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David Walker at the Firestone Walker Invitational Beer Fest

Photo Credit: Nick Gingold, Craft Media L.A.

# BEER BEFORE GLORY

**By Daniel Drennon**

The American (Craft Beer) Revolution continues to rage like a California wildfire with now over 6000 breweries in the US and over 900 here in California. And while this uniquely American Revolution is inspiring new breweries all over the world, there is an ironic twist in that one of the most visible leaders of the country's love affair with craft beer is not even a brewer and, well, he's British.

(FULL STORY ON PAGE 12)

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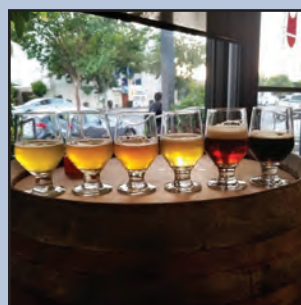
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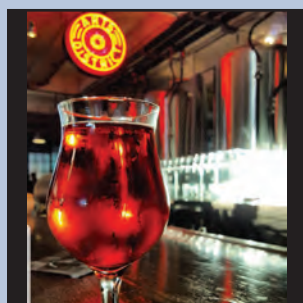
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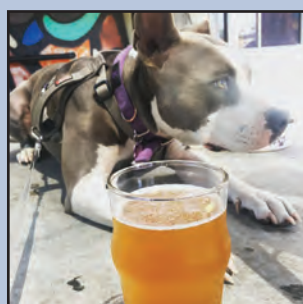
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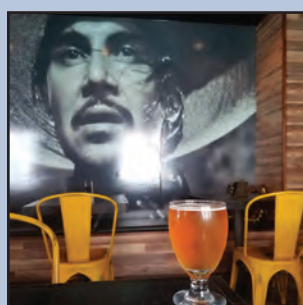
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## BREWER'S CORNER

# DRINK LOCAL, TASTE GLOBAL

## A Tale of Carnivale Brettanomyces by Harmony Sage Fried

*Drink Local* is the lifeblood of Craft Beer. This statement is proudly embraced by brewers and patrons alike, printed on t-shirts and coasters, and dear to our hearts. In a field that prides itself in using local ingredients, innovating green practices, and cultivating local community and cultures, our motto is *drink in the neighborhood* and support the local craftsman. Why drink beer that has been shipped across the country when we should enjoy a fresh beer made around the block?

There tends to be a type of an individual who decides to open a craft brewery. Typically, a hard-working renegade of sorts, a individual who does not fit into the regular nine to five desk job, someone who takes risks and thinks outside the box. We have rejected the Macro way of making and drinking beer and have created spaces

to converse and have a good time. This is also why so many flock to support their “Local”, and enjoy a small taste of the makers’ craft.

These qualities personify the vibe at *Carnivale Brettanomyces* in Amsterdam. Running June 21-24 of 2018 and in its 7th year, this festival has grown while still maintaining an intimate feeling. Loners, punks, and rebels from all over the world came together to share and taste Wild Ales. Without corporate sponsorship, this festival was not held at a big convention hall, but rather spread out all over the city at local pubs, breweries, shops, and historic churches. Many cycled from lectures, to events, to beer pairings - ducking into small shops on cobblestone paths or walking down steep stone stairs to discover a room of beer fanatics who were all there for the same reason;

to embrace a revolution of sour beer makers doing it their way. This was a chance to swap stories, share feral concoctions and share cultures.

Particularly when referencing sour beers, most breweries have a house culture. These are invited by a *coolship* (a large open vat of cooling wort), harvested from local fruit, or collected from bottle dregs of favorite beers. At Long Beach Beer Lab, we use a culture discovered on the skins of locally grown grapes collected from Levi’s Mom’s backyard, lending a unique Long Beach flavor to our experimental Ales. A term often heard at Carnivale Brett, “Beerior”, is used to describe the local ingredients in a beer that allow us to taste something unique from its origin.

The Carnivale embodies much of the man who organized it. Jan Beekaa Lemmens is a tall and lanky man whose boyish charm, shaggy long hair and relaxed character is reminiscent of a favorite mystery solving cartoon character. (*I wonder if he has a Great Dane at home?*) Jan gave the festival a goat mascot because many Brett Beers are described as “Goaty”. As a beer enthusiast who used to beertend at *In De Wildeman* in Amsterdam, Jan came to know all the wild craft beer brewers in Europe. Now he is a brewer for *De Kromme Haring* which specializes in Belgian and Wild Ales. All year long he works tirelessly to plan Carnivale Brett, inviting unique people from all over who do interesting work with Brettanomyces.

We had the honor of lecturing about brewing with sourdough as well as facilitating a beer, cheese, and sourdough pairing at a charming cheese shop located off the river Ijt. There were many lectures, some on the history of sour beer and brewing and others on the science of cultures, yeasts and bacteria that we all love so much: Brettanomyces! Brett will eat everything (or not?) - this was the main topic of discussion around town.

Levi and I arrived Wednesday with our house culture smuggled in a Tupperware, tucked away amongst



Harmony Sage pitching Long Beach sourdough starter in to mega Collab at Oedipus Brewing

Photo Credit: Paul Edwards

our lunch in a carry-on bag. Our plan was to bake sourdough bread for our pairing, which meant we had to feed the starter on Wednesday evening, and make the dough Thursday for the Friday event. Somehow we did this while also attending the kick off mixer at Brewery Oedipus before returning to bake all night. Friday morning we woke up early with loaves in hand, cycled on to the ferry, and crossed the river to Fromagerie Abraham Kef where our beer was waiting patiently.

After our moment in the lecture spotlight, we quickly cycled over to an old church where more events were happening. Arriving late, we rushed up the cobblestone steps through narrow, dusty stone walls to join a lecture by Jace Marti from August Schell brewing company in New Ulm Minnesota. Jace was presenting about August Schell’s historic brewery and the revamping of their entire beer program. August Schell is known for their lager program, and now produces North Star Berliner-style Weisse. This overhaul was nothing less than spectacular, including the rehydration

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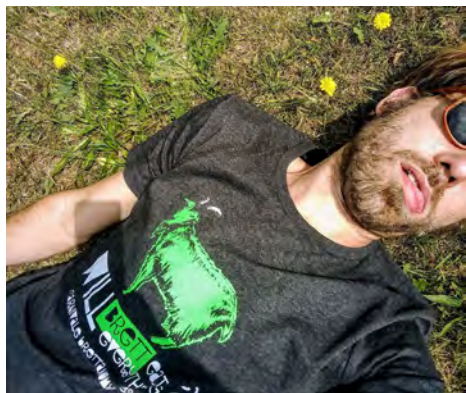
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Jan Beekaa Lemmens' 5 minute relax in sun before festivities begin

Photo Credit: Jan Beekaa Lemmens

of giant Foeders and removal caked-on wax from the wood, both inside and on the outside of the vessel - transforming useless relics into vessels filled with delicious liquid.

That night we met Ulrike Genz from Schneeeule brewery in Berlin at our tap takeover at BeerTemple American Beer Bar. She spoke to us about shneuuuuuullee, her small production facility and what "true" Berliner Weisse means to her. She carried small warm bottles of her berliner weisse in a backpack and graciously opened one for us to try. It was light, slightly tart and surprisingly refreshing for warm beer. Ulrike, a spunky powerhouse of a

woman whose personality outweighed her stature and delicate features, held her own in a mostly male dominated room. When asked many times by passersby if her husband was the brewer she replied in a strong voice "I AM ZE BREWER".

We tasted wild ales from Tommy Sjef at a beer pairing dinner hosted by Elaine at Wilde Chutney. This tasting took place in an old ship hanger converted to a body shop, which is now a restaurant. The dining area is an intimidating massive space with old cars placed sporadically. Tommy is a child prodigy who doesn't look old enough to drink beer by American standards, let alone make some of the best wild ales I sampled during my time at the festival. He started blending beer in his Mother's house, and now has a warehouse full of barrels. Tommy starts with 50% fruit and blends back with old and young lambic, taking characteristics from different barrels, resulting in a sumptuous, funky, vinous, and unique experience in a glass.

Antidoot Wild Fermenten from Eastern Belgium gave a tasting located inside Wahalla brewery's warehouse. There



Harmony Sage riding a bike from tap takeover to beer event

Photo Credit: Levi Fried

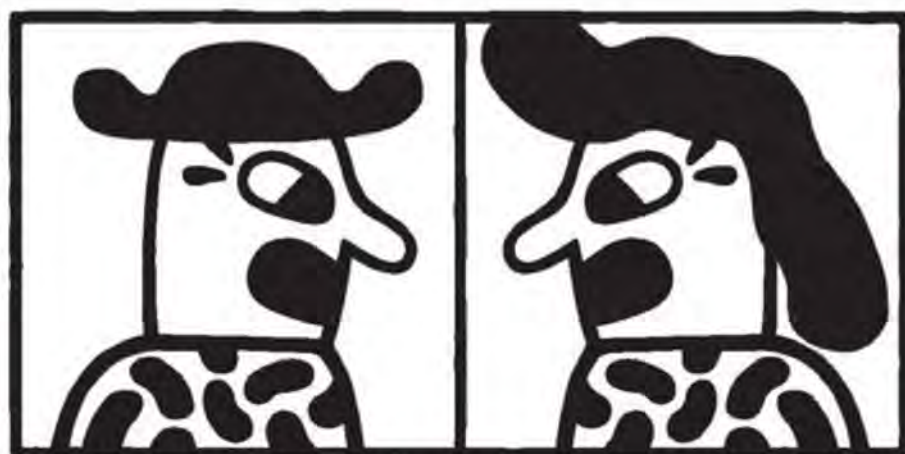
was a large turnout for this tasting and many of us rushed to get a seat. We were surrounded by Wahalla's fermentation tanks, walk-in cooler, and accompanied by white boards of brew schedules and yeasts pitches. Not an unfamiliar scene for those of us in the industry. Antidoot recently turned from home brewery to a professional farmhouse brewery, producing all sorts of wild fermented refreshments. They brought a Cider, an Ale, and a Spontaneous Wine. On the table next to the tasting glasses was a skull of a goat and large bunches of herbs, flowers and hay foraged from all over Europe. Their Peach Ale was like eating a sour gummy candy, bursting with juicy peach flavor yet finishing dry and funky. The Cider, made from apples grown on their farm's orchard also finished perfectly dry with an effervescent crispness that is not usually present in most American Ciders. The Wine was deep and rich with herbal notes and that Brett *goatiness* – which I sipped while gazing at the skull and foraged herbs.

All of these brewers and blenders have many things in common, Local. Whenever possible, we use our unique regional ingredients and resources for the betterment of our beer and community. We source from within our neighborhood and reinvest in our local economies while gaining characteristics and flavors from everything around us. These flavors and characteristics are apparent when tasting all the different ales. A pillar

of Craft Beer will always be *Drink Local* and support our local craftsman; but to fully understand our product it is essential to taste styles in their place of origin. Craft beer celebrates collaboration and the sharing of information with like-minded brewers and blenders all over the globe and promoting unique global *beerior*.

Inevitably, almost out of nowhere, it was time to return home. This rare opportunity, only lasting a few days was a whirlwind of experiences that will stay with us for a long time. Sampling beers from many different places from all around the globe broadened my notion of what a wild ale can and should taste like. This community of artisans drawing from each other's technique and process enriched my ideas about what works and what doesn't. It is so important to take ourselves outside of our own cellar to gain knowledge from others and bring it back to our local community of drinkers, and to always be striving to make better beer for our patrons.

Harmony Sage is a business owner, artisan baker, yeast whisperer, brewer, adventurer and kickass mom. When she isn't baking up a sourdough storm you can find her swimming at the pools and beaches of Southern California. Her education in pastry arts from the ICC and training at the Ritz Carlton allow her to add professionalism to her creativity. Come by and enjoy some of her creations.



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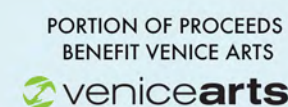
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## WISHEFUL DRINKING

## ET TU, BRUT?

Betraying the Name of an Existing Beer Style  
by Tomm Carroll

Don't get me wrong. I'm all for experimentation in brewing. And there is a lot of that going on in the current craft beer industry, as the multitude of our country's independent breweries (and some of the pseudo-craft sell-outs as well) vie to create a beer that's innovative, distinctive, even *sui generis* — something to set them apart from their countless colleagues and competitors alike that, hopefully, will start at least a fad, maybe a trend, and if they're lucky, a full-fledged Beer Judge Certification (BJCP)-sanctioned beer style.

Some of these experiments are not successful (Samuel Adams' long-defunct Brewers Patriot Collection of colonial-era beer styles, Anheuser-Busch's poor-selling Budweiser Select 99-calorie beer, Small Town Brewery's no-longer-fashionable Not Your Father's Root Beer hard soda). Others catch on and actually become recognized beer styles (Brett Beer, Contemporary-Style Gose, Hazy or Juicy Pale Ale/IPA/Double IPA — the latter very popular iterations of the American-Style PA/IPA/DIPAs, which finally made the BJCP cut this year, and will be a judged category at this September's GABF).

Now there's a new contender on the block and, being yet another variant on the almighty IPA and its relatives, it's already a hit among craft brewers and trend-seeking beer fans, especially in California. It's the so-called Brut IPA, which was pioneered last fall by GABF Award-winning brewer Kim

Sturdivant of San Francisco's Social Kitchen and Brewery.

It's a crystal clear, effusively effervescent, ultra-dry, pale-yellow-colored beer, fruitily aromatic with barely any bitterness (IBUs in the low 20s). A welcome alternative to the ubiquitous murky, milkshake-y opacity of the hazy, juicy IPAs, this new beer somewhat resembles a light-hued West Coast IPA with its clarity. But, thanks to late hop additions, it nonetheless shares the fruit-forward and barely bitter qualities of the unfiltered-and-then-some NE IPAs. The best of both worlds? It will be interesting to see how the more militant Haze Bros react to this latest take on the IPA; is it the degree of transparency or the degree of bitterness that is more important to them?

The beer is made bone-dry by the addition of the amylase enzyme in the brewing process — sometimes in the mash, sometimes in fermentation — which breaks down what would otherwise be residual sugars in the beer, making it less sweet, and hence very dry. The goal is to have the beer finish at or below 0° on the Plato gravity scale, a measurement of the concentration of dissolved solids, mainly malt-derived sugars, in the wort in order to estimate the beer's finishing dryness.

Interestingly, amylase is the same enzyme used to make light beer, as well as to lighten the body of high-ABV beers like Imperial Stouts and Triple IPAs by reducing residual

sugars and syrupy sweetness without watering down the alcohol percentage.

The exceedingly light color of these beers is achieved by using the lowest color malt, typically Pilsner malt, as well as adjuncts like flaked corn and rice, which also further lightens the beer's body.

**Brut Forced**

Personally, I've only tasted one of these newfangled dry beers so far and found it crisp, clean, a bit fruity, somewhat sparkling, and refreshing. I enjoyed it, and look forward to trying more of them. It was Simmzy's Beerbank Bubbly IPA at the LA Beer Week Kickoff Fest. (Thanks for not using "Brut" in the title, Greg and Herbie!)

I don't have a problem with this type of beer, how it's made, or what it tastes like. My nitpick is with its name; I'm apprehensive over its appellation, "Brut."

At a San Francisco Brewers Guild "Meet the Brewers" event at Social Kitchen on June 20, Sturdivant discussed the origins of making — and naming — his game-changing version of an IPA. Fortunately, Bay Area beer writer Dave Jensen (*beer47.com*) live-tweeted a video (twitter?) of the brewer's talk, which you can access here: <https://twitter.com/beer47/status/1009594010946506753>.

"I first called it Hop Champagne, to just be literal about what it is," Sturdivant said, although he later revealed that he uses neutral ale yeast, adding, "I don't really find Champagne yeast to have a particularly interesting profile, or wine yeasts in general."

Back to the name: "[As to] what to call it in terms of a style," he continued, "I was talking to a friend who's a big wine drinker, and she said, 'Brut is a word we use in the wine world very commonly to describe very dry, sparkling wine.' And I thought that was a good term to describe what I was going for, and it all seemed to come



Samuel Adams/Weihenstephan  
*Infinium*, 2011

Photo Credit: Tomm Carroll



Bières Brut: Malheur Brut Reserve,  
Michael Jackson Commemorative  
Collection, 2006

Photo Credit: Tomm Carroll

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(Continued on page 11)



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(ET TU, BRUT? continued)

together to easily communicate to the consumer what it was.”

Despite the appropriation of the protected appellation “Champagne” (which would be illegal to misuse in EU countries) in his working title, Sturdavant should have stuck with that name instead of Brut IPA. Why? Because “Brut” is already in use in the beer world. It is the name of a type of beer that originated in the East Flanders province of Belgium in the early years of this century: *Bière Brut* (aka *Bière de Champagne*). Granted, it’s not one of the better-known Belgian beer styles, but you’d think a professional brewer would’ve been aware of it and, at the very least, would not want to confuse consumers over what kind of beer he created.

Later in his talk, during a Q&A, Sturdavant was asked if he had heard of *Bière Brut* and if he cared that his beer’s moniker had a similar name to an existing Belgian style? He seemed vaguely familiar with a beer utilizing the *méthode champenoise* process and responded, “I did not mean to cross over to anyone else’s existing style. This is a Brut IPA rather than a Brut

Beer [sic].” And, with a shrug, he added, “I’m not too worried about it.”

This worries me, however. Call me a purist — even a curmudgeon — but I think people in the beer industry who are serious about their work (particularly brewers), should be aware of beer history, especially existing styles and appellations, and to honor them. The British beer style called Bitter has been around for well over two centuries, and there have been so many beers since then that have been more bitter than the beer with that name — especially after the Americans reinvented and amped up the hops on the also-British IPA style to 100 IBUs and more. But did they appropriate the term “Bitter,” which would be an apt name for their beers? Of course not, because beer history, like beer itself, should be respected.

Yes, Brut means dry. But like Bitter, that name is already taken. Why not name this new beer what it is — Dry IPA? Or DryPA, or DrIPA, or some other clever spelling. Or, for Ninkasi’s sake, just use Google or a Thesaurus!

Yes, I know, the beer is outta the tap, so to speak; there’s no putting it back in. I may as well be talking into an



DeuS Brut des Flandres, 2011

Photo Credit: Christer Edvartsen

empty beer glass... Everyone and his homebrew friend are now making a Brut IPA. And *all of their friends* are lining up to drink it. But how many of them even know about *Bière Brut*?

### The Brutal Truth

If you didn’t know, or need a reminder, here is some info on the apparently overlooked original Brut beer style:

Brouwerij Bosteels’ DeuS and Brouwerij Landtsheer’s Malheur *Bière Brut* and Brut Noir are perhaps the best known, but there are some 68 different *Bières Brut* from around the world (a few of them retired) listed on BeerAdvocate.com, including from the likes of Mikkeller, Avery, Samuel Adams/Weihenstephan, Birra del Borgo, Cloudwater, Oxbow, Victory, Laughing Monk, Strangeways and even Vasileostrovskaya Brewery in Russia. The U.S.’ oldest homebrew club, Woodland Hills’ own Maltose Falcons, has brewed a few *Bières Brut* the traditional Belgian way, including Brut du Faucon, and won competitions with them.

Often fermented with Champagne yeast, at least for the secondary fermentation, the Bruts, especially the Belgian- and French-made ones, are created like, and resemble, sparkling wine. They undergo a

lengthy maturation (some are even cave-aged in the Champagne region of France) and are subject to *méthode champenoise*: The bottles are stored on their sides, with the cork tilting down to allow the sediment to settle. Over time, they are turned to move the sediment from the sides and toward the cork, which is called riddling (*remuage*). Then the bottlenecks are exposed to cold, so that the liquid is flash-frozen, and the block of sediment is removed, a process called disgorgement (*dégorgement*). Next, a dosage (*liqueur d’expédition*) of sugar and beer is added to replace the lost liquid before recorking and caging the bottle for further aging. The *Bières Brut* are delicate, high in alcohol (10-14% ABV), highly carbonated and often spiced. Color is determined by the malts used.

The moral of this rant? Don’t ask a wine friend to name your beer for you!

Award-winning beer writer Tomm Carroll is a longtime contributor to *Celebrator Beer News*. A BJCP-schooled international beer judge, he is dedicated to beer education and the increased awareness of beer styles and history, and is in favor of developing new beer styles — as long as they are not misleadingly named. Contact him at [beerscribe@earthlink.net](mailto:beerscribe@earthlink.net).

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## COVER STORY

# BEER BEFORE GLORY

by Daniel Drennon

The American (Craft Beer) Revolution continues to rage like a California wild fire with now over 6000 breweries in the US and over 900 here in California. And while this uniquely American Revolution is inspiring new breweries all over the world, there is an ironic twist in that one of the most visible leaders of the country's love affair with craft beer is not even a brewer and, well, he's British.

David Walker, aka The Lion, co-proprietor of Firestone Walker Brewing along with his brother-in-law Adam Firestone, aka The Bear, has been a figure head in the emergence of the California craft beer scene. Firestone Walker launched in 1996 and, over the past 23 years, in addition to building a brewery and a brand, Walker has been the face and voice of the award-winning brewery at countless "Walker's Wild Rides" and tasting occasions up and down the Golden State and beyond. He has served as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the California Craft Brewers Association (the CCBA advocates for California breweries in Washington and Sacramento).

**DRENNON:** Tell me about growing up in England?

WALKER: Born on a farm in rural England, big family, one of five, plus dogs, horses, cats, etc. Welly boots in the winter, shirts off all summer... plenty to do. Went to an all boys school in Devon; rugby, cricket, study six days a week....old fashioned...I scraped along.

**Were you into sports, music, art?**

Obligatory piano lessons resulted in a respect for the Sex Pistols and art classes meant naptime. I was given plenty of chances to be a renaissance man, somehow missed them all. Loved sports; not gifted but not clumsy either so I managed to make most teams; charmed by the traditions, teamwork and brotherhood of it all.

**What profession did you imagine you would end up in as an adult?**



David and Polly Walker

Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

I wanted to be a farm auctioneer but quickly got sidetracked when I realized it took longer to qualify than an actuary...so skipped out on University and started my first business with a friend at 21...computer gig...I was impatient.

**Meeting and marrying Polly Firestone plays a key role in the eventual birth of Firestone Walker so tell us how, when and where the two of you met. Was it love at first sight? Who wooed who or was it mutual?**

She was at an edgy London drama school with one of my best mates who dragged me along to a pub one night on the Kings Rd in Chelsea, the rest is history. A curly haired California Dead

Head in mind and body...had never met anyone quite like her or since... bullseye.

**When did you relocate from England to California and what were you doing in the interim years before the idea for a brewery was conceived?**

We married in '91 and jumped from London to California: she had LA dreams and I knew the tech revolution was a west coast phenom. Somewhat unplanned we had our three girls within six years...she played "pregnant lady" TV roles and I looked sheepish. I kept the computer gig rolling with a partner in Silicon Valley, and Polly and I set about trying to buy a house... it was cheaper to buy a bankrupt

vineyard on the Central Coast close to where her family lived so we switched gears, ditched the freeways and added some horses and big dogs to the family. We dug into the country life.

**How did the brewery idea come about?**

Adam was running a third-generation family winery while I was growing grapes and air miles with my tech gig. I quickly became drawn to the artisanal life which Adam was already deep into, and we often churned on ways in which we could grow the family enterprise further. We both loved beer (more than wine) and so we thought the family should too. To our surprise, as seasoned vintners, they ducked the opportunity, so Adam and I ran with it on our own; created the Firestone Walker Brewing Co, licensed the family name and dug in for a long, life changing haul.

**Jeffers Richardson (now the Barrelmeister at Barrelworks) was your first brewer. How did you find Jeffers?**

We always recognized our limitations; the winery taught us you need professionals if you are going to ask people to put something you make in their body. So, before we incorporated, we sorted out some of UC Davis' freshly minted graduates. We quickly located Jeffers, whose work at the Tied House in Alameda, illustrious name and waist length mane pushed his resume to the top of pile. He literally joined the following weekend: we had a band. Between the three of us we began the process of building a microbrewery from scratch on a budget of around \$75k. Adam's vintner's chops, Jeffers' brewing principles and my impatience got us off the ground. We toiled in an old warehouse on the back 40 of a Chardonnay vineyard for five years, somehow working our way to 6000 barrels of American Oak Union fermented DBA. Jeffers bailed after year three...he fell in love. "The lunatics were running the asylum" for a few years.

**Later, you had the other-worldly good fortune to land Matt Brynildson as your brewmaster. How did that happen?**

In the mid 90's, the microbrewing industry got flooded with pretenders and opportunists, the nascent consumer



Firestone Walker in Paso Robles

Photo Courtesy of Firestone Walker



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L to R: Jim Crooks, Polly Walker, Jeffers Richardson and David Walker  
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got scared, and our backwater of the beer world began to dry up. During this time a local brewer who had contracted his beer for years had recently built a new 30,000 bbl brewery in Paso Robles. Sadly, he lost his dream to the bank during this contraction, so we stepped in and made it ours for just over \$1m. A big bet for a 6000 bbl brewer in a world of beer indifference. Matt Brynildson was the resident brewer on site when we closed the deal; couch surfing and fresh off the bus from Goose Island, he knew how to fly the space ship, so it was wise to add him to our ten-man enterprise. It wasn't for several months that we would realize the quiet gent from Minnesota was a brewing savant...the Lion, the Bear and the Brewmaster were born.

*Jeffers returns from his world travels and you pair him with Sour Jim Crooks to launch Barrelworks. What was the story behind that?*

Jeffers cut his hair and returned to beer after a fascinating ten years, and we wanted him back. Jim Crooks, our diligent head of lab had recently been posted to Buellton as his experiments

with American Gueze were threatening Matt's Teutonic peace of mind. He was going to build a different place for different beers and needed help creating an old world in a modern form. Timing couldn't have been better: Jeffers put the first barrels into our brewery, was soaked in stories of forgotten beer traditions and belonged at his side. The Barrelworks was liberated.

*At what point did you realize that the artistry of craft brewing was catching on and becoming a revolution?*

It was always a revolution to us as the odds of success were low and the establishment was in no mood to change the status quo: the definition of Revolutionary fodder. However, it wasn't till I attended Savor in DC in the early 2000's that I realized our world was being noticed. I dropped into the Church Key where we'd shipped some beer to celebrate the visit to DC. When I arrived I hit a line of folks all trying to get in to taste our beer...I was dumbfounded. It was on!

(BEER BEFORE GLORY continued on page 15)

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David Walker and Matt Brynildson

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(BEER BEFORE GLORY continued)

**How has your vision of Firestone Walker Brewing evolved over the past 23 years?**

It's always been a joint vision; first Adam and I, then Matt, then all the supporting cast too numerous to mention that care so much about our beers and our customers. "Beer Before Glory" remains the overriding vision; one that recognizes that without beautiful beer none of this would have happened or will continue to do so.

**The Firestone Walker Invitational has become the "Holy Grail" of beer festivals, draws fans (and breweries) from all over the world, and sells out in seconds. What do you think has made it so special?**

The Invitational has grown into an event that we treasure in Paso and feel a real responsibility to curate it with some intention improving on the experience every year. Our focus is soundly on the brewer's experience and the eclectic group that make the trip. We want beers you can't find in California, served by owners and brewers who can tell the story surrounded by beer lovers who don't feel crowded or a stranger to the surroundings. I can only see it becoming more limited in the beers served and the tickets sold.

**There are over 6000 breweries in the US and over 900 in California now. What do you think of the notion that there is a point at which the bubble will burst?**

There are 11,000 wineries in the US and they are constrained by climate. We will see at least that many

breweries who are constrained by a lot less. It's confusing and harder and noisier than it's ever been. That said, who wants a quiet life?

**The Brewer's Association (BA) has warned for years that craft breweries opening that are making mediocre beer is an even greater threat to the movement than the well-documented buy-outs by corporate beer. What are your thoughts?**

When it comes to beer quality, it's irrelevant as to the provenance of the brewery. "Beer" is what is being examined here, not the resumes of those brewing it. If a brewery makes sublimely beautiful beer and delivers it to me fresh and affordable, then that's a win. In essence that's what we set out to create; if all the brewers in the world do this, then we can smile and say we changed the world of beer.

**On the topic of corporate beer, I have heard much debate about why Firestone Walker has received a 99% "pass" from your peer craft breweries of all sizes as to your acquisition by Belgian brewery Duvel Moortgat when other breweries acquired by AB InBev, Constellation Brands and Heineken have been vilified. Why do you think this is and can you explain to our readers the difference?**

If Sierra Nevada had acquired our brewery that would likely have been seen as an acceptable match. Duvel Moortgat is smaller than Sierra Nevada, family held for 145 years and, in my view (and I am a Sierra devotee), has as much pedigree and stability as our friends in Chico. Most students of brewing understand the differences. I don't expect everyone to

endorse our moves but I can tell you we remain owners, love who we are, how we do it and where we are going.

**The BA still allows corporate-owned breweries to participate in the World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival awards ceremonies. Why do you think that is and do you think it contributes the obfuscation of the term "craft beer" in the minds of the beer-drinking consumer?**

The BA has many masters and that is reflected in their definitions and rules. Like all of us they are not perfect, but they do an amazing job and are essential to the health and safety of small brewers in America. They are a loud voice and it is important we all keep our message positive with regards to beer in our efforts to progress the category.

**Do we now need a new/improved term to replace the word "craft" if, in fact, it has been all but stolen by insidious corporate acquisition and marketing strategies?**

Probably. I also think you ditch "quality", "my bad" and "learnings" with the same stroke of your journalistic pen.

**As a leader in the revolution, tell us where you see it going, and how do we fortify and protect our flanks from corporate beer?**

It's more complicated than it's ever been, as the larger brewers we all set out to compete with are now making similar beer, courtesy of their craft acquisitions. Guess what: full flavored, time consuming, ingredient heavy beer sells...what a concept. One could say, with craft at 20%+ dollar share in the US we have put a significant dent with our revolution. Throwing sticks at big brewers' beer nowadays is very 1990's and counterproductive because your future customer can't tell the difference in many cases between you and them. Independence Matters...to some ...but that risks becoming white noise as the BA had little choice but to create a broad definition. I wouldn't bet the farm on just an Indie moniker. Ultimately, it's up to all of us to carry on doing what we do every day; brew the best beer we can, respect the people who do it and tell our stories...that's the future...there are no short cuts.

A tall glass of golden beer with a white head of foam. The glass has the "State Brewing Co." logo on it. To the right of the glass is a red diamond-shaped logo with the text "NOW OPEN Gardena, CA". At the bottom of the image is a red banner with the address, social media icons, and hours.

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## PINTS &amp; QUOTES

# LA BEER WEEK SHOWS OFF THE INNOVATIVE SPIRIT OF LOS ANGELES BREWERS

by John M. Verive

When was the last time you had a beer that showed you something new? Two-plus years into the rise of the hazy IPA, the explosion of pastry stouts and the incongruous milkshake IPAs, the biggest trend to vie for your beer dollars has been a return to tradition (lager brewing). Not that I'm complaining as the current glut of lager beer is wonderful (as I've propounded numerous times in this column), but after the L.A. Beer Week Kickoff Festival last month I was pleased to find innovation alive and well. Here are a handful of unique beers that stood out among the superfluity of haze and hops.

Besides some wonderful lagers (including a best-of-show contender in Green Cheek's Oaked Just Right — a lager aged in oak barrels once part of Firestone Walker's fermentation union setup) a return to tradition figured into two of the most intriguing brews I sampled at the festival: Hidden Hollow from 10 Mile Brewing and Rye Not from Long Beach Beer Lab. Coincidentally both beers hailed from the Long Beach area and both

resurrected nearly forgotten styles. The former, technically brewed in the enclave of Signal Hill and not Long Beach proper, is a throwback to one of America's early indigenous beer style: the Kentucky Common.

Hidden Hollow is mahogany-dark and malt-driven. At mid-5% alcohol, it drinks easy starting with a flood of rich bready malt flavors that break off at the finish with the crunch of scorched toast. A roasted bitterness lingers momentarily then blends into a hoppy bite. Made with all traditional American brewing ingredients from 6-row barley to flaked corn to the old-school Cluster hops, the brew is brimming with character. It's been a big hit in the tasting room, and has helped drive the young brewery's growth, and 10 Mile Brewing will soon expand to a second tasting room at a new Steelcraft development planned for Bellflower. Finding a market for dark beer in Los Angeles today is no easy feat, but I hope this beer sticks around and finds a niche.

Rye Not is a collaboration between the husband-and-wife/brewer-and-baker

team behind Long Beach Beer Lab, and the beer uses sourdough starter to kickoff fermentation and includes an addition of baked loaves for extra fermentable material in the tradition of the Continental Kvass style. As with much of LBBL's brews, it's an experimentation that draws on brewing history and modern techniques to craft something new. Rye Not is under 4% alcohol but heavy with bready flavors and aromas and subtle lactic tang that implies sourdough or the sharpness of cultured butter. I'm excited to see where LBBL takes the brew and how it fits into the blended beers that the brewery is concentrating on.

Looking at traditions through a new lens was the modus operandi for the pioneers who launched the American craft beer industry (the venerable

Sierra Nevada Pale Ale is not far from a Strong English Bitter brewed with North American ingredients). Sometimes a spark of creativity provides the small tweak that turns tradition into innovation, and one such little change was responsible for the most striking beer I've had all year. King Carrot from Cellador Ales is a beer that sounds ridiculous, and with its vivid orange hue it kinda looks ridiculous. The rustic ale is bottle conditioned, not with honey providing the sugar as is standard at Cellador, but with carrot juice. This should not work — and I doubt another brewer could turn roots to gold quite as well as co-founder Kevin Osborne has. Here's what Cellador says about the unconventional conditioning process:



King Carrot and sky

Photo Credit: John Verive

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L.A. Beer Week kickoff crowd

Photo Credit: John Verive

“To get enough sugar to properly carbonate the beer, we used 200lbs of carrots for less than one barrel of beer (a ridiculous 4:1 fruiting ratio). We yielded roughly 15 gallons of juice, which we added to 45 gallons of beer. So, The Carrot King is about 25% juice and 75% beer by volume.”

King Carrot was love at first sip with the oaky and phenolic lambic-like

base at the center of a flavor profile underpinned with a subtle earthiness and coriander-like spice. The carrot flavor is there, but it is impossibly well integrated. Admittedly, I’ve only been lucky enough to drink two glasses of this distinctive creation, but I think it’s a triumph of avant-garde brewing — I cannot stop thinking about it! Don’t sleep on Cellador Ales: watch social

media for the announcements of bottle releases, pop-up shops and for news that their Single Barrel Syndicate is opening for new members. Cellador is planning to open their North Hills tasting room in late-2018.

Apart from young breweries cutting new paths through old traditions, there was one other innovation on display at the fest, and it looks like beer’s next trend. At least five breweries were pouring their interpretation of a wholly new style: the Brut IPA. These ultra-dry and intensely aromatic brews are hoppy counter-programing to all those juicy IPAs on offer, and we should see many more examples made around town this summer as brewers begin to experiment with the new technique. There’s still much innovation and excitement to be found in the current climate, you just have to look beyond all the haze.

*John Verive is a Southern California native and freelance writer dedicated to growing the craft beer scene in Los Angeles. He’s a Certified Cicerone®, the founder of Beer of Tomorrow (www.BeerofTomorrow.com), and he covers the beer-beat for the Los Angeles Times. Find him on Twitter and Instagram at @octopushat and @beeroftomorrow.*



Kevin Osborne pouring KC at brewery  
Photo Credit: John Verive

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## TOPA TOPA

# QUALITY, CRAFTSMANSHIP & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

by Erin Peters

Topa Topa Brewing Company celebrated three years on June 9th. I spoke with owner and co-founder, Jack Dyer about their rapid growth and success.

**EP: So tell me about turning three years old.**

JD: It's been a very humbling and fun three years. I think for us, just turning three and being able to grow with the community, both with the craft beer

community and our local nonprofits. We came to market really knowing who we are and what we'd like to brew, as well as who we want to be.

We have three core values that we follow to make every decision. They're quality, craftsmanship and community spirit. We try to instill that in everything that we do from the tap room to making beer to the projects and nonprofits that we support. We have grown our company from three employees to 35.

**EP: Besides yourself, who are the other founders, and how do you guys deal with beer trends?**

JD: There's three founders. It's myself, Kyle Thompson and Casey Harris, who's our head brewer. He also is an owner in the company, which Kyle and I think is important. We want him – Casey – invested financially in the

success of the company. I can't speak highly enough of my business partners. We've built a nice kind of family culture. Casey handles pretty much the entirety of the beer program.

We pride ourselves on not being trendy. We make beers that we like to drink and that we think our customers will enjoy. That's always been a focus for us.

The craft market growth is crazy. There's so much great local fresh beer available now. We try to capitalize on that with our Chief Peak IPA. We sell it as fresh as humanly possible.

**EP: What do you think your hardcore Topa Topa fans who've been there since the beginning would say about you guys?**

JD: We really appreciate our customers and we try and take the time and effort

to give them a great experience every time they have one of our beers. We want them to feel at home and give them a space where they can come and engage with their community.

I like to think that our hardcore customers and partners don't just like us, they love us. We love them right back. I think they value our consistency and that we always put out a high quality product. We don't run out of our flagship beers. We have great regulars. That's been a fun thing that – quite frankly – I didn't expect to have as many regulars. They're part of the Topa family as well.

**EP: What's been the most surprising thing in the past three years?**

JD: Just been the pace at which we've been able to grow. We wrote the business plan based on a set pace that we thought we'd be able to sell beer



Good Vibes. Great Beer.  
Photo Credit: Dylan Gordon

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and grow our tasting room model. But the fact that we're working on our third location and that we're close to 5,000 barrels of production is pretty wild. That was like year seven, eight, nine of our business plan and here we are in year three. And to see the overall growth of Ventura County and Santa Barbara County and craft beer in general. It's wonderful.

**EP: What do you guys have going on in July?**

JD: We just dropped a collaboration beer with our friends at El Segundo Brewing Company. We love those guys. It's called Hat's Off. We already launched the beer in L.A., but it's now hitting stores in the area. We're planning a fun event at Fluid State. El Segundo's committed to a dollar of every beer going to two different nonprofits that help Thomas fire recovery efforts. Otherwise, we're working hard, keeping our tasting rooms busy. We have two construction projects going on right now. We're building a larger production facility.

**EP: Goals for the next three years?**

JD: We are adding a couple more taprooms. The Ojai one should be open by late summer. We're partnering with a really great food provider in the region as well. And the production facility is going to enable us to make beer to satisfy our network of draft accounts and also we're finally going to be able to get into the traditional packaging.

We hope to have packaging by sometime before the end of the year. We make a lot of great beers, but a lot of people just know us for Chief Peak.

**EP: Speaking of Chief Peak, congratulations on the Casa Pacifica win.**

JD: That was a fun win. We don't really measure ourselves by medals. But it's always fun to be voted in by your peers. Casey and our team did a great job with that recipe. It's always so freaking fresh.

**EP: What are your thoughts on the county now and how it's grown versus three or five years ago?**

JD: It's pretty amazing. I was just talking about this last night with Jason, the head brewer at Allagash. The landscape, the diversity, and the styles of beer in our region is really fun to see. I think that's the most compelling part is that whether you're a nano brewer, big production, distribution – all these business models are working.

I find myself talking about the guys at Enegren a lot because I love that they're focusing on these German, real clean beer styles. [You have] the guys at Casa Agria and their sour program.

I think that no longer is Ventura County a skip over spot. There's incredible diversity right here.

*Erin Peters is uniquely poised to cover the local beer scene, having lived in seven So Cal cities including San Diego and Los Angeles. Now home in Ventura County, follow her at [thebeergoddess.com](http://thebeergoddess.com) @TheBeerGoddess on Twitter.*



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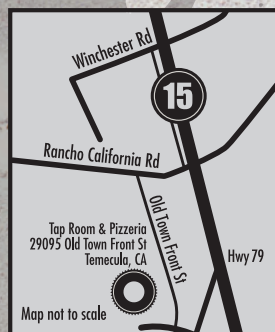


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## LADYBEER

# SoCal Cerveceros

## One of the Most Important Homebrew Clubs in the World by Sarah Bennett

Memo Paramount made his first beer using two plastic buckets, a tamal pot and a few serving spoons. Now, the homebrew equipment at Paramount's San Fernando home includes an upgraded system, multiple fridges and about a dozen soda kegs in which to store experimental beers like Playa Linda, an easy drinker made with Mexican lager yeast, Scottish malt and New Zealand hops.

"Before, I was brewing four to five times a year," Paramount says of his homebrewing years before he teamed up with his friend Erasmo Pocasangre and joined SoCal Cerveceros, the largest (if not the only) Latino homebrew club in the nation. "This year, I've already brewed nine times so far. These guys don't let you sleep."

Paramount, who has degrees in both biology and law, is Honduran and Mexican, while Erasmo Pocasangre is Guatemalan and Salvadoran; both are L.A. natives. Together they are West 11th Brewing, one of SoCal Cerveceros' 20-plus brew crews, many of which joined the club only in the last year after discovering that a group hoping to increasing diversity in craft beer even existed. Because despite L.A.'s historic reign of homebrew clubs (Maltose Falcons is the oldest in the country) and the region's longtime majority minority demographics, homebrewing is still a hobby that continues to be represented by predominantly white men.

"I was really against [homebrew] clubs for so long," Paramount says. "It's not a negative against any that are out there, but it's nice to be able to be ourselves with like-minded people who not only know where we've been, but who we are too." Paramount isn't alone. SoCal Cerveceros is the fastest growing homebrew club in the region, with more than 30 new members in the last year alone, turning what started as a group of six friends critiquing each other's beers in a South Los Angeles backyard three years ago into a powerful force in the conversation on diversity in craft beer.

A sample of what craft beer culture looks like when it's made by and for the largest Latino population in the country was on display this May at ColdChela, SoCal Cerveceros' annual charity beer fest ("chela" is slang for beer in Spanish). Held at a nonprofit space in East L.A., the event featured the familiar parking-lot lineup of tents and jockey boxes, each pouring a brew crew's latest Belgian-style wit, hazy IPA, bourbon barrel-aged stout or, yes, glitter beer. But there were also Spanish-named hibiscus ales and tropical fruit IPAs and porters infused with Guatemalan coffee.

Luis Martinez of Preston Brewing, who by day is an assistant brewer at Belmont Brewing Company, put pounds of Abuelita chocolate in a Randall. Zaneta Santana, who brews with South Central Brewing Company and is the manager of Angel City Brewery's Arts District taproom, served black-bean burgers at her Zaneta's Vegan Kitchen tent. Founding SoCal Cerveceros crew Brewjeria brought a more refined version of their 2017 fest favorite, a Duvel-inspired tripel with muscat grapes called Grapes of Wrath. Chulita Vinyl Club's DJ Bien Buena spun everything from cumbia to rock en español before two local bands performed. And inside, Daniel Moreno of D.A.M. Brewing was busy expertly proctoring the club's first ever homebrew competition, replete with blind tastings, BJCP score cards, and a rigid point system on par with professional-grade comps [full disclosure: the author was a judge -- Brewjeria's excellent tripel took first place].

Compared to last year's event, this year's was more than twice as big, with 350 attendees and more than 50 beers and ciders. It also reflected the most diverse SoCal Cerveceros membership pool yet, with encouraging numbers of female (Maltitude!) and black (Warcloud!) homebrewers entering the inclusive fray.

"Even though we're known for being a Latino-focused homebrew club, SoCal



David Garcia of Big Boys Brewing shows off his brew crew's swag at ColdChela, SoCal Cerveceros' annual charity beer fest

Photo Credit: Luis Montoya

Cerveceros is not exclusively Latino," says club president Ray Ricky Rivera of Norwalk Brew House. "We can't be. Obviously, we are predominantly Latino, but we're more like a microcosm of L.A., if you will. I'd say our goal is to bridge the gap for people of color within the craft beer industry at the homebrew level."

In addition to getting jobs in the industry, hosting public events and donning "Brown People Love Beer" shirts as daily attire (cop one at [dopeanddank.com](http://dopeanddank.com)), one way that the club has been bridging the gap is by having more experienced brew crews

collaborate with local breweries, which Brewjeria has done with Dry River, Border X and, most recently, Sanctum. The group is also starting to pour at more events. For the first time ever, SoCal Cerveceros members represented the club at the Southern California Homebrewers Fest, which took place in Temecula the weekend before ColdChela in May. Though there were several other new L.A. clubs showcasing for the first time, a tent with all Latino homebrewers was a definite first for the fest. Rivera estimates that out of the 1500 people there, less than 20 appeared to be Latino. The fact that the event fell

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on Cinco de Mayo also meant they encountered a contingent of drunk “yo care-o beer-o” types (one SCC member said “Cinco de Mayo had some of these dudes feeling pretty brave”).

“We as a club respect the work and people behind the CHA and it’s unfortunate to hear these things are still happening in craft beer in 2018,” Rivera says. “However, it was important for us to be there to show our support and love for the homebrew community. That, and to represent the underrepresented.” Representation seemed much easier to find over this L.A. Beer Week than in years past, starting with a kickoff fest filled with bright green Mexico soccer jerseys (take that Germany!), a Women in Beer panel stacked almost exclusively with Latinas, a Dope and Dank hip hop show with Lord Hobo Brewing on the taps and ending with a big SoCal Cerveceros showing at the first ever craft beer fest at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach.

Six SCC brew crews held down the fest’s midway in the center of the museum’s sculpture garden on a warm Sunday afternoon, doling out conversational education as they poured hazy IPAs, stouts made with

locally roasted coffee beans and no less than two beers with Selena references (both saisons, both named after the song “Como La Flor,” both delicious). Hub City Brewers poured a hoppy sage saison made with herbs foraged by Dry River brewmaster Naga Reshi. Brewjeria excitedly talked about the progress being made on their production brewery, which will soon open in Pico Rivera.

At his Norwalk Brew House booth, club president Rivera filled a taster glass with his homebrewed mandarina bavaria S.M.A.S.H. and handed it to a young couple on the other side of the jockey box. Seeing their wide eyes as they tried to take in all the options at the fest, he took the opportunity to open another door, to bridge another gap -- and possibly to plant the seeds for the next generation of SoCal Cerveceros. “Are you familiar with this style?”

*Sarah Bennett is a freelance journalist covering beer, food, music and more for L.A. Times, OC Weekly, Eater, Beer Advocate and more. She was named the Food/Culture critic of 2017 by the L.A. Press Club. Follow her on social media @thesarahbennett.*



Starwood Brewing's Robert and Joseph Calderon

Photo Credit: Luis Montoya

## 160 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH...

Believe it or not, beer was literally front-page news in Los Angeles over a century and a half ago. On the first page of LA’s very first newspaper, the weekly *Los Angeles Star* (previously *La Estrella de Los Angeles*), on July 10, 1858, the accompanying poem, “Lager Bier: A Moral Lesson,” appeared, picked up from the *Boston Post*.

It extolls the “virtues” of lager beer, which was sweeping the nation during that period, including Los Angeles, thanks to the influx of German immigrants (many of whom were brewers) and the recent birth in 1842 of the popular Pilsner style of lager in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). At the time, LA had at least two commercial breweries: the New York Brewery (established 1854 at Third and Main Streets) and Gambrinus Brewery (established 1856 at First and Los Angeles Streets). Both boasted in advertisements of their “fine” and “most brilliant” lager beer, although given the warm climes of Southern California — and the fact that commercial refrigeration was still at least 25 years away — they were

most assuredly steam beers.

It seems appropriate that 160 years later things have come full circle in a way, with local craft brewers turning to making lagers, and Firestone Walker’s Propagator brewpub in Venice hosting an international Pils & Love festival on July 28.

- Tomm Carroll

### Lager Bier : A Moral Lesson.

BY NIMINDOL.

I asked a doctor what he thought  
The finest drink a brewer wrought?—  
He answered thus: “Beyond a doubt,  
’Tis Lager Beer!”

I asked a yellow-bearded man  
About a street—and how it ran?—  
He only muttered, “Nix furstan.”  
And “Lager Beer.”

I asked a scholar-looking chap  
What nectar was?—Quick as a snap  
He said: “The true Olympian tap  
Was Lager Beer!”

I asked a moralist the way  
To keep intemperance at bay—  
“There’s only one”—I heard him say—  
“Drink Lager Beer!”

“If you”—the sage’s sermon ran—  
“Would be a sober, happy man,  
Adopt at once this moral plan:—  
Quit brandy tods, and whisky skins,  
And those unmentionable sins  
That flourish in suburban inns;  
Take a good paper—(by the way,  
The *Post*’s the best)—don’t fail to pay—  
And drink my health three times a day.  
In Lager Beer!”  
—*Boston Post*.

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