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VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 12 | MAY 2017 | FREE!

STATE SECRET



Stephan Widmer, Jimmy Smith, Rob Scott, Robert Sanchez and Blake Shapiro

Photo by Daniel Drennon

By Daniel Drennon

Like a lot of passionate homebrewers, Blake Shapiro fell in love with the art of brewing beer and aspired to one day own his own brewery. But unlike most of those dreamers, Shapiro had the good fortune of having sold the family business and having the means to turn dream into reality. As he envisioned a place where “not only the beer drinkers have fun, but the brewers have fun brewing,” he came up with the name State. At first, it was the cool idea of one day having different state parks on cans. Then it evolved to a concept of State simply standing for the great State of California. The further he got into it, it became State as in, “State of Mind.” (Full cover story on page 12)

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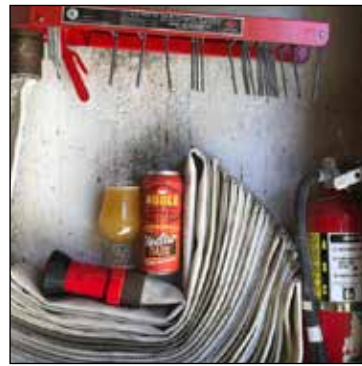


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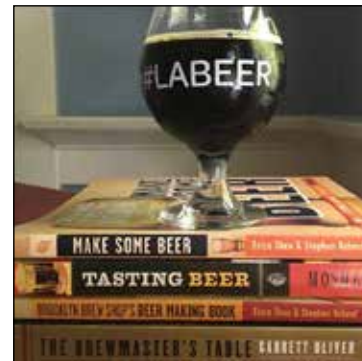
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PINTS & QUOTES

CRAFTSMAN BREWING'S NEXT CHAPTER

By John M. Verive



Pouring a Craftsman 1903 Lager

Photo by Daniel Drennon

"Maybe I'm a contrarian, but I'm not an ostrich," says Mark Jilg, the founder and brewmaster of Pasadena's seminal Craftsman Brewing Company. After 20 years of making beer for the burgeoning Los Angeles market, Jilg is fighting to keep his brand relevant against a tide of new trends, upstart breweries, and the marketplace machinations of Big Beer. To answer the question of how to get his beer in your glass, he's applying lessons learned from years of observing L.A.'s beer culture develop. For the last eight years Jilg has been nearly cloistered in his brewery, divorced from the task of selling the beer he creates thanks to a distribution partnership with Artisan Ales. But when the local independent distribution company folded last year, Jilg was faced with the decision to sign with another beer distributor or to return to the self distribution model more common in upstart breweries than 20-year industry veterans. Jilg bought Artisan's delivery trucks, hired key employees, and challenged himself to sell his beers without selling out his values.

Jilg's reputation as a exacting and opinionated brewer is both earned and overstated. "Beer is my method of expression," he says in the recently organized barrel room in an industrial park near the Rose Bowl. Taps of Craftsman's core brands — 1903 Lager and Heavenly Hefe — are not uncommon in the L.A. marketplace; a longstanding reputation for quality drives sales of the quaffable kegs. But it is Craftsman's "complicated" beers featuring mixed cultures, wood aging, and additions of fruits from persimmons to peaches that exemplify the brewery's DNA — and the brewer's intentions. Jilg takes beer as seriously as anyone I know; he says that it is maybe too personal for him. It makes selling the beer tough. "I spent a lot of time with these beers," he says nodding towards the wall of 600 gallon casks, "I immerse myself in it." By the time Jilg decides a beer is ready to release he understands the essence of the beer, and he wants it to speak to the drinkers.

"Story," he says, "is the important stuff," and each beer has its own story to tell — each another chapter in the overarching story of Craftsman Brewing. But by the time the beer hits your glass, the tale is often obscured. "It's one of those interesting problems," he says with the smirk of an engineer who relishes the challenge. He calls it a "game of telephone" between the people who make the beer and the people who drink it. Every extra layer, from brewery to distributor to retailer to you, adds more noise to the signal, and each extra step down the chain weakens the brewer's intended message. It is one reason why Jilg has enthusiastically (re)embraced self distribution. He can better control the flow of beer to the drinkers, better prevent the message's corruption, and better carve out a small niche in the already niche craft beer marketplace.

But how does Jilg find relevance in a consumer culture dominated by trends, extremes and an obsession with the next new beer? He's redoubled efforts to provide the context for his beers through personal interactions, tastings and events. Jilg is getting out of the brewery and in front of drinkers, even when it's a frustrating experience for him. "Context is not what people want," he says. They might think they do, but they really

want to check-in, bottle share or line-up for special releases. He calls the trend-obsessed and internet-fueled beer culture "the monster that we created," and it puzzles and annoys Jilg the way a wayward calculation or undefined variable consternates the engineer. At a recent event Jilg came face-to-face with that monster and decided not to fight it.

Last month, Craftsman hosted an invitation-only beer dinner that gathered brews from 10 breweries all featuring fruit from the same farm (peaches and nectarines from Masumoto Family Farm). The day after the meal at a BBQ and bottle share, Jilg was struck that so many diners chose not to delve into the complexities of the featured beers and instead opened coveted and cherished bottles from their own collections. "I've spent a lot of time thinking about the definition of 'good beer,'" he says. It's been the central question that he's explored throughout his brewing career. The beer dinner reminded him that the definitions are "all bullshit."

"The best beer is the beer that brings you the most pleasure — even if that pleasure is being a part of the club." Sometimes the pleasure of a beer is in the pure sensory experience. Smells good. Tastes great. Makes you want another sip. Sometimes the pleasure of a beer is where you are or who you're with; the beer simply colors the experience, enhances the moment like salt enhances a steak. The context shifts, and it isn't the brewer's job alone to provide the context for a beer.

"The best business decisions aren't always the best way to do things for the beer," he says. "You can sell craft beer [to anyone], or you can find places where craft beer is comfortable and make it available. I have a preference for the soft sell." It's why you'll find Craftsman beer at the stand-out beer venues in Los Angeles, from the venerable (Father's Office, Barbara's at the Brewery) to the new hotspots (Bar Angeles in Silver Lake, Mikkeller Bar DTLA). But Jilg also wants to uncouple his beer from bars and restaurants, and his long standing promise to begin packaging beer is closer than ever to coming true. The three bottle releases planned for May will give beer fans a chance to contextualize a Craftsman brew in the comfort of their own home (or as Jilg suggests, a hike or picnic). "Our beer in their space means I can have a personal interaction with them even without a face-to-face conversation."

For years Jilg has let his beer speak for itself, and for him, and every glass has something to say. Are you listening?

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

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BREWERS CORNER

THE BASKIN ROBBINS SOUR EFFECT

By Christopher Deapo

The accessibility of sour beer in the current market and the kaleidoscope of vibrant colors and fruit flavors is really impressive, however, sour beers and their barrel aged kin have taken a disheartening negative turn in recent years. There is a pervasiveness of hyper-sour and hyper-fruited examples in the marketplace that just shows very little finesse, zero depth or complexity, and also a willingness to put these beers out at a detriment to all sour brewers. I admit I am as guilty of this as anyone but I wish to change that.

Much like we currently see with the trends in IPAs, the expectation is that there is a constant evolution of “new” and “fruit”. We need to collectively slow this craze as good sour beer takes time. A barrel aged sour beer for example should have some noticeable barrel character in its flavor profile from the time it has taken to mature, not just enamel ripping sour nothingness and fruit juice. While pH and titratable acid can act as guides, they are not replacements for the true art of tasting and blending to achieve a beautiful end product.

Why is this happening? First, the new sour beer consumer is a victim of a culture of extremes in all aspects of their life and a lack of education has led to the belief that more sour and more fruit mean better. Second, there is a need by some brewers with smaller sour programs to maximize the most out of what they produce and a hesitation to dump beer. Third, there is a lack of transparency from brewers as to the method used to create the sour beer. A kettle sour beer or beer created with the use of lactic acid additions and a beer soured over the course of fermentation or extended aging are two separate things and should not be lumped together under the all-encompassing umbrella of just “sour.” Lastly, distributors and retailers are demanding a constant influx of new and different sours with the focus being on scarcity or trendiness meanwhile allowing quality and flavor to fall by the wayside. We have a responsibility as brewers to inform and educate consumers of our beer, so we need to lead the way.

What can be done about it? Look to those who have been doing this for a lot longer than we have; Belgians, Germans or even American examples such as Allagash, Russian River, and Lost Abbey. I am not suggesting that we should all try to emulate them, but there is a lot we can learn from what they do with their sour beers. They combine a scientific and artistic approach that, right now, I feel is generally lacking overall. To the brewers who use sour kettling, take ownership of it! I look at what my good friends at Alvarado Street Brewery are doing, and while they have a “traditional” sour program, they also produce sour kettle beers which they clearly label as such to inform the consumer. While on that topic, if you’re afraid to introduce wild/sour microbes into your brewery, then why are you attempting to make sour beer using solely sour kettling? Is it a “me too” attitude or an attempt at cashing in on current trends? In response to the demands on you as brewers to crank this stuff out with 31 variants, don’t cave to that. If you make a beautiful beer, people will buy it. This may be an unpopular opinion, but if no one says anything can things ever improve?

Christopher Deapo is the Head Squeegie Operator and Barrel Monkey at Phantom Carriage in Carson. Prior to California he brewed and performed QC for places such as Magic Hat Brewing of Burlington, Vermont and Four Quarters Brewing of Winooski, Vermont.



Christopher Deapo

Photo by Tori Stiles

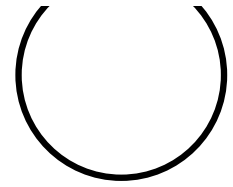
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LADYBEER

5 THINGS I LEARNED AT CBC THIS YEAR

By Sarah Bennett

As embarrassing as it is to admit this, before last month, I'd never attended the Craft Brewers Conference, the country's largest annual gathering of brewing industry professionals.

I always thought it was a super serious business week just for brewers and brewery owners (and maybe a malting company or label-maker or two) to hang out, schmooze and get away from the fans, the journalists and all the other distractions that swarm the Brewers Association's other annual affair, the massive Great American Beer Festival.

Of course, I was wrong. CBC is a great place for journalists to get out of their local scenes and be a fly on the wall of what's going on in American craft beer. Over three days in Washington D.C., I attended days of fascinating seminars, walked the BrewExpo floor, attended countless tap takeovers at bars across the city and put my finger to the pulse of the shifting role that craft beer now holds in the U.S.

Now, fully decompressed back in L.A. (which, objectively, yes, has some of the best beer in the country), here's 5 things I learned at my first CBC.

1. The haze craze is nationwide

From day one of CBC, it became clear that those wily juicy New England IPAs are just as much of a polarizing topic closer to the place of their invention as they are out here on the West Coast. Some of the most anticipated events of the week included special tapplings from some of the biggest names in the haze craze -- Trillium, The Veil, Other Half, Suarez Family Brewing -- and discussions of their merits permeated the convention center halls. People started lining up at famed D.C. craft beer bar Churchkey at noon one day for the chance to sip through some of "East Coast's finest" ("I'm not really into hazy IPAs," a bartender there said at the end of the night). A few days later, lines formed for Monkish's D.C. debut at the same bar (they brewed a collaboration with The Veil while in town). One notable difference is the way the style is increasingly being described. On menus across the city, I saw less "NE IPA" designations and more "IPA brewed with oats dry hopped with..." -- which is far more accurate.

2. Craft beer is so much more than just brewers

Make the Great American Beer Festival your one annual national beer pilgrimage and you might forget about all the other stuff that goes into making your beer. At GABF (as at our favorite bars and breweries), the focus is always about what's in the glass -- who makes it, what recipe they used, how it tastes, etc. But what about the insurance company that protects your favorite brewery against lawsuits? Or the Chinese manufacturer of glimmering new brewhouse pumps? Or the cute old couple who's made a living selling hand-made, artisanal bungs? Over 900 exhibitors crowded the BrewExpo's 700,000 square-feet of showroom space at CBC this year, with everything you never thought of that's required for craft beer to happen. From neon signs to draft solutions to cryogenically frozen hops to barley farms, I have a newfound respect for all the people and companies behind the scenes that are doing the most to ensure brewers can keep their focus on what's in the glass.

3. Big beer still wants to be craft so bad

Early on at the conference, rumors spread of a not-so-subtle craft vs. crap battle going down in the lobby of the Hotel Palomar, where representatives from Stella were pouring free beer in the lobby alongside reps from Stone Brewing. For anyone who thought that the brewery and distributor buyouts over the last few years was the end of big beer's attempt to capitalize on craft beer's growing market share, CBC proved that it's still very much an active warzone. The Budweiser-owned craft brands -- from Goose Island to Golden Road Brewing -- were out in full force all week, spreading their marketing materials across the city and inserting their sponsored events into calendar listings alongside those for independent breweries. And furthering the fears that the buyouts aren't over yet, a seminar on what private equity firms are looking for when investing in a craft brand was standing room only ("It's easier to buy something than to build something," one panelist said). The easiest targets? Breweries making 20k barrels or more per year with growth potential in new markets.

4. Thankfully, there are still lots of real people with real passion in beer

Yes, the buyouts will likely continue, but fear not, there are still lots and lots (and lots and lots) of really passionate, real, genuine, amazing people who believe in the power and beauty of independent beer. In addition to meeting many of these people throughout the week -- and running into many more who I already knew -- independent brewers used every opportunity to speak out against letting multi-national corporations capitalize on the hard work and innovation that craft brewing has spent decades contributing on this front. Allagash founder Rob Tod emphasized the importance of keeping the stories of



Hazy IPAs at Churchkey

Photos by Daniel Drennon

independent beer in the hands of those who created it when he spoke before the keynote speaker on day one of CBC. "They say that independent doesn't matter to consumer and that the beer lover should care about the beer not who makes the beer," Tod said. "But we need to keep talking about the value of small and independent brewers. We need to keep the steering wheel in the hands of small, independent beer-makers. We have responsibility to tell our story or someone else will tell it for us."

5. Craft beer will save us all

Maybe it's because CBC was in the nation's capitol this year or maybe it's because Americans are more divided than ever after electing a big orange goon into the White House last November, but a reoccurring theme of this year's conference was that craft beer is the last bi-partisan thing we have. A congressman gave a pep talk before the keynote speaker on the first day and emphasized this fact, reminding the crowd that the House Craft Brewers Caucus is 193 strong just 20 short of being the largest caucus in Congress. This is because craft beer has the potential to help solve issues relevant to politicians on both sides of the aisle, including encouraging new small businesses, creating jobs for local communities and helping reduce the trade deficit by encouraging Americans to buy American-made products. He ended his speech with a call to action, one that was also emphasized in the last seminar of the conference, about how craft beer reaches across the political divide and helps create community: "Drink craft beer and help save the country."

Sarah Bennett is a freelance journalist covering craft beer, food, music and more. She has covered L.A., O.C., I.E. and Baja beer for Beer Advocate Magazine, LA Weekly, OC Weekly, L.A. Times and more. Follow her on stuff and things: @thesarahbennett



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COVER STORY

STATE SECRET

By Daniel Drennon



Robert Sanchez

Photo by Daniel Drennon

Like a lot of passionate homebrewers, Blake Shapiro fell in love with the art of brewing beer and aspired to one day own his own brewery. But unlike most of those dreamers, Shapiro had the good fortune of having sold the family business and having the means to turn dream into reality.

As he envisioned a place where “not only the beer drinkers have fun, but the brewers have fun brewing,” he came up with the name State. At first, it was the cool idea of one day having different state parks on cans. Then it evolved to a concept of State simply standing for the great State of California. The further he got into it, it became State as in, “State of Mind.”

Also, like a lot of homebrewers, Shapiro quickly discovered that the leap of faith in making the transition from homebrewer to pro brewer is not so easily navigated. The initial beers from State were just O.K. But then Shapiro met Robert Sanchez, a kindred spirit who had himself turned his passion for homebrewing, and dream of being a pro brewer into a reality. Sanchez had honed his chops at Ohana, then moved onto Kinetic where he became acknowledged as a local brewer on the rise.

The two hit it off at a couple of beer festivals. Sanchez was having to drive 86 miles each way, each and every day, to Kinetic in Lancaster. A brewer's day is already a long one and this brutal roundtrip was taking its toll on Sanchez. State Brewing was in Gardena, a mere 8 miles from his house.

Sanchez and his BFF, Jimmy Smith, an industry professional who, through his vast contacts and respect among his peers, had helped Sanchez make the successful jump to pro brewer, had been plotting and planning to open their own brewery. When Shapiro offered to bring them both on at State and give them the artistic freedom to create new beers and unleash their own vision in tandem with his, State's fate dramatically improved...and so too did the beer.

Right of out the gate, Sanchez was brewing beer you take notice of right away. Jimmy Smith was immediately getting those beers into destination beer bars all over greater Los Angeles because of his relationships. Suddenly, the high level quality of brewing happening in Gardena became one the best kept secrets on the local beer scene.

Shapiro leans back in his chair and smiles. His ability to put the right people in the right positions has put State on a trajectory to become among California's best breweries. That is no mean feat and this State Secret will not be a secret for long.

I sat down with Robert Sanchez to find out how this humble homebrewer has done it.

Drennon: When and how did you fall in love with brewing?

Sanchez: I started drinking craft beer in the mid-90's, but I didn't fall in love with brewing until 2009 when my girlfriend gave me a Mr. Beer Kit. I was completely hooked.

Which breweries and/or brewers inspired you?

I would say Kern River (Kyle Smith, now at Lengthwise), Beachwood (Julian Shrago), Taps (Victor Novak, now at Golden Road) and Noble (Evan Price, now at Green Cheek). All great breweries and brewers. They each make such great beer and yet they are so humble. I really admire that.

When did you realize you wanted to become a pro brewer and what strategy did you develop to pursue that dream?

After my first Mr. Beer Kit batch. Having been a photographer, I knew that any art form has two sides. Artistic vision and technical implementation. I proceeded to attack the technical side piece by piece until I could successfully make a reality of my artistic vision. It is a road that I will happily never come to the end of. I will never arrive but will always keep trying to get better.

How long were you at Ohana and what did you learn?

I was at Ohana for a little under a year. I learned the basics of being a production brewer, recipe development and yeast management. I will be forever grateful to Andrew (Luthi) for giving me a shot to brew for him.

You then moved to Kinetic. How did that happen and what was your learning curve there?

I met Steve Kinsey (Kinetic's owner) at a Los Angeles Brewers Guild meeting in November of 2013. Soon afterward, he was looking for a brewer. Based on recommendations from

Jimmy Smith (now State's Sales/Business Development Manager and also beer director at Glendale Tap) and others in the industry, he gave me a shot. We hit it off, according to Steve, in part due to the fact that I wasn't a millennial. The learning curve was pretty steep. The customer base had been drinking Kinetic's core lineup for over two years and they were not really interested in the beers tasting any different just because the brewers had changed. I thank Alexandra Nowell and Chris Gonzales (who left Kinetic for Three Weavers) for helping me with the transition and, of course, Steve Kinsey for all of his support as well as the Kinetic family for the time I spent there. I learned how to run a brewery while pushing creativity.

You have moved to State. Following your career arc, I have personally experienced your beers getting better and better. Is that just a matter of having honed your craft (beer) literally or if something more, what is your "State Secret?"

Our "State Secret" is the coming together of all the right parts. 1. A collaborative staff led by Jimmy Smith. We talk and collaborate on pretty much every beer we brew. Jimmy's market knowledge is hard to beat. 2. A brewery staff committed to brewing great and innovative beers. We will never be bound by tradition. The world is still not flat, right? 3. This is probably the most important part. We have an owner in Blake Shapiro who understands what it takes to be great. He is a facilitator. He is an enabler. He sees our potential and puts us in the position to succeed. He doesn't use State Brewing to glorify his home brew days. He uses State Brewing to help us all be great.

That is what makes him great. We all understand that it will never be about any one of us. It will and forever will be about what is in the glass.

What advice do you have for home brewers who dream of becoming pro brewers?

For home brewers, I would say, always remain hungry. Never be satisfied. Always seek out critical advice on how to make your beer better. If you just want to hear how great your beer is, find another profession. Understand that you are climbing a mountain with no summit and be happy to be on that journey. I would take every home brew batch to bars and ask for their opinion on how I could make it better. Even if they said it was good, I would press for what would make it even better. Be your worst critic. Never stop learning. Don't be afraid to ask pro brewers. If you approach them with the attitude that you just want to learn to make better beer, most will be happy to help. I know I would.

Tell me about growing up. How did it shape you into who you are now?

I grew up in a large family. It taught me to share, listen and also be heard. I didn't play with toys. I'd rather play in the mud and with sticks. I liked to build things from nothing. I was very particular about how things had to be. I come from a family of mechanics and people who work with their hands. Making things from nothing is our way.

Who were your favorite bands growing up?

I listened to NOFX, The Decendents, Misfits, Bad Brains, The Clash, Ramones and probably my favorite was Social Distortion.

Who are your favorite bands now (if not the same)?

I still listen to all those bands, but I also try to listen to new music as well. I like Sharon Jones, Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears, Old Dub Reggae and others.

What were your favorite movies as a kid?

Stars Wars and Indiana Jones. I also watched a lot of Benny Hill, The Three Stooges and Married with Children. Mentors all, really.

Do you follow any sports and, if so, who are your favorite teams and/or players?

In my teens and early 20's, I was an NFL fan. After they left, my interest left with them. I now am a LA Kings, UCLA, Dodgers and Lakers Fan. I'll watch soccer when Team USA is playing, men's or women's, it doesn't matter.

If you could take a month off and do anything, what would you do?

I would go to a Shaolin Temple to learn about inner peace and center from Sensei.

Who and/or what inspires you?

Either people who come from little to achieve great things, or those who do not squander their opportunity to be great. Life is hard and definitely not fair. Take brewing for instance. Just because you work at a brewery doesn't mean you're a brewmaster. I get asked all the time, "Who is the brewmaster here?". I respond by saying, "We don't have a brewmaster. We just have myself and Rob (Scott)."

Between talent and work ethic, which is more important?

Work ethic for sure. When I started as a home brewer, I didn't know anything. It was my work ethic that drove me to learn everything I could from anyone that would give me the time of day. Talent may get your foot in the door but work ethic keeps you in the room.

If you weren't a brewer, what would you be?

I would probably still be a photographer. I spent 27 years as one. It's what I know.

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

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EVENT REVIEW

I LEVELED UP AT BOTTLE LOGIC'S WEEK OF LOGIC AND LIVED TO TELL ABOUT IT

By Allison Foley

The beer nerds converged on Bottle Logic Brewing in Anaheim, CA for their third annual Week of Logic. This year, the event took place at the tail end of March, from the 19th to the 25th. The event isn't for the faint of heart. It brings only the very dedicated Bottle Logic fans together for a LONG week of rare beer, food and friends. Consider it a beer summer camp if you will. Without the bunk beds. Although, as the week wore on, some of us could have used an overnight option.

As far as we know, there isn't another brewery in our great state that hosts this kind of annual event. So, let's take a dip into what 7 full days of going to Bottle Logic looks like.

The Week of Logic celebrates the brewery's anniversary every year. This year's theme was retro gaming imagery. The event is equal parts anniversary party, chance for bragging rights, and epic quest. As an attendee, you have the option to go to only one or a few days, but each day you go to earns incentives, the highest of all being if you attend all 7 days. Attendees are given a passport, for which you receive a stamp on every day you attend. Rules have tightened over the years, and this year, you only received a stamp with purchase of at least one beer. 3 stamps got you a beautiful branded bottle opener, after 5 stamps a pair of branded glassware and an enamel lapel pin were bestowed upon the weary beer fan, and if you had the guts to make it through all 7 days, a fancy growler featuring retro gaming imagery was yours. But as they say, that's not all! The biggest reason this event brings out so many troopers year after year is a guarantee that 7-day attendees get access to at least 1 bottle of all Stasis Project releases throughout the rest of the year. Also known as achieving "Level Up" status.

This year, fans were treated to the first peek at Bottle Logic's new expansion. The adjacent warehouse only had a handful of barrels in it so far, but the new space and parking lot behind it were the perfect size to accommodate the crowd, which was much bigger than year one or two of the event. Each year the crowd grows steadily, along with changes in the way the event is organized. This year we saw temporary security guards hired to control the flow of the crowd. Lines looked intimidating at times, but moved quickly. Three stations were set up inside the new warehouse, where fans were treated to barrel aged offerings including the featured beer of the day, some of Bottle Logic's core beers and many rare variants like Green Jade and Oculango. Two different food trucks were outside daily, giving the geeks a way to soak up all that beer.

If you're planning to check out the Week of Logic next year, know that you will lose a lot of time, energy and money, but it is well worth it for the warm, fuzzy craft beer feelings and being surrounded by the people who make it happen.

Everyone came together in the spirit of great beer, beer friends and a commitment to the 7 day challenge. The event was open from 12-12 for the week. No matter what time I arrived, I always ran into one or more of my friends from the local craft beer community, and we shared our stories. On one particular day when I didn't see anyone I knew, three strangers shared their table with me and we parted ways as friends. On National Dog Day, people brought their pets in costumes. Throughout the week, the humans dressed up, too. I saw Mario and even a female Link. I think I can speak for most of us who attended when I say that as much as I miss my daily beer powwow, we were all physically (and monetarily) exhausted at weeks' end. But we learned things, met people, and tasted beer that we hadn't had the pleasure of learning, meeting or tasting previously. And our commitment will keep rewarding us for a full year. And for that, we thank you, Bottle Logic.

Allison Foley is a SoCal beer nerd, bottlesharer, and proud member of Untappd. Find her under DearlyBeerloved to stalk her beer consumption habits.



Photos by Allison Foley

WISHFUL DRINKING

THE ITALIAN JOB

Judging Birra Artigianale at the Source

By Tomm Carroll

When I accepted the invitation to judge the Birra dell'Anno competition of birra artigianale Italiano (Italian craft beer) at the Beer Attraction expo held in the seaside resort town of Rimini (best known as the hometown of the late filmmaker Federico Fellini) on Italy's east coast in mid-February, I was pleased to be given another opportunity to experience and enjoy the nation's ever-innovative craft beers at the source. Having visited the breweries and beer bars in Northern Italy — the birthplace of the country's craft movement — and written about it in the Celebrator some eight years ago, I can faithfully report that Italian craft beer is only improving and becoming more widespread throughout the nation.

Jury president Lorenzo Dabove, one of the country's foremost beer authorities and a founding father of Italy's craft beer scene over 20 years ago, assembled an international group of 72 jurors to taste 1,367 beers from 257 breweries in 29 categories over the course of two days. In addition, we jurors also had one- or two-on-one private tasting sessions with select breweries at their booths during the expo to provide feedback on their beers.

Not surprisingly, the beers most served to the U.S. judges for opinions were American Pale Ales, American IPAs and Double IPAs. Some were unbalanced or marred by old or oniony hop notes, while others were so close to West Coast style, that for a moment I thought I was tasting a hoppy beer on the California coast, not Italy's Adriatic coast. And yes, some breweries were making hazy IPAs as well.

The Sogno Doro APA from La Buttiga Craft Brewery was one of those that transported my taste buds back home, but it did not place in the awards presentation. Damnatio Memoriae, a Double IPA from Birrificio dei Castelli, was another, and it scored a Silver in that category, one of two wins for the five-year-old brewery.

The American IPA category, for which I judged the finals, was also strong. Birrificio Porta Bruciata struck Gold for Orifiamma, the clear winner according to our judging panel. Hammer Italian Craft Brewery nailed second place with Wave Runner, a beer I saw (and drank) several times during my Italian visit, while CR/AK Brewery claimed a Bronze for Hop Series 15.

CR/AK also mined Gold in the APA category (which I judged in a semi-final round) for Hop Series 14. Silver went to Hopfella from Birrificio Foglie d'Erba, which also grabbed first prize in the DIPA race for Freewheelin' (another beer found on tap in Italian beer bars), while Bronze was awarded to Valstagna from 77 Biscuits Brewery.

The big winner at the awards presentation at Beer Attraction, sponsored by Unionbirrai and Italian Exhibition Group, was one from Italy's first wave of craft breweries, Birrificio Baladin, which scored four awards and was named Birrificio dell'Anno (Brewery of the Year). They included Gold and Bronze in the Barleywine category, for Lune and Xyauyù, respectively; Gold for Nazionale (brewed with all Italian ingredients) in a first-place tie with Trupija from 'A Magara in the Belgian Blond or Pale Ale category; and another tie for first place in the Wood Barrel-Aged category, as the chocolately Xyauyù Barrel split the Gold with the complex and woody Barley Wine from Birrificio.

Baladin's owner/brewmater Teo Musso was on hand, along with his son Isaac — for whom Baladin's Blanche beer was named (the last time I saw him, he was a grade schooler!) — to collect the brewery's bounty of awards. Musso's fellow craft pioneer, Agostino Arioli, owner and brewmaster of Italy's first craft brewery (1996), Birrificio Italiano, grabbed two Golds: for BI-Weizen in the Wheat Ale category and Scires BRQ 1314, a sour cherry beer, in the Fruit Beer category. (Arioli and his beer will be back again at the Firestone Walker Invitational Beer Festival in Paso Robles in June).



The author enjoying a set of tasters at Rome's Open Baladin pub.
Photo by Danise Delgado



Celebrating their Gold medal wins at Birra dell'Anno are Italian craft beer pioneers Agostino Arioli of Birrificio Italiano, left, and Teo Musso of Birrificio Baladin.
Photo by Tomm Carroll



The author, right, and his fellow beer jurors, from left, Giuseppe Chighini (Italy), Christophe Gilliard (Belgium), Lorenzo Dabove (standing, Italy) Luc de Raedemaeker (Belgium), Eduardo Villegas (Mexico) and Anna Borrelli (Italy).

One of Italy's most exciting and experimental breweries, Birrificio del Borgo, which was bought last year by megabrewer AB InBev — shocking not only the Italian craft beer scene but good beer fans worldwide — attended the Expo, but (probably wisely) laid low and did not enter the competition this year. Although owner/brewmaster Leonardo DiVincenzo was present, he wasn't at the booth the couple times I visited.

But after trying two new-to-me beers, I can safely state that del Borgo's innovation continues. L'Equilibrista, a 10.9% abv method champenoise ale made with 39% Sangiovese grape must, was incredibly complex, straddling the line between beer and wine. Imperiale Balsamico, a 9.3% Imperial Stout blended with five-year old balsamic vinaigrette, was as exceptional as it was unexpected. Who knew?

A few random notes from Beer Attraction — Favorite Brewery Name: Birrificio Mukkeller (which won Silver for its Stout, Corva Black). Favorite Beer Name (tie): Hoppy Wan Kenobi from Birrificio Argo and American Brettxit from Birrificio del Ducato.

Wherever You Rome...

While the city of Rimini has some great beer destinations (FOB draught beer bar, Grand Cru bottle shop), as does the much larger and nearby Bologna (Il Punto beer bar/restaurant, Birrificio Zapap's taproom/pizzeria, the drink-while-you-shop Beer 4 Bunnies bottle shop), it was kristallweizen clear that all good beer roads lead to Roma; bottled Baladin beers were even available on the train from Bologna!

Musso and DiVincenzo's Open Baladin pub pours only birra artigianale (except no more del Borgo due to that pesky sale to AB InBev), with the occasional exception of a Cantillon tap, and is a must-visit for beer tourists. I spent five hours there, only drinking tasters of beers I hadn't had, and dropped by once more during my visit to try the ones I missed.

But the three bars/restaurants founded by Roma's maestro publican, Manuele Colonna are also required visits for beercationers. Ma Che Siete Venuti a Fà (which loosely translates to "What are you doing here?") — a tiny sports pub specializing in international craft beer — and its across-the-street sibling in the old Trastevere section of Roma, Bir e Fud — with its inventive pizzas, antipasti and mostly Italian craft on tap — together make for a great afternoon/evening out.

A short drive away is Colonna's latest venture, BE.RE., an 18-tap-and-6-Franconian-style-hand-pump bar and eatery that opened last fall on the border of Vatican City. Do you think the Pope pops over for a pint?

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

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thegoodbeerco.com

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

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

BREW PUBS

Brewbakers
7242 Heil Ave, Huntington Beach
brewbakers1.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inland Empire

BREWRIES

3 Iron Brewing Co.
898 Via Lata #A, Colton
3ironbrewing.com

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

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

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

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

Brew Rebellion Brewing
13444 California St, Yucaipa
brewrebellion.com

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

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

Craft Brewing Co.
530 Crane St, Lake Elsinore
craftbrewingcompany.com

Electric Brewing Co.
41537 Cherry St, Murietta
electricbrewco.com

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

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

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

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

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

Hangar 24 Brewery
1710 Sessums Drive
Redlands
hangar24brewery.com

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

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

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

Last Name Brewing
2120 Porterfield Way, Upland
lastnamebrewing.com

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

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

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

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

Refuge Brewery
43040 Rancho Way, Temecula
refugebrew.com

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

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

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

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

Wiens Brewing
27941 Diaz Rd, Temecula
Wiensbrewing.com

BREW PUBS

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

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

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

Wicks Brewing Company
11620 Sterling Ave, Riverside
wicksbrewing.com



Old Towne Orange, California

NOW OPEN

Tasting Room Hours of Operation	
Sun	Noon - 8pm
Mon - Thurs	4pm - 10pm
Fri & Sat	Noon - Midnight

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WWW.CHAPMANCRAFTED.BEER

☎ 844-855-2337



FEATURED LISTINGS

Alpine Village
833 W Torrance Blvd, Torrance
alpinevillagecenter.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

City Tavern
9739 Culver Blvd, Culver City
citytavernculvercity.com

City Tavern
735 S. Figueroa St, Los Angeles
citytaverndtla.com

Cooper's House of Brew Masters
4823 Paramount Blvd,
Lakewood

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

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

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

Hot's Kitchen
844 Hermosa Ave, Hermosa Beach
hotskitchen.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spring Street Smokehouse
640 N. Spring St, Los Angeles
sssmokehouse.com

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

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

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

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

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

Tortilla Cantina
1225 El Prado Ave, Torrance
tortillacantina.com

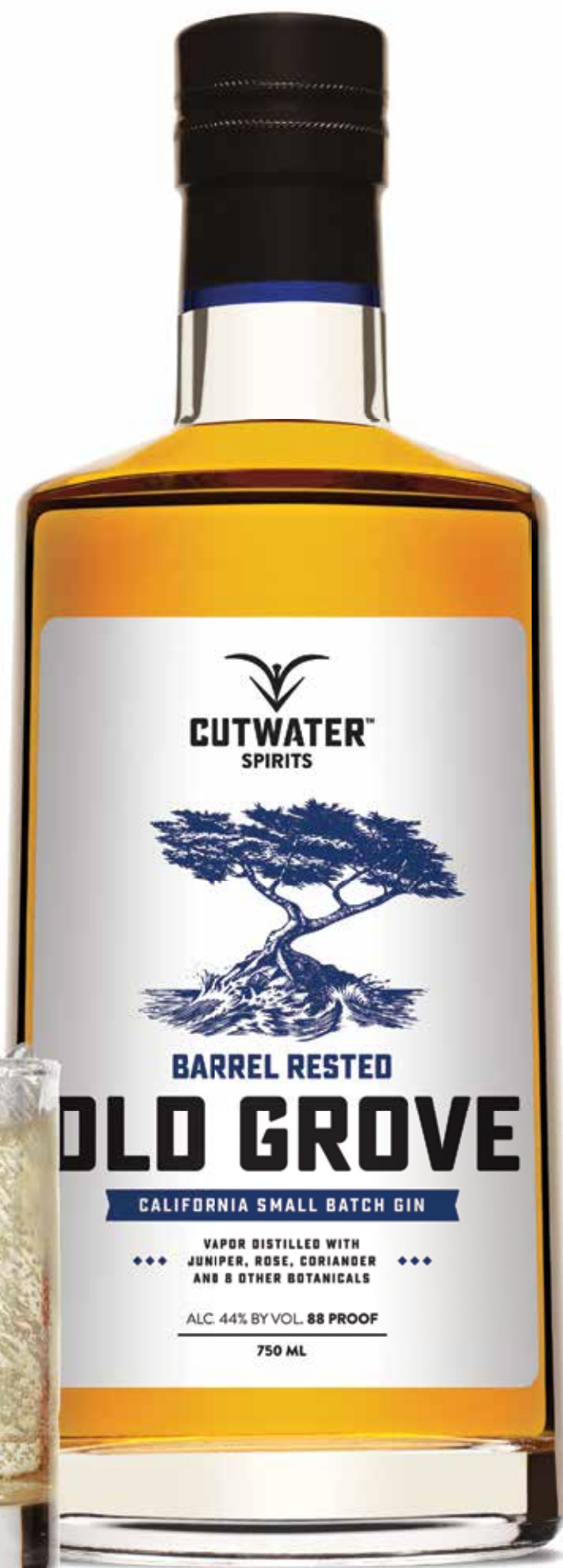
Zpizza Tap Room
5933 W. Century Blvd, Los Angeles
zpizza.com



OUR NEXT BOLD ADVENTURE.

From the band of liquid pioneers behind Ballast Point, one of the most successful beer brands in history.

Early in our brewing tenure, curiosity and creativity drew us to explore the art of distilling. The result is a diverse and award-winning family of spirits that's become the foundation for Cutwater. Building on the tradition with our minds wide open to the unconventional, the Cutwater crew is committed to bringing quality, ingenuity and integrity to the world of spirits.



“THE EARLY RETIREMENT”

BARREL RESTED OLD GROVE & SODA

- 2oz. **Old Grove Barrel Rested**
- 4-6oz. Soda Water
- 1 Slice of Lemon

Build in glass with ice and add squeeze of lemon.

More recipes at cutwaterspirits.com

DIFFERENT HOPS EVERY 90 DAYS

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