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## The Secret to World-Class Brewing is...

# LOVE



Sam Tierney, Matt Brynildson, & Vinnie Cilurzo

Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

by Daniel Drennon

In my travels throughout the wealth of wonderful small breweries in the greater Los Angeles area, I often get asked by beer fans, "What is the best small brewery in LA?" I usually test them by grinning and answering, "The Propagator." They excitedly ask where is it and are surprised when I answer Venice.

Now many of you know this is a playful trick on my part since The Propagator is mighty Firestone Walker's research and development brewhouse accompanied by a lovely restaurant in Venice. But while every industry insider well knows of the phenomenal beers being brewed there by Sam Tierney, the vast majority of everyday beer drinkers are unaware.

So, if you are one the of many who don't know that Firestone Walker is brewing small batch beers at The Propagator, this is your official heads up and invite to make the trek to west LA no matter how near or far you may reside. I promise you that you will not be disappointed.

(full cover story on page 8)

### TO LIVE & DRINK IN LA



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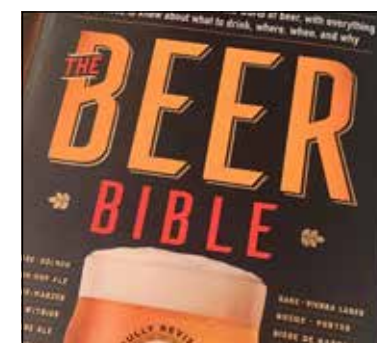
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## TO LIVE & DRINK IN LA

# PARTY LOYALTY ON THE PATIO AND ON THE PITCH

by Tomm Carroll

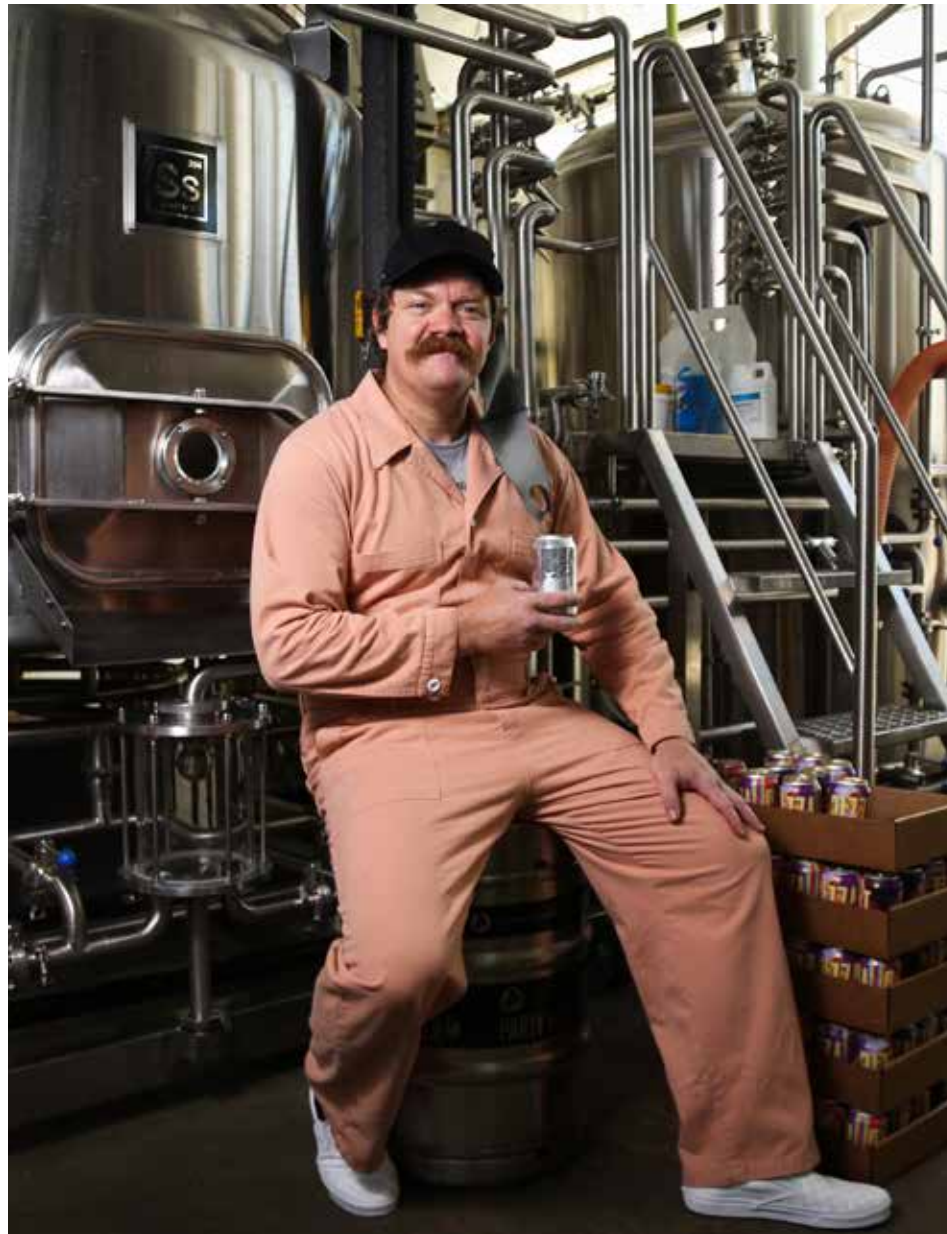
“The ingredients of this cocktail are as follows: One part fate, one part destiny, and two dashes of dumb luck.” Those are the words of Jason Eisner, co-owner of Party Beer Co. in the West Adams section of LA, describing the against-all-odds good fortune he and his team have enjoyed, not only in launching this new brewery in the midst of public health crisis, but also in securing the rights to be the official craft beer of the Los Angeles Football Club (LAFC). “Honestly, it’s one of those magical, mysterious moments in life where it seems that the whole universe perfectly aligns to help you achieve your goal.”

It sure didn’t seem so at one time. Especially when a once-in-a-century pandemic hit in mid-March 2020 — shortly after head brewer Lee Bakofsky (“one of these legends in LA craft beer,” according to Eisner) was recruited and when the 10bbl brewhouse, six fermenters (four 20bbl and two 10bbl) and the canning line were still in a warehouse. The brewery-to-be was a former smog check facility, with not a lot of indoor space.

“So I moved everything in here,” Bakofsky (who was formerly with Eagle Rock Brewery for over a decade, most recently as head brewer) told *Beer Paper* during a visit to the brewery last month. “It was weird to be working during COVID when hardly anyone else was; it was pretty much just me and the electrician or the plumbers.”

It took until August 2020 for Party Beer to release its first beers — Pizza Cat Pilsner, Destroyer of Worlds Hazy IPA and Black Lives Matter Golden Ale among them — and open for take-out and curbside pick-up only. “Yeah, things were still pretty well locked down when we opened for beer-to-go,” the brewer recalled. “Thank God we had that canning line because, man, what would we have done?”

The brewery patio didn’t open to the public until shortly after LA County



Lee Bakofsky (head brewer)

allowed outdoor drinking and dining at breweries months later. To this day, a vegan food truck is always on premises.

Somewhat akin to Eisner’s “magical, mysterious moments,” Bakofsky tends to see “weird silver linings” in adversity. “You know, it really was sort of fortuitous the way the timeline worked out, because if COVID had hit like a month or two later, we would have just hired a bunch of staff [which likely would have to be laid off], and we probably would have already invested in a planned, tastefully designed outdoor bar and refrigerator,” he explained. “We were gonna have

email interview. “In New York City... in the summer and early fall, everyone wants to be outside enjoying the weather. It’s a whole vibe. The irony is that on that side of the country, you can really only utilize outdoor space comfortably for about five months a year. So when we started the planning for our Southern California brewery, we decided that for the taprooms, we wanted other people to experience being together outdoors, enjoying the sun, the beer and each other’s company.”

It’s almost as if he foresaw the pandemic restrictions for drinking and dining at breweries.

To that end, Eisner responded, “When the CDC said that the safest place to be around other people was outside in the open air, in that moment, we felt strongly that we would push through this and succeed. It wasn’t easy, but we love what we do and we have grit. Our beer garden [at Party Beer] is so big that even at 50% capacity, we felt we’d be able to safely serve our community, and take care of the well-being of our staff.” For the record, the patio space is 5,200 square feet, including a 510-square-foot mezzanine, and is available to rent as an event space.

Eisner mentioned “taprooms,” in the plural, as Party Beer’s license allows it to have up to five additional taprooms. “That’s the plan,” Bakofsky said. “Let this location be seasonal, and then open satellite tasting rooms. But given that we are in a weird time now [with COVID], we’re not in as much of a rush to open up a bunch of tasting rooms as we once were.”

That said, Party’s beers are on tap and in cans at two Eisner and Beane-owned venues, the popular Block Party bar and the vegan restaurant Wolfie’s Hot Chicken, both on York Boulevard in Highland Park. “Essentially, Block Party is sort of our unofficial first taproom,” Bakofsky explained, “sort of like how Maximiliano in Highland Park used to be the unofficial Craftsman Brewing taproom.”

mini-golf and other amenities out there too.”

But that doesn’t mean those plans for the vast beer garden have necessarily gone by the wayside permanently. In fact, Eisner, a longtime cocktail mixologist, bartender, bar/restaurant manager and confirmed vegan, and his best friend, business partner and brewery co-owner Josh Beane, have been planning such a project since the 1990s.

“Coming to California from the East Coast, I never truly understood why there weren’t more outdoor areas for people to enjoy food and beverages in Los Angeles,” he told *Beer Paper* in an



(Maintaining its connection to local craft breweries, the space occupied by Maximiliano, which has been closed since the beginning of 2020, will be a new pizza and beer restaurant for Van Nuys-based brewery MacLeod Ales, scheduled to open later this year.)

And speaking of product availability outside the brewery, Party Beer recently signed with City of Commerce-based Guardian Distributors, which handles distribution for other local breweries like Arrow Lodge, Frogtown and Indie, as well as some 40 others throughout the state and beyond. “We just started working with Guardian, mostly for LA distribution,” Bakofsky remarked. “It’s been mainly cans, but we did send them a small amount of kegs. And they’re pretty heavy into off-premise, which I think is good for us.”

“We love Guardian, and the coolest thing about beginning to distribute is seeing your beer offered in beverage programs and retail shops that you yourself shop in,” Eisner added. “We’re proud to be in local favorites like Sunset Beer, Glendale Tap and Flask, as well as restaurants like Nic’s on Beverly and The Bar at Ace Hotel. After the first couple weeks, we were already in over 100 accounts. When you’re at a concert, or an LAFC game, at the Banc of California Stadium, you can find us on over 30 taps and in all the grab-and-go sections.”

Ah yes, that designation of Party Beer’s brew as the official craft beer of the LAFC; how did that come about for a brand new brewery? Chalk it up to “one of those magical, mysterious moments in life,” that Eisner had cited.

He was happy to elaborate: “In the early stages of planning Party Beer Co., Josh and I met with some potential investors in Northern California who asked us this question — ‘Beer and sports have such a strong connection. If you could pick any sports franchise in the world, who would you partner with and why?’ Our answer from day one was always LAFC. We literally wrote in our business plan that by year three, we wanted to find a way to create a relationship with them. We see LAFC as the future of professional sports in LA, and soccer as a global unifier. Like beer, soccer has this unique ability to create inclusivity and community. And that is exactly what we want to do as a brand.

“During the pandemic, Josh, Lee, and I did a virtual happy hour for the LAFC executive team,” he continued. “They had just parted ways with Angel City Brewing and had vetted many other LA craft beer brands to take Angel City’s place, but didn’t quite find anyone that they felt was the perfect fit. During the happy hour, we simply spoke our truth. We talked about how we wanted to build a brand that would be at the heart of the most meaningful experiences of your life. A literal celebration in a can — hence our name. We had an overall great time with them. The next day, they invited us to tour Banc of California Stadium and the rest is, as they say, history. We believe in LAFC and they believe in us.”

While certainly welcome, that great news came as a bit of a shock to the brewer. “[Jason and Josh] came in here all excited, like, ‘Dude, we think we can be the official craft beer of LAFC!’” Bakofsky recalled. “And right away, I was like, ‘What are you talking about? I’ve got six little [fermenters] back here; does anyone have a grasp on how much volume that is — or isn’t?’”

But despite his initial trepidation, somehow it all came together for last soccer season. “Part of the reason it worked out is because the stadium was only allowed to open under a really strict occupancy due to COVID — like 25% capacity at first, and then it ramped up,” Bakofsky confessed. “If it hadn’t been that way, we would have just been slaughtered out of the game. Also, there were a few concerts at Banc of California Stadium last season, which totally caught me off guard, because I was basically planning everything around the LAFC home games.”

Indeed, Party Beer met its order at the stadium by relying on some good, old-fashioned contract brewing — at Bakofsky’s former employer, Eagle Rock Brewery. “We kind of squeaked through last soccer season with the help of Jeremy [Raub, co-owner and brewmaster at ERB],” he revealed. “He did a batch of beer for me last year when I was like, ‘Oh my God, how are we gonna make enough beer?’ It all went seamlessly.”

For this LAFC season, which just began with a home opener on January 29, and continues with matches at Banc of California Stadium February 2 and 19, Party Beer will be represented



Jason Eisner & Josh Beane (co-owners)

Photo Credit: Eugene Lee

by its four LAFC flagship beers: Golden Ale, IPA (West Coast), Hazy and, new this year, Pilsner (made with the new American hop Lórien), in 19.2oz cans as well as draught.

Those beers are available at the brewery as well, along with others, including two new feline-themed brews: Bitch Paw-Lease, a single hop (Talus) West Coast IPA; and Purradise Lost, a Hazy IPA made with Yakima Chief Hops’ proprietary Cryo-Pop blend. There’s also Smog Czech, a Czech dark lager (named in honor of the brewery’s former life), brewed in collaboration with LA’s All Season

Brewing — which was previously an automobile service center too, and whose head brewer, Erick Garcia, is also an alumnus of Eagle Rock Brewery. How’s that for a magical, mysterious moment of synchronicity?

Thirsty? Stop by Party Beer for a tune-up for your taste buds. The address is 4203 W. Jefferson Boulevard, LA 90016.

*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).*



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## IE PROFILE

# Reimagining Beer and The Way We Enjoy It

by Andrew Smith



Marshman (L) and Irish (R) stand before a recent art show in the tasting room

Photo Credit: Andrew Smith

Barely a year after Solaris Beer & Blending opened its tasting room to the public, they're already recognized as one of the most exciting breweries in the Inland Empire. That's due, in part, to their imaginative mixed fermentation beer program. It's also due to their philosophical approach, as they aim to broaden the way we experience beer.

Solaris is a partnership formed by a couple of homebrewing buddies and diehard music nuts, Chad Marshman and Skyler Irish. Marshman was

a career musician, dualling as the Safety and IT Director for his parents' construction company. It was a lifestyle he described as "unsustainable."

Irish started homebrewing in 2009. "I met Chad a few years later and taught him what I'd learned, then it got out of control," he joked, "As a homebrewer, I never really brewed the same beer twice. I was always curious about what could happen next. That's what got me into long-aged sours and working with brett."

They settled on Murrieta, as Marshman's parents owned the building. It's a convenient spot as Murrieta flows seamlessly into Old Town Temecula and wine country. Murrieta is an interesting city, home to five excellent breweries all within a one-mile radius. Solaris is on the border of Temecula. If you look out the window, you're literally looking out towards Temecula, a city of 12 brewery taprooms, and about 50 wineries.

"One our loftier plans was to be that

conduit between beer and wine culture, where wineries respect breweries and wineries interact with breweries," Marshman explained, "We wanted to take full advantage of wine country, and develop bonds with our favorite wineries. The ultimate goal was to do something a little more upscale with beer, truly be that middle point between a brewery and a winery."

Such a concept might seem obvious in a wine-centric area. But, in Temecula, Solaris really is unique. While most breweries will drop an occasional beer into wine barrels, Solaris already has over 80 beers aging in wine barrels, plus about a dozen liquor barrels. It's the mixed fermentation and blending that really sets Solaris apart.

Beers like Saison Bloem may be working on familiar ground, although they do nuance it with lavender and age it in Petit Verdot barrels. Others, like Girl in the Dunes, defy definition. "We weren't even sure what to put it under," said Irish, "Tongue in cheek, we called it Postmodern IPA." German Hallertau Blanc hops offer wine characteristics. There's a rustic Saison character with notes of grapes, lemon, and rose petals, before a super-dry, brut IPA finish. They barrel-age it as Woman in the Dunes.

(IE PROFILE continued on page 6)



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Irish (L) and Marshman (R) posing on the brew deck Photo Credit: Andrew Smith

It's rare that I enthuse over fruited sours, but Super Sunrise was something of a revelation. A 9.3% ABV imperial sour hefeweizen conditioned on organic, strawberry, pomegranate, cherry, fig, mulberry, grape, and vanilla beans, it's a beer that captivated my attention far beyond the last sip. It's such a far-out concept that I had to ask about the thought process.

"We both have a similar philosophy to approaching beer," said Irish, "Inspiration could come from all over the place, a song or a food we ate."

"We've done an evolving series of the sour hefeweizens," added Marshman, "What we've noticed is that all have this acai breakfast bowl thing, berries with a little granola, a little honey character, it's tart but it's sweet. We loved the hefeweizen, banana ester and wanted to support that in a fun way, find fruits to uplift it as a whole."

"Sometimes we find it strange when breweries will throw fruits together that don't quite make the fruits themselves better," Irish expanded, "You don't want them to clash with each other. As a breakfast bowl, we are throwing a lot of fruits together. But

we don't just do it randomly. Even if it's an extreme beer, you can still have balance. If you're doing a fruited sour, you need enough acidity to prop up the fruit."

That adventurous, offbeat approach defines Solaris, but they also have a rotation of familiar lagers and IPA's. Both guys were drinking lagers during our meeting. "The lagers are our biggest love right now," Irish commented, "Brewing wild ales is fun and fulfilling, it's our long-term goal. At the end of the day, you can have something highly nuanced and thought provoking. Or you can just turn off your brain and enjoy yourself. And lagers are a brewers' treat, indeed!"

They're still trying to strike that balance between the familiar and the new. "If the locals ask us multiple times, we're going to bring it back," Marshman explained, "But there's still this exploratory spirit. We want to keep brewing new things, push it further and see what we're capable of. People want that familiar experience. We want to open up new experiences. We're trying to have at least enough variety where we don't feel that we're losing the fire."

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The 10-barrel brew system allows them to split, blend, and play around with each batch. “We can easily pull off however much we want and do whatever we want with it,” added Irish, “It would be difficult to achieve with full distribution, but that’s not in our business model. We’re not slaves to our accounts.”

Music is an integral part of the Solaris theme. Every beer offers an “Ambient Pairing.” There’s music in the tasting room, dedicated vinyl nights, and they have their own Spotify channel. They’ve even hosted a few local radio sets.

“We love beer a lot, but we could live our lives without it. I don’t know if we could live our lives without music,” said Irish, “It goes back to the communities that we want to be a part of. We’re excited to get people into the brewery and show them what we’re excited about.”

“It’s this idea of a heightened experience,” Marshman elaborated, “People taste what they feel. Anything you can do to set the tone of what people feel while enjoying your product is ultimately to your advantage. It’s also a way that we can bring our interests into our jobs.”

While they do seem philosophically in sync, the musical picks are no simple process. “It’s something that should take five minutes but can sometimes take weeks to pin the song down,” Irish joked.

Bridging music analogies, I wanted to define the brewery as new wave or avant-garde. “I would appreciate that label but I feel like it’s a little presumptuous,” added Irish, “There’s nothing new. We’re just trying to produce good product over and over again that’s potentially different to what’s going on around us.”

Just like the music, the tasting room is an intrinsic part of the experience. Marshman describes it as “1920’s German Bauhaus, lots of primary colors, minimalism, simple geometric shapes,” adding that, “We also wanted this kind of gallery vibe where we could have big abstract art pieces that you could stare at and feel comfortable.”

In addition to the music and the art, I should add that Solaris is named after the 1970’s genre-expanding, psychological, Russian sci-fi classic. Similarly, Marshman and Irish are taking a broader, philosophical and imaginative approach to the way we taste and experience beer. The brewing techniques are long-established. But, just as musicians and artists all draw from the same notes and colors, the way you configure them can take on a complete air of originality.

*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](http://CraftBeerIE.com)*

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## COVER STORY

# The Secret to World-Class Brewing is...LOVE

by Daniel Drennon

In my travels throughout the wealth of wonderful small breweries in the greater Los Angeles area, I often get asked by beer fans, “What is the best small brewery in LA?” I usually test them by grinning and answering, “The Propagator.” They excitedly ask where is it and are surprised when I answer Venice.

Now many of you know this is a playful trick on my part since The Propagator is mighty Firestone Walker’s research and development brewhouse accompanied by a lovely restaurant in Venice. But while every industry insider well knows of the phenomenal beers being brewed there by Sam Tierney, the vast majority of everyday beer drinkers are unaware.

So, if you are one of the many who don’t know that Firestone Walker is brewing small batch beers at The Propagator, this is your official heads up and invite to make the trek to west LA no matter how near or far you may reside. I promise you that you will not be disappointed.

Here is my interview with the artist behind these local liquid gems. And, oh yeah, The Propagator does also offer a full line up of all of those Firestone Walker beers you do know and love.

**DRENNON:** *What is your title at The Propagator and to whom do you report?*

TIERNEY: I am the Propagator Brewery Manager and report to our Brewmaster Matt Brynildson.

**DRENNON:** *What was your training and career path to getting the job?*

TIERNEY: I got really into trying and rating new beers back in the Rate Beer/Beer Advocate era while I was in college in 2007. I was in Sweden for a semester at Lund University and started looking up all the weird beers available at the Systembolaget, which is the state monopoly liquor store over there. I mostly got really into Belgian beers and a few Scandinavian craft beers at the time but also German and Czech beers. When I got home in

2008, I decided to get some books and take a serious go at homebrewing. In my last semester at UCSB in 2009, I volunteered a bit at Telegraph Brewing and that experience convinced me that I wanted to be a professional brewer.

I attended the International Diploma program at Siebel and Doemens in the fall of 2010 and then went back home to Santa Cruz and applied at a bunch of breweries, getting a few interviews before landing a brewer position at Firestone Walker. I started in May 2011 and rotated between the shift brewing positions for three years before being promoted to QC Brewer, which handled yeast and other special projects like barrel-aging and small batch stuff. I did that for another three years before being promoted to Cellar Manager and overseeing all cold-side operations from fermentation up to packaging. After a couple years as Cellar Manager, the Venice job opened up at The Propagator and my wife was interested in moving to LA so I took the opportunity to make the move down here.

**DRENNON:** *Do you develop all of the recipes for the Research & Development (R&D) beers brewed at The Propagator?*

TIERNEY: Some of the recipes are more collaborative with the Paso team, especially beers that are specifically intended to be impending releases up there. Matt still has a strong influence on the direction that those beers go. Others are more esoteric ideas that I have or that are suggested to me, and in that case, I typically come up with new recipes to work those ideas out. In many cases it can be as simple as trying out new ingredients that we are interested in and coming up with a fun beer to showcase them. I mostly draw on a firmly established house style to recipe construction but also like to continuously work in new techniques and ingredients that I see from other brewers and want to try.

**DRENNON:** *What do you feel is the key to being great at recipe development?*



Sam Tierney (Propagator Brewery Manager) Photo Courtesy of Firestone Walker



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Sam Tierney, Matt Brynildson, & Vinnie Cilurzo on STiVO brew day

Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

TIERNEY: I think it comes down to knowing what you are going to get out of your ingredients and how to use them to achieve that goal. That can be a challenge considering the immense range of possibilities, but I find that tradition is very useful to get you close to a target. If you start with classic ingredients/formulations for a given style and then deliberately work your way to your target with ingredients that you are familiar with, you can be very precise in crafting flavor profiles.

**DRENNON:** What are the other key components to brewing world class beer?

TIERNEY: Precise process control is huge. Control allows you to express your vision in an accurate way. It doesn't help much to have an idea for the world's greatest beer if you can't precisely control your ingredients and process to achieve that goal. You also can't discount a good palate. You need to know what tastes good in order to do the difficult sensory work to tweak your way to your goal. You can brew technically sound beer by developing great process, but you need the means to put it all together via sensory to make beer that delights. This is where a good sensory program is vital because you can't always trust one person's palate to be an infallible

guide, even if they are a uniquely gifted taster.

**DRENNON:** Tell us about the Kaspar Schulz brewhouse and what advantages it offers a brewer.

TIERNEY: Schulz is on the forefront of brewhouse technology, especially in the small brewery space, so you get a lot of the design aspects of a larger brewhouse in a small system. We have an external wort boiler that provides a very energy-efficient and gentle boil, and the 3-vessel setup allows us to do step-mashing and decoctions.



Sam Tierney

Photo Courtesy of Firestone Walker

(COVER STORY continued on page 10)



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Beer Paper at STiVO canning day

Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

(COVER STORY continued)

We run the brewhouse on the same software we use in Paso, so we have a lot of automation for a small brewery that helps ensure we are hitting our numbers on every brew.

**DRENNON:** *How much interaction do you have with Firestone Walker brewmaster Matt Brynildson?*

TIERNEY: Matt and I can get pretty involved with some of the projects down here, especially collaborations, but we also go through stints where he is happy to give us a little more space and let us do our thing once we go over the basic schedule and ideas for new beers. I think we have a balance that works well for everyone.

**DRENNON:** *Do you feel like the mothership in Paso Robles allows you to be both autonomous and creative?*

TIERNEY: The way we have it set up, I do have a lot of autonomy, but the biggest constraint is probably keeping our three taprooms happy. I know we are being too out there when we start piling up new releases. We sometimes have over 30 beers on tap so things can get lost in the shuffle and there can be some internal competition for sales. I like to make sure that Propagator beers are selling well, and that means not always brewing more esoteric beers, but really drilling down to what is currently exciting drinkers. We hope that releasing interesting and engaging beers here drives more business to the taprooms so it's not a zero-sum game with our other beers

**DRENNON:** *What is the process for any of your R&D beers brewed in Venice to be elevated to the main FW line up?*

TIERNEY: Most beers start 1-2 years ahead of an expected launch and then we start working based on the idea of what we want to release. That might mean brewing a new beer in a style we want to explore, or taking a beer we previously made and tweaking it in a new direction. Beers like Citrus Cyclone or Welcome to LA evolved over many months as we were figuring them out brew by brew and letting the process evolve naturally based on internal feedback. With a beer like Hopnosis we had a clear goal in mind from the outset and only did a couple of rounds of trials before we settled on what was essentially the final product. Of course, it also takes time to dial in a recipe in Paso. Recipes never scale perfectly, even with all the same ingredients and a similar brewhouse setup.

**DRENNON:** *What is your favorite thing about brewing? And least favorite?*

TIERNEY: Favorite would have to be seeing people enjoy the beers we make. All the hard work is worth that moment when a group of friends are enjoying a round and having a great time. My least favorite is automation equipment failures. That's the downside of an automated system. Sometimes a tiny sensor failing on the brewhouse will ruin your whole week. It'll make you wish you could just start opening valves by hand and keep brewing.

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2022 Pivo pilsner

Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

**DRENNON:** What was original concept for the brewhouse at The Propagator? Was it always to be R&D beers since I know you also get to brew some of the classics such as Wookey Jack that have been dropped from the mass distribution line up?

**DRENNON:** Do you have any beers that you consider to be your own personal favorites or even signature beers?

**TIERNEY:** As soon as the scope of the brewery became clear based on the amount of space we had to build it, we knew that we were going to utilize it to make some of the old classics and taproom favorites, as well as develop new beers. Wookey Jack was the first beer we brewed down here, so we could assess a known recipe that's also a little more forgiving than something like 805 or Pivo. We have 20BBL tanks that we can double-batch into, which is way more than you need for strict R&D work but perfect for supplying our taprooms.

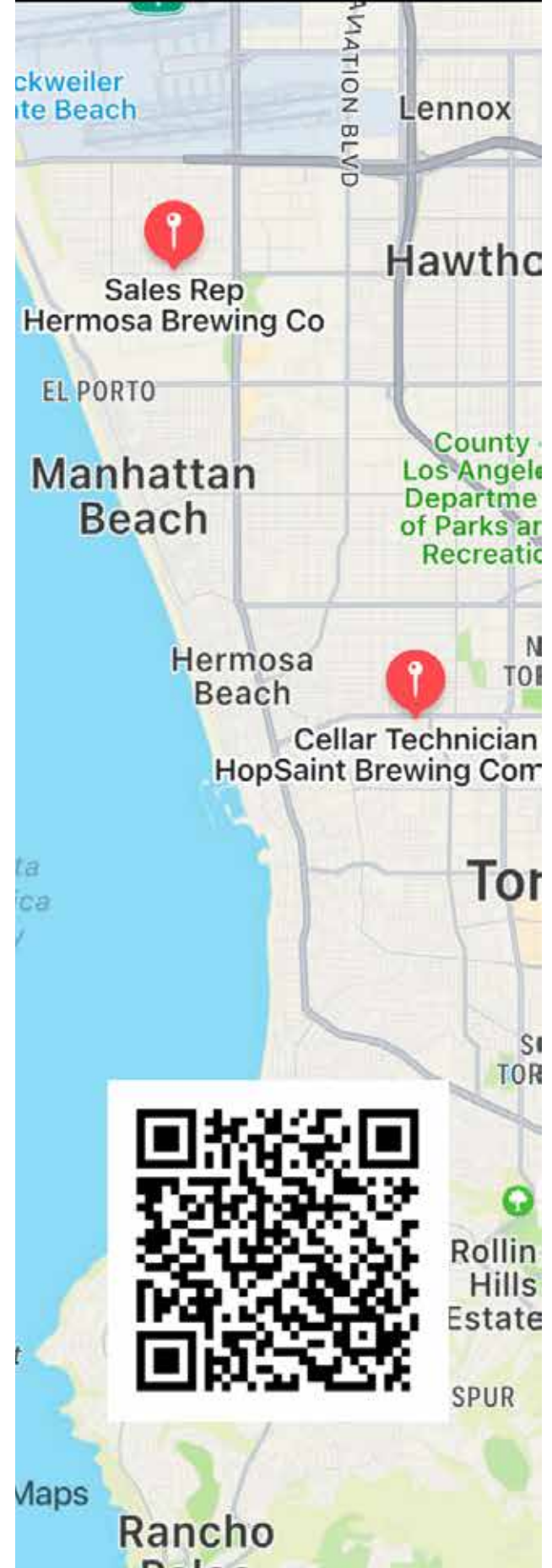
**TIERNEY:** Welcome to LA was the first beer that I started working on when I moved down and took a little over two years to develop into what we are brewing now for distribution. The only other beer that I have brewed more of is Gen 1, which was the first original recipe we started brewing here back in 2016. We riffed on it for anniversary beers but always kept the original recipe essentially the same. When I moved down, I started doing more riffing within that framework, like switching base malts or trying new yeast strains, and now we have a whole family of beers based on the original idea

(COVER STORY continued on page 12)



Boomhut Mobile Canning of 2022 Pivo pilsner

Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer







Boomhut Mobile Canning of 2022 Pivo pilsner

Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

(COVER STORY continued)

of a Mosaic/Citra unfiltered IPA. I really enjoy figuring out what the next version is going to be and am lucky that it's always a popular hop combo.

**DRENNON:** *You do quite a few collabs at The Propagator with other world class brewers, most recently the phenomenal STiVO collab with Vinnie Cilurzo of Russian River Brewing. What do you see as the biggest value and/or reward from such collabs, other than causing your marketing team to salivate?*

TIERNEY: Can you put a price on spending the day with a brewer like Vinnie? He's such an open, generous guy as well. For collaborations in general I think they present a unique opportunity to spend quality time with other brewers just focused on learning how they brew. We always collaborate with brewers whose beer we love and have a lot of respect for, so I am always eager to learn as much as I can from them, and hopefully share

as much as I can about what we do as well. It's also just a genuinely great time getting to spend the day with others who share your passion.

**DRENNON:** *What advice would you give to young brewers who have aspirations to go pro?*

TIERNEY: I think most aspiring brewers imagine working at a small place where it feels more like homebrewing, but the best opportunities in many cases are going to be at larger breweries where there are more jobs and a fast-paced work environment. I would look for any way to get in the door and then master each opportunity you are given. If you are killing it washing kegs and your passion and positivity rub off on everyone, more opportunities will come your way. Brewing is truly a craft and even an experienced homebrewer will have a steep learning curve when they start in a commercial brewery. You really just need to start on the ground floor and master your

craft through hours and hours of hard work. Brewing school is a good formal option to increase your skills but you need to weigh that investment versus other options. There are so many great books and on-line resources these days as well

**DRENNON:** *Between talent and work ethic, which do you think is most important?*

TIERNEY: I think you can't deny

that both are needed. Talent is easily wasted if not correctly applied, but hard work needs proper direction in order to effectively achieve. Maybe love is the real key? If you love what you do, you'll find the motivation to focus your ability and keep improving.

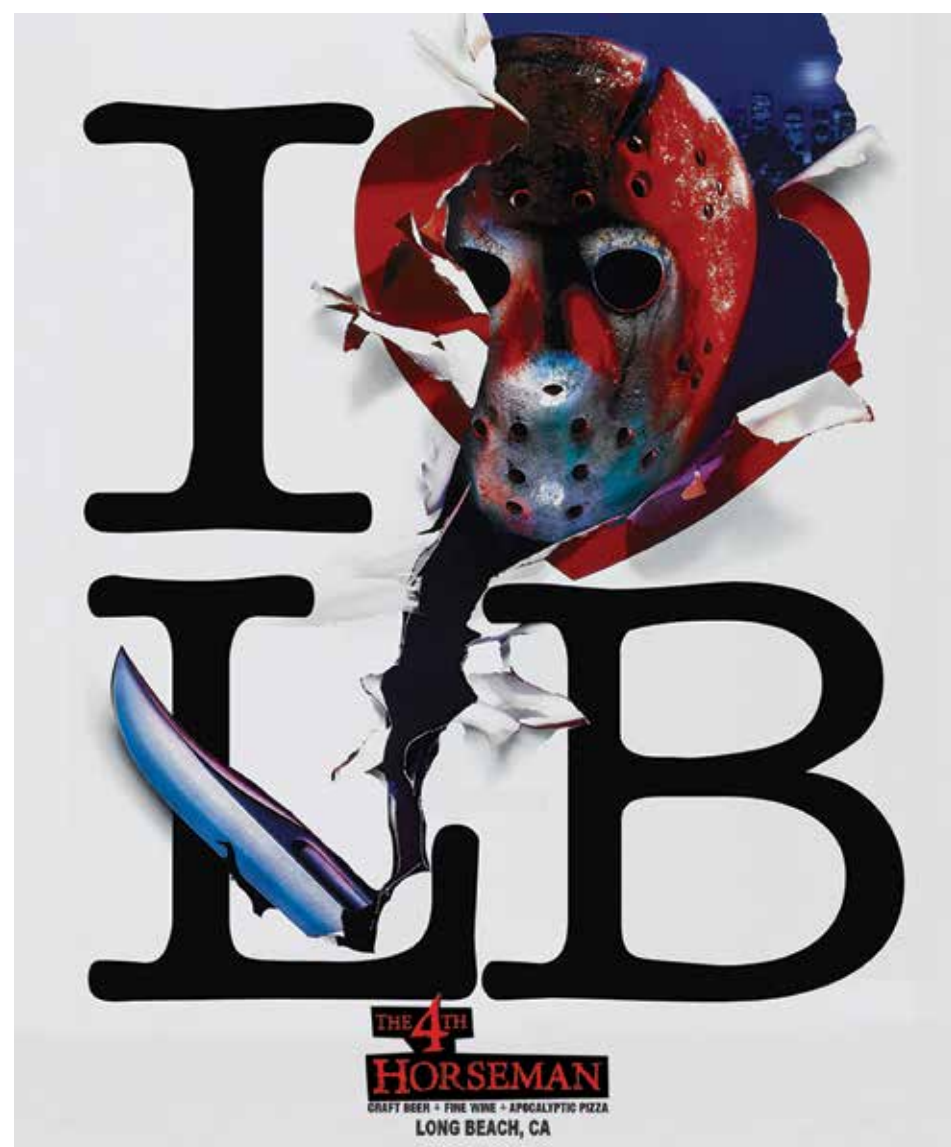
**DRENNON:** *If you have to describe yourself in one word or phrase, what would it be?*

Curious.



Matt Brynildson on STiVO brew day

Photo Courtesy of Firestone Walker





**OC BEAT**

# PROFILE: TUSTIN BREWING COMPANY

by David Mulvihill



Daniel Quiñonez (head brewer)

Photo Credit: David Mulvihill

Origins: When this reporter first interviewed Tustin Brewing Company owner Jason Jeralds back in 2011, he recalled his original aspirations for the restaurant and brewery he opened in 1996, “I want to be a pub with good beer; a place people are comfortable coming to, and coming back to.” Over 25 years later, TBC hasn’t strayed far from his initial and continuing desire to provide a welcoming and approachable atmosphere, providing good food and remarkable house made beer.

TBC’s proclamation has always been, “Beer as it should be!”

Confirmation comes via a culmination of friendly staff, talented brewer, respectable kitchen team, solid customer base, numerous awards, and in tasting its beer.

Current State: Feeling that it was

time we got to know him better, this reporter caught up with Tustin Brewing Company’s current head brewer Daniel Quiñonez in late December. Some may recall Danny from his time some years back as TBC’s assistant brewer, under the direction and tutelage of decorated brewer Jerrod Larsen. He returned to take the head brewer reins in August, 2020, as Larsen departed for Stanton’s new Bearded Tang Brewery.

Quiñonez’ affinity for craft beer began while in college (as a Fine Arts/ Photography major at Cal Arts). After graduating, armed with a desire to brew professionally, his foray began at Bayhawk Ales in Irvine. Hearing of an opening from a friend (Jason Casey) working there, he applied and was hired in October, 2014. Starting with menial-but-indispensable tasks involved with brewing, eagerness and hard work, coupled with a bit

of luck, allowed him to advance to the brew deck within the first couple of months. Some months later, while attending Smog City Brewing Company’s “Infinite Wishes” (BBA Imperial Stout) release event, he saw and introduced himself to Larsen, and shared his brewing objectives. By May of 2015 he had joined the TBC brewing team, eager to learn everything he could from Jerrod.

Regarding his training and advancement as a brewer, Danny recounted his time as TBC Assistant Brewer, “I was taught well by Jerrod. He created the best foundation. I consider that my first real experience as a brewer.”

He worked as Jerrod’s assistant for about a year and a half, in a part-time capacity, when Jason Casey, now brewing at Torrance’s Smog City Brewing, told him of a full-time

opening at Smog. Knowing owner/brewer Jonathan Porter from Smog City and his connection with Tustin Brewing Company, Daniel jumped at the opportunity to expand his brewing chops with Porter and the Smog City crew. “He’s someone I really respect as a brewer-owner.”

*Note:* Jonathan Porter was TBC’s award-winning head brewer prior to opening Smog City Brewing with wife Laurie. He was Jerrod Larsen’s brewing mentor in the years before Larsen assumed head brewer duties upon Porter’s exit to open Smog City.

Quiñonez brewed at Smog City for 2.5+ years. An opportunity at Brouwerij West found him making another move for another 1.5 years. Brouwerij West’s efficient automated European system and slant towards Belgian and hazy styles allowed him

(OC BEAT continued on page 14)

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(OC BEAT continued)

to add additional aspects of brewing to his repertoire.

After over a year as TBC head brewer Danny has definitely settled into his role. The well-appointed product speaks for itself, from core beers to varying new releases. Quiñones feels “super fortunate” to be in his current position and to have talented friends and mentors that assisted him along the way.

The Beer: From its core beers (Golden Spike Light, Clutch’s American Wheat, American Pale, Red Hill Red, Blimp Hangar Porter, and the coveted Old Town IPA) to a constantly updating variety of offerings, patrons can expect well-crafted, satiating representations of style. During *Beer Paper’s* December visit, 12 TBC beers were flowing. In addition to the aforementioned core beers, the list included additional IPAs, Hazy IPAs, and a rice lager, “The Jerry.” Dry, crisp and clean, with the taste craft rice lager fans expect. Danny’s honoring of style comes clear in his lager and light ale presentations. Whether it’s a German-style pilsner, Mexican-style lager, or Cream Abdul Jabbar cream ale, you



Daniel Quiñones (head brewer)

Photo Credit: David Mulvihill

won’t find flaws trying to be masked by added flavorings or extra *out-of-style* added hops.

Guest taps and a full bar round out the selection and include seltzer, cider, and wine. Check out the daily specials

board, Chef Ivan and the kitchen staff’s opportunity to supplement an extensive food menu with additional fresh fare.

Tustin Brewing Company  
13011 Newport Ave #100

*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.*



## BOOK REVIEW

# THE BEER BIBLE 2.0

by Sean Inman

It felt fitting that I order my copy of the second version of the Beer Bible by Jeff Alworth via Powell's Bookstore the venerable Portland institution since Alworth resides in the pre-eminent beer town.

The original Beer Bible was published way back in 2013 and time and trends have marched on since then so a revised and updated version was needed. Most especially since the first book has nary a mention of a certain beer style that is now very popular and is spinning off sub-niches already.

Hazy IPA is not the only new addition to the bible, and not the only subtraction either. Breweries that were highlighted in V1 have been replaced. Brown Ales and Mild Ales have been combined and Witbier has been rolled up into a chapter with other Belgian beers. The beer travel and tourism section has been altered and expanded as well since Alworth places a premium on visiting where the beer is made, or as he puts it, "touring local breweries is critical to understanding styles born there." And he walks the walk, having visited a bucket list worth of famous European breweries.

Another big addition in the beer historical timeline is Kveik yeast, and Alworth has added more information on Lars Marius Garshol who pulled back the curtain on the traditional beers of the Baltics and Scandinavia to the greater beer world. Now even somewhat casual beer fans have heard of the yeast rings that Garshol has translated to us.

Overall, the book is roughly the same size and heavy weight as before but close to 20% is new material and it has been re-adjusted into a new Dewey Decimal Beer version of styles arranged under the headings of classic lagers, classic ales, new and unusual styles, and wild ales.

Tackling beer in toto, is a mammoth task. What gets more attention and what doesn't is a continuous push/pull problem. But Alworth has been writing about beer (and politics) for long enough, and he has talked with and visited an enviable amount of brewers and world breweries such that he can take a screenshot of the current beer moment and make it come alive. He writes in such a way that anyone who picks up the book can dive right in without feeling talked down to.

Praises being said, I found the section on Sake a bit of an odd choice. I would imagine that it should be a topic or book all on its own. It has the feel of an author favorite that was expanded past what most craft beer fans would really need. I could pick three or four topics that could have taken that page count.

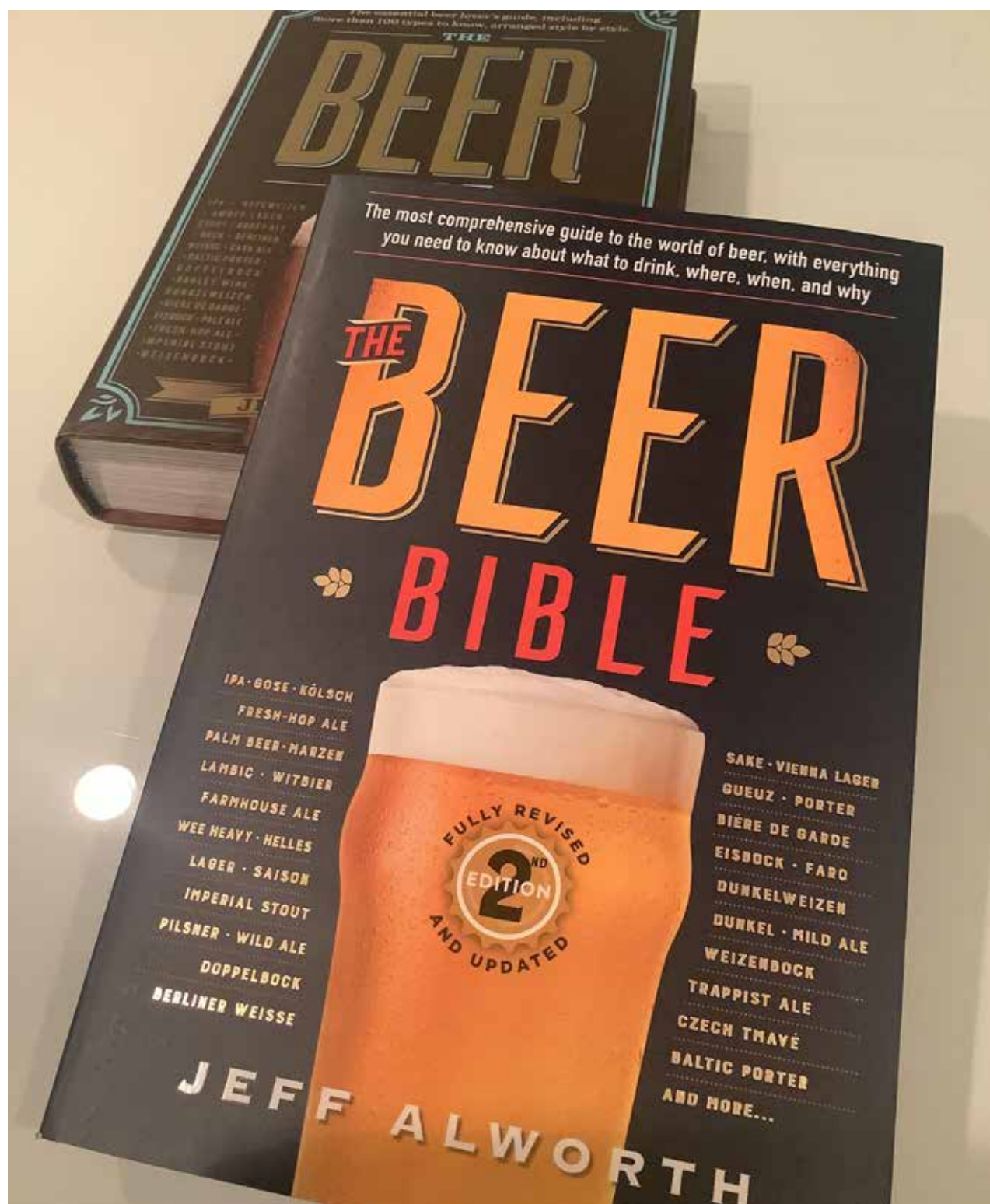
When Alworth was in Los Angeles at the Firestone Walker Propagator as part of his book tour, he talked about the part that they have played in brewing history as well as discoursing on styles that are slowly losing favor. The pre-Prohibition lagers were pouring that day and the malt forward beers really paired well with his earnest talk about beer. Maybe in a revised third edition we may see mention of more California breweries and Los Angeles breweries in particular.

If I could add anything to such a comprehensive book it would be some local color. Maybe local

writers such as Tomm Carroll, who you read in these pages, could add a Los Angeles chapter or SD Beer News' Brandon Hernández could contribute to a San Diego version.

Whichever city you call home, you can choose your own bookshop from either the City of Roses or the City of Angels when you buy your copy because it is an essential title in your beer library.

*Sean Inman has been blogging about beer since 2009 at the Beer Search Party blog. He has written for Food GPS and Thrillist in addition to this fine beer periodical.*







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