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Jeff Bagby in the brewery

Photo Courtesy of Bagby Beer

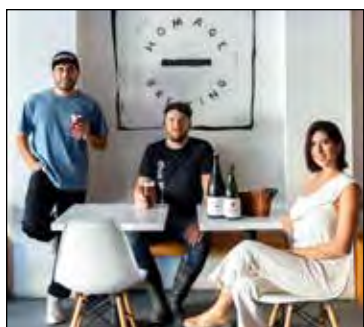
**By Julian Shrago**

*“Who the F@#k Is Jeff Bagby?!” adorned many a t-shirt worn by the Pizza Port brewers at the Great American Beer Festival several years back. It was somewhat of a rhetorical question for most in attendance, but for those who may be a little lean on their craft brewing history, allow me to give you a quick, but distinguished summary.*

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## PROFILE

# PAYING HOMAGE TO HOMAGE

by DANIEL DRENNON

The name for Homage Brewing comes from owner/founder Matthew Xavier Garcia wanting to acknowledge and pay tribute to the influences in his life, from music to movies, as well as the artists that provided inspiration. Garcia, himself a guitar player for the now-defunct hard-core metal band A LOVE ENDS SUICIDE, speaks to a sense of humility and his debt to others in the genesis of Homage Brewing.

Formed with his wife Lauren, and fellow professional musician turned head brewer Jeremiah Bignell (Horse the Band), Homage recognizes innovation and channels that spirit in everything they do. According to Garcia they are heavily influenced by iconic Belgian breweries such as Cantillon, 3 Fonteinen, and De Struise. Garcia met Bignell, calling him a “sour homebrewing legend,” at one of Chris Quiroga’s legendary Woodshop bottle share events. Garcia had been homebrewing since 2011 and immediately conceived the idea for Homage Brewing.

Garcia said, “I had been touring the country in a band, so I knew about branding, marketing and creating a culture. All that stuff formed who I am. My generation feels you don’t have to go to school to make something of yourself. When the music door closed, the beer door opened. I felt the same kind of spark I felt with music. You have to have the mindset of an artist when you undertake brewing. You understand how to create something from nothing. Once you understand a formula, it is the same for creating a song as it is for creating a base beer. I know structure and I know rearranging structure.”

Garcia, now 32 years old, started playing music in high school in West Covina and A LOVE ENDS SUICIDE enjoyed a very successful five-year run from 2003 to 2008 before disbanding (literally). After high school, he moved to Pasadena. There he had a four-year managerial stint at Congregation Ale House from 2012 to 2016. He continued to evolve his knowledge of everything beer and everything beer business.



From left to right Matthew Garcia, Owner/Brewer, middle Jeremiah Bignell, Head Brewer, right Lauren Garcia, Owner  
Photo Credit: Matthew X. Garcia

Homage Brewing opened in May 2016 in Pomona, cleverly planned, between The Glass House and the venerable Fox Theatre music venues. That undeniable nexus between the artistry of playing music and brewing beer just keeps manifesting itself. Homage became what I call a “buzz brewery” right out of the gate, developing fans and critical acclaim much like a new band with a hit song. And now, much like a sophomore album, Garcia confirms the rumors that Homage will open a second brewery in Chinatown (downtown Los Angeles).

Due to my strong ties to Pasadena, Lauren started looking there but then Chinatown popped up on her radar. Garcia said, ‘I actually saw Bob Kunz’ [Highland Park Brewery owner/brewmaster] out in front on his new brewery there when we were looking and I was like, ‘Oh Shit, this place we’re checking out is on the same block as Highland Park!’ I’m good friends with Bob and am a huge fan of everything he does.

I ask if Garcia thinks Kunz will be equally excited to share a block with Homage and Garcia nods emphatically, “I feel like we do things differently enough from Bob that we will not be competing. Instead, we’ll be working off of a synergy with one another and provide a one-two punch for local beer fans. Plus, we’re LA natives and we wanna be in LA” The new location, which Garcia hopes will open in summer or fall of 2019, will feature a 15 bbl brewhouse, significantly upping production capacity from the humble 5 bbl system in Pomona.

I ask what’s been his philosophy on Homage beer styles. I can tell he likes the question by the excitement on his face. “Sours were always my jam,” he responded. “For Homage, me and Jeremiah’s goal is to take a blank canvas, then start blending with a nice aged hop and oak character, wild yeast character, low acidity, minerality and, most of all, that it is all balanced. Not too tart. We really hang our hats on a well-balanced sour so you don’t have to pucker up. I hold our beers up to being as complex as a fine wine.”

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Jeremiah Bignell pouring Saison Automne - Photo Credit: Matthew X. Garcia  
 Barrel Aged Saison Conditioned on Burgundy Plums

I point out that Homage, like so many other Belgian-influenced and/or sour-centric breweries, has navigated into the swelling sea of haze-makers. He smiles and replies, "I was hesitant to get into the hazy IPA thing but it

came to the point where it became a challenge to do it and then it became fun to pull off doing it as well as anyone else," Garcia replies. "It was a chance to push myself to do something new. It's a style that is here to stay and we're proud of the beers we're making."



Four Corners Hazy IPA with Citra, Mosaic, and Motueka hops  
 Photo Credit: Matthew X. Garcia

I ask Garcia to describe himself and who he is for our readers. He thinks about it for a moment and responds, "The way I look at myself is that I am highly motivated with a true love for traditionalism and culture. What I am trying to do with Homage is create a feeling. When you go to Europe... Belgium...there is a feeling that you get. When you come to Homage, I want you to feel like you are having a unique experience."

*Daniel Drennon is the publisher, editor and head writer of BEER PAPER. Like a million other dreamers, Drennon moved to LA to write screenplays. Like 999,000 of them, he was ultimately unsuccessful. In 2009, inspired by the artistry of American brewers, he became the first dedicated beer writer for the LA Weekly.*



Matthew Garcia pouring at Tast of SoCal Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

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**BREWER'S CORNER****IMPERIAL WESTERN  
DEBUTS AT UNION STATION**

by DEVON RANDALL

*Imperial Western Beer Company at Union Station Photo Credit: Devon Randall*

Once upon a time, before freeways and automobiles, before airlines and jets, travel by rail revolutionized the great western expanse of the United States. One could actually travel from sea to shining sea in a reasonable period of time measured in days instead of weeks or months. You could even make the journey with relative confidence that you would not be eaten by a bear. While expedient, this new method of travel was not without its

downsides. Train lines were privately owned and fragmented in their routes. The modern 'dining car' was not yet a thing; in fact, modern 'dining out' was not even a thing out West. Travelers by rail would frequently find themselves victims of scams, desperately seeking sustenance in a narrow 30-minute window at desolate depots across the frontier, only to inevitably lose their money and be forced to reboard still hungry.

*Imperial Western Team and significant others Photo Courtesy of 213 Hospitality*

Enter the Fred Harvey Company.

In 1876, Fred Harvey, the man, began a relationship with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railway that would blossom into the Fred Harvey Company, a thriving business empire for nearly a century. Harvey and his successors were able to provide consistently excellent service by implementing a number of innovative strategies. Perhaps the most notorious of these strategies was the "The Harvey Girls." By requiring his all-female staff to live onsite, be 18-25 years old, and remain unmarried for the contracted employment period, the restaurant could accommodate a 4-course meal in 30 minutes at any time of day or night. Judy Garland memorialized "The Harvey Girls" in a film of the same name in 1946. There was also a wildly successful

Broadway show on the same topic. "Fred Harvey" became a ubiquitous term associated with class, integrity and hospitality. Often credited with "civilizing the west," Harvey built restaurants and eating houses at major depots across Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and California. The symbiosis between the railroads and Fred Harvey's eating houses led to great success for both parties: Travel by rail was now safe, even pleasant, and Harvey's restaurants had a steady supply of fresh, and captive, customers.

But alas, the good times didn't last. Train travel fell out of favor. By the 1950s, the country preferred travelling by personal automobile on the new interstate highway system, or by air.

(IMPERIAL WESTERN  
continued on page 9)

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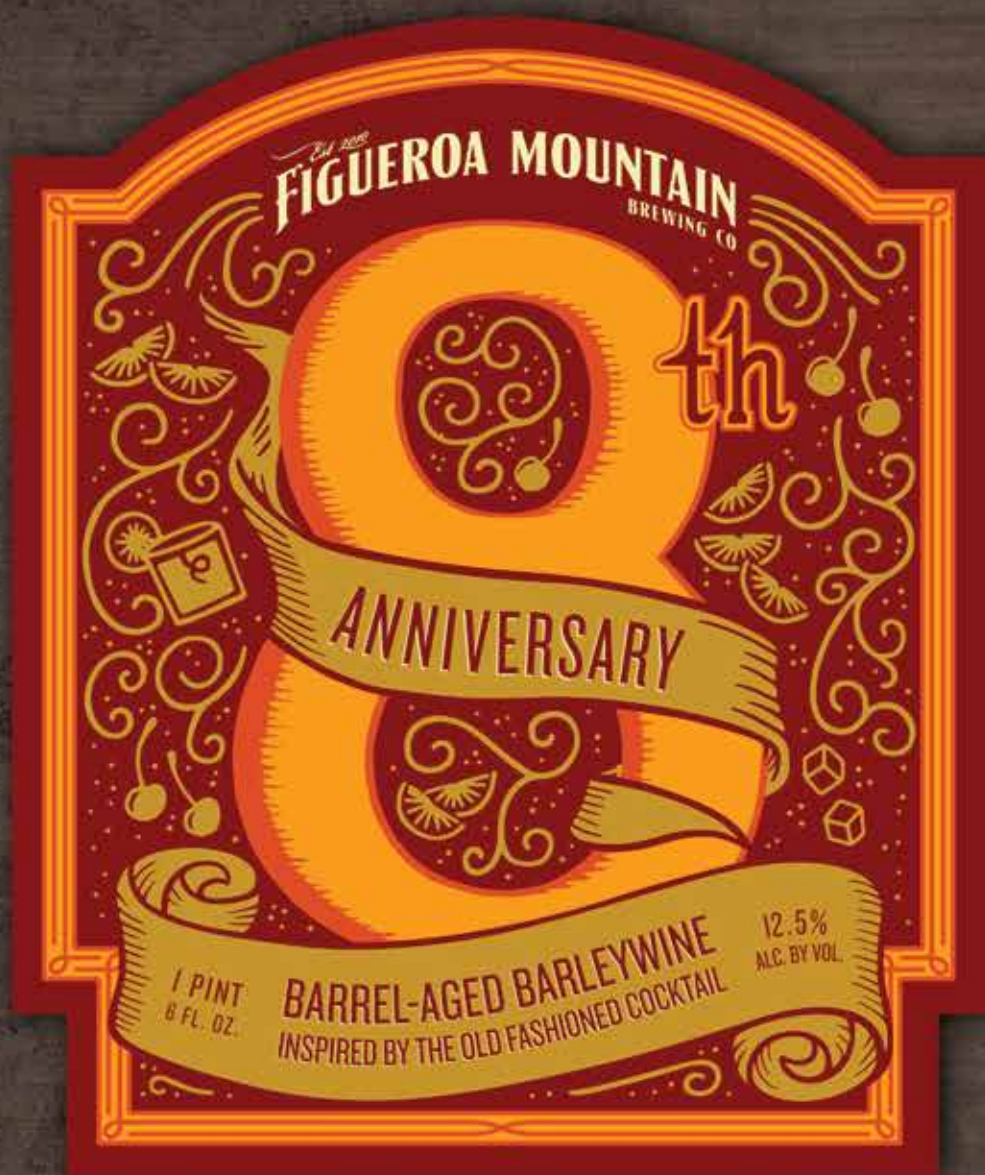
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(IMPERIAL WESTERN continued)

A number of economic, political and familial struggles tore the Fred Harvey Company and family apart. The Harvey House at Los Angeles' grand Union Station, opened in 1939, but shut its doors permanently only 28 years later in 1967. And mostly shuttered it has remained, until now.

Enter 213 Hospitality.

213 Hospitality has been dutifully and purposefully revitalizing the DTLA hospitality scene for nearly two decades. Early projects were Golden Gopher, Casey's Irish Pub, SevenGrand, Tony's Saloon, Cole's French Dip and then later Normandie Club, Honeycut, Cana Rum Bar, Las Perlas, etc. In 2015, 213 got into the manufacturing game with our first brewery, Arts District Brewing Company. Just as ADBC was opening, 213 owner and proprietor Cedd Moses had another idea and another opportunity. The sprawling, approximately 11,000-square-foot Fred Harvey space was going to be revived. Only there was one teensy problem. Nobody wanted to lease and rehab the approximately 5,000-square-foot kitchen attached to the equally large dining room. There was a lot of work to do on such a massive and historic project, but Moses is a man with a vision. He proposed utilizing that massive kitchen and dormitory as a brewery.

Although this sounded just swell in theory, there were a lot of challenges to overcome. Not ones to make things easy on ourselves, we were faced with another split-level brewery, many involved departments (property management, LA Metro, Historic Preservation, etc.), and some very out-of-date layout and equipment challenges. Creative solutions were put into play with a semi-off-site

spent-grain storage, highly custom grain-handling system and, in retrospect, some fairly entertaining late-night do-it-yourself rigging in order to shoe horn the brewhouse and all 18 fermenters and brite tanks into the building. We've also assembled a dream team of managers; (Brian Lenzo, Steven Zakarian, Bryan Garcia), brewers; (myself and Erick Garcia), chefs; (David Lentz and Kris Longley), and our neighbors at the attached cocktail bar, The Streamliner, (cocktail royalty Eric Alperin, Max Seaman, and Mikki Kristola). The food program is seafood-focused with rotating oyster selections, ceviche, and agua chile scallops being a few of my favorites. This provides some really interesting beer and food pairing opportunities. Sea urchin and Vienna Lager, any one? Although we're starting with clean beer, we will be pursuing a sour and barrel-aging program, as nothing complements the salinity and texture of an oyster quite like a nice tickle of acidity.

Learning about historic Union Station, downtown Los Angeles, Fred Harvey and this amazing space has given me a lot to ponder and a robust bouquet of inspiration. I hope to carry on the Fred Harvey legacy with dependable, quality classics and comfort beers, like our uber-filtered Kristal Weiss or our Simcoe-heavy West Coast IPA, and with more adventurous treats available for the bold, like our Oyster Stout or our kettle-soured Hefeweizen. Whether you're homeward-bound, or on your way to someplace new, a fine beer makes an excellent travelling companion.

*Devon Randall was born and raised in Los Angeles. She was the award-winning Brewmaster at Arts District Brewing Company and has just opened Imperial Western Beer Company in Union Station.*



Devon Randall (Imperial Western) and Daniel Drennon (Beer Paper)

Photo Credit: Megan Bruce Hackney



## WISFUL DRINKING

# BEYOND THE CASK

## REAL ALE TO GET SURREAL IN TORRANCE

by TOMM CARROLL

C. Andy Black, head brewer and self-deemed “cask vanguard” at Torrance’s Yorkshire Square Brewery, is a traditionalist. Some would say he’s a purist...maybe a perfectionist. On occasion, he’s even been called a curmudgeon. But local craft beer fans who know him understand that those descriptions mainly stem from his steadfast dedication to and protectionist stance on properly brewed, conditioned and served cask beer, or real ale. So it’s not a surprise to learn that his training as a brewer was done at England’s Rooster’s Brewing in North Yorkshire.

What does come as a bit of a shock, however, is that Yorkshire Square’s first cask-only invitational festival, which includes a judged competition of the commercially brewed entrants (a first for the greater LA area), is open to non-traditional cask ale styles like West Coast IPAs, Double IPAs, as well as (are you sitting down?) so-called “California casks” — firkins of (sometimes brite) beer with ingredients like paprika, prickly pear, pineapple or peanut butter added directly into the serving vessel. Think Anaheim’s Tiki-themed FirkFest last March.

“I want to give acknowledgment to the people who can make good alternative casks,” Black told *Beer Paper* while discussing Yorkshire Square’s upcoming Cask’s Not Dead Fest and competition, featuring 30 breweries, to be held Saturday, November 17, at the brewery. “I want everyone to have

an equal shot. I’m a British-trained brewer, but I also work in California and have a lot of respect for my fellow brewers and what they’ve come up with, so I want to capture that in the judging.”

Indeed, unlike most cask ale competitions, such as the UK’s 41-year-old Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) — where only traditional cask beers compete by style, followed by a Best of Show final — the only two categories to be judged at Cask’s Not Dead (CND) are “Traditional” (top choice will be crowned “Lord of the Old School”) and “Abnormal” (highest rated to be named “Magician of the Weird”), with unique trophies for win, place and show for both.

“What we’re trying to promote with this event is that brewers can make untraditional or ‘cocktail’ versions of cask — it’s a thing — and still compete,” Black explains. “We want to reward those who are interested in excellent cask beer, no matter what its form.” To that end, the judging criteria of the beers in both categories are going to be more unconventional than in a normal competition, with the most heavily weighted portion of the score sheet devoted to how the beer performs in the cask. “To me, drinkability is a primary aspect of quality cask beer — it’s ‘more-ishness,’” he confides. “The judges will need to be open-minded about these beers, but also have a strong understanding of what cask beer can be in all of its permutations.



Andy Black, left, with his mentor, Oliver Fozard, head brewer at England’s Rooster’s Brewing at Yorkshire Square’s taproom in 2017

Judging will *not* be on a style basis.”

Rives Borland, CND’s competition administrator who is also head brewer-in-waiting for Lomita’s imminent Project Barley, as well as an award-winning member of both the Pacific Gravity and Strand Brewers homebrew clubs (the latter of which he is a past president), agrees. “Finding judges with sufficient experience *drinking* cask ale should not be much of a problem; it’s finding local judges who have actually *judged* cask that will likely be difficult,” Borland elaborates. “Likewise, for the stewards, we will try to rely on people with professional experience dispensing cask ale; otherwise, we’ll have to train them how to pour — or pull — beer from a cask.”

Black acknowledges that organizing and putting on such an unconventional competition/festival is proving to be quite an undertaking. “This first competition is gonna be a bit of a learning curve — just putting that judging pool together,” he concedes. “We’re still such a young brewery [18 months old], and trying to pull off these big events is fuckin’ brutal. But Gary [Croft, brewery co-owner and a bona fide Yorkshireman] wanted to do it this year.”

Still, the brewer is optimistic and excited about CND, which is being eyed as an annual event. “I don’t think it will ever get to the level of the Firestone Invitational — we don’t have the capacity for that — but my

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Photo courtesy of the British Guild of Beer Writers

hope is that it'll be an event worth going to, where the invitation really means something to people," he offers. What similar event would he compare it to? "We'd like Cask's Not Dead to have more of the feel of smaller invitationals like the Double IPA Fest at the Bistro [in Hayward, CA] or Mohawk Bend's LA IPA Fest, where it's a little bit informal, a little bit serious, and a lotta fun for the people who go to it — but also the brewers are really into it," Black responds.

"Invited breweries are either those with whom I am good friends, in some sort of professional capacity, or ones I don't personally know but for whom I have a lot of respect, and like their beers," he continues. "They range from the Central Coast to San Diego, but the list is LA-heavy."

At press time, the confirmed CND participants include Arts District

Brewing, Bagby Beer, Beachwood Brewing, Cellador Ales, Eagle Rock Brewery, El Segundo Brewing, Figueroa Mountain Brewing, Firestone Walker Brewing, Green Cheek Beer, HopSaint Brewing, Inland Wharf Brewing, Institution Ale Co., Karl Strauss Brewing, Los Angeles Ale Works, MacLeod Ale Brewing, Monkish Brewing, Mumford Brewing, Pizza Port San Clemente, Riip Beer, Simmzy's Burbank, Topa Topa Brewing, Transplants Brewing, Trustworthy Brewing (formerly Verdugo West) and, of course, Yorkshire Square.

Also, in its first foray into partnering with a single local brewery to stage a beer festival, the Los Angeles Brewers Guild is the nonprofit benefactor of CND. "We are very excited to partner with Yorkshire Square on this unique, new event to help educate beer lovers

opportunities for beer drinkers to engage with our brewers and learn more about the beers we care so much about."

"This is a win-win," adds Black. "The Brewers Guild working with breweries on events promotes the guild and raises its profile as a united front of craft beer. And because of its familiarity running the LA Beer Week kickoff festival, LABG is an invaluable tool to breweries — because they know what they're doing."

For more information on Cask's Not Dead, visit Yorkshire Square's Facebook page. Tickets are available via Eventbrite.

Hope to see you over a pint or two on the 17th. Cheers!

on the lost art of cask beer," comments LABG executive director Frances Lopez. "As one of the strongest proponents of real ale in California, Andy Black and the Croft family are really going leaps and bounds to curate a festival that not only upholds tradition but also makes room to embrace the American iteration of the art. We aim to create more intimate

Award-winning beer writer Tomm Carroll is a longtime contributor to *Celebrator Beer News*. A card-carrying member of Britain's CAMRA (*Campaign for Real Ale*), he judged the *Championship Beer of Britain* competitions at the 2016 and 2017 GBBFs. Contact him at [beerscribe@earthlink.net](mailto:beerscribe@earthlink.net).



Photo courtesy of the British Guild of Beer Writers

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## COVER STORY

# BAGBY

by JULIAN SHRAGO

“Who the F@#k Is Jeff Bagby?!” adorned many a t-shirt worn by the Pizza Port brewers at the Great American Beer Festival several years back. It was somewhat of a rhetorical question for most in attendance, but for those who may be a little lean on their craft brewing history, allow me to give you a quick, but distinguished summary.

Jeff Bagby is a California native who’s been a craft brewer in the greater San Diego area for roughly 20 years. His humble beginnings as a homebrewer migrated into the professional sphere with a purposeful evolution. Armed with a sharp palate, deep curiosity, and strong work ethic, Jeff became (and is) one of the best brewers in the world. First at Oggi’s, then at Pizza Port Carlsbad, and the eponymous Bagby Beer Company, Jeff has quantitatively proven his abilities with an almost unmatched count of World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival medals. The breadth of Jeff’s brewing ability is echoed in the wide variety of styles that you’ll always find at his pub.

Jeff continues to serve as an inspiration to many brewers around the world. His abilities as a brewer are matched by his generosity as a person and huge willingness to openly share his methods. By no small measure, I became a professional brewer because of Jeff’s mentoring, friendship, and continued support. But my voice is hardly isolated here. Jeff’s name and reputation are synonymous with world-class beer. And when it comes to West Coast-style IPA, Jeff is one of its



Jeff and Dande Bagby

Photo Courtesy of Bagby Beer

originators and perfecters.

That’s who the f@#k Jeff Bagby is!

**SHRAGO:** *As one of the pioneers of west coast-style IPAs, what are some of your favorite examples being produced today?*

**BAGBY:** Russian River - Blind Pig, Sierra Nevada – Torpedo, Boneyard – RPM, Hollister - The Pope, Firestone Walker - Union Jack, and Societe – The Apprentice.

**SHRAGO:** *What are some of those most rewarding aspects of owning your own brewery/business?*

**BAGBY:** Receiving feedback from people that have more than just a positive experience with Bagby Beer in some way. Whether they learned something, experienced something that

way to go when it comes to really nailing lagers. Many processes required to make true lager require specialized equipment to accomplish the precision lagers really need. While I love these styles, and have enjoyed brewing (and drinking) them, I just don’t have a lot of experience with some of the necessary equipment yet to get our lagers where I’d love them to be. I believe committing to these styles means embracing some of the most difficult brewing that there is, which keeps me excited to continue increasing my knowledge and improving the way that we make lager at Bagby Beer.

**SHRAGO:** *What are some beers that you have been enjoying for decades that still give you a sense of wonder?*

**BAGBY:** I’ve enjoyed a lot of beers over the years but I can’t think of any that give me a sense of wonder. I will say that many of the changes in the industry in the last few years have been interesting to witness, especially when I look back on where it began for me, what was important in those early days, and how far things have shifted since then.

**SHRAGO:** *What new and emerging trends/fields/styles/ingredients are you most excited about in brewing?*

**BAGBY:** What I really hope for is the return to an appreciation for and

they never had before, or even just that they identify with, and appreciate what we are doing.

**SHRAGO:** *What are some of your passions unrelated to beer that people may or may not know about?*

**BAGBY:** Spending time with Dande and our beagles and cat. Also, cocktails and spirits have become more of a passion in the last few years, even though it is sort of related to beer.

**SHRAGO:** *Is there a style of beer you feel you’re a long way from mastering?*

**BAGBY:** I feel like I still have a long

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Jeff Bagby checking gravity of one of his beers

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celebration of classic and proper styles. As a brewer, I fell in love with beer styles from all over the world, and always tried to gain a sense of the culture and history through the beers, the brewers and these awesome places all over the world. It was always our goal to bring those experiences to our guests at Bagby through the beer.

What is sad to me is that more brewers are focusing on what is “trendy,” “new” or “innovative;” it feels like the industry is actually becoming less diverse and more homogenized when it comes to what beers are available to expose the craft beer drinker to. The stories are less important, the context is lost, the focus has shifted to whatever is newest, whatever is most likely to trade for some other beer far away, whatever is the most compelling to post on social media. And, as there are fewer brewers and breweries caring about these classic styles, beer drinkers are missing out on a huge and rich aspect of beer: the deep roots, important relationships and a real connection to beer on a global scale, which to us is so important.

**SHRAGO:** *Do you have any atypical sources of inspiration for your brewing?*

BAGBY: Not really. I am always inspired by classic or original beers and/or breweries that I feel have brewed, or continue to brew, beers that define a style.

**SHRAGO:** *You have a strong reputation for winning awards across a broad range of styles, so when creating a new recipe, what’s your general methodology?*

BAGBY: I always seek out, taste and research beers that are landmarks and style-defining. When I can I also try to visit the breweries and regions that are brewing certain styles so that I can talk with the brewers about their processes and ingredients.

(BAGBY continued on page 14)



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The Dork Squad leadership (L-R): Jeff Bagby, Dande Bagby, Executive Chef Robert Gaffney, Executive Hospitality Managers Claire Barnett and Justin Evelyn  
Photo Courtesy of Bagby Beer





(BAGBY continued)

I can then taste the beers as close to or at the source, and enjoy them in a cultural context, which is very important.

**SHRAGO:** *Is there anything in brewing (the beer itself) that you consider off-limits?*

**BAGBY:** For us, even though we love the styles and get asked all the time when we're going to start, we didn't design any part of our brewery to produce traditional lambic and/or gueuze. So, because we aren't configured for this, and therefore cannot produce them properly, I consider those styles off-limits for us right now. Maybe someday we will have the ability to produce them in a way that honors the legacy, tradition and methods of these incredible beers.

**SHRAGO:** *What should people know about you and your wife Dande that continue to shape the world-class beers and memorable customer experiences with Bagby Beer?*

**BAGBY:** What we hope people know is that everything that they experience while they are at Bagby, or they are drinking our beer somewhere, was done with a purpose. Everything that we do is the result of a past experience that we've had. Our goal is that everyone has an experience that enriches them in some way, makes them think differently about something, or challenges them a little bit. We're also constantly working to improve the



Executive Hospitality Manager Claire Barnett

Photo Courtesy of Bagby Beer

experience, get a little bit better, every day. Often these tweaks are a result of travel to other places, inspired by how problems are solved, how really terrific places are able to execute at their best level, and achieve a fantastic experience for everyone. Nothing makes us more fired up than having a really fun, quality experience, working to understand it, and applying what we learn to our place. It's enriching to us, and we hope it translates to our people, first with our staff, and ultimately to our guests.

*Born in Northern California, Julian Shrago was an aerospace engineer for over a decade before becoming a craft brewer. Along with his business partners, Gabe Gordon & Lena Perleman, they opened Beachwood BBQ & Brewing in Long Beach in 2011. The pub was recognized in 2013 as Mid-Sized Brewpub of the Year at the Great American Beer Festival, 2014 Large Brewpub of the Year at the Great American Beer Festival, & 2016 World Champion Large Brewpub at the World Beer Cup. Beachwood has expanded its brewing operations with Beachwood Blendery, along with a production facility in Huntington Beach, CA.*

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## BENNETT'S BEAT

# EAGLE ROCK BREWERY'S WOMEN'S BEER FORUM GETS AMBUSHED

by SARAH BENNETT

It all started with an email to the brewery's general info address last year with a question that no one had ever before thought to ask. "Are men allowed in the Women's Beer Forum?"

Since 2011, Eagle Rock Brewery co-owner Ting Su has used her brewhouse to host informal monthly education nights geared towards women, an effort launched to ensure that LA's growing beer scene reflected the city's diverse reality rather than craft beer's bearded-dude cliches.

She called it "Women's Beer Forum" to signal to female beer drinkers that this was created with them in mind. The goal, she says, was to level the playing field and bring more women into the conversation, not keep men out. "At the time, a lot of education needed to happen before people understood what craft beer was about," Su says. "The beer industry was and continues to be incredibly male-dominated."

She never thought that the community-minded night (which has over the years welcomed men, both as attendees and presenters) would become the target of a gender discrimination complaint, much less one of many recently filed against women's groups and small businesses by a few San Diego-based men's rights activists.

Invoking the broad protections offered to Californians under the decades-old Unruh Civil Rights Act, members of the nonprofit National Coalition for



Ting Su, pictured center, at the Women's Beer Forum

Men are going after bars that offer drink specials for women, venues that host women-only networking events and even Mother's Day giveaways at baseball stadiums, claiming they are excluding men from discounts and perks on the basis of gender. Enough of these lawsuits have been successful -- earning the men involved in them large payouts in the process -- that many, when accused, are now just choosing to settle at the threat of a suit instead of choosing to put their business on the line and drag it out in court.

But no one was thinking about the National Coalition for Men's crusade for men's rights or the specific marketing language that would prove compliance with the Unruh Act when the email inquiry asking whether or not men could attend the Women's Beer Forum glided into the general inbox. "I have to emphasize the fact that the Women's Forum hasn't been exclusionary. There's no gender or plumbing check at our events and no one has ever been turned away from buying a ticket or getting the same educational experience as anyone else because of their gender," Su says.

Yet without a specific policy on the books one way or another, an employee responded to the email as best they could, saying that men are not generally allowed at the forum but they are always more than welcome to drink in the taproom, which remains open to the public.

On the night of the forum, Su says, a man came in acting bizarrely, asking continually to go into the back, to the brewhouse where the Women's Beer Forum was supposed to take place. Because the event was a few hours off,

though, the bartender kept saying no, so he bought a beer, barely drank it and paced around for a while before finally stepping outside and not returning. No ticket was purchased and no attempt was made to enter the event after it started.

A week later, another email came to Eagle Rock Brewery, this one from the man describing his experience trying to attend the Women's Beer Forum and citing gender discrimination statutes in the Unruh Act to reinforce his claim that he was excluded. To make the problem go away, he wanted money -- lots of it. Instead of money, Su, her husband Jeremy Raub and other owners apologized for the miscommunication, reiterated that men are of course allowed (though none have taken such an intense interest in attending before), and even offered to give him the same educational experience with the same flight of beers and the same presentation as was presented to the group the night he felt excluded. "Shockingly, he declined," Su says.

(EAGLE ROCK BREWERY WOMEN'S BEER FORUM continued on page 18)

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(EAGLE ROCK BREWERY WOMEN'S BEER FORUM continued)



Women's Beer Forum

Photo Credit: Chelsey Rosetter

He also came down in price a little bit and attached the form he was planning on sending into the state as an added nudge. Eventually, he filed the form with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing and after seven months of waiting for a response, Eagle Rock Brewery was notified that there was reasonable cause to open a case. Their only options: pay a settlement or defend themselves in a potential lawsuit that the state would file on his behalf.

“Through gritted teeth and burning hot fury tears, I was like ‘Fine, let’s settle, but there has to be more,’” Su says. “The conversation can’t stop here.

We have to do something to keep them from moving on to the next group and the next company and continuing to get their money by extorting people.”

Determined to turn their ordeal into something positive, Eagle Rock Brewery launched a GoFundMe campaign last month, originally just to help recoup their legal and settlement fees, but now with a longer-range goal in mind. Calling for an end to lawsuits that allow so-called “career plaintiffs” like the men who tried to sue Eagle Rock (they are named in multiple similar suits) to exploit small businesses and women’s groups, Su and Raub are



Women's Beer Forum

Photo Credit: Chelsey Rosetter





Women's Beer Forum

Photo Credit: Chelsey Rosetter

hoping to take this fight to Sacramento. They are talking to attorneys about possible amendments to Unruh and want to knock on legislators' doors to help close any loopholes and protect events like the Women's Beer Forum that promote diversity, not hinder it.

"In the beer industry, we are going to continue to try and encourage women to join the conversation," Su says. "We are nowhere near gender equality in the beer world and there is no way to achieve any sort of diversity without creating the ability to educate yourself and feel comfortable in that world. These types of events need to continue and be encouraged."

But how do you change legislation that was also written to protect minorities and under-represented groups from discrimination? How do you end exploitation of the law by men's rights

activists trying to punish those who are trying to level the playing field? Su doesn't have an answer yet, but is encouraged by the support of everyone who has come forward to say they also want to find out.

"We're turning it around on them. We had to settle so I didn't put the entire business at risk, but I'm now going to tell everybody how to avoid them in the future," Su says. "We worked so hard to create community and I'm not okay with walking away from it and waiting for them to take it out on someone else."

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



Women's Beer Forum

Photo Credit: Chelsey Rosetter



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## YAEGER SHOTS

# STATE STREET BEER MILE BEGINS FEATURES DRAUGHTSMEN ALEWORKS

by BRIAN YAEGER



Mas Macho Mexican Amber Lager at Mosaic Locale with Hook and Press donut

Photo Credit: Tami Snow

Santa Barbara's northwestern neighbor, Goleta, is actually where UC-Santa Barbara Gauchos study and live, or at least live. Smart marketing move by UCSB since "UCG" doesn't sound quite as beachy and beautiful (in contrast, UC-Irvine blew it by not calling itself UC-Newport Beach). The point is, Goleta is every bit as much a part of the Santa Barbara community as the University and it's where Gaucho alumnus Scott Stefan co-founded Draughtsmen Aleworks. In fact, when Draughtsmen opened in 2016, it became Goleta's fourth brewery, joining Hollister, Captain Fatty's, and M. Special - all of which brew great beer and hold their own unique charms. That said...it's not Santa Barbara.

"Santa Barbara has the cache," says Stefan matter-of-factly from Draughtsmen's brand new tasting room along famed State Street. Although the brewing company was the last one into the Santa Barbara area, it's the first of four to open a second tasting room along a nine-block stretch of State Street. The others set to follow are Goleta's Captain Fatty's, Camarillo's Institution Ale and San Diego's Modern Times.

Scratch that. After an exhaustive limbo, Night Lizard Brewing

opened last month becoming the area's newest brewery. Of these five newcomers, Night Lizard is the only one that does, or will, brew onsite. OK, well, technically, scratch that, too. Santa Barbara Brewing Company ("BrewCo") opened in 1995, making it the city's oldest brewery, located just one block southeast of Night Lizard, but it is temporarily closed and will open under new ownership and a new name, Cruisery (part cruiser bike hangout, part brewery) within weeks. That means State Street will soon be home to six new brewery taprooms. Heck, let's throw in the still-fairly-new Finney's Crafthouse, a beer-forward burger joint with 30 taps that's a Frisbee's throw from the beach and this new hoppy State Street crawl has the makings of a proper Beer Mile (1.1 miles to be exact). The point being, while Santa Barbara has long been a magnet for wine-trippers from the more populous parts of SoCal, beer-trippers all of a sudden have a lot to soak up.

"Good beer is number one," says Stefan, enumerating the reasons for such a weekend getaway up the 101. "But it's not just beer. We have great food and wine. And it's not just Santa Barbara, it's a multi-stop destination," he adds, rattling off hot spots such as The Lark in SB's Funk Zone and

Industrial Eats up in Buellton, where Figueroa Mountain's production brewery and Firestone Walker's Barrelworks call home. "Come for the beer; stay for everything else."

Draughtsmen's new spot is itself destination-worthy. It opened on a Wednesday. Not exactly a banner day when the house, any house, is totaling receipts. But Santa Barbarans have been jonesing for a place like this. Dubbed "Mosaic Locale" by its developers, the former Peet's Coffee space is host to three different businesses behind its one counter, but in a tasty way they're symbiotic: Hook & Press Donuts, Buena Onda Empanadas and our friend the aleworks. The doughnut shop - SB's first true artisan purveyors of the fried dough, opened at 8 a.m. and sold out before 9:30. Two hours later,

Draughtsmen's 11 taps started pouring and had racked up more sales before 5 p.m. than the Goleta taproom's average Wednesday. (The Brazilian-American-made empanadas are the ultimate in hand-helds and, for me, make the difference between popping in for a pint or two and sticking around for a third.)

The kicker is that only the doughnut maker hyped the grand opening via social media. "It was the softest of openings," relays Stefan. "The princess and the pea minus the pea in terms of soft openings." Already, the draughtsmen and draughtswomen - the five principals are Stefan, Kris Turner, Chris Van Meeuwen, Tami Snow, and brewer Reno King - are eager to collaborate with their fellow Mosaic pieces. Buena Onda already uses Draughtsmen's Meat & Potatoes Porter

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to marinate the pork in one of their empanadas. And while the idea of a dry-hopped doughnut may or may not come to fruition, beer-infused glazes seem like a foregone conclusion.

King, a veteran of the Central Coast brewing scene who cut his teeth at Figueroa Mountain and Ventura's Posiedon, makes what is perhaps my favorite porter in the area. And I'm a sucker for his floral, delicate Japanese rice lager. But this being late 2018, it's his IPAs that rule the day. Of the 11 taps, five are IPAs. There's the new session IPA, Cougar Killer (4.4%), a hazy, of course, called Nebulous; a Belgian IPA called MultiPass; and a pair of West Coasters that are roughly 7 percenters; with my personal preference strongly leaning toward Awesome Possum. When most of the pints are \$5 and the other four IPAs are \$6, Awesome Possum costs \$7. The brewery loves using contemporary hops from the world's best growing regions whenever possible, and Awesome Possum is powered by today's holy trinity: Simcoe, Mosaic and Citra. And not in diminutive doses. The beer's original name was "Bank Breaker." So yeah, it's totally worth

the extra buck!

Reno likes the classics." In other words, a rice lager is wonderful and fairly traditional, but don't come in looking to order a passionfruit-orange-guava kettle sour (especially since you can literally get that in doughnut form from Hook & Press).

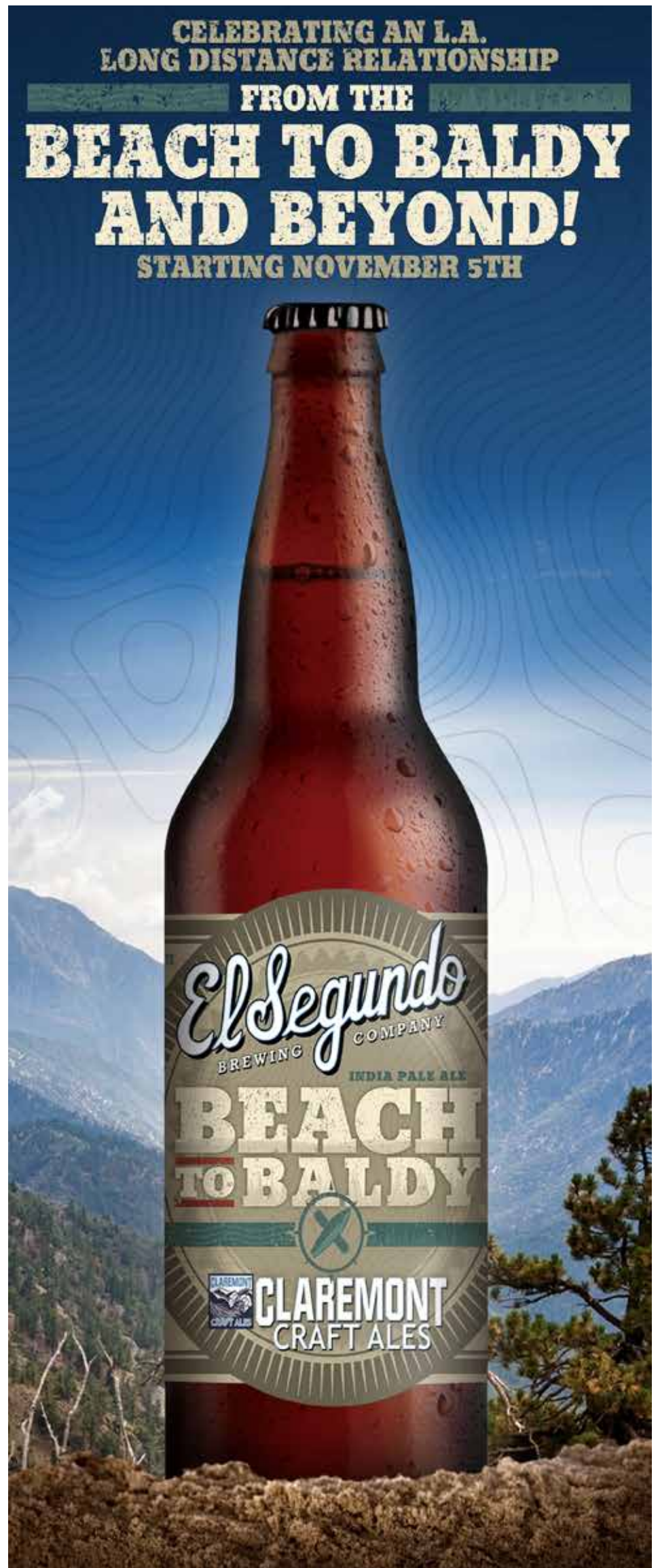
Come to think of it, that morsel would pair nicely with Nebulous, the juicier, sweeter IPA brewed with Neomexicanus hops, complementary to the Hawaiian Punch flavors. And referencing that and the other sold-out doughnuts from opening morning, Snow says the whole package demonstrates that, "Santa Barbara is excited to have - and support - local." Indeed, a handful of Draughtsmen's regulars came in, thanking the crew for saving them the short drive to Goleta.

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



Co-owner Scott Stefan

Photo Credit: Tami Snow





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216 S. Alameda St, Los Angeles  
angelcitybrewing.com

## Angry Horse Brewing

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angryhorsebrewing.com

## Barbara's at the Brewery

620 Moulton Ave #110, Los Angeles  
barbarasatthebrewery.com

## Beachwood Brewing

7631 Woodwind Dr, Huntington Beach  
beachwoodbbq.com

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210 E 3rd St, Long Beach  
beachwoodbbq.com

## Beachwood Blendery

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## Beachwood BBQ

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