

## Dynamic Duo Garner Critical Acclaim at Bearded Tang



Jon Chiusano and Jerrod Larsen

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt

by Daniel Drennon

A common and, more importantly, smart strategy if you dream of launching a new brewery is to find a decorated professional brewer who might be looking to make a move,

whether it be for a new challenge or simply a new environment. Since opening a small business, especially in the unfortunate era of COVID, is akin to rolling the proverbial dice, the best way to hedge your bets (and

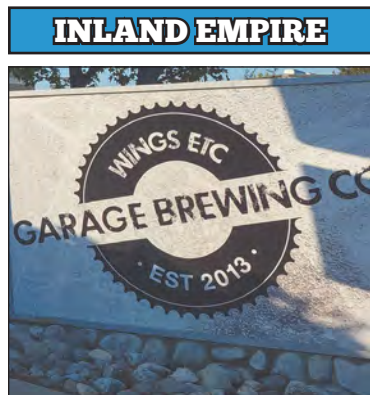
ensure your investment) is to go with a pro.

Bearded Tang, which recently opened in the very cool Rodeo 39 food court in Stanton (Orange County on Beach Boulevard just north of the 22...we didn't

know either), doubled down and hired not one, but two professional brewers: Jon Chiusano, formerly of TAPS, and Jerrod Larsen, formerly of Tustin Brewing Company. The quality of Bearded Tang beers has been superb right

out of the proverbial gate, nothing less that I would have expected when you pair two world class brewers.

(full cover story on page 8)



PAGE 2



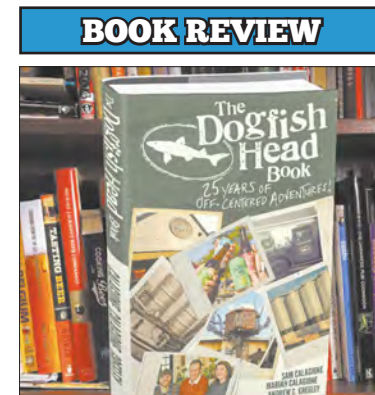
PAGE 4



PAGE 6



PAGE 12



PAGE 15

## INLAND EMPIRE

# GARAGE BREWING: SUCCESS BUILT ON COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

by Andrew Smith

There's no brewery more recognizable in the Inland Empire than Garage Brewing. They've won over 60 medals and they're easy to find across Southern California. Much of that success comes down to owner Lou Kashmere. He's something of an anomaly in the industry. He's not a brewer by background, but he is one of the sharpest, most intuitive guys you'll meet.

"This is a young people's business," says Kashmere. "I'm the oldest person you're ever going to meet." It's that experience and maturity that has provided the platform for Garage's success. His grasp for the process and understanding of the industry are clear as he methodically walks me through his production facility.

Kashmere was a successful figure before opening the brewery. His background as an electrical contractor provided a good base. He built his success on an area of land he owns at the foot of Old Town Temecula. He owns the gas station there (which his wife runs) and the building that houses a Jack in the Box. He also owned a Goodyear franchise which he sold, then bought back in 2012.

"I got this cockamamie idea to get into the beer business," he jokes. It was quite a change of direction, one based on distaste for one industry and the conviviality of another. "The garage business has no morals, everyone is out to screw each other," he adds, "I owned the (Goodyear) building and Old Town was becoming very popular."

"I enjoy the beer business," Kashmere continues, "I don't have to do things to make money. I don't have any partners. I don't have any debt. I don't have a landlord. It allows me to do what I want to do."

The brewpub started in 2013 with a 10-barrel system. Distribution started from there. It's still fully equipped with fermenters and brite tanks. In 2015, they built a new 30-barrel



*The Original Brewpub (and one time Goodyear shop)*

*Photo Credit: Andrew Smith*

brewhouse, just five miles north, in Murrieta. All distribution now runs through the new brewery. The brewpub focuses on smaller batches and barrel aging.

"It's not that difficult to make beer," Kashmere explains, "If you have the right process then you can make outstanding beer." The process is something he reiterates several times as we tour the brewery. "People who run small breweries, their whole mantra is: Every beer is going to be uniquely different. That's what makes them popular. My whole thing, as a production brewery, is that every beer has got to be the same."

"Our brewery is completely automated," he begins, pointing out the sealed trailers that contain spent grain, "It's all automated: No flies, no manual labor, no nothing" They use reverse osmosis water. Grain is dispensed and weighed through a computer system.

They own all their own kegs. And keg washing runs through a state-of-the-art Rotech system. The kegs have an internal chip which allows sanitation to be optimized via Bluetooth. "Nobody else our size has one of these," he adds.

They use a Perfect Pitch for the yeast, which removes the guess work and improves consistency. He also employs a full-time microbiologist. "We couldn't do it without a lab person," Kashmere adds, "We do fermentation checks and yeast checks every day." And he makes particular note of the "Best By" dates on every can, sending his own people behind the distributors to enforce.

"Making beer is just boiling water," he continues, "But If you don't have a filter (centrifuge) like ours, you can't clean up the beer like we can. That beer comes out clean as a whistle. We have everything they make to ensure

we get the best quality and shelf life. If there's a better way to make beer, we're going to do it."

The brewpub is still the only spot where you can visit Garage. But, during my visit, construction of a brewery taproom was close to completion. It's targeted for some time this Spring. There's a glass wall offering full view of the brewery and they'll also be offering tours.

Garage's beer portfolio stands out as a little more unique too. They've got standard flagships like 951 Blonde, Inline IPA and Mango Hefeweizen. And they've made over a dozen different Hazy's. But they're also recognizable for less common flagships like the Marshmallow Milk Stout and Belgian Tripel. The Tripel has been my go-to 6-pack for some time.

It's the quirky beers that really give Garage a different look: Peanut Butter



Inside the Brewpub (all those tables aging beer)

Photo Credit: Andrew Smith

Chocolate Milk Stout, Gingerbread or Blueberry Cream Ale, Jasmin Green Tea Lager, Hatch Chile IPA. They clearly have an inclination to make something different.

“Some people love goofy beers,” Kashmere comments, “The restaurants really suck that stuff up.” When asked about the Apple Pie Pale Ale, another personal favorite, he adds, “That beer just resonates with people.”

As for the thought process? “Somebody’s making a beer and we basically want to make a better one,” he explains, “What do we need? What do we think is lacking in the industry? I usually look for things that harmonize with food, or a reason to order a beer after dinner. I think about what we want to produce. Then I meet

with brewers and we come up with a recipe.”

There were a few of strategic changes during the pandemic. The brewpub switched from pizza to fried chicken. They do have great wings. “When we opened there were no pizza places,” explains Kashmere, “Now they’re on every corner.” He also cites simplification of the process and the fact that fried food just works with beer.

The brewpub has also been redesigned; the benches removed in favor of barrel tables. Those barrels – the ones beneath the tabletops – all contain beer. It was part of a concerted investment into the barrel program, which has been branded under the “Redux” label. They’ve also added

Mexican lager “Xxolo” and Seltzer “Bub2le” labels.

The proof is clear. The 60+ medals are the most by any brewery in the IE. That has included two Golds at GABF. In 2018, they took five medals at the US Open Beer Championships, and placed 6th in the Top 10 breweries.

In 2020, they had four of the Top 150 in Beer Connoisseur. In 2021, they had six. It’s not something Kashmere gloats over: “Most people who buy our beer buy it because it speaks for itself. It’s the process. It takes time. We’ve just learned to make beer better and faster.”

He’s not complacent about it either. It’s hard work and commitment to the process that have driven Garage’s success. “I’m here to turn on the lights and unlock the doors every day,” he notes, “I’m usually here at 5:15 to read the previous day’s reports and know where everything is at.”

The growth, the medals, the consistency – Garage Brewing is a shining model in the local craft beer business. After visiting the brewery and seeing the investments, you’ll see why. The brewpub has a great deal of beer diversity to offer. Now, I’m looking forward to sipping a beer at the main brewery itself.

*Andrew Smith grew up in England and ‘thought’ he knew everything about beer before he landed on the California craft boom. He covers the Inland Empire more extensively on his blog at CraftBeerIE.com*



The Murrieta Brewery - Rotech Keg Washer (right)

Photo Credit: Andrew Smith

# BEER PAPER

OWNER/PUBLISHER/EDITOR: Daniel Drennon

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Joshua Cortez

HEAD WRITER: Daniel Drennon

SENIOR CONTRIBUTOR: Tomm Carroll

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS:

Tony Betancourt, Matthew Garcia, Sean Inman, David Mulvihill, Andrew Smith, and Owen Williams

Beer Paper is 100% funded by our advertisers.  
Please support them!

## ADVERTISE WITH BEER PAPER

We distribute 20,000 print issues a month and have direct access to regional craft beer consumers. For more information about advertising with Beer Paper please contact us at [danieldrennon@gmail.com](mailto:danieldrennon@gmail.com).

WEB: [www.BeerPaperLA.com](http://www.BeerPaperLA.com)

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/BeerPaperLA](https://facebook.com/BeerPaperLA)

TWITTER/INSTAGRAM: @BeerPaperLA

©2022 Beer Paper L.A. All Rights Reserved.

## BREWER'S CORNER

# WHAT DOES BARREL-AGED ACTUALLY MEAN?

by Owen Williams



Owen Williams, Ritual Brew Master

Photo Credit: Calvin Cardenas

Historically beer was brewed and stored in vessels—early on the vessels were made of clay and fired to make them strong. Later, the Romans brought us wooden barrels. Through trials and tribulations the wood of choice became Oak as it lends to being very hard (durable) and imparted a nice wood flavor; a flavor that wasn't overpowering, like a Cedar or Pine. Some sour ales are still being aged in Cedar, but here at Ritual Brewing, we don't make sour-ales. Charring the internal sides of oak barrels make them sanitary and allows the wood to react favorably with the liquid contents. The charring brings about a nice mellowing and removal of some unwanted flavor components (like sulfurs). It also brings about a caramel coloring to the liquid (no charring lends to very little coloring where more charring

lends to deeper amber colors). People found that aging a high proof (usually above 6.0% ABV) liquid in these charred oak barrels mellowed the product and imparted vanilla, leather and tobacco flavors. This flavoring is caused by oxidation. Oxidation is usually not a good thing for beer once past primary fermentation and makes for a cardboard or wet-paper flavor. As the liquid (in our cases 12% ABV and above) gets warmer it expands and goes into the wood. When the liquid cools, it is drawn out from the wood. One warming and cooling cycle is called a season (or year). 24 seasons equals 24 years for example.

Here at Ritual, we've taken our high octane Fat Hog and Big Deluxe (12.2% ABV) and aged them in several different types of barrels. Not different wood (all are white American Oak

with #3 char), but wood that has had a high test (proof) different liquid (160+ proof) Cocktails or Whiskey. Some of the whiskey may have been made from Rye (e.g. Rye Whiskey Barrel), a Scotch Barrel (American Whisky) Manhattan Cocktail, Boulevardier (an alcoholic drink composed of whiskey, sweet vermouth, and Campari), or Bourbon Barrel. We either put in our Fat Hog or our Big Deluxe in one of these barrels.

We have filled numerous barrels throughout the years and we let them age in ambient temperature on barrel racks in our tasting room. They get warm in the Summer and cool in the Winter. Even though the beer can come from the same batch and go into a certain type of barrel, each and every barrel tastes unlike the other (maybe very similar or very different). They are just like people: everyone has a different personality although they may

look the same. This biotransformation (change in aroma and/or flavor) is the chemical modification (oxidation) on a chemical compound (current aroma and flavor compounds) lending to new (novel) aromas and flavors. It's all up to the wood, the product aged in it prior, the product going into the barrel and how it was treated while in the barrel.

What makes it "fun" for us is about every six months we taste each and every barrel. I say "fun" because it really is a pain. We have to have a quiet, clean space (free from distractions visually and olfactory). Then you need to evaluate whether the barrel is good to drink, blend it with another barrel or barrels or let it spend more time in the barrel or dump it. This sometimes is a gamble. If the barrel gets too much aging it can taste papery or astringent. When you taste our Barrel-Aged Beer, know that each



Everything you need  
for your brewery

5692 Buckingham Dr, Huntington Beach, CA, 92649  
714-891-1150 • Curtis@brewershardware.com  
www.brewershardware.com

f i t You Tube @brewershardware

keg will taste different from another keg...some better than others. A buddy of mine likes to come by and bring high-end barrel-aged beers to taste. He loves to let them 'warm up allowing other great aromas and flavors to express themselves'. Problem for me is I can hardly wait more than ten minutes...if it's a good beer, I want to drink it all quickly; swishing it around in the mouth, through my teeth and coating my palate. When I swallow and exhale through my nose (retro-nasal) a whole myriad of aromas and flavors are produced. They don't hit you all at once; instead, there are multiple layers of flavors and aromas and they do change the warmer the product gets. What makes them really fun for me is the talking about the aromas and flavors with the people I'm drinking them with...now that's fun! Sometimes fellow drinkers can help you express aromas and flavors you just can't put your tongue on (pun intended) and this leads to enjoying the experience even more.

Note flavors of plums, prunes, dark cherries (stone fruits), vanilla, tobacco, toasted caramels, toffees, leather and coffees all sounded by our Fat Hog Barley wine or our Big Deluxe an



Ritual Brewing outdoor patio

Photo Credit: Calvin Cardenas

Imperial Oat Stout all of which were aged in previously used (one time) high-proof barrels for varying lengths of time... when you can taste four different barrel-aged beers alongside of one another, that sounds like a fun time! Cheers!

Owen Williams started his professional brewing career at Riverside Brewing Company (back in the mid 1990's), then spent almost 12 years building 11

breweries and 86 restaurants for BJ's Brewery. From there he started his own brewery consulting business and picked up a professor gig at Cal Poly Pomona teaching an upper-division course about Beer and Culture. During that chapter he met his business partner, Steve Dunkerken, and opened Ritual Brewing Co--which just celebrated their 9-year anniversary. For the last 30 years Owen has won multiple County, State and National

Medals for his award-winning brews. Besides his most recent Gold Ribbon at the SDIBF, he is proud of the Ritual and Bottle Logic collaboration which won Gold and Best of Show for Arcane Ritual at the Festival of Barrel-Aged Beers (FOBAB) in Chicago. Currently he manages production at Ritual Brewing Co and teaches at the University of Redlands and California Polytechnic University—Pomona.

# EUREKA

## BREWING COMPANY

EUREKA BREWING COMPANY  
BREWED WITH PRIDE IN CALI

13723 1/2 HARVARD PL, GARDENA, CA 90249

Follow us @eurekabrewco

★ HARVARD PL.

139<sup>TH</sup> ST.

ROSECRANS AVE.

WESTERN AVE.

NORMANDE AVE.

L.A. BEER  
DRINK  
LOCAL

DISCOVER  
GREAT  
BEER

## OC BEAT

# Rad Beer Co and Rad Beer and Kitchen

by David Mulvihill

Early last year, Beer Paper (online) introduced readers to Anaheim's Rad Beer Co, brought to us by Dana Point's Rad Beer & Kitchen team: Joe Wilshire (Project Social; Docent Brewing co-founder) Steve Martin (Project Social), Cameron Collins (Brew Ha Ha Craft Beer Festivals), and Dylan Mobley (former head brewer at Bottle Logic Brewing and Helmsman Ale House).

## The Setting

Rad Beer Co is located within the space formerly occupied by Legends Craft Brewery. While the address may be the same, the look, feel and beer, received a complete Rad makeover. Wood tones were replaced by Rad's signature red, black and white appointments throughout. The lighting and sound systems were upgraded. Sports fans are satiated by the quadruple screen video wall above the bar, as well as the beer streaming from the new 20-tap Rad-Red pipe draft tower. The Rad Wall mural, courtesy of local artist Juan Marante (AKA Tocayo), dominant and expressive, completes the scene.

During my first pre-opening visit last March, Dylan was hard at work readying the brewhouse for brewing again. His meticulous sanitation



Rad Beer's Joe Wilshire, Cameron Collins, and Dylan Mobley

Photo Credit: David Mulvihill



## GOOD BEER, LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOME

Get tangled up in a new ultra aromatic IPA, Hoptangle, releasing this month.

Or relax as the sun sets in the west with Blood Orange Meridian, our Belgian Style-sour, boasting the smooth citrus accents of blood orange with classic Blendery Funk.

Beachwood



Steve Martin

Photo Courtesy of Rad Beer

processes included a complete breaking down of the system and connectors to thoroughly sterilize every component. Rad Beer's 10-barrel system and tanks have current capacity for 110 barrels of fermenting beer, with adequate space to grow and easily double that size. Production supplies the onsite tasting room, Rad Beer & Kitchen (formerly Rad Brat), Project Social, and a growing number of accounts via self-distribution.

### Brewing Chops

Dylan Mobley's venture into commercial brewing began in 2013. As an avid homebrewer with professional aspirations, he secured a coveted spot in the Master Brewers Program, a twin-campus course of study and hands on training that takes place at the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago and the Doemens Academy in Munich, Germany. After graduating the program, his first position was with Stone Brewing Company, where he worked all areas of brewery production for over a year. Next, he joined Jon Carpenter and Angel City Brewery in Los Angeles for a brief stint prior to accepting the head brewer position at Bottle Logic in April of 2015. Four years later he left Bottle Logic to pursue plans of opening his own

brewery in Dana Point with his wife.

When initial plans didn't work out, he took time to regroup and reconsider options. During this time he hopped on board with Helmsman Ale House in Newport Beach to assist with getting its new beer program started.

### New Chapter: Rad Beer Co.

Mobley explored several ideas and concepts for brewery/ craft beer-focused partnerships with Cameron, Joe, and Steve. Those began with opening of Rad Brat in Dana point and quickly morphed into what we now know as Rad Beer Co.

The beer: Given Mobley's Munich-based lager brewing training and an affinity for the same, lagers are a featured part of Rad's core beers (i.e. King Minutia German-style Pilsner: crisp, clean and refreshing). No stranger to brewing well-appointed IPAs, a varying mix of delectable West Coast, Hazy and Double IPAs will gratify those with hoppy aspirations. Rad Beer's nod to the Angels, Halo Red IPA, balanced and bold, offers old school color, pine and citrus, while finishing with contemporary tropical notes. A rotation of on-point North American, British and Belgian inspired styles (and even Berliner weisse-style kettle sours) rounds out the collection. Some collaboration brews are in the works. Dylan will be brewing beers with Shaun Morgan (1886 Brewing in Orange), the folks at Artifex (San Clemente), and other local brewers, and likely hitting the road to brew with some out-of-state brewers.

This BEER PAPER reporter recently met Collins and Wilshire for lunch at the newly re-branded Rad Beer & Kitchen for a Rad Beer update.

Rad Beers tasted during the sitting included:

Combo Swell Brown: prominent malt, but light & refreshingly balanced.

Backyard Buds West Coast IPA, with Mosaic and Citra hops as the stars.

Sea of Haze IPA: Provides the tropical, melon and citrus richness hazy fans are looking for, whilst approachable to IPA purists.

Dave Tripel: At 9% ABV, this traditionally crafted Belgian-style Tripel opens with an initial subtlety of essence and aroma, exposing a common sense punch-line of flavors as it crosses your palate.

### Rad Beer & Kitchen

The aforementioned Rad Beer & Kitchen opened in Dana Point in December, 2020 as Rad Brat, with a dogs, brats, sausages & craft beer concept. Community centered within the La Plaza Park Complex, the team wanted to provide an approachable casual welcoming atmosphere, promoting a high energy, surf, skate, rock and family-friendly vibe. With a successful start prior to opening of Rad Beer Co, and time to gauge progress since, the team felt improvements and tweaks to concept could result in reaching more of the community and solidifying identification with its brewery.

Holton Britt, former chef at The Cellar in San Clemente, was enlisted to redesign the menu and expand offerings to include dishes crafted to pair with Rad Beer and guest beers on tap. Modifications were made to the interior dining area, with full table service replacing the fast-casual lineup ordering process. While popular brats, dogs, smash burgers, salads and malts are still available, entrees now include short ribs & mash, Jambalaya, fried chicken, fish tacos, fish n' chips, and mac n' cheese, and additional daily

specials, such as the bacon chowder (with luscious chunks of slab bacon) I enjoyed with lunch.

Wilshire expressed his gladness with having Holton on the team and no longer being limited by "Brat" in the name. It now "...allows Holton to do all of this fun food that everybody gets excited about!" New faces abound as the customer base grows. Updating the name to Rad Beer & Kitchen solidifies its connection with the brewery. 28 rotating handles typically include many of Rad Beer Co's current brews, and numerous selections of friends' craft beers on tap, from local breweries and breweries across California and the US. An ample choice of cans and bottles, hard seltzer and ciders are also available.

Rad Beer Co  
1301 S Lewis St, Anaheim

Rad Beer & Kitchen  
34091 La Plaza, Dana Point

David Mulvihill continues his thirst to experience and promote the best of craft beer. He also provides business-side support (reporting, excise tax, policies & personnel) to local breweries and brewers guilds. david@socalcraftbeer.com.



## COVER STORY

# DYNAMIC DUO GARNERS CRITICAL ACCLAIM AT BEARDED TANG

by Daniel Drennon

A common and, more importantly, smart strategy if you dream of launching a new brewery is to find a decorated professional brewer who might be looking to make a move, whether it be for a new challenge or simply a new environment. Since opening a small business, especially in the unfortunate era of COVID, is akin to rolling the proverbial dice, the best way to hedge your bets (and ensure your investment) is to go with a pro.

Bearded Tang, which recently opened in the very cool Rodeo 39 food court in Stanton (Orange County on Beach Boulevard just north of the 22...we didn't know either), doubled down and hired not one, but two professional brewers: Jon Chiusano, formerly of TAPS, and Jerrod Larsen, formerly of Tustin Brewing Company. The quality of Bearded Tang beers has been superb right out of the proverbial gate, nothing less that I would have expected when you pair two world class brewers.

I sat down with Chuisano and Larsen on the brewery's spacious back patio to chat.

**DRENNON:** *Jon. You're actually one of the co-founders and the Director of Brewing Operations for Bearded Tang. Please take us through the genesis, formation and launch of Bearded Tang.*



Bearded Tang tap handles

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt

**CHIUSANO:** Seeing this project come to fruition from blue prints has been a very exciting, yet tumultuous experience, especially in the midst of opening a brewery during COVID. The concept was founded on the idea that an anchor brewery within a larger marketplace would present a potentially unique experience for our customers upon every visit to our location within Rodeo 39 Public

Market. We experienced a number of inevitable construction-based delays pre-COVID, but pushing through the buildout during the pandemic was quite an experience. We experienced significant equipment delays for example, including purchasing and rebuilding a used brewhouse, but I wouldn't trade the experience for anything else as I feel that it has made me not only a better brewer, but a more patient human being.

Fortunately, we have had the pleasure of working with many breweries around Orange County and Los Angeles in a collaborative fashion, and these industry colleagues have helped us enormously. With the insanity of 2020, finally seeing smiling faces enjoying the beer and general hype around the brewery has made the entirety of the year's difficulties incredibly worthwhile, and has made us strive even further to improve our community and industry.

**DRENNON:** *What size is your brewhouse and what are your short and long-term production goals for Bearded Tang?*

**CHIUSANO:** We have an oversized 10bbl Specific Mechanical Brewhouse. What is exciting about this particular brewhouse is that it was engineered to create fantastic European style beers through means of decoction and traditional step mashing. Throughout the build, we made the brewhouse ours by adding a number of customizations that allows us to produce less traditional styles such as NEIPAs. In our design, we placed nine 10bbl Tanks and five 20bbls tanks with the idea of having an ever-revolving tap list, focusing on consistency, variety, and creativity. This amount of cellar space for such a small brewery (less than 2000 sq ft) allows us to dedicate a portion of our tank space to what we feel are world class lagers out the gate, as well as churn out other clean and balanced styles that are designed



THE ORDINARIE.

AN AMERICAN TAVERN

THE ORDINARIE OFFERS CRAFT BEER, COCKTAILS, CHEF INSPIRED FOOD & LIVE ENTERTAINMENT.

Located at 210 The Promenade, Long Beach CA (562) 676-4261

INFO @ THEORDINARIE.COM





Jon Chiusano

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt



Jerrod Larsen

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt

to be paired with the food options that Rodeo 39 provides.

**DRENNON:** *You both became assistant brewers in 2011, Jon at Santa Barbara Brewing and Jerrod at Tustin Brewing. Jon, you brewed for Bottle Logic and later joined the stellar TAPS team of brewers that garnered a remarkable 11 World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival medals during your tenure. Please tell us about your learning curve.*

**CHIUSANO:** I'd say the steepest learning curve I experienced was during my tenure at Bottle Logic, where I finished my coursework through the American Brewers Guild. Between BL and TAPS, I was held to an extremely high standard of consistency and cleanliness. Each of the locations I have worked at have presented their own unique challenges and separate learning curves. Santa Barbara Brewing Company (RIP) was an incredibly aging and old school brewery that was like caring for an old ship that was always on the verge of sinking. I learned the important skill set of constantly being able to fix and maintain brewery infrastructures. At

Bottle Logic, Kyle Manns and I were given a shiny and brand new brewery to work with, where the equipment ran relatively perfectly (in terms of a brewery that is), so I was able to heavily focus on my brewing process, recipe development, barrel aging, forecasting, and management skills, as well as being part of a start-up environment. At TAPS, I returned to a pub environment, but here is where I began to really improve upon my craft with the assistance of an all-star team. TAPS has had an incredibly rich history of fantastic brewers, so I was honored to have had a head brewer title as well as helping to build their Tustin location. Bearded Tang has given me another unique learning curve pertaining starting a brewery from scratch, and the pile of experience I've had from my previous breweries has proven absolutely invaluable.

**DRENNON:** *Jerrod, you were responsible for a very impressive five World Beer Cup and GABF medals during your nine years at Tustin Brewing Company. What was your learning curve?*

(COVER STORY continued on page 10)

BELMONT BREWING CO





Oceanfront brewpub serving up local beer and casual eats in Long Beach

 **OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!**

MON - THU: 11:30 AM - 11:00 PM  
 FRI: 11:30 AM - 11:30 PM  
 SAT: 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM  
 SUN: 10:00 AM - 10:30 PM

 25 39TH PLACE  
 LONG BEACH, CA 90803

BELMONTBREWING.COM



Jon Chiusano and Jerrod Larsen

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt

(COVER STORY continued)

**LARSEN:** At Tustin Brewing, I was required to brew six core/house beers and keep them on tap at all times. Brewing these same beers over and over, I was able to hone in on my process very fast. When space would allow it, I would brew new recipes and experimental brews. Being in a brewpub setting, I was allowed to experiment with different raw materials on a weekly basis. My time at TBC allowed me to get familiar with a lot of different ingredients and dial in my recipes.

**DRENNON:** *When and where did you guys meet and how did you, Jon, end up hiring Jerrod to be Bearded Tang's Head Brewer?*

**CHIUSANO:** Jerrod and I met during my tenure at Bottle Logic when he came by to pick up some malt. From there, our friendship blossomed and we eventually began to discuss the possibility of working together down the line. The two of us always had a similar approach to brewing and our personalities meshed perfectly, so when the opportunity to hire a head brewer for BTB arose, offering Jerrod the job became a no-brainer.

**DRENNON:** *You are a critically-acclaimed two-man brewing team, aka the dynamic duo in my book. Your beers have been exceptional right out of the gate. Explain for those of us who are not brewers what each of your roles are in the brewhouse and how you mesh*

*responsibilities to produce what are, right out of the gate, tasting like world class beer.*

**CHIUSANO:** I am glad you think that we are the dynamic duo and thank you for the kind words about our early beers. We have an incredible opportunity to utilize both of our knowledge pertaining the craft and our combined twenty years of professional brewing experience, so meshing responsibilities comes quite naturally. Currently, we are splitting roles evenly, though Jerrod and I joke about my administrative responsibilities. We have a great opportunity to utilize our unique past experiences and combine forces to create a dependable craft beer brand.

**DRENNON:** *Who is responsible for recipe development and formulating the overall tap list?*

**CHIUSANO:** I have had the lovely/bittersweet opportunity to develop recipes over the last 18 months while the project was in the early brewing phases. COVID presented me a lot of time to stay at home and draft SOPs, potential draft lists, and of course recipes. Though, now that we have been working together for over a month and the learning curve has flattened, we will begin sharing the responsibility more heavily and really rely/lean on each other for creativity.

**DRENNON:** *What is your process for naming the beers and speaking of naming, explain the choice of Bearded Tang for the brewery?*

**CHIUSANO:** I have taken pride in my beer names. I keep a notebook with me at all times in the event I hear a funny phrase or name. Pop culture references and puns are the obvious choice, but every now and then I'll hear an accidentally poetic phrase or word that cracks me up and I have to write it down. Lately, Jerrod and I have been coming up with some great names from simple conversation, music, or life experiences. Bearded Tang was chosen as the brewery name prior to my hiring, but I found the brand to be a great platform for beer as it creates a silly and recognizable character which embodies our company: community focused, creative, and obviously fun. The Blue Tang, similar to Dory in "Finding Nemo" was chosen to be our pipe-smoking, mustachioed fish. We have nicknamed him

## HOST A CUSTOM CRAFT BEER TASTING IN THREE EASY STEPS

1. BUILD YOUR PACKAGE
2. RECEIVE YOUR INDEPENDENT CRAFT BEER
3. SIP, LEARN & ENJOY!



SCAN CODE  
TO BOOK!





Cone Deaf (wet hopped IPA)

“Fil” (a suggestion that references filling a glass compliments of our brewer pal Ian McCall from Riip Beer Co.). Blue Regal Tangs play important roles in the ecosystem by maintaining the health of coral reefs, and we were inspired by this integral fish that protects its community.

**DRENNON:** *Where do you see Bearded Tang in five years?*

CHIUSANO: We are striving to have multiple locations across multiple Rodeo Marketplaces. Most importantly, I see Jerrod and I creating a craft beer brand that is synonymous with quality and community.

**DRENNON:** *What knowledge, skills and abilities do you think aspiring brewers need to develop to achieve that simple yet lofty status?*

CHIUSANO: Put simply, beer is like any other



The Bearded Tang and DFD

craft, the more you study, the more you understand what you don't know. The importance of becoming exceptional at anything is, I believe, admitting to yourself that you don't know as much as you think you do. Also, don't use too much crystal malt (wink).

**DRENNON:** *What is your own favorite thing about being a professional brewer?*

CHIUSANO: To beat a dead horse, I love the community. I feel at home inside this industry, and I love the countless approaches that can be taken (and learned from colleagues) to make a good beer. Having something tangible that I can enjoy, and see others enjoy, keeps me motivated to create and share memorable experiences through the canvas of beer.

LARSEN: It's nice to see people really enjoy the beers that we brew. I enjoy being a part of the whole process. Start to finish, grain to glass.

**DRENNON:** *And then what is your least favorite thing?*

CHIUSANO: Probably people asking me if I “just drink beer all day.” No, I clean and use Ekos all day.

LARSEN: I'd have to agree with Jon. People assume that brewers just drink all day. Also, I despise dirty glassware.

**DRENNON:** *We all despise dirty glassware! If you were not brewers, what would you guys be?*

CHIUSANO: I fell in love with brewing because of the balance between manual labor, science, and creativity/artistry. I have a difficult time imagining myself in another role that could fancy each of those three criteria, but in all likelihood, I would probably go into civil or electrical engineering.

LARSEN: Before I was a brewer I was in Dental Ceramics. So, if brewing beer had never piqued my interest I probably would be still be involved in the Dental Arts in some way.

**DRENNON:** *Which is more important: Work ethic or talent?*

CHIUSANO: There is no talent without work ethic. Talent can be molded with work ethic. Without a work ethic, one is stagnant.

LARSEN: Definitely work ethic. You have to have that in order to get through an endless grueling work week. Talent comes with getting the experience.

**DRENNON:** *Please describe yourself in one word or phrase.*

LARSEN: Ambitious.

CHIUSANO: Sapere Aude.

**DRENNON:** *I had to look that one up and I love it. Readers: If you don't know it, your homework assignment is to look it up, too. Let's all learn a cool Latin phrase!*

## Beer as Unique as the People Who Drink It



Beer - Food - Games - Events

2964 Columbia St, Torrance

## TO LIVE & DRINK IN LA

# The Wide World of Schwarz DARK LAGER CELEBRATED, AWARDED IN DTLA

by Tomm Carroll

Though not a trendy beer type by any means, and typically neither a winter nor holiday staple, the classic German dark lager style known as Schwarzbier was nonetheless venerated with a tap takeover and local competition at Downtown LA's Arts District Brewing at high noon on Sunday, December 12. It was called "Schwarz-Mas Time Schwarz-Off."

Firestone Walker Propagator's eponymously titled Schwarzbier was chosen the best example of the entries by the judges, and Sam Tierney, head brewer at the Venice-based Propagator, was on hand to collect his award (aSchwarzd?). Second place went to Nighthawk from Moorpark's Enegren Brewing, which almost exclusively brews German-style beers, followed by Foreteller from There Does Not Exist, a brewery in San Luis Obispo, in third. Nachtkrapp from San Gabriel's Ogoogo Brewing took the People's Choice Award, as voted by drinkers at the Schwarz-fest.

Other breweries competing in the Schwarz-Off included All Season,

LA; Angel City, DTLA; Arts District, DTLA; Boomtown, DTLA; Cervceria del Pueblo, Pasadena; Eagle Rock Brewery; Figueroa Mountain, Westlake Village; Highland Park, Chinatown; Long Beach Beer Lab; Lucky Luke, Palmdale; Mumford, DTLA; Party Beer, LA; and Three Weavers, Inglewood.

All told, 17 beers were entered in the competition, not all of them technically Schwarzbiers. Some were other dark lagers, and one was actually an ale (none of which placed in the contest), all from brewers who wanted to be included but couldn't quite make brewing a Schwarz fit into their schedule in time; a Schwarzbier does need to be lagered, after all.

This was mainly due to the short notice of the Schwarz-Off. "It was definitely last minute," confessed Dave Ziolkowski, head brewer at Arts District and organizer of the event, who didn't send out an official call for entries until the beginning of November. "But I had been polling a lot of brewer friends to gauge



*Schwarz competition winners, from left, Firestone Walker Propagator's Roland Montgomery and Sam Tierney; There Does Not Exist's Anthony Bagdasarian; and Enegren's Sean McInerney*

*All Photos Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer*

their interest and availability to contribute. Ogoogo brewed their first-ever Schwarz that week to make it into the comp. We even had a few breweries join in after our social media announcements."

The idea of Schwarz-Mas as a festival and competition stemmed from "many nights of a group of us drinking pints together: myself, [Mumford Brewing's] Peter Mumford, [LA Brewers Guild's] Leti Barajas and [Highland Park Brewing's] Blanca Quintero," explained Ziolkowski. "Leti's favorite style to drink is Schwarzbier, and the rest of us all started campaigning for our individual brewery's Schwarzes to be her favorite. Then Blanca and I started talking about hosting some sort of official showdown to settle it. Arts District has the space and ability to carry guest beer kegs, so the easiest way to execute a Schwarz-Off was for us to just host a big tap takeover."

As for scheduling the event during the run-up to the Christmas holiday, "The production timing for the core

of us was right for it to land at the end of the year," he adds. "Plus, there's just something comforting about the mildness and nutty roast of Schwarzbier that works for the holidays — despite it not being a winter-specific style."

### Schwarz Race

Speaking of style, the entries in the Schwarz-Off were blind-judged to the style guidelines of the Brewers Association, along with some of the specifics of the BJCP (Beer Judge Certification Program), in the private backroom "Study" of the brewery's taproom at the start of the event. Judges included brewers/ reps from breweries: Ting and Jeremy Raub, Eagle Rock; Blanca Quintero and Josh Penney, Highland Park; Erick Garcia, All Season; Devon Randall, Homebound; Sam Tierney, FW Propagator; Cesar Flores, Dry River; and Dave Ziolkowski, Arts District.

Non-brewery judges were: Franny "Fullpint" Cannon, Los Angeles Brewers Guild; Matt Garcia, *Beer*



*View of judging table*



All of the judges

Paper photographer; Gary Magnone, Hopped LA; Hal Mooney, LA Beer Hop/Your Beer Friend; and yours truly. Arts District's assistant brewer Alex Lucio, Jr. served as steward.

All judges evaluated the first round, and advanced the beers they thought worthy of consideration for the best Schwarzbier to the final round. Then, to ensure impartiality, only the non-brewing judges chose the winners from

the quintet of beers left standing.

For a little behind-the-scenes intrigue, this judge can now safely reveal that among the final five, two brews were quickly eliminated. The third beer was definitely a keeper, but also definitely third place, as the remaining two were stellar. Our panel was split; some judges favored one, the others liked the

(TO LIVE & DRINK IN LA continued on page 14)



Dave Ziolkowski of Arts District, the organizer



Judging the first round, from left, Ting Su, Jeremy Raub and Hal Mooney  
All Photos Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

(TO LIVE & DRINK IN LA continued)

other. This Schwarz owned the aroma, but that Schwarz favored the flavor. More swirling, sniffing, sipping, retro-nasal olfactoring...letting the beer warm a bit, then repeating. Suddenly, our allegiances started to shift. What just seemed like the best was now bested...slightly. We finally reached a consensus. But it was close; the beer-

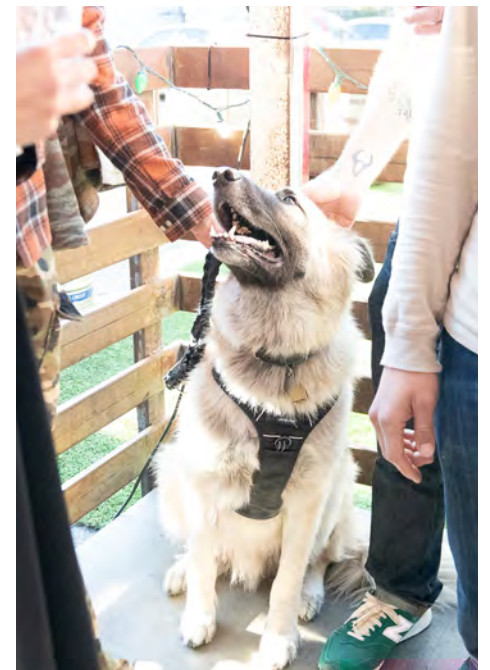
judging equivalent of a photo finish.

The turnout was strong for Schwarz-Mas, with most folks congregating on Arts District's patio on that sunny Sunday, and it did not seem strange to see them sampling dark beers by the half or full pint. "All of the participating breweries' staffs were out representing, along with a hefty amount of industry friends from other



Franny Cannon, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Brewers Guild, with husband Bryant and dog Sherbie  
local LA spots," Ziolkowski said.

Reflecting on the success of the event, he continued, "It felt great that the Schwarz-Mas spirit was in the air. The energy was fantastic! I feel like so many members of our local brewing community were thirsting for something like this to bring them together over a shared love. Schwarzbier, as a style, lives in a neither-here-nor-there space on taplists, and has built a reputation for itself among brewers as being too esoteric for the average consumer to seek out. But the beauty of the style lies in its simplicity of its production, creating something more than the sum of its parts. Toast, nuttiness, comforting crispness, high drinkability — it all translates universally. I hope Schwarz-Mas is able to contribute



Milo loves the attention

to more Schwarzes showing up year round."

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Schwarz-Mas Schwarz-Off will be back in 2022, according to Ziolkowski. So keep that in mind, local brewers who did not have a proper Schwarzbier to contribute to December's competition and festival.

In closing, Ziolkowski posits, "What other under-appreciated styles can we work toward celebrating in 2022? Maybe a Maibock Bock-Off in May?"

Why not? There's more than enough time to brew and long-lager one by then!

Tomm Carroll is a Los Angeles-based beer writer / judge / educator / historian / collector / traveler / drinker (not always in that order). He can be reached at [beerscribe@earthlink.net](mailto:beerscribe@earthlink.net).



# Tortilla Cantina

Taco Bistro and Sports Bar

**ORDER SOME OF YOUR FAVORITES  
AND HAVE IT DELIVERED TO A LOCAL BREWERY  
TAKE 15% OFF WITH PROMO CODE "BEERME"**

**(FREE DELIVERY WITH IN 6 MILES)**

**Some local favorites**

**Such as our shrimp civiche cocktails,  
world famous wings to our handmade  
jalapeno poppers.**

**Or try a local favorite,  
6 or 12 pack of crispy tacos.  
(chicken, pork, beef)**

**Fresh made to order salads  
(shrimp, chicken or steak)**

**Check our Beyond Menu featuring  
Nomad Vegan Eats Nacho Sauce.**

**Then top it off with some apple  
or chocolate chimis - a local favorite.**

**order at - [www.TortillaCantina.com](http://www.TortillaCantina.com)**



Nicholas Rupnarain from Highland Park Brewing

## BOOK REVIEW

# Off-Centered Book and Beer

by Sean Inman

The well-worn phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words” really applies to *The Dogfish Head Book - 26 Years of Off-Centered Adventures* by Sam and Mariah Calagione with Andrew C. Greeley.

You get the historical overview of the Delaware brewery that could be argued was the first FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) brewery before that acronym even existed. That history spans very humble beginnings and cobbled together brewing equipment to literal history as they re-create beers from all over the world and time.

I would liken this book to being invited to a friend’s house who just came back from vacation and is going through their photos. In this case, that friend is an easy storyteller who has had not a plain vanilla vacation but has globe trotted and gotten into scrapes but is still smiling at the end. You leave the house thinking that in lesser hands the night would have been overly long.

From personal remembrance and from the local perspective, both 60 Minute and 90 Minute IPA were much sought after in the days before breweries in Los Angeles started sprouting. Any craft beer bar worth its salt would try to get their beers but they were almost always at brewing capacity so shipments all the way to the West Coast were erratic. But despite that, Sam did make time for Los Angeles by hosting an event at the Four Points Hotel near LAX wearing barbershop quartet attire and hosting a bocce ball competition with local breweries as part of the off-centered entertainment.

There are times in the book where the enthusiasm goes a little overboard but then you run across

an employee profile and you get pulled back in alongside the scrappy upstarts. I mean, what brewery history takes the time to talk about the receptionist for two pages on not inexpensive glossy pages? That says volumes about the company.

The one other quibble that I have, is that a lot of time was spent talking about the Dogfish Head Inn and assorted restaurant ventures. They are parts of the story but that extra space could have been used to place the brewery into context with the larger craft beer community. Or to be spent highlighting other employees.

With 2022 starting, thoughts turn to what next? Mariah Calagione replied that “Throughout the process of writing *The Dogfish Head Book*, one question I’ve been asked countless times – and I’ve asked myself this too – is, ‘what will the next 26 years bring?’ Honestly, I don’t know ... I’m not sure any of us do, but I’m sure excited to find out!” Considering that they make spirits, are now tied with Sam Adams and have a Miami location, anything does seem possible.

It has been a long road since that first home brew batch of beer in 1993 but after finishing this book, I wanted to see a series like this about the so-called “Heritage” breweries. I want to see the roads that Sierra Nevada, Yuengling, Bell’s and the like took. Maybe even our own Craftsman Brewing in Pasadena. History of places while the history is still being made.

*Sean Inman blogs about beer at Beer Search Party and has written, in the past for Food GPS and Thrillist.*

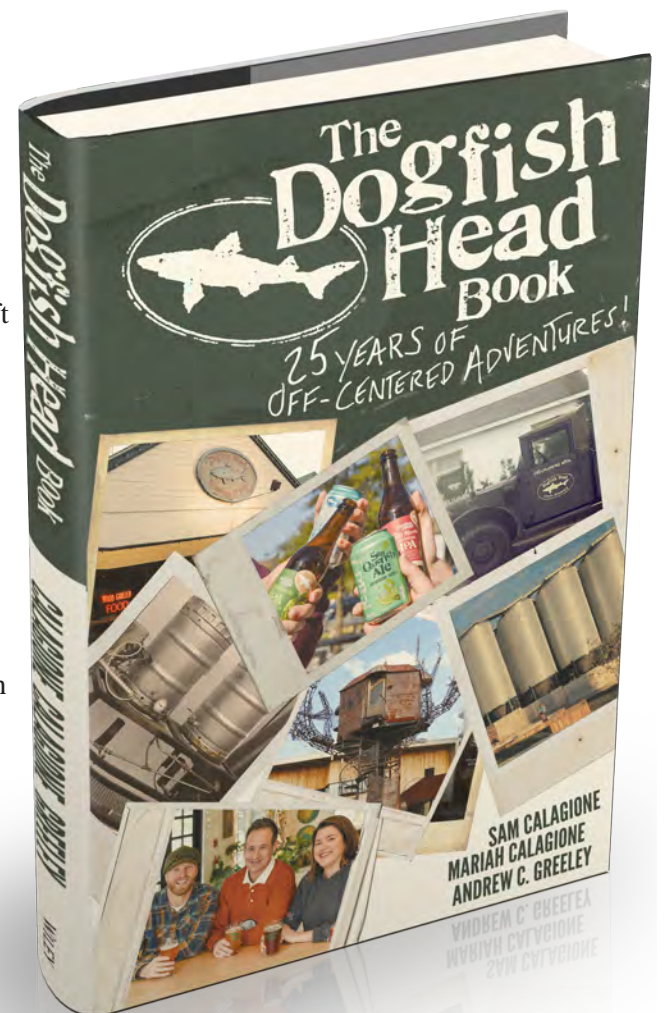


Photo Courtesy of the Publisher Wiley



# Beer Elite Job Search

Find local craft beer jobs.

Download on the  
 App Store

START OFF 2022 RIGHT  
BY JOINING OUR MUG CLUB!



**GAMECRAFT**

BREWING CO

LAGUNA HILLS

CA



new  
LIMITED RELEASES  
AVAILABLE!

**LAGER NERDS  
SINCE 2018**



SCAN FOR THE LATEST!

23301 Avenida De La Carlota, Laguna Hills, CA 92653