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KERN RIVER GOLD RUSH AT GABF 2019



Rebecca and Eric Giddens, owners of Kern River Brewing Company

Photo Credit: John Feldschau

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GABF 2019

CALIFORNIA CAPTURES CROWN IN COLORADO

by Russell Hainline



Ambitious Ales

All photos by Emily Hainline

At this year's Great American Beer Festival, California continued their annual domination of the awards ceremony, racking up 68 medals across the board—28 more than Colorado, the state with the second most wins this year. California craft breweries also took home twenty gold medals, scoring the top prize in nearly a fifth of the available categories.

Kern River Brewing Company in Kernville led the way in California's charge toward GABF glory, winning two gold medals, two silver medals, and the distinction of being named the Brewery Group and Brewery Group Brewer of the Year. "We have sat in that auditorium for many years watching our friends walk away with medals, and all I ask for every year is 'just one bronze,'" said Eric Giddens, co-founder of KRBC, whose excitement was visible to even those sitting in the back row at the award ceremony. "[Our] brew team probably hates this time of year since I am a pain in the butt, but hopefully after this year they understand why."

Beer Paper's coverage area took home a whopping 25 medals at the ceremony—for perspective, if the *Beer Paper* coverage area was its

own state, it'd have been the third winningest state at the festival, only behind California and the host state of Colorado. Los Angeles County accounted for 11 of those wins, with Orange County bringing home nine. (Editor's Note: Due to the awesome number of local breweries that won medals, regrettably, they are not all mentioned in this article. Please visit www.greatamericanbeerfestival.com/the-competition/winners/ for the full list.)

Ambitious Ales not only opened their Long Beach taproom this year, but also took home a medal in its first year at GABF, winning a silver for its coffee beer, Central Perk. They hope to join the tradition of success established by fellow Long Beach staple Beachwood Brewing, who took home an American-Style Stout bronze for Kilgore. Beachwood has won at least one medal at a staggering eight consecutive GABFs. "It's truly been humbling," said Julian Shrago, the owner and brewmaster at Beachwood. "I pinch myself all the time."

In Torrance, The Dudes' Brewing took home two medals, the only brewery in Los Angeles County to attain such an honor this year. Their Grandma's

Pecan won bronze in the Field Beer category, and Los Dudes' Cerveza Lager Mexicana nabbed silver for American-Style Cream Ale. While gold eluded the Dudes this year, Highland Park Brewery in LA took home the top prize in the India Pale Lager or Malt Liquor category for their crispy boy (and personal favorite), Timbo Pils.

To the east in LA County, Claremont Craft Ales took home the gold for Station 101 in the Double Hoppy Red Ale category, marking their second consecutive gold for a red ale, having won in 2018 for their Imperial Red Ale, Happy Days. Simon Brown, owner and CEO of Claremont Craft Ales, said that, while Station 101 was first made seven years ago, the numerous revisions they've given it over the years has it currently at the top of its game. "We are super pleased where it is now," said Brown. "Our beers go through constant revision, as we dial in processes, gain access to better ingredients... the quality of our beer has never been higher."

Green Cheek was one of Orange County's big winners, taking home the gold for best Australian-Style Pale Ale

with, appropriately, Australian for Pale. Their Radiant Beauty also won silver in the American-Style IPA category. These wins should surprise no one familiar with Green Cheek. "We're in love with making hop bombs that still have a lot of drinkability to them," says Evan Price, co-founder and head brewer for Green Cheek. Green Cheek's hoppy concoctions have won them several medals since they've launched—and fans throughout the craft community. Eric Giddens of Kern River Brewing confessed, "I was actually wearing my Green Cheek shirt underneath my flannel on the awards stage."

Orange County also dominated the Coffee Stout or Porter category, taking home both the gold and the silver medals. Tustin Brewing won silver for their Portola Breakfast Stout, while GameCraft Brewing in Laguna Hills grabbed gold for There Is No Cow Level-- which also won gold at California Craft Brewers Cup. Andrew Moy, head brewer at GameCraft, had love for his fellow OC medal winner: "Portola Breakfast Stout has been one of my favorite coffee beers for a long time and was a lot of inspiration for There Is No Cow Level, so credit to



Claremont Craft Ales



Bravus Brewing



Green Cheek Beer Co.

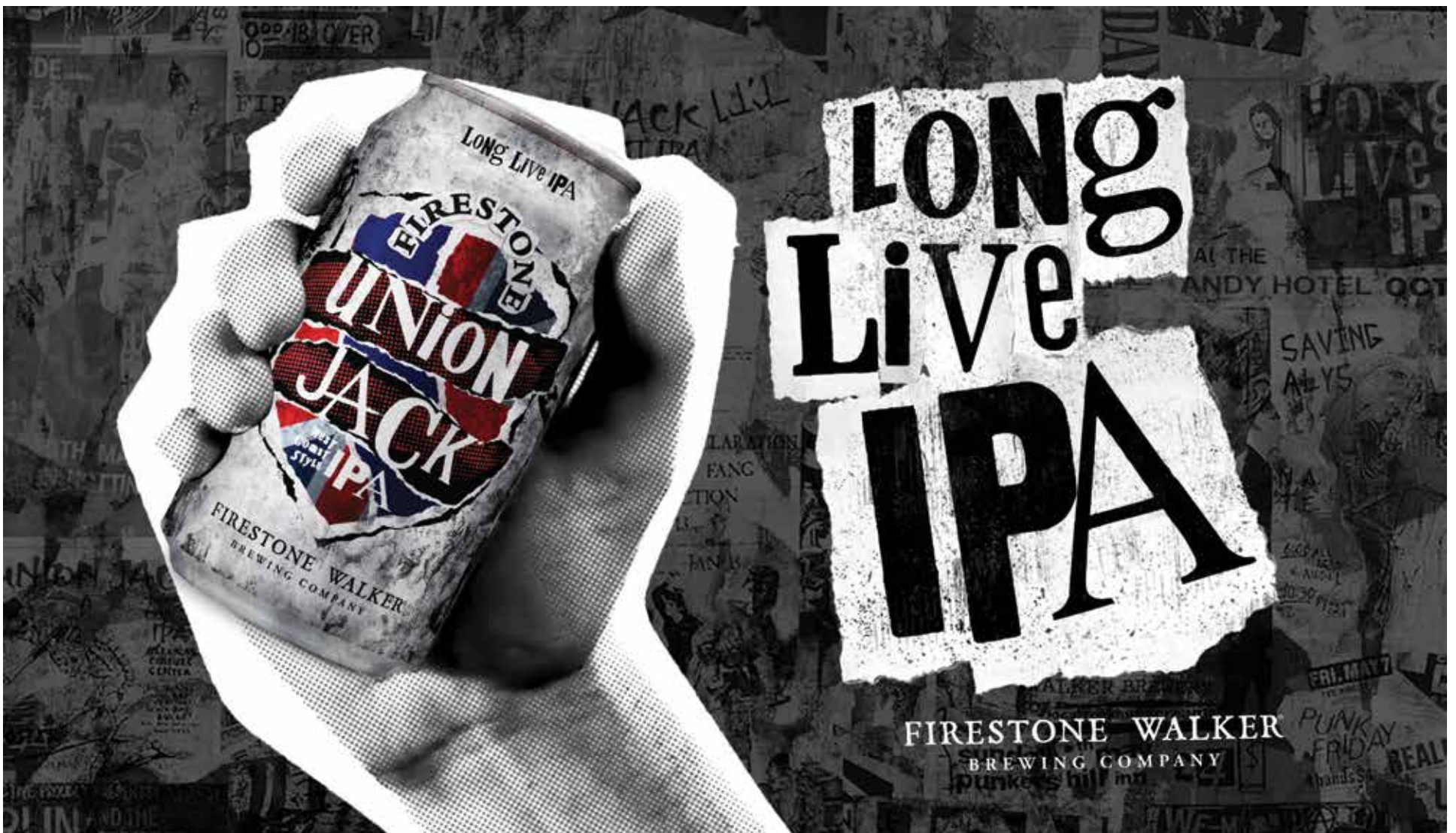
Jerrod (Larsen, head brewer at Tustin)!” Additional accolades belong to Anaheim’s Phantom Ales for winning silver with Juice Jockey in the extremely competitive Juicy or Hazy Imperial IPA category (165 entries!).

Bravus Brewing in Newport Beach was another big OC winner, taking home both silver and bronze in the Non-Alcohol Beer or Alcohol-Free Beer category. When their bronze medal winner, Bravus Barrel-Aged Bourbon Stout, was announced at the category, there were audible chuckles and people uttering “wow!”, impressed at the existence of a

non-alcoholic barrel-aged beer—with “bourbon” in the name to boot. Philip Brandes, founder and head brewer at Bravus, said of the reaction, “That was funny, wasn’t it?” For him, the big reward is changing the minds of skeptical consumers of their non-alcoholic beer. “To see the average craft beer drinker’s demeanor change as they tried the beer at our booth was really an amazing thing to behold.”

When asked about the state of California craft beer in 2019, everyone agreed that the quality continues to improve as the quantity continues to expand. Beachwood’s Julian Shrago attributes California’s

(GABF 2019 continued on page 6)





After Shock Brewing

(GABF 2019 continued)

high caliber of craft to its rich and lengthy history: “California has repeatedly demonstrated its prowess in innovative and consistent brewing. Lest we forget, California is the birthplace of craft brewing (Anchor in the 19th century), and it’s a fully thatched part of our cultural fabric.”

Sam Tierney, brewing manager at Firestone Walker’s The Propagator—which took home a silver for their classic saison Summer Opal, giving the Firestone Walker brand a GABF medal for a mind-boggling eighteenth consecutive year—credits the legacy of statewide institutional knowledge, with quality brewers training future quality brewers. “Many a Firestone Walker alumnus has gone on to brew award-winning beer at newer breweries, and that also goes for

brewers who started at many of the other older breweries here.” Evan Price of Green Cheek agrees: “We’re standing on the shoulders of giants!! We’ve learned from some of the best in the world-- Ken Grossman, Matt Brynildson, Vinnie Cilurzo and Tommie Arthur-- on how to make the best beer there is.” As we continue to see new California craft breweries open with brewers who cut their teeth with other award-winning California brewers, we can surely expect the state’s sustained GABF success to continue into the future.

Russell Hainline is the co-founder of The Beer Travel Guide, a website dedicated to helping readers find the best craft beer wherever they go. He can be found in LA watching Duke basketball games, and he can be found on Instagram drinking oodles of craft beer at @russellhbeer.



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WISHEFUL DRINKING

WAVE MAIDEN'S TALE

HOW A ONE-TIME 'IPA GIRL' SWAPPED HOPS (AND GRAIN!) FOR HERBAL ALES

by Tomm Carroll

First off, let's get a bit of ancient beer history out of the way as a useful reference point for this article:

Back in the latter part of medieval times (the period roughly encompassing the 5th to the 15th century), there were alcoholic beverages — mostly grain-based — known as “Ale” and “Beer.” The main difference was that ale, the older of the two by centuries, was brewed with a variety of herbs and spices (but no hops) as bittering agents. Beer, on the other hand, was bittered with hops. (“Lager” had its origins in the 15th century due to the hybridization of brewing yeast during the cold storage of beer in caves, but was not fully understood until the mid-19th century.)

Today, the word “Beer” comprises all of these: Ale (warm-fermented, with hops), Lager (cool-fermented and cold-conditioned, with hops), a hybrid of the two, and Gruit (an ale brewed with herbs and spices instead of hops).

Okay, back to the 21st century: South Bay native Margaux Moses was in love with craft beer since she was old enough to drink, and got a job at Rock and Brews in El Segundo. She was also a regular at El Segundo Brewing “since there were 12 seats downstairs”

in its tiny tasting room. “Citra was one of the first craft beers I fell in love with; I was an IPA girl,” she confessed to *Beer Paper*. “I totally drank a lot of [Port Brewing's] Mongo!”

Like most craft aficionados, she drank a little bit of everything. “I loved sours too, so Monkish's Feminist was a favorite,” she adds. That herbaceous Belgian-style Triple, brewed with hibiscus, was one of the acclaimed Torrance brewery's original beers — and likely an early influence for Moses' current role: owner and brewer for the one-woman Wave Maiden Ale Works, a nano brewery specializing in “experimental herbal ales rooted in plant medicine,” according to its website (www.wavemaidentaleworks.com).

But the main inspiration for the avid craft beer lover to create Wave Maiden was the health issues she developed from drinking beer. “It was really killing me to drink beer, which was super-disappointing,” she revealed. “So I tabled beer in my life for a couple of years, and went to school to study nutrition, but mainly plant spirit medicine and herbalism.”

Among other things in her schooling, Moses learned that she can't drink



Margaux Moses

Courtesy of Wave Maiden Ale Works



Margaux Moses & Shauna DeBolt Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @MomentsInBeer

wheat beers — “They make me feel really sick. I'm fine with gluten-reduced beers; I definitely do feel better after them than a normal beer. Some styles don't bother me as much, and I now know the chemistry of my body and what to eat and not eat before drinking beer.

“It's a mean sensitivity, for sure, and I knew that so many people are starting to have trouble with beer,” she continued. So, as an herbalist, she started working with clients,

recommending herbal tinctures and teas, and found that many of them told her, “When I drink what you gave me, I feel a lot better — but I just don't want to brew tea every day; I want to drink beer when I get home from work, not tea.”

That was a Eureka moment for Moses. “I totally related, because *I wanted to drink beer* most nights and not tea, too!” she said. “I just started to wonder if anybody's ever put these plants into beer. Was that even a possibility? So I

began researching medicinal plants and beer and went down the rabbit hole for months, watching YouTube videos and talking to the guys at homebrew shops. I just started putting together these blends that I would normally work at with just loose-leaf tea blends. Only fermenting them...

Herbal Essence

“But for me, as an herbalist, I wanted to bring awareness of the plants, and I wanted them to serve as sort of a gateway,” she added. “People really don’t want to hear about what plants or tinctures they can work into their lives to feel better. But I realized that when I put them into beer, I could really get people paying attention and excited by them.”

And so Wave Maiden was born. Birthed in the spring of this year, Moses’ operation has an alternating proprietorship with Brewery Draconum in Santa Clarita (which celebrates its second anniversary November 17 with a Brewers Brunch, by the way), using its brewhouse once or twice a month and rents a 10bbl fermenter. She is currently looking for production/taproom space in the Long Beach area to set up her own facility, and plans to can her ales “for

environmental reasons.”

Named for a tale from Norse mythology in which nine sisters worked harmoniously with the ocean to craft beers for the gods and goddesses, Wave Maiden currently brews two herbal ales, neither of them containing hops nor cereal — essentially grain-less gruits. They can be found on tap at Brewery Draconum’s taproom as well as at select craft beer bars around LA; check the website.

The ales are Comber, dubbed a Damiana Herbal Ale (6.2% abv), consisting of the herbs Damiana (a wild shrub that grows in Mexico and Central America, and was historically used as an aphrodisiac and to maintain stamina), as well as Mugwort and Yarrow (both herbal ingredients of the traditional gruit). It tastes like a floral-forward Saison with a white-peppery finish. Moses said the pepper flavor is from the Yarrow, a plant frequently used for medicinal purposes, as is Mugwort.

The second, Riser, a Hibiscus Herbal Ale (5.8% abv), which also includes rosehips and goji berries — the latter, a

(WISHFUL DRINKING continued on page 10)



Margaux brewing an herbal ale

Courtesy of Wave Maiden Ale Works



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Margaux Moses

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(WISHFUL DRINKING continued)

native fruit of China, has many health benefits, including immune system support — is mildly tart and fruity. According to Moses, “A fair amount of the fermentable sugar comes from a long boil of the goji berries. But I up the abv with another type of sugar...”

And therein lie a couple of important questions: 1) As *all* beer — or any alcoholic beverage — needs a sugar source, which the yeast ferments into alcohol (and carbonation), when there is no inherent sugar in the herbs (as there is in berries and other fruits), where does the fermentable sugar come from?

“I use a variety of fermentable sugars,” explained Moses. “That’s all I’ll say for right now because it’s proprietary. What I will tell you is that if you went into Whole Foods and looked at the sugar aisle, anything there that’s fermentable...I have fermented.” A third non-grain ale, which she described as “sage-forward,” should be released in November.

Indeed, back in the early days of the aforementioned Middle Ages, in regions around the world that didn’t have access to cereal grain — or grapes (wine), stone fruit (cider) or honey (mead) — thirsty residents used

whatever sugar source they could find to concoct an alcoholic beverage. In olden (but less ancient) days, when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in New England in the 1600s, instead of their intended destination of Jamestown, Virginia because they ran out of beer (look it up), they had to brew a “beer out of necessity” (as water couldn’t be trusted to be safe). The settlers used squash, acorns and maple and birch sap as sugar sources, and tree bark and herbs as bittering agents. Thus, Pumpkin Beer and Root Beer (originally a low-alcohol beer) were created. (Happy Thanksgiving!)

No Grain, No Gain?

2) If an alcoholic beverage isn’t made from grain as a sugar source, and isn’t brewed with hops, for that matter, can it be considered “beer?”

“There’s been a lot of positive feedback, but certainly some negative comments from the ‘purists’ walking around these beer festivals,” replied Moses (our interview took place at the LA Brewers Guild’s Beer & Food Festival last month at the Los Angeles Arboretum in Arcadia, where she moderated a panel on Beer and Botanicals).

Moses has certainly done her homework on the “beer” classification

for her herbal ales, citing Section 5052(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 USC 5052(a), as well as the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) regulations 27 CFR 25.11, both of which define the term “beer”...as “beer, ale, porter, stout, and other similar fermented beverages (including sake or similar products) of any name or description containing one-half of 1 percent or more of alcohol by volume, brewed or produced from malt, wholly or in part, *or from any substitute therefor.*” In addition, under the TTB regulations §25.15, Materials for the Production of Beer, it states, “Beer must be brewed from malt or from substitutes for malt. Only rice, grain of any kind, bran, *glucose, sugar,* and molasses are substitutes for malt. In addition, you may also use the following materials as adjuncts in fermenting beer: honey, *fruit,* fruit juice, fruit concentrate, *herbs, spices,* and other food materials.” (Italics mine.)

As for hops, see the definition of the medieval ale, as well as gruit, at the beginning of this article. Also, regarding *humulus lupulus*, Moses offered, “Just like alpha acids and hops, Mugwort and Yarrow have all these wonderful anti-viral, anti-bacterial properties. If you ask me, as an herbalist, what hops are for, I’d tell you I don’t really think they’re that good for you, and they’re a sedative. If you were having surgery back in the day, you’d probably want a really strong dose of them.”

What kind of yeast does Wave Maiden use in its herbal ales? “I use all ale yeasts,” Moses explained. “Some consider them boring, but I like them. The Comber has a lot of those fruity esters and it’s a little bit spicy, so I get asked if it’s Belgian yeast a lot of the time, but it’s not. It’s just a very clean ale yeast. I chose that because it does

dig a little deeper into the taste of the plants. People ask, ‘How can these plants possibly be this complex if this is all that’s in it?’ Well, because they’re amazing.”

But don’t get the impression that Wave Maiden is anti-grain. Once Moses opens her own facility, she will be brewing with grains, although not the typical beer ingredients, but those like malted millet and quinoa — all gluten-free. “I have brew recipes that are ancient grain-based,” she said, “and I have all my equipment picked out to do these ancient grain styles,” including a mash filter, like Brouwerij West in San Pedro and several Belgian breweries have, to efficiently brew with grains other than barley.

“I’m not necessarily pushing a brand that’s gluten-free — that’s not the main selling point of this,” Moses explained. “It’s a bonus for a lot of people, sure, but this is about sourcing ethically harvested and grown ingredients in really healthy soil — not GMO mono-crop culture — and producing a beverage that provides a level of nourishment. And I know I can take the byproduct and feel really proud to compost it and return it back to the ground.”

Wave Maiden deems itself “progressively traditional.” And in this try-anything age of Smoothie IPAs and Pastry Stouts, it’s refreshing to see (and drink) something that’s historical yet unique, so old it’s new again. To borrow a phrase from the comedy troupe Firesign Theatre, “Forward into the Past.”

Award-winning beer writer Tomm Carroll is also an international beer judge, historian and educator. He enjoys drinking locally, globally, historically and educationally. Contact him at beerscribe@earthlink.net.

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DESTINATION BAR

POURING THE GOOD STUFF

by Sean Inman



John Sullivan, owner of We're Pouring

Photo Credit: Sean Inman

John Sullivan went behind the bar and poured us both a taster of Unsolicited Advice from Green Cheek Brewing Company. We both caught the aroma and as I took a sip, I could see him taking a step back and pointing at the beer with a smile. The smile you get when you come across a beer that blows by your expectations. That is the type of person you want creating a beer menu.

We're Pouring opened in Glendale in an area known more for a stretch of dental offices than craft beer back in February of 2017. Since that date, the taps have seen 700 unique beers poured from the thirty taps that owner Sullivan carefully curates. He also replicates the logos on the giant menu board above the bar including the "Drink While Smiling Bird" that is the logo of Green Cheek.

The restaurant and bar are the vision of Sullivan, a self-described "dental tech, craft beer nerd and home cook" who wanted a place that served up

both good food and good beer. The tap list contains multitudes. There has been a variety of styles since day one but within each category you will find rotating and tried and true taps. You will always be able to find IPAs (though probably not that milkshake version since Sullivan isn't a fan of that derivation of the style). He has nine hoppy beers on tap plus one pale ale. Lately both Beachwood, State Brewing and Mumford Brewing have been well represented in this arena. Stouts and sours are covered as well as the lighter side as you will always see Bottle Logic's (714) Blonde Ale or Modern Time's Ice Pilsner. We're Pouring is also one of the few craft beer locations that offers their flights priced by the ounce instead of a flat fee.

Sullivan is always ready to get the best available no matter the cost or time. He routinely will take a drive on Monday down to Riip Beer Company in Sunset Beach to pick up a keg or head north to Paso Robles to pick up

wine for the four handles of that other beverage. He acknowledges that it is a lot easier to get high quality beer even in just the relatively short time that he has been open and he goes as far as to say that, "California easily makes the best beer in the world" and taking that grandiose claim a step further that Los Angeles and Orange County give you "no reason to go anywhere else."

On the food side of the ledger, pizza is the calling card for We're Pouring with four house standards as well as the ability to customize your own. Sullivan has put as much energy into the dough of the pizza as he has his tap list and in surprisingly pizza deficient Glendale, this makes it a must stop based on the pizza alone. Sliders are also on offer including new hot chicken versions with one so hot that it is named No Returns.

Without advertising and with only a few special tap-takeovers sprinkled

throughout the year (Modern Times in December, Bottle Logic in January and Beachwood during L.A. Beer Week), We're Pouring draws crowds most nights. And while the IPA is still king of ordering interest, you will see a variety of people with a variety of beers as Sullivan notes, "60 to 70-year-olds ordering barrel-aged stouts" is not out of the ordinary.

Back when they started, it wasn't surprising to have people ask for Coors or Stella Artois but Sullivan says that doesn't happen anymore. Customers know that We're Pouring could actually be short for We're Pouring, (the good stuff). The stuff that makes you stand back and point at the glass with a smile.

Sean Inman has been writing about craft beer in Los Angeles since 2009. His daily beer posts are on the Beer Search Party blog. He also writes a bi-weekly beer column for Food GPS.

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COVER STORY

KERN RIVER GOLD RUSH AT GABF 2019

by Daniel Drennon

As Olympic athletes, Rebecca and Eric Giddens are used to winning medals.

Their Kern River Brewing Company (KRBC), just went off at last month's Great American Beer Festival, taking home two Golds, two Silvers, and being named Best Brewery Group in the United States.

They met in Wisconsin at a kayaking camp. Rebecca was 12 and Eric was 16. They would see each other off and on throughout the years at kayak competitions. Rebecca made the U.S. Junior Team about the time Eric was transitioning from the Junior team to the U.S. Men's Team. They toured the world together racing and supporting one another (Men and Women do not compete in the same events in Whitewater Kayaking). Eric was on the U.S. team for over a decade and managed to win one World Cup race and make the 1996 Olympic Team in Atlanta, his home town. He is the canoe/kayak TV analyst for NBC on their summer Olympics coverage.

Rebecca in Eric's impressive shadow? Ms. Giddens, a native of Green Bay (appropriately Titledown, USA) has hauled in an incredible eight World Cup and World Championship medals, made the 2000 and 2004 Olympic teams, and brought home a Silver Medal in the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece.

In the wake of being named Best Brewery Group, I asked the two to tell their story to *BEER PAPER*.

DRENNON: *The leap from Olympic athletes to brewery owners is a fascinating one. How did you decide to open a brewery and why Kernville of all places?*

ERIC: We were living in San Diego while I was getting my Ph.D. at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Rebecca was training for the 2004 Olympics. We spent a lot of time on the Kern River, which is the nearest whitewater river to San Diego, and fell in love with the area. We tossed around the idea of opening a business in Kernville and a brewery made the most sense. Craft beer was



Kern River Brewing Company in Kernville, CA

Photo Credit: John Feldschau

beginning to make a resurgence in the early 2000's and San Diego was on the forefront of that movement. It seemed like a great fit for Kernville which needed a place for people to congregate after their outdoor adventures.

After Rebecca won a Silver medal in Athens and I finished my Ph.D., we started looking towards our next phase in life. Kernville seemed like a great place to move to and we decided to give the brewery a try. We figured if we failed, we would fail quickly and we could always plug back into "normal" life. We ended up partnering with Kyle Smith, who has since moved on to start his own brewery. Kyle was a homebrewer and a firefighter in the U.S. Forest Service and the three of us went all in on trying to make KRBC a success.

DRENNON: *What year was that and how would you describe the California beer scene at that time?*

ERIC: We started the business in 2005, bought the property and began converting an old building into a brewery. It had been, in order, an

after-school club for kids (called the Just for Fun Club), two different Mexican restaurants, a fruit stand and an antique shop. Needless to say, it needed a lot of work before we could open.

REBECCA: We rebuilt the original building with the help of friends and family. In May of 2006 just before opening we threw a party for all of the volunteers and we had 80 people from our community, all of whom had a large hand in helping us build KRBC, join us for a soft opening on the house. If you ever catch an event at KRBC filled with locals you can see why we made this our home...amazing people!

ERIC: The craft beer scene in San Diego was developing; the craft beer scene in Kernville was non-existent. It's funny, we talked with a lot of breweries down in San Diego in the year or so leading up to our decision to start the brewery. They all said that the brewpub model was the way to go; there was no money in a production brewery. Now we go down there and some of those same folks have huge, sparkling facilities. Of course, we know they were being straight with us

at the time, but things sure changed in a hurry in Southern California. In the end, we think the brewpub model was appropriate for Kernville. It gave us a chance to get people in for some food and introduce them to craft beer. Soon we had all the locals drinking IPA and the rest is history.

REBECCA: It was a pretty proud day when we were able to pull Bud Light from the tap lineup!

DRENNON: *What were your initial short-term and long-term goals for KRBC?*

REBECCA: Traveling through Colorado and California we noticed that most outdoor mountain towns had successful brew pubs that acted as a gathering place for customers to share their adventures. Our goal was to create this environment for Kernville. We're so proud to walk into KRBC today and see our customers sharing time with their family and friends, coming in after climbing, biking, kayaking, fishing, camping, hiking, rafting - it feels like a wonderful extended family.

DRENNON: *As the West Coast IPA craze was ascending into a near-obsession in California, KRBC began showing up on everyone's radar with two phenomenal beers – Just Outstanding and Citra double IPA.*

ERIC: Just Outstanding, which we named after a local mountain bike trail, was one of Kyle's homebrew recipes. That was the garage beer that really made us think we could pull the whole thing off; delicious and very innovative for the time. It was a true joy to watch as we were able to move people on from our gateway blonde and red beers and create a town full of hop-heads. There is even a rumor that one Daniel Drennon happened to list this beer among his favorites (Note: The reference is that this author listed Just Outstanding as one of "The Five Best IPAs in the World" for an LA Weekly article in 2011).

Citra Double IPA, which in retrospect was a pretty uninspired name, came about as we played with this relatively new hop back in 2010. Right out of the gate, we recognized that it was a special hop and a special beer. People began to take notice and soon it caught fire on the beer forums and started pulling in some accolades around the beer world.

DRENNON: *Citra took home some medals that escalated fans desire for the beer to near-Pliny-like status with folks driving to Kernville and camping out in your parking lot for the bi-annual release: summer when it was 100 degrees and winter when it was ten degrees! What the Hell did you think about that?*

ERIC: Our first inkling that things were about to get weird was when Citra beat out Pliny the Younger for the People's Choice award at the Bistro Double IPA festival, an honor that it had held for many years. Citra then went on a four-year streak of its own. After that, Citra delivered us our first medal, a Gold at GABF, and the hype train was in full motion. Obviously, we were over the moon that people were stoked on our beer. It helped put us on the beer map, but in some ways, it was a double-edged sword.

We started releasing it in 22 oz bottles and draft at the brewery only. We were still operating off of a 7 bbl brewing system then and it seemed like a great way to use our limited quantity of this beer to get people to come experience our brewpub. It was pretty cool at first when we pulled up to work before the first beer release and there was already a line; evidently some had camped out the night before. That soon turned into panic as the number of people in line continued to grow and a quick count indicated that we would not have enough bottles of Citra Double IPA to go around. It is still one of the harder things we ever had to do when we walked through the line and explained to folks who had driven hours to get to Kernville that they would not be bringing bottles of Citra home.

DRENNON: *What year was the Citra GABF Gold medal and what years did it win at the Bistro IPA Fest?*

ERIC: GABF Gold was 2011 and Bistro People's Choice was 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

DRENNON: *That's quite a gap between those medals and your incredible achievement this year. Winning medals isn't the end all, be all, but once you've done it, and especially as world class competitive athletes, I would imagine it becomes a goal that becomes increasingly difficult with the explosion of breweries in California and the country. Was there a strategy to get back to winning medals?*

ERIC: There were likely a few factors that contributed to our absence from the GABF stage for so long. First and foremost, our philosophy was to make beer that we liked, not necessarily brewing to style. We would simply go through the beers we had available and send in the ones we thought were good into the competition, even if they did not fit the category guidelines. Apparently waiting for the judges to come around to our views was not a particularly good strategy.

(COVER STORY continued on page 14)



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Rebecca and Eric Giddens

Photo Credit: John Feldschau

(COVER STORY continued)

You are right in that we have some competitiveness in our DNA. Somewhere around 2017 we decided that we were not going to make progress on winning beer medals unless we changed our approach. We now had our 20 bbl production system where we could brew our flagship hoppy beers, allowing us to turn the 7 bbl system into more of a playground for experimentation. Before that, it was common for Just Outstanding to occupy 3 of our 5 fermenters. We went from sometimes 6 or 8 beers on tap before we opened our production facility to as many as 20 now. We began to focus on having a variety of beers available to pub customers and went through each recipe, making changes as we went. Just Outstanding was pretty much the only beer off limits. The result is that we started winning medals again at various competitions. Highlights include winning a Silver for Brown Claw at GABF in 2018 and doubling up at the Bistro DIPA/TIPA festival in 2019; a Gold for Double Chuuurch in the DIPA category and a Bronze for Y.U.B. Trippin' in the TIPA Category. You are correct in your statement that

winning medals is not the end all, be all, but it felt good to get rolling again; mainly for our brew team that had yet to experience much success in competition.

DRENNON: *What does being named GABF 2019 Brewery Group of the Year mean to you?*

ERIC: To be named one of the top breweries out of the almost 2300 breweries that competed in GABF is pretty astounding to us. We always knew we had a special place, but to be recognized in this way helped validate our beliefs and reassure us that we were not delusional. The locals and staff have been so proud of these awards, and they should be; they all helped make it possible.

In general, the quality of beers across the country has improved dramatically since we opened in 2006. It is humbling to look across the auditorium at the number of people who devote their lives to making quality beer. To get any sort of recognition at GABF is a dream come true for most brewers. To win a brewery of the year award is next level and something we are still trying to process.



The Backyard

Photo Credit: Sarah Lowrey

REBECCA: We're well aware this will probably never happen again, so we might as well live it up and enjoy the moment!

DRENNON: *GABF features Gold, Silver and Bronze medals being announced in 107 style categories. KRBC took home Gold in Session IPA for your Gravity Check, followed by Silver in Double Hoppy Red Ale for Side Hike, then Gold in Belgian-Style Blonde or Pale Ale for Nenette, and finally another Silver in Brown Porter for Brown Claw. Tell us your emotions as you heard them announced as medal winners.*

ERIC: One interesting fact is that all four of these beers either did not exist or had different recipes than the previous year. Even Brown Claw, which won a Silver in 2018, had a different malt bill and hop bill. With that said, these four beers were, in our view, the best of the 10 we submitted for competition. We chose these, along with Double Chuuurch and Pumps Bumps 'N Rollers Kolsch, to pour at the festival in the hopes that one of them might just bring in a medal. We would never have expected what ended up happening in that auditorium in Denver.

Gravity Check was our first beer to come up for an award in category 17, Session IPA. The original Gravity Check recipe, admittedly one of our favorite beers, was pretty much a S.M.A.S.H. beer with Pilsner Malt and Mosaic. We completely changed this beer around for the competition with both the malt and hop bill and knew instantly we had hit it right on.

Right out of the tank, I loved this beer. I told the crew that "if there is a better Session IPA out there, I want it because it will be my new favorite beer". We had spent the afternoon previous to the award ceremony at Cannonball Creek Brewing in Golden and had the pleasure of drinking "Trump Hands," their award-winning Session IPA. When they announced that beer for Silver, I got slightly depressed, knowing there was only one more slot available on the board. When Chris said "And the Gold Medal goes to Grav..." I shot up out of my seat and let out an inappropriately loud "woo hoo!". Luckily, he finished the sentence with "...ity Check, Kern River Brewing Company" otherwise it would have been rather embarrassing. We celebrated up on stage and I told the rest of the crew "That was awesome, we got our medal. We can go home now".

After that we had a couple of categories roll by without a hit. Then it started to get surreal. We got a Silver for Side Hike Double Hoppy Red, Category 69. A beer we designed specifically for the comp and was a collaborative effort with the whole brew team. Holy Crap, a Gold and a Silver in the Same GABF. We had just doubled our historical total. Another fist bump with Charlie (Papazian). Best Day Ever!

We celebrated on the way back to our seats with the folks from Beachwood and Green Cheek. I flashed Evan Price the Green Cheek t-shirt that I was wearing under my KRBC flannel to raucous applause. We barely got seated again when Category 86,

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Belgian Blonde came up. We knew we had a good beer entered, but it seemed silly to be hoping for any more medals. Bronze, no luck. Silver, nope, oh well... Gold to Nenette. What? Kern River doesn't even make Belgian Style beers. This one blew our minds. Our first GABF Gold medal for a non-hoppy beer.

We were waiting in line to receive the medal for Nenette and I started doing the math. I was pretty sure we were going to get a Brewery of the Year award. Normally they present this when you pick up your last medal for the ceremony, so I was kind of expecting them to announce it prior to us taking the stage. When they didn't announce anything, I said to myself, "Holy Crap. We are getting another medal, and I'm pretty sure it's for Brown Claw". I didn't mention anything to anybody else; it just seemed too ridiculous to even say out loud.

Category 97, Brown Porter, rolled around and, sure enough, Brown Claw was announced for Silver. Shortly after we got in line, they paused the medal announcements to announce Brewery Group and Brewer of the

year. It was pretty special to have Brandon Berube, our new head brewer, and Emily Kirkpatrick, a brewer who started off with us as a dishwasher when she was a teenager, there with us. It was their first GABF and it turned out to be a pretty memorable one. We were bummed to not have the rest of the brew team there, especially Andrew Karle, our other brewer, but we were pretty sure the whole team was celebrating back in Kernville.

I think we are most proud of the fact that we won medals in a wide variety of styles; from hoppy to malty to a fermentation-driven Belgian-style. To be recognized across this broad spectrum of beers does not happen by accident and we hope it reflects the care and attention we put into all of our beers.

REBECCA: Eric's worked so hard on the Gravity Check recipe. He's been obsessing over it for a couple of years now. This last batch, he finally felt like we nailed it - he was so proud to enter it into the GABF. By the time they named the Bronze and Silver, my hopes were down for this beer so when they called our name a completely uncontrolled yelp came out of me. We

truly could have walked away with just the one medal and been very happy campers.

When Side Hike came up for silver, I was super proud of our team. Brandon Berube had recently joined us as our new Head Brewer and this was a recipe that we did not have set for the competition. He and Eric were able to collaborate on this beer, make some major changes from our last hoppy red and the result was a delicious hoppy red - glad the judges noticed too!

Nenette is a beer we have to keep on tap. Our customers adore this beer and it gives us variety (important to mix it up since we're known as being an IPA-centric brewery). We're always striving to dial in this recipe so that the one consistent Belgian beer we brew is top notch. The feedback from our customers is the reason we entered this beer into GABF, so a big shout to our Nenette drinkers for keeping us inspired to do our best.

At GABF we were pouring at a "Meet the Brewers" booth and I had volunteered to go back and pour before the ceremony ended. We didn't have volunteers so I knew that I had to be back in time. Ten minutes to pour time

I looked at Eric and said "I can't leave yet. I need to stay for Brown Claw. I promise I'll run to our booth right after they call the brown porter category." I was hoping Brown Claw would win a medal and was so stoked when they called our name.

I had not been counting others medals nor did I realize there was still a group category to win so I had no idea that we were also going to receive the Brewery Group of the Year award. I honestly felt like I was having the best dream ever when they called it and tried to wake myself up to be sure it was real. Never did I imagine that we'd be "one of those breweries" we've watched year after year popping back up on stage. We've worked really hard to do our best. Each one of the beers that medaled made it to where it was because of our whole team. Recipes were made but that's not why we won medals. We won because our whole crew participated, worked hard and worked together. We trained and trusted our brewers to do their best and that's what they did; Emily, Andrew and Brandon you rocked it. And then of course we're well aware

(COVER STORY continued on page 16)

The advertisement features a background image of the interior of The Slice & Pint, showing a brick wall, hanging lights, and patrons. Overlaid on the image is the El Segundo Brewing Company logo, which includes the text "THE SLICE & PINT" in a large, stylized font, "EST. 2018" below it, and a circular logo with "SVP" inside. Below the logo, the text reads: "WHAT'S FOR DINNER? ORDER SOME PIZZA! GET A 6 PACK TOO. YOU EARNED IT." At the bottom, the website "WWW.THESLICEANDPINT.COM" and the address "130 WEST GRAND AVE, EL SEGUNDO 90245" are listed.



Eric Giddens, Brandon Berube, Andrew Karle and Emily Kirkpatrick (the brewers)

Photo Credit: John Feldschau

(COVER STORY continued)

that it doesn't stop there - Tami, Brian, Truelove, Valdez you help baby the beer every step of the way! Chelsea, Melissa, Kelly and Megan you keep us all in line! Jacob, your chef skills and leadership keep our customers coming back for more! Finally, the drive and vibe that our whole staff generates keeps us striving for the best! If you can't tell, I'm blown away by the crew we work with and both Eric and I truly count our lucky stars every day! I'm so proud KRBC could take the Brewery Group of the Year Award back to such a deserving crew made up of amazing individuals!

DRENNON: Tell us about The Backyard expansion. Why and when did you do it?

We started thinking about expanding around 2013. There was quite a demand for our beer and we were working hard to keep the taps supplied at the pub and sending out limited amounts of beer to Southern California. We were routinely turning down requests for beer and that was probably the main motivator to expand; to get more Kern River beer out in the market and raise awareness of our little mountain town. Somehow, we forgot the pains of building the first brewery and the fact that we swore never to do that again. After a year or so of planning and 2 years of construction we finished the brewery, literally in the backyard of the old brewery. This, incidentally, is why we

were awarded "Brewery Group" of the year. We technically have two brewing locations and two licenses, even though they are only steps apart. We are quite possibly the smallest brewery group out there.

DRENNON: Does KRBC have a brewing philosophy?

ERIC: Besides being obsessed with quality, we really try to focus on drinkability. Making beers that are balanced and well-crafted so that people can simply enjoy drinking a glass. It sounds silly, but in an age where many beers are designed to be aggressive or ground breaking, sometimes it is nice to have the person across the table, not the beer, be the focus of your attention.

DRENNON: How has your background as world-class competitive athletes influenced the way in which you run a brewery?

REBECCA: If there is one thing that Eric and I have learned from 15 years plus of racing at an Olympic level, it's that setting goals and rigorous training sets one up for success. In 2017 we had a goal to brew to style, enter beers in competitions and use the judges notes as well as listen to constructive criticism to make quality changes to our recipes. Eric has a background in science so we also spent a lot of time and money on our quality control program. While brewing is of course an art, the science goes hand in hand if you're striving for award winning beers.

While whitewater slalom kayaking in an individual sport one of the most important things that we learned as athletes was that it takes the whole team working hard and treating each other with respect to come out on top. Over the past few years our number one mission, over winning medals, was to have a true team. We knew that with good people on our side that cared about each other and our business that we had the best chance at success. We would never be where we are today without our amazing staff and we couldn't be prouder. On stage at GABF, Eric and I discussed that this couldn't have happened to a better KRBC team. We have the most selfless, caring and hardworking individuals that we've ever had the pleasure to work with. We wished that we could have had our whole staff on stage with us - we couldn't wait to get home to celebrate with everyone!

DRENNON: What have been your most important lessons learned over your first 13 years?

ERIC: Perhaps the biggest lesson is perseverance. We have had success over the years, but it has not been without some pretty daunting obstacles. Building something from the ground up has been a learning process and we often got it wrong before we got it right. At the end of the day, regardless of whether you moved forwards or backwards, you have to show up the next day and try to improve.

Another thing that is important is to try to always do things the right way. If you have good intentions, you won't second guess yourself if things go awry.

DRENNON: How do you feel about experimentation in new styles or doing twists on existing styles?

REBECCA: I am always pushing to try something new and different. Eric enjoys the challenge and research. Now we also have Brandon who's excited to create and collaborate!

ERIC: If you are not evolving, you are getting stagnant. That does not mean that you have to chase every trend (I'm looking at you, Milkshake IPA, which I know Rebecca will make us brew), but learning something new is always a fun challenge. It's also important for us to have a variety of things on tap at the pub so that anyone can find something they like. For example, we make a Hard Seltzer for the pub. Not because we want to get rich quick, but because we would rather make our gluten free option for customers than buy it from someone else. Who would have thought that fermenting simple sugar could be so interesting.

DRENNON: Do you plan to do any collaborations and, if so, why do you like collaborating?

ERIC: We have our "Hops for Homies" program that focuses on collaborating with other breweries. We love it; we get to invite brewers to Kernville and get out on the river or a trail and show-off the Kern River Valley. We also get to exchange ideas and just talk beer. We also enjoy going to other breweries to see how they do things. Invariably we come back with new ideas and new motivations.

DRENNON: Between talent and work ethic, which is more important?

REBECCA: Talent is important, however, we quickly learned that for us (and our goal of working as a team) work ethic beats out talent any day. Usually with a good work ethic one understands the need to learn each day, work for the good of the company and of course be a good team member.

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

REBECCA: (smiling) Determined.

ERIC: Lucky A.F.

YAEGER SHOTS

MACLEOD ALES: BEYOND THE CASK

by Brian Yaeger



Alastair and patron Paul Hansen having a chuckle Photo Credit: Charles Owen

MacLeod Ale Brewing Co., launched in Van Nuys in 2014 by wife-husband duo Jennifer Febre-Boase and Alastair Boase, is *all about* that real ale. Well, it's *a lot about* authentic cask ale. Jennifer grew up in Kent from whence all those glorious English hops came and Alastair, grandson of Roland MacLeod, grew up in the West Highlands, hence the Scottish flair down to the Boases playing their bagpipes on suitable occasions. To round out the British Isles vibe, one of their bartenders is Irish. The brewery opened as a quasi torchbearer for CAMRA (the English consumer advocacy group, Campaign for Real Ale) and it's still your best bet for a proper pint of bitter, Guv'nor.

At the same time, its flagship beer is now Van ICE, an American light lager. Second tops is, unsurprisingly, a hoppy IPA. A cold, carbonated American IPA, not one of those *warm, flat* (read: cellar temperature, naturally carbonated) malt-balanced English

IPAs. (Fun aside, Febre-Boase recalled that, "a friend of mine would politely ask if we were aware that the beer was pouring warm, or even ask for ice.") It's not 'til you get to the fourth best cellar, er, seller, that MacLeod's roots start showing. The King's Taxes, dubbed a 60 Shilling Scottish Ale, brims with toffee'n'tobacco goodness and receives the proper cask treatment, pumped into your pint at 50 degrees instead of a chilly 38. Although, if I may get pedantically BJCP on dear readers, The King's Taxes is 4.7% ABV, thus placing it well beyond the 60 Shilling "Scottish Light" realm (style guidelines allow for 2.5-3.2%) and elevating it to the more regal 80 Shilling "Scottish Export." But this is America, not the UK, so even its champions—a mix of British expats and Yanks who somewhere along the line developed an affinity for real ale—are fine with perhaps a bit of American bombast to seep into their beers and beer styles.

"Our mentor, Tom Hennessy, suggested we could save money by eliminating equipment," said Febre-Boase, such as brite tanks, CO2 canisters, filters, etcetera. In other words, MacLeod wasn't necessarily aiming to brew and serve exclusively cask ale, but it was a more frugal way to break into the LA beer scene. Alastair's fondness for Leith Heavy, a Scottish ale he quaffed near the docks of Edinburgh as a wee lad, helped guide the vision.

"Regarding the success of the cask ale experiment, we think it's been an outstanding success! We've been a beacon for Valley British ex-pats and anyone who's lived, studied or traveled in the UK. However," she continued, "as we've grown over the years we have added more and more draft equipment in order to serve cold fizzy beer, and our patrons enjoy that just as much.

"Truthfully, we never had a goal of remaining staunchly CAMRA. This may disappoint some, but the reality is we couldn't afford all the equipment we needed to start a proper brewery... The cask ale was a great way to establish our brand, garner attention and get some great British fans in the beginning. Now we have a much bigger crowd, most of whom have never heard of Real or Cask Ale, but if they sit next to a regular, it doesn't take long before they're being given sips of The King's Taxes or The Little Spree."

The Little Spree is called a Yorkshire Pale Ale and it fits squarely in the middle of the range of British pale, hop-forward ales from ordinary bitters to India pale ales. So drinking a pint of The Little Spree or, say, The Best (MacLeod's 4.7% best bitter) or The

(YAEGER SHOTS continued on page 18)

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Beertender Nicole Geletka pulling a pint of *The Little Spree*
Photo Credit: Charles Owen



MacLeod pizza!

Photo Credit: Charles Owen

(YAEGER SHOTS continued)

Luckypenny (a 6.3% ESB) is both a way to travel back to England via beer but also a way to travel back in time to the roots of American craft brewing. Those early microbrewers weren't emulating German lager brewers nor were they yet brewing homages to Belgian Trappist monks or farmhouse brewers; they were nearly exclusively replicating British styles. So if you're of a certain age, you may recall when ESBs—Extra special bitters—were the IPAs of the late-eighties through mid-nineties.

Febre-Boase is quick to point out that MacLeod's customer base—a blend of expats, craft enthusiasts who brave the 405 traffic to reach the taproom, and locals who come in for a cold beer (ICE accounts for 20 percent of sales), pizza, or a place to play some games with their friends or kids—aren't exclusively hopheads. There's a nutty, malty brown ale, a dry Irish stout, a roasty coffee porter, and even among the beers with the word bitter in it, Kentish hops are earthier and more subdued than alpha-tastic American ones.

Ultimately, macro-lager-targeting Van ICE aside, MacLeod aims to offer something not necessarily different, but distinct. Of the 20 beers available in the taproom, just a quarter are served on cask, but when you may be hard pressed to find a brewery's draft list that is less than a quarter IPA variants, that qualifies as fulfilling a niche.

"I don't think cask ale is going to take America by storm," said Febre-Boase. I think it's a great thing to offer, if you can do it right and be dedicated to quality.

"I do appreciate niche breweries myself...I personally prefer to see that rather than breweries trying to do too many styles at once. I tend to think in food terms a lot. When you dine out, do you want to go to a French, Italian, or Thai restaurant? Or one restaurant that serves a little of everything? I think it's clear that the food will be better if the menu is focused. So if your niche includes cask, do it!"

Then Febre-Boase added, "Keeping that analogy going, I can see having a wonderful restaurant serving classic dishes from the past, but it

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MacLeod tasting room

Photo Credit: Charles Owen

would be unlikely to catch on as a wide-spread concept.” She’s right. Would I love the chance to find somewhere that still made beef stroganoff? Yes. That served liver and onions? Not so much. Baked Alaska for dessert? Heck yeah! Green Jell-o with fruit cocktail suspended inside? OK, the menu needs to be hammered out. But in this regard, there’s some comparison here to the preservation of cask or real ale.

To a degree.

“Regarding CAMRA, we don’t worry too much about it,” she concluded. “The goal is to serve the best tasting, the clearest, the best conditioned cask ale we possibly can. At first, we had a cask rack with a ‘cask breather’ system—a gentle blanket of CO2 entering the casks instead of oxygen—which is not CAMRA approved. As we got busier, we did away

with that system because we go through the firkins quickly enough so as not to need the CO2 blanket, which can extend the life of the cask significantly from 3 or 4 days to two weeks or so. Once we did that, we were completely CAMRA-compliant. Now we are using a cask widge system which can be used with or without a CO2 blanket system, but we still do not use a breather. So, we are still basically adhering to CAMRA standards. But we are not trying to save dying styles. We make what we like to drink and as long as there are a reasonable number of customers who also like it, we keep making it.”

Brian Yaeger is the author of Red, White, and Brew and contributed to the Oxford Companion to Beer. When this Cicerone isn't 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.



Operations Manager Sean Martin and Beertender Nicole Geletka

Photo Credit: Charles Owen

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INLAND EMPIRE

RETIRED COLONEL ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE INLAND EMPIRE BREWERS GUILD

by Andrew Smith



Bill Steinkirchner, far right, discusses the Inland Empire Brewers Guild with Andrew Smith

Photo Credit: Shelley Smith

Hopefully you've been following our brewery visits around the Inland Empire over the last few months and maybe checked out a few of your own. This month we decided to visit Bill Steinkirchner at Stone Church in Corona. While we shared a few beers and talked about his own brewery, the central theme was the Inland Empire Brewers Guild, where Steinkirchner was recently elected president.

A retired army colonel, Steinkirchner doesn't mix his words. Formed in 2014, the Guild has gone through various formats and had its ups as well as its downs. The Inland Empire has its challenges, and it's taken a bit of a military-like shakeup to get the Guild on track. Sensing a need for fresh leadership and direction, Steinkirchner "threw his name into the hat" for the presidency. The kind of leadership and direction an army colonel could

bring? "Yes! Everyone on the board now is aged 50 and above. One guy is a retired navy commander, then there's me. It's a pretty mature group. We all work well together and that's what's needed."

It's an expansive region, which narrowly stretches along the I-10 but more broadly covers all of Riverside and San Bernardino counties: Arizona to the east, and Death Valley to the north. Since the 1970's, the search for affordable housing has sparked a mass inland migration and a rapidly rising population. The breadth and the growth have caused both opportunity and challenges. Another problem has always been the stigma of the "IE" and the "909" area code. But there's a craft beer culture rapidly rising and generating plaudits as the area starts to outgrow the shadow of its more affluent neighbors.

A beer culture in the Inland Empire is a new concept. Ben Cook told us that when he opened Hangar 24 in 2008, Dale Brothers (now Last

Name) was the only other production brewery. A couple of cities had their own brewpub, but they were few and far apart. We don't have any official numbers, something Steinkirchner hopes to address, but best estimates show a growth from 20 breweries in 2012 to 78 today. It's a growth that can't go unchecked as the Guild aims "to advocate and stimulate a world-class beer culture within the Inland Empire"

Steinkirchner has already made visible changes. "The first thing I did when I became president was to rewrite the bylaws and introduce chapters. It's such a big area that it needed that." The five chapters are Temecula Valley, Riverside/Corona, High Desert, Low Desert, and Rancho Cucamonga. "We've revamped everything. Now it's pretty much flourishing. For the first time, we've got a positive bank account. It's got direction, structured format, and a five-year strategic plan with yearly initiatives. The website is up and running. Some of the chapters are holding their own events under the Guild." Those events have included a Temecula beer month and Rancho Cucamonga's San Bernardino Beer Week.

The Guild's Vision Statement speaks of "making the Inland Empire a craft beer destination." It's viable. Several cities have grown into metropolitan areas with multiple breweries. Population growth has seen city lines blurred in the almost continuous sprawl from Los Angeles to Coachella. Active efforts include a Hop Passport and a booth at the recent Craft Beer Summit in Long Beach. The satellite festivals are headlined by an annual Guild Fest, which just celebrated its 5th year. There's also a great event coming up in November, Amber Waves of Grain, the Guild's fundraiser for veterans, which according to Steinkirchner "is unlike any festival you've ever been to."

While the Guild exists to promote the breweries, the process is to ensure

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Bill Steinkirchner at Stone Church Brewery
Photo Credit: Shelley Smith

all breweries in the region are representative. “To make us recognized and respected, the breweries have to make the best beer they possibly can. If any brewery in the Inland Empire gets a bad reputation that reflects on the rest of us. We all have to brew the best beer possible. We’re not in competition with each other. It’s not even big beer that’s going to ruin us. We have to make sure that we work together.” Guild meeting agendas emphasize safety, quality control, and educational topics. “It’s about networking and working together to improve our collective knowledge. If we don’t continue to improve ourselves and make good beer, then it’s not

doing any good. They [consumers] should be saying. ‘Hey this is a great area. They have great breweries that make great beers.’ That’s what you want.”

With 39 breweries on board, Steinkirchner also strives for strength in numbers. “Any brewery in the Inland Empire is free to attend the monthly meetings, member or not; they all get the invite.” Startups are openly encouraged. “We’ve all been through the process, made the mistakes, and we want to make it as painless as possible for newcomers.” Steinkirchner has worked to facilitate membership: “At the Guild Fest in May, every brewery that poured beer had their dues waived for the year. If you couldn’t make it, it’s a hundred bucks a year. That’s nothing.”

It’s an optimistic outlook for the guild as a positive bankroll works towards Steinkirchner’s goal of hiring a full-time director. Last Name and Hangar 24 arrived early on the scene, but several world class breweries have followed, “People don’t realize how many great breweries we have in the Inland Empire. We used to have to drive to Orange County for great beer. You don’t have to do that anymore.” And visitors are arriving from further afield.

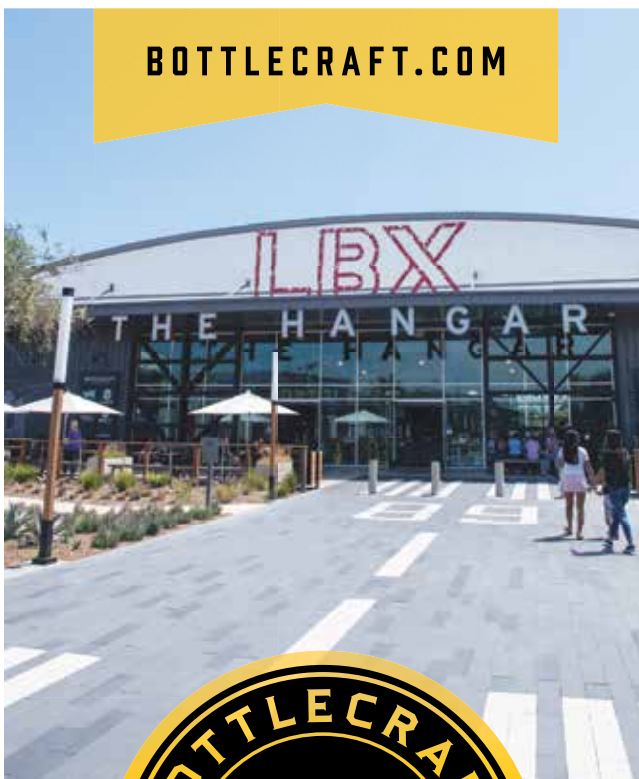
“I was just at Ironfire,” adds Steinkirchner, “They’ve got a great barrel program.” Temecula itself is an easy draw. The greater Temecula Valley has 14 breweries. A study conducted by Cal State San Marcos reported an economic impact of \$30 million in Temecula alone. Riverside, Corona, Rancho Cucamonga, and Redlands all have several centrally located breweries, and tourist meccas like Palm



Springs now have their own craft beer scene. While we’re at it, we can’t fail to mention the medals at Great American Beer Festival. In 2011 and 2012, no breweries in the Inland Empire won medals at GABF. Since then, awards have gone to No Clue, Hangar 24, Kings, Garage, Taps (Corona), Black Market, Refuge, Aftershock, Packinghouse, Wiens, Ritual, Last Name, Heroes, and Babe’s.

Some of those breweries have been covered in this column, and we’ll have many more to tell you about in the months to come.

Raised in England, Andrew Smith “thought” he knew everything about beer before moving to the United States. He covers food for Locale Magazine and runs a local Coachella Valley blog at CVBeerScene.com



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Arrow Lodge Brewing
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Dry River Brewing
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The Dudes' Brewing Co.
1840 W 208th St, Torrance
395 Santa Monica Place, #304,
Santa Monica
24250 Town Center Dr #190,
Santa Clarita
173 N Moorpark Rd, Ste. D,
Thousand Oaks

Eagle Rock Brewery
3056 Roswell St, Los Angeles

El Segundo Brewing
140 Main St, El Segundo

Figueroa Mountain
Brewing Co.
30770 Russell Ranch Rd,
Westlake Village

Five Threads Brewing Co.
1133 Via Colinas #109,
Westlake Village

Frogtown Brewery
2931 Gilroy St, Los Angeles

Hand-Brewed Beer
9771 Variel Ave, Los Angeles

Hermosa Brewing Company
1342 Hermosa Ave,
Hermosa Beach

Highland Park Brewery
5127 York Blvd, Los Angeles

Homage Brewing
281 S Thomas St #101, Pomona

Hop Secret Brewing Company
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800 N Alameda St,
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2350 Sunrise St, Los Angeles

King Harbor Brewing Co.
2907 182nd St, Redondo Beach

La Verne Brewing Co.
2125 Wright Ave, La Verne

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3630 Atlantic Ave, Long Beach

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518 W Willow St, Long Beach

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12918 Cerise Ave, Hawthorne

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610 W Ave O #104, Palmdale

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14741 Calvert St, Van Nuys

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20311 S Western Ave, Torrance

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1756 E 23rd St, Los Angeles

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Phantom Carriage Brewery
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Pocock Brewing Company
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Santa Clarita

Progress Brewing
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Project Barley Brewery
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Lomita

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

San Fernando Brewing Co.
425 Park Ave, San Fernando

Sanctum Brewing Company
560 E Commercial St #21,
Pomona

Santa Monica Brew Works
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Monica

Scholb Premium Ales
2964 Columbia St, Torrance
2306 E 4th St, Long Beach

Smog City Brewing Company
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2936 Clark Ave, Long Beach

Strand Brewing Company
2201 Dominguez St, Torrance

Surfridge Brewing Company
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Ten Mile Brewing Co.
1136 E Willow St, Signal Hill

Three Chiefs Brewing Co.
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El Segundo

Three Weavers Brewing Co.
1031 W Manchester Blvd Unit
A-B, Inglewood

Timeless Pints Brewing Co.
3671 Industry Ave, Lakewood

Trademark Brewing
233 E Anaheim St, Long Beach

Transplants Brewing Co.
40242 La Quinta Ln Unit 101,
Palmdale

Trustworthy Brewing Co.
156 W Verdugo Ave, Burbank

Upshift Brewing Company
339 Indiana St, El Segundo

Wingwalker Brewery
235 West Maple, Monrovia

Ximix Craft Exploration
13723 1/2 Harvard Pl, Gardena

Yorkshire Square Brewery
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BREW PUBS

Beachwood BBQ & Brewing
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Bonaventure Brewing Co.
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Hermosa Beach

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300 S Raymond Ave, Pasadena

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Innovation Brew Works
3650 W Temple Ave, Pomona

Karl Strauss Brewing Co.
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1000 Universal Studios Blvd,
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Ladyface Ale Companie
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1266 Sartori Ave, Torrance

Rock Bottom
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1700 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles

The Bruery
715 Dunn Way, Placentia

Lost Winds Brewing Co.
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Last Name Brewing
2120 Porterfield Way, Upland

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331 W 6th St, San Pedro

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1174 N Grove St, Anaheim

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824 Carnegie Ave, Santa Ana

Beachwood Brewing
7631 Woodwind Dr,
Huntington Beach

La Quinta Brewing Company
77917 Wildcat Dr, Palm Desert

Twisted Oak Tavern
30105 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills

Brewing Reserve of California
2930 College Ave Suite D,
Costa Mesa

Noble Ale Works
1621 S Sinclair St #B, Anaheim

Beachwood Steelcraft
12900 Euclid St,
Garden Grove

No Clue Craft Brewing
9037 #170 Arrow Rt,
Rancho Cucamonga

Wolf Creek Brewery
27746 McBean Pkwy,
Santa Clarita

Brewery X
3191 E La Palma Ave, Anaheim

Phantom Ales
1211 Las Brisas St, Anaheim



Oak Hills Brewing Company
12221 Poplar St. Unit 3,
Oak Hills

TASTING ROOMS

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1931 E Wright Cir, Anaheim

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17214 Pacific Coast Hwy,
Huntington Beach

BREWERIES

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Redondo Beach

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Old Towne Orange

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3 Iron Brewing Company
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Santa Ana

Santa Ana River Brewing
3480 W Warner Ave Unit B,
Santa Ana

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

Refuge Brewery
43040 Rancho Way, Temecula

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Bellflower

Docent Brewing
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San Juan Capistrano

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1566 W Lincoln Ave, Anaheim

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The Good Beer Company
309 W 4th St, Santa Ana

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101, Orange

Huntington Beach Beer Co.
201 Main St,
Huntington Beach

Escape Craft Brewery
721 Nevada St #401, Redlands

Stone Church Brewing
2785 Cabot Dr Suite 160,
Corona

Asylum Brewing
2970 La Palma, Suite D,
Anaheim

Hoparazzi Brewing Company
2910 E La Palma Ave, Anaheim

Pizza Port San Clemente
301 N El Camino Real,
San Clemente

Euryale Brewing Company
2060 Chicago Ave #A-17,
Riverside

Strum Brewing
235 S Campus Ave, Ontario

Backstreet Brewery
1884 S Santa Cruz St, Anaheim
14450 Culver Dr, Irvine

Karl Strauss Brewing Co.
2390 E Orangewood Ave, Ste
100, Anaheim
901 S Coast Dr, Costa Mesa

Stadium Brewing
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Aliso Viejo

Garage Brewing Company
29095 Old Towne Front St,
Temecula

Thompson Brewing
9900 Indiana Ave Suite 7,
Riverside

Black Cock Brewing Co.
1444 N Batavia St, Orange

Laguna Beach Beer Company
29851 Aventura Ste C-E,
Rancho Santa Margarita

TAPS Brewery & Barrel Room
15501 Red Hill Ave, Tustin

Hamilton Family Brewery
9757 Seventh St #802,
Rancho Cucamonga

Wiens Brewing
27941 Diaz Rd, Temecula

Bootlegger's Brewery
130 S Highland Ave, Fullerton
696 Randolph Ave, Ste B,
Costa Mesa

Left Coast Brewing Company
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Clemente

TAPS Fish House & Brewery
101 E Imperial Hwy, Brea
13390 Jamboree Rd, Irvine

Hangar 24 Craft Brewery
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Bottle Logic Brewing
1072 N Armando St, Anaheim

Legends Craft Brewery
1301 S Lewis St, Anaheim

Tustin Brewing Company
13011 Newport Ave #100, Tustin

Inland Empire Brewing Co.
1710 Palmyrita Ave #11,
Riverside

TAPS Fish House & Brewery
2745 Lakeshore Dr, Corona

Bravus Brewing
1048 Irvine Ave. #715,
Newport Beach

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