...the British way. Now you may ask yourself, what kind of stuck in the last century, nay, the century before that, or even the century before that, um, luddite (to be fair, right?) opens a cask-focused British brewery in the middle of our super modern, super hop-obsessed California beer culture.

Well, sure. Culture is a word that probably belongs to the art of brewing what the Brits call "real ale."

The eminent UK beer consumer protection group, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) defines real ale as "beer that is produced and stored in the traditional way and ferments in the dispense container to produce a reduction in gravity. It is also dispensed by a system that does not apply any gas or gas mixture to the beer..."

This brings us to Andy Black. Born in Minnesota. Raised in New England. Home-brewed during his days at the University of Vermont. Got an internship at Rooster's in Old England, a forerunner of using New World hops in British Pale Ales. Black fell in love with beers brewed the British way - high drinkability, considered hopping, elevated temperature, light carbonation. He took a course from BrewLab in the UK and a certificate from the Institute of Brewing & Distilling. And then, amazingly, in 2012 his search for his first professional brewer position lands him 6000 miles away in the San Fernando Valley where MacLeod Ales is preparing to open the first cask-focused brewery in Southern California.

After a three-year stint at MacLeod (where he made a name for himself in the burgeoning LA craft scene), he departs over philosophical differences and embarks on a sojourn at the IPA powerhouse of El Segundo Brewing

Co. Now what's a cask specialist British trained brewer to do? Surely, there can't be another against all odds dreamer who thinks a true British-beer-pub-brewery can flourish here in our sunny Southland.

Enter Gary Croft. A Brit born and bred in Yorkshire, England, Croft has a dream of opening a proper Yorkshire pub in, \*gulp\*, Torrance. A dream sparked by an unspeakably bad pint of cask beer in the Southland. The probability of him crossing paths with a young American brewer actually trained in Yorkshire? Near zero. And yet, here we are. Yorkshire Square Brewery opens in 2017 with the always overall-clad Black in the brewhouse. Both men are committed to championing cask-conditioned real ales with moderate ABVs, served in a proper British pint. I recall a lot of local beer pundits thinking both men should either be committed or heralded as an indication of the LA beer scene's coming maturity.

Black is known, as one might imagine for someone who brews with an eye to the past in the midst of an obsessively modern California craft revolution, for his candid opinions on the beer scene.

**DRENNON:** *Let's get right to it. What do you say to the folks who hate on cask ales?*

**BLACK:** With the general beer consumer this is easy to handle. Cask is pretty rare and deciding on a new beer is one of the many terrifying experiences we have to make on a regular basis, so why not only drink increasingly desperate variations of IPA on keg? It is after all the 'safest' choice. But actually, the easiest lead in is talking about what cask should be (thoroughly drinkable, lightly effervescent, about 52F, and not grossly marked up in price) and helping folks demand more of 'Firkin Friday'.

A nice lead in for newbies is talking about Guinness developing the nitrogenation process to mimic Northern-style cask's texture and appearance. What kills me is people who hate on cask beer and should know better. I'm looking at hardcore craft beer fans and brewers here. More often than not that attitude is coming from one of two places: an experience of badly made or stored cask beer which has then been magnified to represent all cask beer or from the half jest/half contempt place where people mock cask beer with the tiresome stereotypes that chase anything British.

**DRENNON:** *What do you consider to be the best and worst things about the so-called American craft beer revolution?*

**BLACK:** I fear this is going to come off as painting with an extremely broad brush but I'll try. The worth has been inspired by US craft's relentless drive to prove itself worthy of being a fundamental addition to the history of beer. Its identity seems built on creativity and diversity, perhaps best expressed by the homebrewing scene where people aren't constrained by the needs of the market and where a

snazzy name, label, or #hype doesn't matter at all. The rebirth of British brewing owes a lot to US craft, as does the growth of new breweries throughout the world. What really disappoints me about US craft is its total lack of hindsight. It's not unique to US craft but it's disappointing that while we laud and devour the history of the great founders, Sierra Nevada for instance, and wish to emulate their success and/or their beer, it doesn't seem like we study those breweries that failed and learn from their mistakes. That links to my interest British brewing, there were plenty of British breweries in the US but what happened to them? They made crappy beer and didn't engage with the discourse of US craft so maybe I should try to do a bit better.

**DRENNON:** *Consistency and balance are arguably the two most important achievements in brewing? How do you ensure that Yorkshire Square beers have both?*

**BLACK:** For some yes but I consider them to be wildly subjective. My goals are to make highly drinkable beer that doesn't exhaust one's palate and to seek improvement with every batch and every brewday, even if that means that a brand changes a bit from batch to batch. Achieving high drinkability is certainly a challenge and I think the solution comes from the goal at the end - everything in moderation. Lower ABV seems like the easy way out but then the beer has to have the malt, hop, and yeast complexity to make the beer substantial enough to enjoy regularly. But then nothing can be



Andy Black

Photo Credit: Tomo Tany

too massive or the beer can't be easily enjoyed over and over. Perfect drinkability in a lower ABV beer (<5% in my book) means the aroma and flavor of the third pint is present and enjoyable, just as it was in the first pint. I use an expressive English yeast, lots of specialty malts in low quantities, and lots of late hopping in my beers to build this. Stronger beers are a different story and not exactly my forte, but I'm working on it. Constantly seeking improvement in the beers versus relentless consistency comes

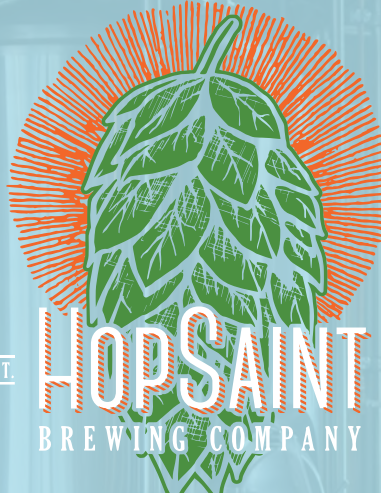
from talking with Dann Paquette of the late Pretty Things Beer & Ale Project about his methodology in making his odd portfolio of Belgian and British beers. Rather than say something is 'good enough' or chase perfection, it's so much more interesting to keep tinkering. If a recipe is ever "done" then I may just stop brewing it.

(THE ANDY BLACK UNFILTERED continued on page 14)

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(THE ANDY BLACK UNFILTERED continued)

**DRENNON:** *What is your overall assessment of the quality of brewing in California?*

**BLACK:** Beer in CA is great and has been great for a long time, so CA deserves to be on a pedestal. That said there has always been an arrogance about the beer scene, especially with the hegemony of West Coast IPA persisting for so long. I feel like I got a bit sneered at for promoting New England beer when I first came to SoCal. Folks acted like Jack's Abby was some kind of joke brewery and they hadn't even heard of Tree House. So, I'm rather happy that a side-effect of NEIPA has been New England breweries at the forefront of the beer scene.

**DRENNON:** *Does anything in the current world of beer excite you?*

**BLACK:** It is a bit of a rough time on the business side of beer right now with a lot of uncertainty and the potential of friends and neighbors going out of business seeming more real all the time. So, I've been actively trying to step away from the business and quarterly production figures to find joy in craft beer again. I always want to be trying new things, challenging my dogmas, and improving my skills. A recent trip to Earth Eagle Brewings in Portsmouth, NH was perfect. Lots of what I call "Artistic" beer, which has all kinds of exciting edges and curves in its aroma and flavor profile and doesn't conform to dogmatic guidelines of what beer should be. Some things can be messy, but the end result is gorgeous. There was a proper cider blended with an ale of some sort then refermented with Brett that was stunning. Their taproom also hit the same marks. Locally, I'd say Craftsman, Cellador, and Highland Park hit the mark for artistic beer. I know there's some up-and-comers but I don't get out to try things much, so if I can get beer from Mark (Jilg at Craftman), Kevin (Osborne at Cellador), or Bob (Kunz at Highland Park) I'm quite happy. Related, I'm really excited to see the success of TRVE as of late. I'm rather obsessed with their beer and brand. It is quite committed to something that the mainstream would say is not market-savvy and yet folks pour out of the woodwork. When I'm in Denver, I pretty

much just camp out there, it has become kind of a joke about how the crew can find me there. Also exciting is seeing Green Cheek do so well. I don't know if we'll ever see such a successful brewery opening ever again. Brian (Rauso) and Evan (Price) helped me out so much in my formative years of brewing, so it is fantastic to see them doing so well.

**DRENNON:** *What is your take on macro-beer acquisitions, their blatant theft of the term "craft beer" and other mergers or acquisitions?*

**BLACK:** It makes me feel a little sick. I've always felt craft beer would do best by embracing the kind of DIY/punk vibe of its formative years, so the acquisitions and crafty campaigns have been a moral affront. News just came out that Fullers sold to Asahi Europe and it's bumming me out. The US and UK beer industries were so M & A happy from the 1950s to 1970s that there were hardly any breweries left and very few beers to choose from. It wasn't good for the consumer except for the battle for the lowest price point. So, this new level of M & A activity, especially in light of shrinking beer sales, is truly concerning after the explosion of independent breweries that seemed to have real staying power.

**DRENNON:** *What responsibility do consumers have to support independent breweries, if any?*

**BLACK:** In the short-term I don't think it's their problem. Moreover, I get annoyed when consumers are overly concerned about the beer business rather than the qualities of the product we make. I've heard consumers excuse bad customer service or crappy selection at taprooms because the brewery is making bank on a can release even though they don't care for the beer... so good for them? Long-term, if M & As go wild then consumer choice will go down and cost-cutting on quality WILL happen, then consumers will have a responsibility to protect good beer and create something like CAMRA.

**DRENNON:** *Dare I ask what you think of the explosion of the hazy IPA, to the point where the Brewer's Association even created categories for it at World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival?*



Andy Black studying his cultures

Photo Credit: Tomo Tany



*Andy Black refining his recipes, traditional style*

BLACK: I'm a bit indifferent to the beer in competition, it is just another new style. But I welcome it in many ways. It really rocked the boat for West Coast IPA-only brewers, as it firmly declared that their increasingly desperate variations on their standard IPA weren't excited and actually they weren't even that hoppy! I also like how it changed how we use hops in brewing. I think the savvy folks are getting better aroma and flavor, even in beers that aren't NEIPAs. The major negative points for me are this new class of consumers, the IPA zombie, and how breweries have responded to them. It should be said that I detest Instagram (@westcoast\_andyb), so to have a beer style go #hype just because it looks good on the 'gram is pretty annoying. We all tolerated the occasional massive lines for barrel aged stout releases because they were occasional, but now the lines for can releases are weekly activities of an unashamed cash-grab. I hear too many stories of parents lining up with their kids at dawn. Lastly, the breweries are not bringing these folks into the fold of craft beer fans, they are just trying to slake their thirst for #hype over and over.

**DRENNON:** *Speaking of can releases, and related beer trading and selling from coast to coast, is this good for beer or bad for beer?*

BLACK: Breweries encouraging illegal sales should be ashamed as they do hurt honest retail stores. I've got no problem with trading, since it encourages beer community and the idea that beer can be localized, I just wish there was more than just NEIPA being traded. Once upon a time, when craft beer was small and fun, I traded a six pack of Magic Hat #9 for two bottles of 3 Floyds Dark Lord. The

trade partner just really wanted to try that #9, and they wanted me to be able to try Dark Lord. Pretty sweet deal.

**DRENNON:** *If an even younger than you brewer came to you for advice on opening his or her own brewery, what would you tell them?*

BLACK: Make your bones elsewhere and work until you've got an investor pool looking to buy an existing brewery. Being a start-up sucks most of the time. You can never have enough start-up capital, do NOT be your own general contractor, actually write a proper business plan (if you won't do the homework, you shouldn't take the test), get a flexible brewhouse, utilize the SCORE program, and find business partners that have strengths you don't, otherwise you MUST hire to fill the gaps. A good entrepreneur rarely leaves work and that is punishing when your work involves brewing and then a taproom running into the late hours. That said I'm always open to talking with people to share what I've gone through building two breweries.

**DRENNON:** *Where do you see Yorkshire Square in ten years?*

BLACK: I had a solid answer a year ago, but the recent beer market has me reevaluating my notions. Basically, I'm not sure of anything anymore, I hope that changes by Q3 this year. Ideally, I'd like us to have tripled production, finally added some real Yorkshire square fermenters, a substantial vatted Porter and Stock Ale program, and created a couple of brewpubs in and out of state, just for good measure.

**DRENNON:** *Where do you see the American craft beer revolution in ten years?*



*Photo Credit: Tomo Tany*

BLACK: That I really don't know. For good or ill, there is definitely going to be a contraction in the beer industry. The US economy is headed toward recession, even if craft beer can't admit it's in a bubble, so something is going to happen whether we like it or not. I think in ten years, assuming AB-InBev isn't allowed a legal monopoly, the breweries that make it will be more savvy businesses and brewery owners will resemble restaurateurs. I think very large craft breweries will start to fade and the vast majority

of brewery's production will remain local. Also, whether I like it or not, business arrangements like CANarchy, stupid name BTW, will be the norm. Luckily, these will eat each other up in an effort to gain market share and then fade away.

**DRENNON:** *Finally, what one word or phrase would you use to describe yourself?*

BLACK: Cask vanguard, dedicated to the craft and culture of brewing.



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## FOOD PAIRINGS

# GROWLER NIGHT

by TREVOR HAGSTROM

For the month or two that Los Angeles isn't reliably warm and comfortable, we like to occasionally pretend that we're snowed in. A little rain is enough to feel like a weather emergency for many in town. This is also the time of year that is best suited for a romantic evening in, or so the greeting card companies have told us. For a quiet night in, with lovers or friends, we recommend a growler night. For date nights, growlers may beat flowers. Why not each bring a new favorite beer and share them with each other.

Growlers are groceries. Don't wait to drink them. The sooner you open them, the fresher your beer remains. We plan our meals around both what is freshest at the market, and what our favorite brewer has concocted for the season.

There are three usual varieties of a growler, 64oz jugs, 32oz "squealers," and 32oz crowlers, which are single-

use cans filled fresh at the brewery. We go for the jugs, as we'd prefer to reuse our glass, and 32oz usually goes too fast among friends.

More friends mean more beer to try. Growler parties take the fun of a craft beer bar back home. The brewery is closing? Growlers back at ours. Parties where everyone brings a growler are great way to discover new craft brews and ensure that there is enough beer for all. For those that want to investigate their beer, growlers lend themselves well to blind tastings, just don't use brewery branded ones for this. Since so much about beer styles is revealed by a beer's appearance, we like the challenge of tasting blind from opaque glassware, like steins.

Print out some beer tasting note for guests to note their impressions. For more casual drinking, we still like to keep the growlers organized in a row



Photo Credit: Maggie Rosenberg

on a table, clearly labeled with the beer's basic stats, and let guests pour from them at their leisure.

Drinking at home necessitates proper glassware. Stocking a home bar doesn't require you to order branded glassware from each local brewery, but you should consider upgrading from those antique Bud Bowl pint glasses.

The selection of beer glasses and steins out for display can become overwhelming, but most beer styles are best served in one of two basic glass shapes: slim glasses with a small opening, or wider glasses with a larger opening. Slim glasses are popular

in Germany and include the Kolsch stange, the Pilsner glass, and the weizen glass. Basically, any German glass except a Bavarian maß mug or stein fits into this svelte category. These glasses are best for light lagers, wheat beers, and lambic, or any beer that you want to enjoy with preserved carbonation. Most Belgian styles go better in the bulbous glassware, which includes hundreds of variations of Belgian goblets and tulips. You don't need them all. The key to a good ale glass is a wide lip with plenty of room for head. After the head dissipates, the glass leaves enough room to allow for a little swirling to release the aromas.

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Regular beer drinkers should own both a set of tulips and a set of slim glasses. If you're like us, you probably have a motley collection of glassware from past beer festivals, brewery tours, and "steal the glass" nights. To make use of these, we like to match our assorted glassware with our assorted friends. Choose a glass to reflect their personalities or physical attributes (the tall guy gets the tall glass). This way you never have to worry about grabbing someone else's beer by mistake.

We don't have a food truck in our backyard, so we have to make some preparations for the inevitable hunger that comes from an evening of beer tasting. Theme nights are fun for smaller gatherings. With only a few beers to match, a cohesive home-cooked meal can be prepared to pair with your growlers. Salty snacks are a must for any beer occasion. Our favorites are the simple classics: peanuts and pretzels.

The best beer fare for parties is obviously something from the grill, but in February that doesn't always work out. A rainy day alternative is to get a simple steam box for hot dogs or sausages. Upgrade the usual mini-mart



Photo Credit: Maggie Rosenberg

experience by filling the compartment with bratwursts. Pre-cooked bratwurst is best. If you can't find those, raw ones will need to be first grilled or boiled before steaming, but the box

will keep them nice and warm until hunger washes over the group. If you don't want to invest in a hot dog box (these can be found for about 50

dollars), a steamer can be bootlegged at home using a couple of disposable aluminum pie tins. Just flatten one of the tins out and poke several holes in the pie tin, and then stack it on top of the other pie tin. Place the contraption in a pot that is around the same size and layer the hot dogs on the newly designed steamer. As you keep it over low heat, continuously add water to the pot to keep the steam going. If you have a colander that fits the pot, put it on the rim to steam buns.

Growler leftovers, like potluck leftovers, can be saved in the fridge for future snacking. Leave growlers at a host's house at your own risk. Like Tupperware, you would hope for them to be cleaned and returned, but we all know that'll never happen.

*Trevor Hagstrom and Maggie Rosenberg are food, beverage, and travel content creators who specialize in local foodways. Trevor writes and Maggie takes photos. Their combined experience has seen them organizing beer festivals, designing beverage menus, and exploring some of Europe's oldest breweries. Examples of their work can be found at [www.tandmworks.com](http://www.tandmworks.com).*



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## BREWER'S CORNER

# PARDON MY RANT

by BRENDAN MEGOWAN

Where did we come from? Where do we go?

To say our industry is experiencing a period of turmoil would be grossly understating a massive paradigm shift that has rocked the very core of a rising star in the American economy, so called “craft beer.” While some folks panic in the streets, pulling at each other’s hair, to get a space in line for the next muddy can release, others mourn for the creative and historical styles some of these breweries were previously known for. Was there really a need to purge beer boards of the majority of historical styles and replace them with various versions of essentially the same style, hazy IPA?

If you ask an enthusiast waiting in line for his weekly haze can four pack, they will probably give you an enthusiastic yes. But, how do we now find ourselves in this predicament

where a complex fabric of culture and rich history is replaced by Kool-Aid style recipe formulation and flavor profiles that barely resemble the gorgeous balance of hops, barley, and yeast for which this beverage was previously known? There are many factors that contributed to what is now ubiquitously known as the haze craze, but the root cause of the shift towards hazy/ juicy styled beer boils down to one thing: Quality.

Growth and expansion led to poor quality industry wide. There were some shining exceptions to this claim (cue the trumpets for Vinnie Cilurzo of Russian River Brewing) but the temptation of large expansion and uncontrolled distro deals created a quality emergency that made the shift to local can releases almost inevitable.

In 2008, I once put my name on a reserve list at my local bottle shop for

one 22 oz bottle of (insert sell out West Coast IPA.) Upon opening the bottle, a wave of citrus aromatics hit my nose and I was forever a lover of the West Coast IPA. Over the years, I watched as exponential expansion gradually chipped away at the quality of this brand.

Walking into grocery stores, I began to see my once coveted showcase of hops and balance piled in a pyramid at 80 degrees right next to a window. Big box liquor outlets bragged about how many varieties of beer they offer, and began stacking the warm shelves with every brand of IPA they could get their hands on. Millions of cases of heat struck IPA, sat there quickly dying on the shelf, leaving the cool label art as the last indication that this bottle once held something of creative value.

When I walk through one of these places, I can’t help but be reminded

of the scene from Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls, when Ace walks through the trophy room and cringes at the heads of once glorious beasts cut down in their prime, their stale remnants a mere caricature of the glory which nature intended. The effect on this mistreatment of the world’s most popular alcoholic beverage was a public relations nightmare for our dear friend the West Coast IPA and many other styles deemed traditional flagships.

When millions of 22 oz bombers and six packs go to market in less than stellar form, you can expect a decrease in repeat sales volume. This decrease wasn’t overnight, but somewhere along the line during the euphoric over-indulgence and excitement of having literally thousands of beers to learn about, people forgot about the cardinal rule of beer: beer tastes best the closer you are geographically to



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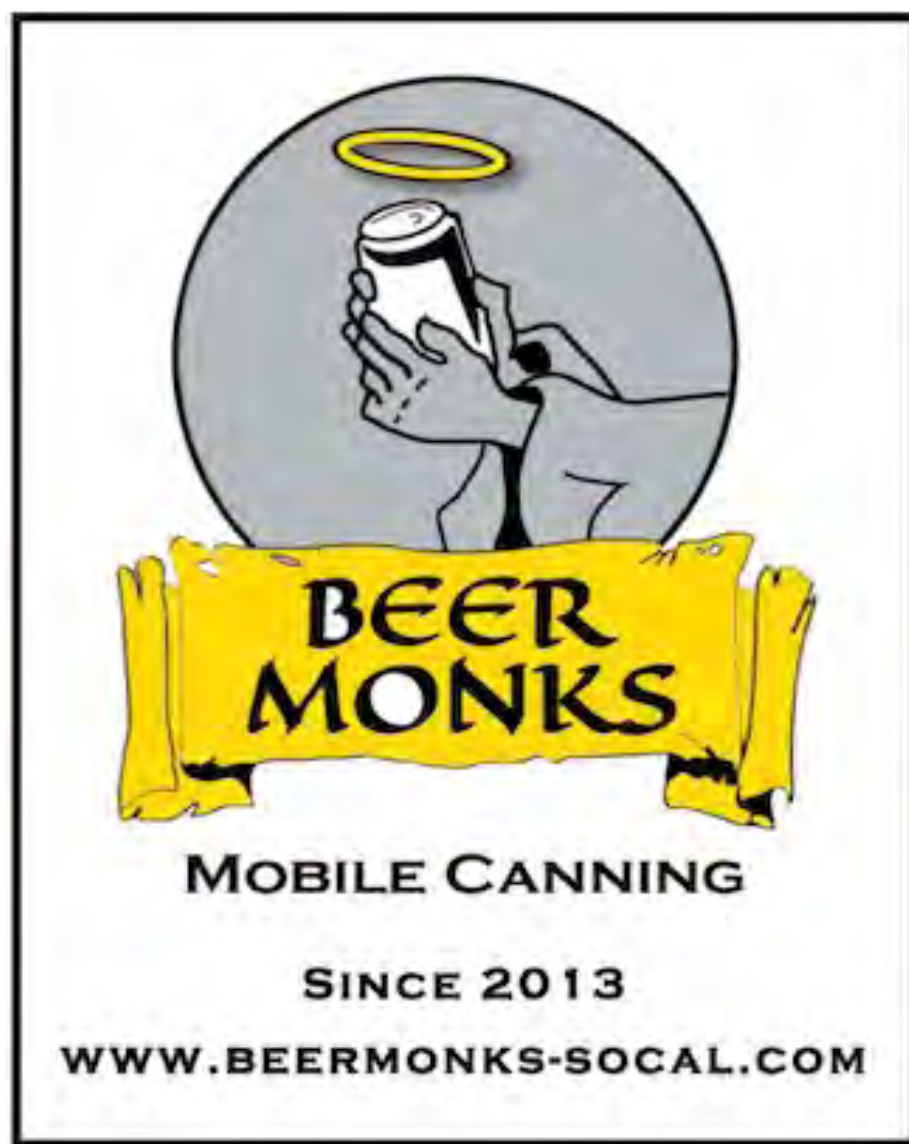
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Brendan Megowan of Whale Face Beer

the brewery, the closer you are to the packaging date, and the best you are able to shield the beer from light, heat, and oxygen.

Poor quality led to gimmicks to cover it up, while new hop varieties provided new flavors and aromas that were easy to obtain by simply dumping in a truckload. Creative names and weekly beer releases prevented recipe development of flagship brands because recipe development is rooted in continuous adjustments.

When each beer is a one off, the guess and check process to create perfect balance and brightness breaks down. This process of dialing in consistent balance became replaced with a tendency to throw in gobs of designer hops. The nuance of balance and fermentation no longer was a factor of quality.

Is the world doomed to the continued takeover of traditional beer? Will this trend continue to grow in the near future? Unfortunately for proponents of traditional styles, the haze craze is still in full force with no signs of slowing. The days of starting a small brewery in an industrial park, pumping out a standard lineup to wide distribution, growing exponentially and eventually selling out are over. There are, however, rays of hope. Some neighborhood brewery tap rooms who concentrate on in-house sales are beginning to gain traction with quality driven traditional lager, kolsch and, yes, still excellent West Coast IPA. Some might say the haze craze would have never happened had the breweries who rode the craft boom executed their growth models with quality in mind; some may argue failing quality had nothing to do with it, and changing consumer preferences pushed brewers to create less bitter, more fruit forward beers.

Henry Ford once famously said, "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." It's my belief that the creators of the craft are also its curators and, as such, have the responsibility to present quality and options to the consumer. Chasing trends does a disservice to the history of beer and degrades the quality of the consumer experience.

*Brendan Megowan is a brewery consultant and owner of Whale Face Beer, a new brewery and tasting room coming soon to Long Beach.*

## YAEGER SHOTS

# #FLAGSHIPFEBRUARY IN #THE805

by BRIAN YAEGER

This column launched with a profile on Central Coast Brewing brewmaster Brendan Gough and the rise in consumership of his Monterey Street Pale Ale. It's pretty impressive since there isn't a ton of interest these days in breweries that have been around for 21 years, let alone their best-selling beers. So many customers walk into a bar (no, this isn't the start of a joke) and ask "Whatchya got that's new?" Then they notify the denizens of Untappdtown that said one-off has been tried and may walk out never to be a customer at that same brewery again. Been there, tappd that.

I wonder if all these drinkers with all these earned badges have yet to tick beers like Firestone Walker Double Barrel Ale (DBA) or Figueroa Mountain Hoppy Poppy. Have they even (especially) ticked some of the non-pale/IPA brands that put several breweries from the 805 on the map such as Island Brewing's Avocado Honey Ale or Captain Fatty's Calypso? No, the avocado one doesn't taste like guac, and no one would expect Calypso, a cucumber Berliner Weisse, to be among a brewery's top-sellers, but the American Riviera is nothing if not a refreshing break from the everyday in the 213/310/323/818/424/661/747/714/562/949. Yes, every brewery allows their brewers to let their creative juices flow by writing new recipes, but up here, we don't let our flagships flounder. At least not too much.

#FlagshipFebruary aims to combat that malaise of repetition. When so many



Firestone Walker DBA

Courtesy of Firestone Walker

craft beer drinkers suffer from FOMO to the point where all they do is order flights of the freshest, sexiest offerings, it could be argued that what they're really missing out on is the opportunity to enjoy a proven, world-class beer for a second time.

Nostalgia aside, there's something flagship brands have that no

experimental hazy juice-bomb or graham-cracker-crust, dry-cacao-nibbed pastry stout has, and I'm not talking about a neckful of GABF medals. I'm talking about fine-tuning. I'm talking about the art of perfecting. A furniture maker didn't get to call himself a craftsman by making a series of one-off chairs. Flagships aren't just scaled-up test batches; they are honed over years of painstaking details as well as customer feedback. They're beers brewed with the intention of enjoying repeatedly. Imagine getting to enjoy a pint without all that fumbling around with your smartphone.

Furthermore, millennials can't be nostalgic yet—as a *Gen X'er* I demand that we please stop blaming them for everything—and even if they were it wouldn't be for beers like Sierra Nevada Pale Ale or even Stone Arrogant Bastard; it'd be for that first bootlegged tallboy of Heady Topper or Tree House JJJulius.

So I buy a six-pack of DBA. Once you're done chortling at the idea of buying a whole six-pack, I'll proceed. The bottled-on-date indicated the English pale ale was now a couple months old. Not a hot seller. But not too worried, since aren't Brits the same folks who drink all that warm, flat beer? (Real ale fans: I kid!) I poured myself a wine glass of DBA on the advice of none other than David Walker, though I figured he'd prefer it in an imperial pint. As for his beloved brand, he states that DBA "will always rule my heart. It lives in a sea of craft beer chaos because it's loved and was the beginning of an amazing journey."

The beer pours a bejeweled orange indicating the deliberate selection of Maris Otter, Munich, crystal, and dash of chocolate malts used in this beer clamor for the starring role. And the hops that do play supporting roles are gentlemanly Kentish Goldings. The result is downright woody—Cedar

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and Oak to be specific—which also stands to reason because of its partial oak fermentation process. Those Styrian and East Kent Golding hops round out DBA’s flavors with orange peel, faint pepper, and my homemade BBQ rub’s herbs. It’s far from trendy, but damn near perfect. And that doesn’t even address Unfiltered DBA if you’re lucky enough to find it on draft!

It’s a beer that hopefully has a forever home along the Central Coast. It has earned the brewery many medals, starting with silver at the 2002 World Beer Cup and including four gold medals over the last eight GABFs. Then again, Pale 31 earned four GABF medals and Wookey Jack garnered two golds, but Firestone Walker has pulled the plug on both due to inadequate sales.

Firestone Walker made just 15,000 barrels of Double Barrel last year. “Half of what it was in its hey day,” said Walker. Compare that to their real flagship, 805 blonde ale, of which they brewed 250,000 barrels.

Santa Barbara’s Telegraph Brewing likewise put its original eponymous IPA (that I loved) to pasture. It was born back when people favored the West Coast style and New England IPA wasn’t yet a thing. Now in the hands of Utah’s Epic Brewing, Telegraph primarily makes hazy beers.

Captain Fatty’s in Goleta once led with Vortex IPA, but The Blue IPA (nearly a full percentage point higher in alcohol at 7.6) is now their best-selling hop bomb. Amazingly, Calypso Cucumber Sour (made with fresh, pureed cukes) sells an equal amount, as each one comprises 15 percent of the brewery’s total production. Anecdotally, while drinking at their tasting room bar (where I had The Blue and some small pours of the small-batch one-offs, so sue me), I didn’t hear a single call for Vortex.

Figueroa Mountain, based in Buellton, has managed to keep their initial flagship—Hoppy Poppy IPA—outselling the others. It accounts for over 40 percent of wholesale shipments and sales were up last year over 2017 (to the tune of nearly 25,000 barrels). It doesn’t hurt that Hoppy Poppy medaled at GABF the last two years. Then again, so did Davy Brown (brown ale), which is a personal fave, but oh man, YOU try selling a brown ale in this climate.

Amusingly, Island Brewing continues to do best with their blonde ale. Maybe that owes to Carpinteria’s super-relaxed vibe. The avocado beer (made with avocado honey from nearby orchards, no actual avos) is basically a blonde ale, too, introduced way back in 2001 to pour at the Carpinteria Avocado Festival. (Hey hipsters, I bet it goes great with your avocado toast...Sorry for the snark; I like avo toast, too.) It can be found in stores as far south as Ventura or sometimes Thousand Oaks.

So, are you inspired to go back and revisit square one of your craft beer journey? Or maybe revisit dad’s square one? If not, take a minute to think about how many beers you race around ticking and how many of them you actually gave high ratings to.

As David Walker put it, “My goal is to never have a beer I don’t love. That’s not easy with several thousand brewers all with a license to wander creatively. Sometimes a flagship is the only way to guarantee that moment.”

*Brian Yaeger is the author of Red, White, and Brew and contributed to the Oxford Companion to Beer. If he’s not writing for beer publications he’s planning beer festivals. Along with his wife and son (I.P.Yae.) he recently moved to (and is learning to surf in) Santa Barbara, where he’s teaching UCSB’s first beer-tasting class.*



David Walker with his beloved DBA

Courtesy of Firestone Walker



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818brewing.com

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alostabrewing.com

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angelcitybrewing.com

Angry Horse Brewing  
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braverybrewing.com

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brewyardbeercompany.com

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commonsplace.la

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craftsmanbrewing.com

Dry River Brewing  
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www.dryriverbrewing.com

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eaglerockbrewery.com

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elsegundobrewing.com

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FigMtnBrew.com

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fivethreadsbrewing.com

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lincolnbeercompany.com

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lbbeer.com

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laaleworks.com

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macleodale.com

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mtlowebrewing.com

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mumfordbrewing.com

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ogopogobrewco.com

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pacificplatebrewing.com

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pocockbrewing.com

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progress-brewing.com

REV Brewing Company  
1580 W San Bernardino Ave, Ste H & I, Covina  
revbrewingco.com

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sanfernandobrewingcompany.com

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sanctumbrewing.com

Santa Monica Brew Works  
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drinkscholb.com

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smogcitybrewing.com

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strandbrewing.com

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1136 E Willow St, Signal Hill  
tenmilebrewing.com

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threeweavers.la

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3671 Industry Ave, Lakewood  
timelesspints.com

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ximixcraft.com

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yorkshiresquarebrewery.com

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zymurgybrewworks.com

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beachwoodbbq.com

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belmontbrewing.com

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1301 Manhattan Ave, Hermosa Beach  
abigailerestaurant.com

The Brewery at Simmzy's  
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simmzys.com

Brewery Draconum  
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Azusa Brewpub Chapter  
619 N Azusa Ave, Azusa  
congregationalehouse.com

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thedowneybrewing.com

Firestone Walker - The Propagator  
3205 Washington Blvd, Marina Del Rey  
firestonebeer.com/visit/venice.php

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www.hopsaint.com

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ibrewworks.com

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redcarbrewery.com

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sageveganbistro.com

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sanpedrobrewing.com

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asylumbrewingcompany.com

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backstreetbrew.com

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barleyforge.com

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phantomales.com

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stereobrewing.com

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thebruery.com

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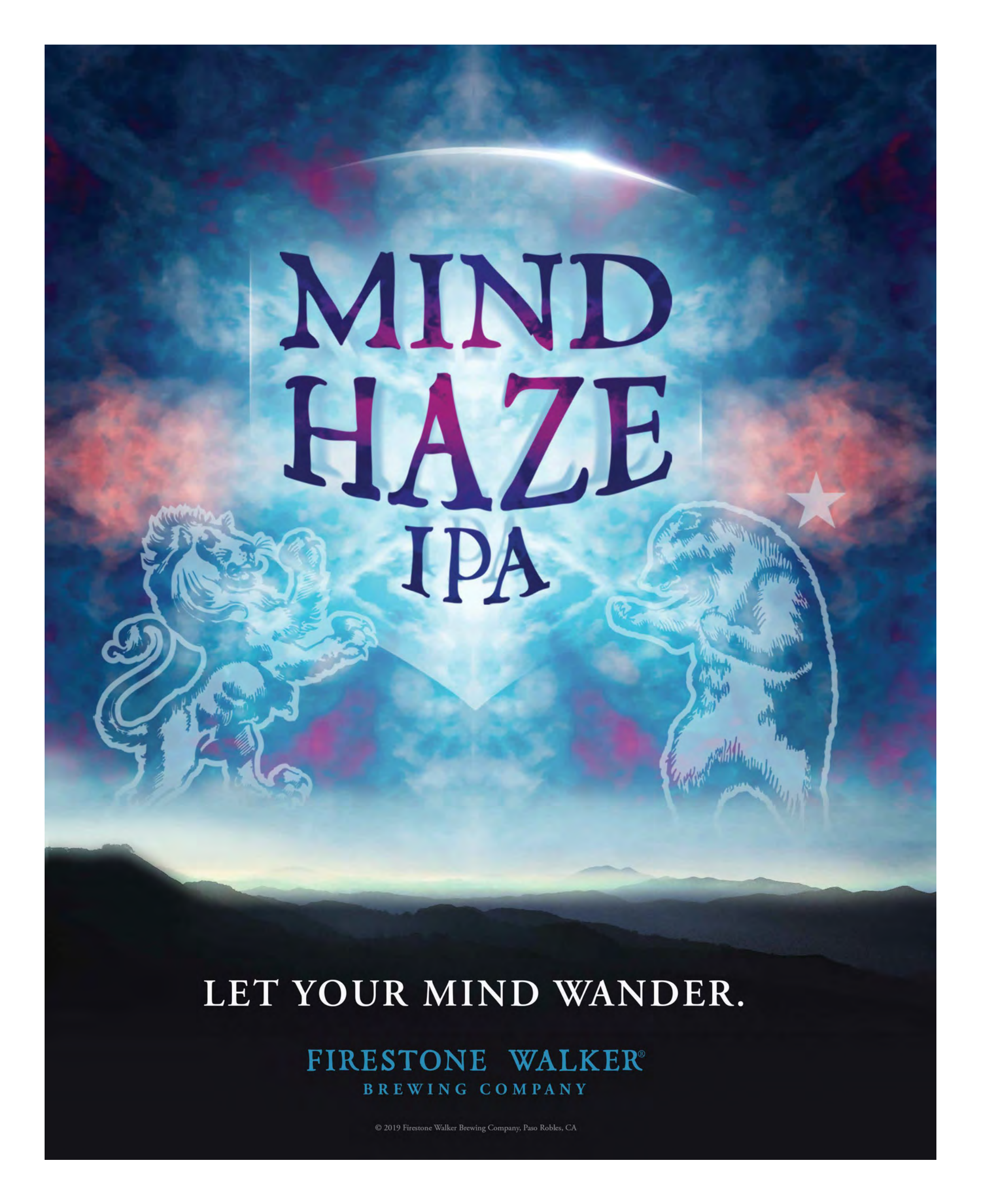
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