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VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 4 | SEPTEMBER 2016 | FREE!

THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN



Kevin Ashford of Figueroa Mountain

Photo Credit: J North Productions

In 2010, Jim (father) and Jaime Dietenhofer (son) opened a brewery in Buellton they called Figueroa Mountain. It was just on the other side of the 101 freeway from another brewery you might have heard of called Firestone Walker. At the time, I've gotta say my reaction was, "Why the Hell would anyone open a new brewery in the imposing shadow cast by FW?" My skepticism quickly evaporated as "Fig" immediately began racking up medals at the Great American Beer Festival and now, six years later, was just named 2016 Best Commercial Craft Brewery in the greatest brewing state in the country. With over 700 craft breweries in the Golden State, to be named the best at the California State Fair's annual competition is no mean feat. It confirms what any beer drinker worth their hops and barley already knew – Figueroa Mountain is in no one's shadow when it comes to brewing consistently world class beer.

(see my interview with Kevin Ashford, Creative Director of Brewing, on page 12)

INSIDE

OPINION



PAGE 4

FEATURE



PAGE 7

WISHFUL DRINKING



PAGE 9

COVER STORY



PAGE 12

BREWER'S CORNER



PAGE 17

PROFILE



PAGE 19

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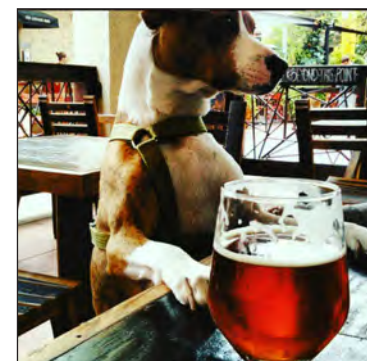
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OPINION

THE AB-INBEV “WHY DON’T THEY LIKE US” TOUR CONTINUES

By Dan Becker aka Danny Fullpint

As a repercussion of AB-InBev purchasing up regional craft breweries over the past two years, many fans have taken a righteous stand, and have turned their backs on the companies that have traded their independence for global beverage domination. Parallel to fan backlash, bars and independent retailers are choosing wisely and opting out of carrying and promoting corporate owned craft brands.

As we read the third cookie cutter article outlining how 10 Barrel, Golden Road and Breckenridge figureheads are “fighting back” against the backlash of their former fan base, we have to wonder, how many more times will the same article be written? We’re guessing at least a half dozen more times.

In under two weeks, The Denver Post, The Denver Business Journal and Westword have all covered how tough it is being a great brewery, with tons of resources that’s no longer getting local love and street cred. Lots more of the “nothing has changed” meme is being spewed.

In these articles, we’ve learned that the corporate giant is organizing a dog and pony show (why the long face), in which they are prancing out these figureheads to beer bars in what I’d like to call the “Why don’t they like us?” tour. I say the corporate giant is behind this, as I would hope these newly minted millionaires would be satisfied with the business decision they recently made, and didn’t decide to go on this PR tour on their own. I don’t recall Ben & Jerry scrambling for street cred after selling to Unilever. Dr. Dre didn’t go back to Compton and pander to the homies after selling Beats to Apple for a few billion. Frankly, this is downright embarrassing to watch.

We know it’s tough having 12 handles at the local ball park. One can only imagine how tough it is to dominate every airport eatery with “craft beer.” Seeing end caps at every grocery store in America has to take a toll on one’s soul after a while. Listen guys, it’s going to be ok. The wounded heart takes time to heal, but believe me, it will. Looking closer regarding them “fighting back”, it seems they are not content with being an international conglomerate that may make decent to good beer. They want to blend in with their respective communities, be part of the local guilds they were recently kicked out of, and receive the invitations to the festivals they are no longer being included in. The whole purpose of local craft guilds and craft only festivals are to band together and protect themselves against the aggressive, predatory practices of the big guys. Essentially, the wolves are scratching their heads as to why the lambs aren’t inviting them over for tea.

The issue isn’t whether or not these recently purchased breweries are making good beer or not, it’s about affiliation and intention. There is bloodshed at the retail level right now, and it’s at the hands of AB-InBev. I’m not clear why love and admiration of such a small fraction of beer drinkers is so important to these people in the big scheme of things. Whatever the reason is, it’s pathetic.

Here’s my advice to you teary eyed millionaires. Find a nice vacation home and spend time with your families. Get a golf instructor and get some golf lessons. Let your brewers do the best they can, maybe they will win a gold medal at the Great American Beer Festival or World Beer cup, that will cheer you up! Most importantly, please go away with what little dignity is left after this insanely planned out campaign that seems to be flooding the online Denver rags, this isn’t how rich people are supposed to act.

Dan Becker, aka Danny Fullpint is the Co-Founder/Chief Beer Drinker at TheFullPint.com, a daily online national beer publication based out of Los Angeles. This article was originally published there. Follow The Full Pint on all social media platforms at @thefullpint.



The AB/InBev Golden Road stand at Dodger Stadium

Photo by Daniel Drennon



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FEATURE

BEER AND BASEBALL

By Daniel Drennon

So I am starting this with an apology. For two years now, I have wanted to do a cover story on the state of craft beer at major league parks in California. For myriad reasons, I haven't pulled it off. This time it was having no time to get up to Oakland and San Francisco to check out their parks. Hence, you are getting the scaled back So Cal assessment of Dodger Stadium, Angel Stadium and Petco Park. I promise to make all five parks next season.

Let's go from worst to best.

DODGER STADIUM – Craft Beer Grade = F

That means we have to start right here at home with historic Dodger Stadium. Sadly, the craft beer (lack of) scene is historically bad. The leaders of the Boys in Blue are so far up AB InBev's ass, I doubt that Indiana Jones and Jason Bourne, working in tandem, could extract them. What little craft there is you will find (though you may again need Indy Jones to help you) stationed at the horseshoe ends of the stadium, by the bathrooms. It is a hodge podge, non-sensical selection of craft and quasi-craft. For the privilege of escaping the (bad beer) crap everywhere else, you can expect to pay \$17 for a small plastic cup. Also, all the ABVs are kept at sessionable-level because clearly they don't want Dodger fans killing visiting fans or even one another. By all means though, please enjoy your fucking God-awful Michelada or worse, a Kirin lager that proudly proclaims on the plastic cup that it offers "a refreshing frozen foam topping." The Dodgers brass who charge \$12 for a plastic "helmet" full of, gulp, popcorn have also figured out that their obscene profit margins are even higher if they serve foam instead of bad beer.

ANGEL STADIUM – Craft Beer Grade = D

Moving south on the 5, we arrive at Angel Stadium (Edison Field?). Dear Angels owner Arte Moreno. Please know that by far the best craft beer you have, in fact the reigning "Best Small Brewery in the World" as awarded by the 2016 World Beer Cup, is across the street. Lamentably, you do not carry Noble Aleworks in the stadium, no doubt because you are sharing AB InBev ass space with the Dodgers. Smart Angel fans drink as much Noble as possible before the game, walk over, and drink as much as they can after the game. Why is the best brewery in the world not represented in your stadium when it is across the street? Sales of Noble would kill it like Ballast Point sales at Petco kill it at Petco (see next review). You like money. We know that. You're worth over a billion. Hey. So is Ballast Point.

Speaking of BP, you do have a Ballast Point stand by the big Angel helmets when you walk in. Unfortunately, no one working at the counter serving BP has ever heard of them, or craft beer. No one managing your concessions is smart enough with your money at stake to think of turning one of the three lines into a "Beer Only" line so that people like me who would drink three or four Sculpins don't have to stand in line for a half hour while moms buy their kids corn dogs.

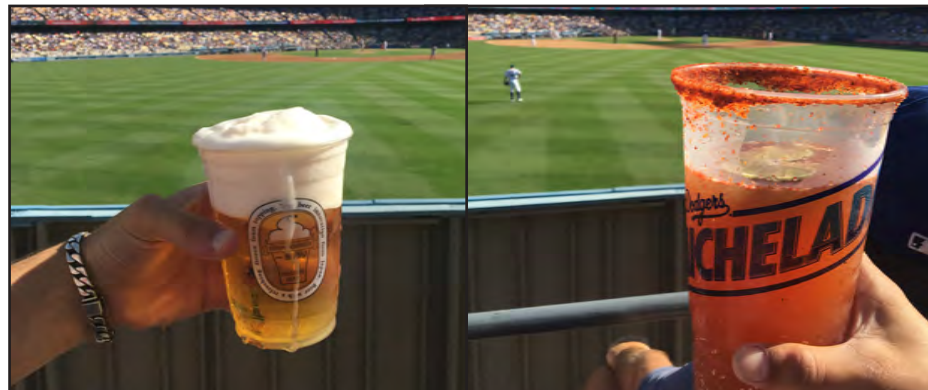
You also have a place called the "Draft Pick" (clever...very clever). 24 taps of craft beer if we counted all the InBev and MillerCoors acquisitions as craft. But Mr. Moreno. We don't. See Danny Fullpint's article in this issue for enlightenment. You have a Blue Moon Brewing Company stand that was empty. They aren't craft and God knows they aren't walking distance across the street from the stadium.

The Draft Pick does, obviously by some accident, have Trestles IPA by Left Coast Brewing in San Clemente. I suspect it has to do with whomever distributes Left Coast but I will award them, given the dire straits that craft finds itself in your stadium, as the best local craft beer.

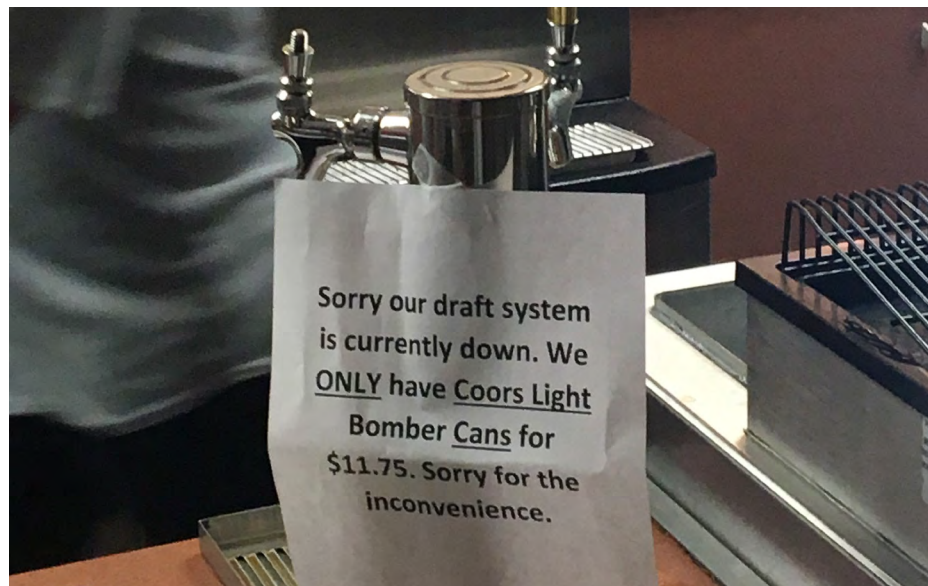
That said. You can get a Sculpin or even a Grapefruit Sculpin from your fellow billionaires at Ballast Point, so I am prepared to give you a wholehearted nod over the robber barons at Dodger Stadium (oh, Magic...please, please bring some California Craft Showtime to us next season).

PETCO PARK – Craft Beer Grade = B

Now we hop on the Amtrak across the 57 from Angel Stadium to head to San Diego, self-ordained as "America's Craft Beer City." Surely, we will find craft beer Nirvana at Petco Park. And indeed, you enter the stadium and walk down what I would deem craft beer row. Outdoor kiosks serving the likes of Alesmith, Hess, Port and Pizza Port, Coronado, Alpine, Green Flash (same thing?), Belching Beaver and Mission. But the 800-pound, aforementioned billion dollar gorilla at Petco is Ballast Point. I'm pretty sure BP has more handles at Petco than AB InBev and MillerCoors combined. For 23 years, the flagship and pride of San Diego's loyal beer fans, Ballast Point crushes it. There is a full BP bar with dozens of taps, a BP "Craft Pier" in the outfield where you can sit in cushioned lifeguard chairs along the outfield wall or chill on a grassy knoll. It is mostly all Ballast Point all the time at Petco. And God knows, B.C. (Before Constellation), I would have been gushing, praising, and anointing Petco as the Mecca of craft in baseball. And perhaps it still is – I need to visit a lot more parks, especially AT&T in San Francisco.



Dodger Stadium: "A refreshing frozen foam topping" ...sucks. Nothing says craft like a cold Michelada. All photos by Daniel Drennon



This pretty much sums up craft at Angel Stadium



Best beer at Angel Stadium is across the street at Noble

Let's deal with reality. If there is an upside to B.P.P.C., it is that you can now get Grunion or Sculpin at every ballpark (except Dodger Stadium), hotel lobby bar, airport and arena – probably on the planet. That said, the artistry of craft is tied to fresh, local and typically small batch brewing. Even Petco, with over 100 San Diego County breweries could offer a more diverse selection of breweries and beers. But compared to the Dodger and Angels, the Padres are far and away the So Cal champions of craft beer.

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WISHFUL DRINKING

BESU-BORU & BIRU: BIG IN JAPAN TOO

By Tomm Carroll



Japanese beer girls (known as “biru no uriko”) at the Tokyo Dome. Photo by Tomm Carroll

Despite its popularity in many countries around the world, our national pastime also happens to be the most popular spectator sport in Japan. A variation of two English team sports — cricket and rounders — modern American baseball is believed to date back to the New York Knickerbocker Baseball Club in September 1845, predating our Civil War by a good decade and a half. Surprisingly, it was first introduced to Japan as a school sport less than 30 years later by an American English teacher at a Tokyo secondary school in 1872. Professional “besu-bōru” (Japan-ization of “baseball”) started in the 1920s, and by 1936 the first league was formed in the Land of the Rising Sun. During WWII and its aftermath, the Japanese had refrained from using foreign-based words, so the sport was called “yakyū” (Japanese for “field ball”).

For its part, “biru” (beer) didn’t come to Japan until the 17th century, when it was brought by Dutch traders and sold in a beer hall created for sailors working the Far East trade route. By the country’s Meiji period (1868-1912), when it ceased being an isolated feudal society and reopened to foreign trade, European brewers began to arrive and helped to grow a local brewing industry. The first brewery was established by a Norwegian-American in the port city of Yokohama in 1869 — only three years before baseball arrived! Called Spring Valley Brewery, it would eventually become the Kirin Brewery.

Aside from a few differences (see next paragraph), “Puro Yakyū” (professional baseball) today is pretty similar to its American antecedent. Like our Major League Baseball, there are two leagues that comprise Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), the older and more prestigious Central League and the Pacific League (which allows designated hitters), with six teams each. The season begins in April and culminates in playoffs in September and then a championship in October, called the Japan Series. Of course there is the “suree sutoraikku” (three strikes and you’re out) rule, and the scoreboard in the “kyujo” (ballpark) reads R, H and E — for runs, hits and errors. There are also flashing, fast-moving images on the Jumbotron video screen, along with (at least at Tokyo’s 38,000-seat Meiji Jingu Stadium) a booming voice over the PA acclaiming in English: “STRRRRIKE OUT” and “HOME RRRRRUN!” at appropriate moments.

Among the divergences: Both the field and the strike zone, as well as the baseball itself, are smaller than in the MLB. Also, in Japan, game length is limited to 12 innings (15 in the playoffs) in the case of a draw after nine, and tie games are allowed. Japanese teams have cheerleaders, who dance to J-pop songs, along with the cute costumed mascots, during the fourth and the seventh inning stretches. And each team has a rabid following of non-stop chanting fans, the “oendan” (cheering squad), complete with megaphones, horns, drums and tiny plastic bats to clap together in unison as they sing their team’s song when it is at bat. Home team supporters sit in the right field bleachers, visiting fans in left; the noisemaking never stops.

And get this: When a foul ball is hit into the stands, the fans don’t try to catch and keep it. Rather, an usher blows a whistle to warn spectators to watch out, and whoever recovers the baseball hands it over to the usher, who returns it to the home team. When did you last see that at Dodger Stadium?

So what about the beer? I thought you’d never ask. In both countries, it’s as integral a part of a baseball game as a bat or catcher’s mitt. And like with besu-bōru, there are comparisons

and contrasts between Japan and America when it comes to the biru too. The main similarity is that macrobreweries dominate. Japan’s “Big Four”: Asahi, Kirin, Sapporo and Suntory (the latter also a distiller, whose beer is not currently available in the US). All produce 100% malt beers, especially those under Sapporo’s “luxury” label, Yebisu (also not found Stateside), as well as dumbed-down adjunct beers.

Draught, bottles and cans of those brands can be found at the stands inside Jingu (home to the Yakult Swallows — pronounced, without a hint of mockery or embarrassment, as “Swarrows”), which opened in 1926 in the Shinjuku section of Tokyo, as well as at the massive Tokyo Dome (aka “the Big Egg”), the Bunkyo area’s enclosed, 42,000-seat home since 1988 to the Yomiuri Giants — the Yankees to their cross-town rivals the Swallows’ Mets. Unlike in America, Japan’s baseball teams are named for their corporate owners, not for their home cities.

The big divergence is the beer in the seats...well, not the beer per se, but how and by whom it is served. Cute, perpetually smiling and peace-sign-flashing Japanese beer girls (known as “biru no uriko”) in short little brewery-specific outfits hawk draught beer in the stands. Yes, draught beer, poured at your seat!

These ladies haul around small keglets in insulated backpacks and flirt as they dispense beer in 400 ml (13.5 oz) logo plastic cups, carried in their utility belts, for ¥700 (about \$7) from a creamer faucet, with two nozzles — one to pour the beer and the other to top it off with a creamy, nitro-looking head of foam (these faucets, uncommon in the US, are prevalent on most beer taps in Japan). You can’t beat that price, or the service with a smile, at an American ballpark. And they serve until the game is over; no last-call-during-the-seventh-inning bullshit. No wonder beer sales are booming at the kyujo! And while the biru, including the all-malt variety, may not be the most exciting, it pairs well with the oppressively humid summer heat of Japan — even inside the Dome.

The English-language Japan Beer Times reported this past April that a Japanese “ji-biru” (craft beer) — and there are now many of them — finally made its debut at a kyujo. Taking a hint from our Anchor Brewing’s collaboration with the San Francisco Giants, Yokohama Bay Brewing created a BayStars Ale, a 4.5% pale wheat ale, as well as an equally low-abv BayStars Lager, to be served on draught this season at Yokohama Stadium, home to the Yokohama DeNa BayStars.

It’s a fitting location for craft’s Japanese ballpark breakthrough — given that this port city was the location of the country’s first brewery — and a fortuitous one for this beer writer, as he will be in Yokohama later this month to judge the International Beer Cup at the Great Japan Beer Festival.

Play Besu-bōru! Kanpai!

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.



Japanese beer girls (known as “biru no uriko”) at the Tokyo Dome. Photo by Tomm Carroll



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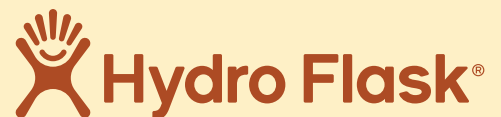
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THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN

By Daniel Drennon



Kevin Ashford of Fig Mountain

Photo Credit: J North Productions

In 2010, Jim (father) and Jaime Diethofer (son) opened a brewery in Buellton they called Figueroa Mountain. It was just on the other side of the 101 freeway from another brewery you might have heard of called Firestone Walker. At the time, I've gotta say my reaction was, "Why the Hell would anyone open a new brewery in the imposing shadow cast by FW?" My skepticism quickly evaporated as "Fig" immediately began racking up medals at the Great American Beer Festival and now, six years later, was just named 2016 Best Commercial Craft Brewery in the greatest brewing state in the country. With over 700 craft breweries in the Golden State, to be named the best at the California State Fair's annual competition is no mean feat. It confirms what any beer drinker worth their hops and barley already knew – Figueroa Mountain is in no one's shadow when it comes to brewing consistently world class beer.

Kevin Ashford oversees brewing operations at the six Figueroa Mountain tap rooms, including their latest in Westlake Village on the western edge of LA County. David Traile oversees brewing operations on the production side. I sat down with Ashford and, per our new tradition, asked him a boatload of personal questions so you can get to know his personality – it's a given that he's a phenomenal brewer.

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

Ashford: I grew up in a suburb equidistant from Washington, DC and Baltimore, Maryland. It is known as Columbia (MD). It was a great place to be raised. Tons of diversity with a sizeable population of around 100,000 at that time. It shaped me to be an inspired respectful member of all walks of life. I was your standard kid, gave skateboarding a try (I sucked), used to catch frogs and tadpoles in the local creeks, rivers, and ponds. Loved riding bikes with friends until the sun went down. Got into the occasional trouble (my mom would say more regular trouble). I have always played drums and ended up playing in a couple bands. I was always taught that hard work got you anywhere you wanted to be.

Who were your favorite bands growing up?

Music has been a huge influence my entire life. My mom was a professional singer/real estate agent. My dad also sings. There was music in my house multiple nights a week for rehearsals. It was such a pleasant time in my life. I have always been into rock music, but love

hip hop, electronic, Jazz, and several other genres. As an adolescent I liked the typical rock (Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Nirvana, Queens of the Stone Age), punk/pop punk, but had a good respect for classic rock (Zeppelin, Cream, The Stones, The Who, The Beatles). Also a lot of indie rock (Minus the Bear, Dismemberment Plan (Local to DC), Fugazi, The Pixies, etc). I am a huge David Bowie fan. His passing was crushing.

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

I am a huge Queens of the Stone Age fan. I also love guitar forward rock. Great bands like The Sword, Danava, Uncle Acid and the Deadbeats. We have a great local band in Santa Barbara named "The Caverns, they are young, but incredible! My brother DJ'd for a bit so I like progressive house and lounge music, none of the crap cheese big room kids sweating on each other shit. Classic hip-hop is never going out of style whether it is east coast or west coast.

What were your favorite movies as a kid?

I loved classic horror (and still do) - Poltergeist, Candyman, Nightmare on Elm Street, Halloween, Friday the 13th as well as The Exorcist, Evil Dead, and Night of the Living Dead... really anything that went bump in the night and kept me awake. Also loved action movies (Jackie Chan, Jet Li), Anything with Arnold, Stallone, and the usual suspects of classic action films.

What are your favorite movies now (if not the same)?

I make an effort to see at least one movie a month in the theater. It is an amazing way to turn off the phone for a bit, and put yourself in time out. I love a lot of movies and really enjoy getting to the theater. I really enjoy Thrillers, Histories, Horror, Action. Loved Bridge of Spies recently. Lights Out is pretty good if you like to feel uncomfortable! I have to bring up a great series on Netflix right now called "Stranger Things." It is awesome. It has a great 80's feel with good music and creepy feels.

What is/are your favorite food(s)?

I love Dim Sum! Usually need to be carted out after though. Indian food, Ethiopian, Afghani.

Anything ethnic. Anything without Mayo (sushi mayo is ok, has to be spicy though).

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

I am a sports guy to be sure. I grew up playing just about everything. I love the NBA and wholeheartedly support the Warriors. I fell in love with the team back in 2007 when they knocked out the number one seeded Mavericks. I would support the Wizards more if they had a different name (Hah!) I love and played hockey. I am a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. We have some family just outside Ontario and would have been casted out if I rooted for anyone else. They really suck by the way. Washington Redskins will always be my football team. Love the team they have put together over the past couple years. Baseball might be my favorite sport. The Baltimore Orioles are and will forever be my team. They are finally playing well, but I probably just jinxed it...

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

If I could take a month off (That is a thing?) I would explore the depths of our oceans and the vast expanse of space!

If you could take a month off and travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Tough question. I would love to see Eastern Europe. The history of the countries there fascinates me. Southeast Asia too, the history of these countries is wild. Brasil for Carnevale would be amazing.

If you could host a dinner party with any three people in history, who would they be and why?

Abraham Lincoln – Natural born fighter for people’s individual rights.
 Amelia Earhart – To learn what true worth and taking on adversity is all about.
 Martin Luther King Jr. - Inspirational to the core. Would love to have met him.
 Honorable Mention: Adolf Hitler – but just to deny him service and send him to prison, probably kill him, but not with poison... that is the easy way out.

Who and/or what inspires you?

My Grandfather – Hardest working guy I know. Never gives up no matter what comes his way.
 My Mother – She worked her ass off every day. She passed away from cancer in 2009 and never gave up. She inspires me to be the best I can be in any situation. She was thoughtful and selfless to those she loved, and ruthless to those who opposed her nurturing ways. Anyone who knew her was lucky.

My Team- I am so glad to work with a great group of people. Jaime, Jim, David, Juan, Nic, Sean, Ryan, James, Kevin, Andre, Patrick, and Craig. They are a constant source of inspiration to dig deeper, and work harder!
 My surroundings, friends, music. It is hard to not be inspired in this world.

Between talent and work ethic, which is more important?

Very tough. Can’t teach talent. Can’t teach work ethic. I truly believe if you work hard enough everything else falls into place.

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

I would be on the front line fighting the scourge of Human Trafficking.
 Or a chef getting his ass handed to him.

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

Diehard.



David Traille, Kevin Ashford, PJ Perez and Juan Zepeda

Photo courtesy of California State Fair



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By Daniel Drennon

Loftus Ranches and Hopunion created Ales for ALS to support a very worthy cause - ALS research. They offer participating brewers access to a proprietary hop blend, free of charge, in exchange for participation in Ales for ALS™. Each invited brewery brews a special beer with these hops and donates a portion of the sales to ALS TDI, the world's leader in ALS research.

On August 11th, Beachwood hosted an event at their Long Beach location featuring their own contribution, the outstanding Hopular Mechanic IPA, along with the Ales for ALS beers brewed by their brewery pals representing all of California. Matt Brynildson of Firestone Walker and Brian Brewer of HopSaint both showed up to support this Noble (Aleworks brewed a fantastic Fight the Good Fight IPA) cause.

The stellar tap list also included Ales for ALS beers by Cellarmaker, Drake's, Eagle Rock, Monkey Paw, Pizza Port Bressi Ranch, Russian River, Societe, and Stone Liberty Station. First keg to blow? Cellarmaker.



Brian Brewer, Julian Shrago, and Matt Brynildson

Photo by Daniel Drennon

BREWER'S CORNER

A BREATH OF FRESH BEER

By Brendan Megowan

Oxygen has an essential role in creating our favorite beverage.

The perfect water profile, cutting edge hops, heirloom barleys, and isolated yeast strains provide everything needed to create a delicious beer...or so it would seem. Many a home brewer has sat back and wondered why their fermentation is sluggish or why their beer was too sweet. My first question is always- "did you aerate your wort?" Yeast are amazing creatures. Somewhere between plant and animal behaviors, they are technically fungi. Although they prefer to metabolize oxygen like humans, they also have the interesting ability to survive in low oxygen environments through a process called anaerobic fermentation. Brewers often introduce oxygen into the fresh wort to support a robust aerobic fermentation which will provide a high enough cell count for a clean anaerobic fermentation. On the other hand, if starved for oxygen, yeasts will increase ester production creating a more complex flavor profile. This technique is often employed to create the hallmark flavors of many Hefeweizens and other styles.

In a commercial brewery, oxygen is introduced into the beer at only one specific time in the brewing process. When the beer has cooled after the boil and is on it's way to entering the fermenter, oxygen is introduced through a diffusion stone inserted in the pipe coming out of the chiller. Oxygen introduced at any other time in the process can create off flavors. During the first three days of fermentation, yeast metabolism is active enough to consume nearly all the oxygen in solution. In fact even oxygen introduced at the perfect time can be detrimental if in too high a volume. Over oxygenating wort can lead to stressed yeast that put off undesirable flavors such as sulfur.

The amount of oxygen absorbed into the wort is dependent on many factors including liquid flow rate (gpm,) oxygen flow rate (l/m), size and type of diffusion stone, wort gravity, distance to fermenter, and temperature fluctuations. Any of these factors can be manipulated to increase or decrease the availability of oxygen to the yeast and thus the flavor profile and overall health of the yeast cells. A good brewer will use a Dissolved Oxygen (DO) meter to check the oxygen wort absorption on the way to the fermenter. Measured in parts per million (ppm,) oxygen levels in wort can be detected and adjusted to create a desired fermentation profile.

Many home brewers use oxygen tank systems with mini diffusion stones, but proper aeration with ambient air is generally accepted as sufficient. Ambient aeration, though not sterile, can be accomplished simply by vigorously shaking a freshly filled carboy or pouring wort back and forth between buckets a few times. In fact, the German purity law, Reinheitsgebot, prohibits the addition of pure oxygen at any part of the process. To ensure proper oxygen content, German brewers simply use sterile compressed air through a stone just like oxygen. Once the wort has been aerated and the yeast pitched, however, brewers tend to avoid oxygen; as well they should. Oxidation of the volatile flavor compounds in a delicious beer is the most common cause of a beer losing that certain "fresh" feeling.

Oxidation flavors in finished beer are the product of the combined effect of DO, time, and temperature. An excess of any of these three oxidative factors can render a wonderful beer undrinkable. The volatility of fresh beer flavors coupled with the popularity of session IPAs, juicy northwest style IPAs, and west coast IPAs getting lighter in body by the day, has made our friend oxygen public enemy number one for brewers, distributors, retailers, and consumers alike. Trans-2-nonenal, the chemical compound responsible for that classic cardboard oxidation taste is not the only problem than can arise when packaged beer has DO problems. Beer, in the presence of oxygen and warm temperatures can lose hop aroma, gain perceived sweetness, promote bacterial infection, create diacetyl (rancid butterscotch) and even change color. A super light colored IPA may be more of an amber color months later if not packaged and stored correctly.

The only way to deal with oxygen in warm beer is to have a continued fermentation within the package so the yeast will scavenge any remaining oxygen in solution. This technique is called bottle conditioning or keg conditioning and is the technique employed in the famed Sierra Nevada Pale Ale. Warmer temperatures stimulate the yeast to metabolize more oxygen, but as discussed earlier, simultaneously, the oxidative effects on the malts and hops is exacerbated at warmer temps. This is a classic pick your poison type of decision and world class beers have been made with and without bottle/keg conditioning. I have often wondered how some Belgian lambics can remain light in color after years of room temperature barrel aging while some American Pale Ales turn amber within months. I now believe it is the continued miracle of fermentation activity in the barrels that has protected the delicate beer from the onslaught of oxidative mayhem.

The only other option for breweries, and probably the most effective is to do their best to mitigate the big three oxidative factors of DO, time, and temp. This feat is easier said than done but can be accomplished through quality fermentation, minimal beer movement, closed transfer systems, cold storage, packaging date codes, and quick product turnaround. The stakes are high and a quality light hoppy beer is still a rare commodity. Rich spoils await the brewers who can deliver the freshness, and oxygen is the biggest thing standing between fresh beer and their customers.

Brendan Megowan has been brewing for eight years and is the Head Brewer for Olde Ritual Brewing Co.

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PROFILE

CRAFT BEER HAVEN IN LITTLE TOKYO

By Erin Peters

If you're looking for a fantastic craft beer selection in downtown LA, then Far Bar is a must visit. The non-descript restaurant/bar on 1st street may not look like much from the outside. But you know what they say, it's what's on the inside that counts.

And inside, you'll find 15 rotating taps that include the likes of Craftsman Smoked Black Lager, Noble Ale Works Nose Candy and Bruery Terreux Sour in the Rye. Hell yes. Also available are 20 non-rotating craft taps with favorites such as El Segundo Blue House Citra Pale and Stone Ruination Double IPA 2.0.

And lucky for Angelenos, awesomely hopped So Cal beers like these pair fantastic with American & Asian fusion cuisine. Far Bar is located inside a storied Little Tokyo landmark (its predecessor Chop Suey is designated as a historic building). It's outdoor patio is unlike most others; a long, narrow brick and concrete oasis with swinging golden lights between the buildings on either side.

As you walk through the front of the gourmet gastropub with the main bar and eye opening selection of whiskey (the whiskey and bourbon selection is one of the best in Los Angeles), continue onto the back room. There, you'll find a smaller, back bar (hence Far Bar) where beer guru Guillermo Bugarin shows patrons his prowess.

It's here that you can see what's rotating and available for the day. And if you're up for some properly prepared absinthe, this is also the joint to hit. But I digress.

Located in the historic Far East Building, this unconventional, dimly lit, chill gastropub started out as a cocktail bar in 2005. Today, it houses one of the largest selection of bottled craft beers from Japan (largest in Southern California).

Beer Program Manager, or as his co-workers like to call him, "Beer Sensei," Guillermo Bugarin, has been elevating the craft beer selection at Far Bar for about a year and a half. Previously, Robert Sanchez (head brewer of Kinetic Brewing) was buying the beer about once a week.

The big difference today is that Bugarin is working at getting the latest and most sought after California brews, five to six days a week. And before Sanchez, well known LA beer figure Jimmy Smith was at the helm, first elevating the Far Bar craft reputation to destination beer bar status.

When asked what he's attempting to do with the rotating list, Bugarin quickly responded, "Keep it local. keep it balanced." And the permanent handles enable more choice for us.

"Having permanent handles gets me some nice stuff on the rotating side...Having a Stone permanent handle gets me all of the Stone beers. ALL of them. There isn't a Stone beer I can't get. Same thing with AleSmith. I get all the special Speedways....and sometimes I want to keep it local. I have Iron Triangle. I have Boomtown."

Bugarin also just added Japanese beer flights to the menu in July.

"The Japanese craft beer is fun. Their palate is different. A lot more maltiness, but also lighter...I had a beer that was a collaboration between COEDO and Garage Project and Stone [Tsuyu Saison]. It was very good."

They even have a cartoonish looking bottle called Niigata Beer Co. - Wasabi Ale. While I don't recommend this one particularly, their wasabi fries are a great choice. And if you're really hungry, try the Ultimate Bacon Fried Rice. Because everything's better with bacon.

If you are an LA beer fan and you somehow, some way do not yet know Far Bar, please check out this downtown gem. The weekday happy hour is from 3-7pm with a late night happy hour Sunday-Monday 9pm-midnight.

Erin Peters is a Southern California craft beer writer for the CV Independent. Follow her at TheBeerGoddess.com and on all social media as *The Beer Goddess*.

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26738 Aliso Creek Rd, Aliso Viejo
stadiumbrewing.com

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

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

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

Inland Empire

BREWERIES

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

Last Name Brewing
2120 Porterfield Way, Upland
lastnamebrewing.com

Electric Brewing Co.
41537 Cherry St, Murietta
electricbrewco.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

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

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

Thompson Brewing Company
9860 Indiana Ave, Riverside
thompsonbrewing.com

Wiens Brewing
27941 Diaz Rd, Temecula
Wiensbrewing.com

Wild Donkey Brewing Co.
2351 W Lugonia Ave, Redlands
facebook.com/DonkeyPunchBrewery

BREW PUBS

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

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

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

Wicks Brewing Company
11620 Sterling Ave, Riverside
wicksbrewing.com

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