

## THE (LIQUID) GRAVITATIONAL FORCE OF BRENDAN GOUGH



Brendan Gough, Brewmaster of Liquid Gravity

Photo Credit: Dylan Grant of SLOBREW

by Daniel Drennon

How did I discover Brendan Gough? Well. Let's be clear. I did not discover Brendan Gough. But, man, did I wish I had.

Several years ago, a brewer pal, I now can't even recall which one, told me that on my way home from the Firestone Walker Invitational in Paso Robles, I must absolutely make a stop at Central Coast Brewing in San Luis Obispo. And added that, "your mind will be blown."

I think I involuntarily emitted a derisive laugh. After all, the FW Invitational is what I call my Christmas in June. It is singularly my favorite day of each and every year. Forty-plus of the best breweries on the planet serving their sublime brews to the best beer fans in the universe. It is perfection.

So how, after that day, could I possibly be impressed by some 20-year old microbrewery in SLO?

We arrived at Central Coast Brewing the Sunday morning after the Invitational, hungover of course, and anxious to get back to L.A. It was to be a quick stop right as they opened the doors at 11 am to confirm the obvious, that the beers couldn't possibly come anywhere close to the previous day's glorious offerings, and then I could taunt the brewer pal who said so by asking if he had been smoking weed...or perhaps crack...before he suggested CCB would "blow me away."

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## FESTIVAL REVIEW

## PILGRIMAGE TO LAGERVILLE

by Russell Hainline

We feel the rumblings from beneath us. We see the groundswell as it approaches. We hear the pleas on social media from brewers and beer aficionados alike: Make Craft Lager Popular Again.

While lager remains an exceptionally popular drink for non-craft consumers of beer across the country, not too long ago, craft beer lovers pivoted the other direction, eschewing the light crispness of a lager or pilsner for the bold hoppy delights of the IPA. Now, as the IPAs get hazier, and the stouts get sweeter, and the sours get more fruited, Untappd Ozymandias cries out, “Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!” while a certain subset of beer geek seeks refuge in the refreshing delights of the lager once more.

Enter Lagerville, Figueroa Mountain’s lager-only beer festival, held April 9th outside their Buellton location. Figueroa Mountain launched this festival in 2018 as an antidote to your Festivals of Dankness and your Pastrytowns, a glorious oasis of pilsners, bocks, Baltic porters, and lagers of all shapes and sizes. “Too many people still think of lager as clear, fizzy, mass-produced stuff, but that couldn’t be further from the truth,” said Kevin Ashford, Figueroa Mountain’s brewmaster. “There are so many beautiful lager styles out there... Our hope is that this festival will show more people that.” They’re an appropriate host, as they’ve been a destination for lager lovers for over a decade, boasting, among their countless accolades, 15 Great American Beer Festival medals in various lager categories, including a gold in 2021’s American Amber Lager category.

This year, after two years of socially distancing itself, Lagerville has re-emerged, bigger and better than ever. (In stark contrast to me, who only re-emerged from social distancing bigger than ever.) A beautiful sunny Saturday made for perfect lager weather, and while there were a number of fantastic lagers from across the country— including Oregon’s Heater Allen, Texas’s Pinthouse Pizza, and Washington’s Cloudburst Brewing—the bulk of the festival was centered squarely upon California’s lager scene,



Aerial view of Lagerville at the Figueroa Mountain Buellton Brewery

Photo Credit: Jesse Natale

to help prove true beyond any shadow of a doubt the age-old adage: “West coast, best coast.”

And much like the Los Angeles Dodgers two short years ago, these California breweries stepped up to the plate and knocked the assignment out of the park. I could wax poetical for three times my designated word count. So, with much love to places like Urban Roots, Alvarado Street, and the Almighty Russian River, I’ll be keeping things focused on the beers I tried from Central and Southern California.

It feels appropriate to start in Ventura County, as VC ran a clean sweep over the awards voted on by festival attendees and given out at the end of the day. Ventura Coast Brewing went home with not only the Best in Show Runner Up for their Beachscape Pilsner, but also the coveted Best Overall Brewery award. For the Best in Show winner, hop on the 101-S for half an hour and get to Tarantula Hill Brewing, whose Accidental Amber

blew the voters away.

Even outside of the award-winners, Ventura County impressed. We got great German-style pilsners from MadeWest and Institution with Purple Tide and Rx, respectively. We got a typically delightful selection from the lager legends at Enegren Brewing—their rauchbier, The Big Meat, was definitely among the boldest beers poured at the festival. I also couldn’t resist the chance to grab some Naughty Pine Brewing, a brewery in Westlake Village that’s under a year old, but whose Sturdy B-Pils I’m already ready to declare one of the best pilsners in Southern California. **MAYBE BRITTANY QUOTE**

Los Angeles County was also well-represented, as Highland Park Brewery, those purveyors of perfect pilsners, had their classic Timbo Pils on hand, as well as their exceptional High 8 West Coast Pilsner that they brewed for their recent anniversary. I sipped down samples from two of my South Bay favorites, El Segundo

Brewing and Common Space Brewing, and I got a chance to have my first-ever beers from Malibu Brewing—the Pacific Gold is a nice light crusher, and the Canyon Rosé a slightly fruity and floral light lager, as its name suggested.

I also got some Loma Prieta from Beachwood, one of my favorite beers of the festival. In talking to Julian Schrago, the brewmaster and co-owner of Beachwood who was pouring pilsners for lucky folks Saturday, his passion for the artform of brewing lagers came through: “You start to understand the term ‘respect your elders.’ These are some of the original beer styles. I don’t think you can really truly understand beer in its entirety unless you get the fundamentals, which is what you get here. This is drinkable, consumable heritage. This is fundamental beer.”

In from Orange County, Evan Price, co-founder and brewmaster of Green

(FESTIVAL REVIEW continued on page 4)

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(FESTIVAL REVIEW continued)

Cheek Beer Co., was also slinging some of his terrific lagers, including the sublime Kinda Like Toast, a Vienna-style lager that's light and, appropriately enough, a little toasty. Price, like many others in attendance, dug the more focused festival format, saying, "It's important to do specialty beer festivals. Getting together an audience that appreciates that one thing?... I think this is the future of beer festivals."

I also had my first encounter with Bearded Tang Brewing, a Stanton brewery which has only been open a year and a half yet already boasts a GABF gold medal in the Coffee Stout category. Their lagers are equally praiseworthy, from the Australian pilsner Ella Down Unda to my personal favorite and a festival standout, Zest Quest, their citrus bomb of an unfiltered pilsner. The folks at the booth told me Bearded Tang is aiming "to put Stanton on the map"—with beers as good as these, they're well on their way.

The SLO County breweries may have driven down for their festival, but they have driven themselves up my personal rankings for great California

beer. There Does Not Exist's hazy IPAs make their way down toward LA County now and again, but their lager game is top-notch, wowing attendees with their dark lager, Moonset, and their German pilsner, Mittpils. Their neighbor, Liquid Gravity Brewing, brought their own terrific German pilsner in Crispy Life, and Central Coast Brewing presented, among others, General Schwarz, a five-star schwarzbier whose medals of honor include a GABF gold medal.

And, of course, it's not a California lager festival without Firestone Walker pouring some of their beauties. Matt Brynildson, brewmaster at Firestone Walker, told me Lagerville was "another amazing example of the increasing interest within the craft community for lager style beers. This is a relatively remote event that drew 1000 lager lovers together and most of the brewers came themselves to pour their beers.... it made this lager nerd smile ear to ear." Brynildson definitely wasn't alone in that regard.

Finally, there's the host brewery itself, serving up, among other things, Lagerville, a terrific Czech dark lager collab with Enegren and Urban Roots, and the giggle-inducingly named I Just Dunked In My Pants, an award-



Julian Shrago (R) with presumed escaped convict from nearby penitentiary (L)  
Photo Credit: Emily Hainline

winning dunkel that won a place in our hearts with its name and its flavor. They have a terrific venue for a beer festival of this size, and I'm glad they used it for the purposes of spreading the Gospel of Lager.

Events like this give me hope for further specialized beer festivals down the line coming to Central and Southern California. More lager festivals. More saison festivals. More Belgian ale festivals. Break up the monotony, strike back against the hype. Beer is the magnificent art form it is precisely because of its versatility, its variety of style, of flavor, of kick,

of effervescence. (It's also the tastiest form of art, I find.) Specialized festivals like Lagerville help showcase more of the colors in the beer brewer's palette and expand the reaches of the beer drinker's palate. For that—and for the opportunity to make that palette/palate pun—I am grateful.

*Russell Hainline follows in the proud screenwriting tradition of loving to drink. You can find him on TikTok at @thebeertravelguide, on Instagram at @russellhbeer, and on a barstool at any beer establishment in the West LA area.*

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Guests share a toast at Lagerville

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## IE PROFILE

# STORYTELLERS: A BREWERY WITH A FEW STORIES TO TELL

by Andrew Smith



The Cantrell Brother, Matty (L) Randy (R) in front of the mural of grandpa's porch  
Photo Credit: Andrew Smith

My first visit to Storytellers Brewery & Meet House had just been a casual one. I'd missed a few chances. They did a brief soft open in 2018, then closed for expansion. Shortly after reopening, Covid hit. After a pint of cask, a conversation with the owner, and a couple of crawlers, it became clear that Storytellers had a story to tell. That story starts with Matt Cantrell, who some might recognize from El Segundo Brewing's early years.

The Cantrell story goes back further than that as Matt's brother and Storytellers co-owner Randy recalls: "We grew up in eastern Kentucky and spent a lot of time at Grandpa's place. When the area was still something of a frontier, it was a gathering place. People would pass by, hang out on the porch, even spend the night. He kept that spirit of community. In the 70's, Matt and I grew up on this porch, listening to the stories people shared. They called it The Meeting House."

Randy made his way to California through the software business, eventually establishing his own companies. Matt followed him a few years later for graduate school, majoring in Clinical Psychology and setting up his own private practices.

Finding his career "super draining," Matt made his weekend escape through

homebrewing. A dedicated student with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he stumbled upon a Cicerone class taught by Tom Kelley, one of the El Segundo Brewing owners. Within a month, Matt was filling in at events. Soon he'd be working weekends at the taproom, then deliveries, then sales. One day he showed up to "chaos at the brewery," and the rest is history.

"I walked through all these random events," Matt recalled, "The doors just perfectly aligned. From a lonely homebrewer, I became one of the integral components of the brewery and saw this wonderful explosion of the brewery and their IPA's."

A family move relocated him to Texas and Austin Beer Works, something he describes as "a completely different experience." He went from a 15-barrel to a 40-barrel system and 120-barrel fermenters, and a much broader catalogue. "It was a really cool time in my growth as a brewer," he adds, "Understanding that there's a whole other world out there: lagers, sours, and mixed fermentation."

It was during that time that he also started yearning for more. "Brewing for someone else, I was always going to rise to a level but never go beyond it," said Matt, "If I was ever going to do anything in this business, I needed

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to do this for myself.” He shared those thoughts with Randy, who, coincidentally, had also been looking for a change and was discussing something similar with another friend.

“We had that conversation on a porch during a thunderstorm just like we used to at grandpa’s,” added Randy, “It was one of those nights enjoying some drinks and swapping stories. We were both ready for a change.”

“I always thought he did great work,” Randy continued, “I wanted to get him into his own space so that other people could enjoy what I’d been enjoying.” Randy sold his software companies and the two brothers set about creating their own Meeting House.

They settled on Corona by chance. Enjoying a few beers at Skyland Ale Works, they learned that Skyland had just vacated a smaller property across the parking lot. It was a turnkey offering with a 3.5-barrel system that they couldn’t pass up.

“We settled on doing something smaller and lower risk,” said Randy, “That’s very east Kentucky, very hill country, very independent. It’s kind of in our DNA to go small.” It would allow them full creativity to do things their own way. “At some point, we will go bigger, with a bigger system, some core beers,” Randy continued, “But you can’t get awesome from a creative perspective if you keep brewing the same thing.”

“At first I was convinced that we needed four core beers,” added Matt, “But, why would I want to do core? That’s what I’d been doing the whole time. I’m not going to be able to do anything creative if I’m busy brewing for other locations. People tell me they love that they can get four or five new beers every time they come in. That’s what I think craft beer is all about, the craft of creating.”

Given Matt’s roots, you might expect an inclination towards IPA’s. He does brew some. Popular variants include the Peach Tea IPA and the Imperial Red. Other regulars include an Irish Red and a Chocolate (rotating) Coffee Stout. But, there’s so much more intrigue about the portfolio. I was initially drawn to the Early Grey English Pale on cask. It sparked my first conversation with Matt. I left with a crowler of his excellent Belgian Dubbel and a Roggenbier. It was the latter that really confirmed Storytellers as one of the most interesting stories in the IE.

I’d never seen a Roggenbier. It’s a revival of an obsolete Bavarian style. Similar to Dunkelweizen, it’s fuller in body and uses a heavy dose of rye. Geographical shortages of rye had been the reason it disappeared. Matt’s version is wonderfully rich, deep, and complex. It made for one of those epiphany moments, regular occurrences in my early microbrew days, but less so today. Like most things at Storytellers, it inspired a deeper conversation.

“I spent a lot of time researching that beer,” said Matt, “I love historical styles. I want to pursue those styles that have laid dormant but that have been the foundations for where we are now.” Shortly after my third visit – yes, I made three visits for this feature – Storytellers released a Pre-War Pils. Matt also crafted an authentic Kentucky Common from recipes and water profiles he obtained through his Louisville connections.

While Randy has brought valuable business and IT knowledge, he and his son, Corey, also brew. “We call ourselves the B-sides,” jokes Randy. They’re responsible for some interesting twists on craft seltzers, hard teas and tropical IPA’s. The teas are an integral part of the story, an ode to the family roots. Southern Sweet Tea is derived from grandma’s Carolina recipe. Randy also spoke of a Spicy Smoked Pineapple Hard Tea: “It’s a Lapsang souchong tea, fire roasted over bamboo and pine wood. So, you get a nice smokiness that tastes like a Kentucky bourbon porch tea.”

Another of Randy’s additions was the Chai Tea Cream Ale. It’s not a style I typically drink, but the Chai adds some delicious spice, vanilla, and floral complexities. “That was one of the first beers we did and kind of set the tone,” said Randy, “When we saw customers enjoying it, we knew we had to pursue these interesting supporting flavors.”

That creativity and desire to explore new possibilities is really what’s so inspiring about Storytellers. The “craft of craft” as Matt emphasizes. “Matt is a scholar,” adds Randy, “He loves school and learning. He’s taken that same love of learning and research and put it into something he loves doing.”

The portfolio makes Storytellers a unique experience. I’ll call it the philosophy of craft, since philosophy happens to be another of Matt’s majors. It’s also about the time, the space and the experience.

“From the outset, we wanted to

pay homage to our grandparents,” said Matt, “To create a place that reaches back into history, to enjoy each other’s company, a place where even the stranger feels welcome.” In that respect, you’d be hard pressed to find two more amicable guys in the industry, or a more imaginative

portfolio.

*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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OWNER/PUBLISHER/EDITOR/ HEAD WRITER: Daniel Drennon

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Joshua Cortez

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS: Matthew Garcia, Jolie Hackney, Russell Hainline, Sean Inman, David Mulvihill, and Andrew Smith

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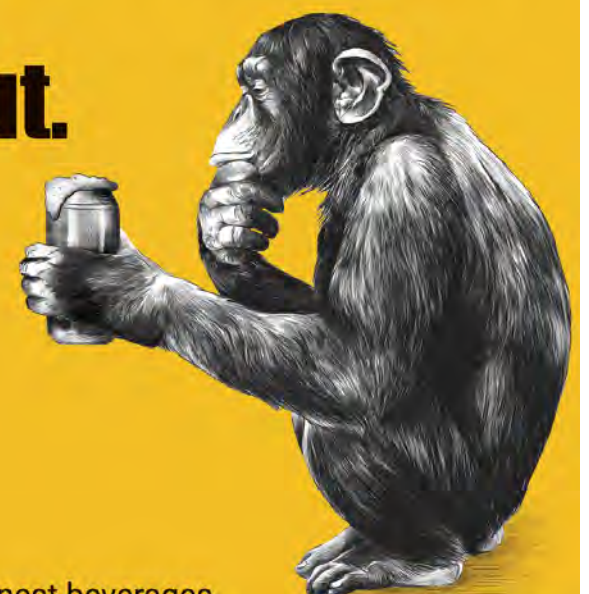
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**COVER STORY**

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How did I discover Brendan Gough? Well. Let's be clear. I did not discover Brendan Gough. But, man, did I wish I had.

Several years ago, a brewer pal, I now can't even recall which one, told me that on my way home from the Firestone Walker Invitational in Paso Robles, I must absolutely make a stop at Central Coast Brewing in San Luis Obispo. And added that, "your mind will be blown."

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So how, after that day, could I possibly be impressed by some 20-year old microbrewery in SLO?

We arrived at Central Coast Brewing the Sunday morning after the Invitational, hungover of course, and anxious to get back to LA. It was to be a quick stop right as they opened the doors at 11 am to confirm the obvious, that the beers couldn't possibly come anywhere close to the previous day's glorious offerings, and then I could

taunt the brewer pal who said so by asking if he had been smoking weed... or perhaps crack...before he suggested CCB would "blow me away."

As we took our bar stool seats at the bar of the tiny establishment, CCB looked every bit the "microbrewery" that had opened in 1998 and been making the "meh" beers of that era for 16 years until the aforementioned Brendan Gough took the Head Brewer job in 2014.

The first easy observation that perhaps my brewer pal was not on crack were the medals on the wall behind the bar: 2015 GABF Gold Medal for Monterey Street Pale Ale; 2016 World Beer Cup Gold Medal for Lucky Day IPA; 2016 GABF Gold Medal for General Schwarz German Schwarzbier; 2016 GABF Silver Medal for Monterey Street Pale Ale; 2017 GABF Gold Medal for Monterey Street Pale Ale; 2018 GABF Bronze Medal for Lucky Day IPA; and, oh yeah, 2019 Bistro IPA Festival Gold Medal for Lucky Day IPA. Yeah, yeah. Couple of these came after my visit, but you get the point.

The second sign that this was a wise stop was the arrival of Beachwood brewmaster Julian Shrago and his wife Fauna. Shrago is easily one of the most



Brendan and Celeste Gough

Photo Credit: Jolie Hackney

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decorated and critically acclaimed brewers over the past ten years, so when he shows up to drink your beer, especially the day after FWIBF, the cat is, as they say, out of the bag. You have arrived as a brewer, and then some.

I don't need to tell you that Gough's line up of beers lived up to the hype. And then some.

This born and raised local kid had parlayed his award-winning homebrews into a shift brewer job at Firestone Walker for three years, and then took the helm at CCB for five years where he had quietly and, somehow under the radar, evolved into one of the very best brewers anywhere. Now what?

What would the next challenge be since emerging from the long shadow of mighty Firestone Walker just up the 101?

Answer. His own brewery. Liquid Gravity. He and his wife Celeste, aka The Hop Witch, bought local SLO brewery Tap It! and opened late 2019 in the midst of the pandemic. Most new breweries do not produce world class beer right out of the gate. There is usually a dialing it in period, even for an accomplished brewer. But

Gough again defied gravity, oops, defied the odds and Liquid Gravity beer is already as good as it gets. In fact, since starting Liquid Gravity, Gough has already added more GABF hardware to his resume with a 2021 Bronze Medal for Mo' Diggity IPA.

DRENNON: Where were you born and raised?

GOUGH: I was born and raised in San Luis Obispo.

DRENNON: What were you into as a kid?

GOUGH: When I was young, I was definitely into sports. I played travel baseball and basketball until high school. By the time I got into high school I had largely lost interest in team sports and really got into skateboarding and snowboarding.

DRENNON: What, where and when was your first beer experience?

GOUGH: My first real beer experience was in Munich, Germany in 2002 at the age of 21. My buddy and I were on a backpacking trip through Europe. During our first day in Munich, we wandered into a beer garden and spent most of the afternoon drinking liter



Brewmaster Brendan Gough

Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

steins of proper Bavarian Hefeweizen. I remember being blown away by this magical cloudy beer that tasted liked spiced banana bread. I had never tasted anything like it. At the time I was drinking mass produced American lagers and I had no idea a beer could be so flavorful without being overly bitter. That day changed my entire life. I came back to the States on a mission to find more flavorful beer; eventually finding IPAs, sours and everything else.

DRENNON: How and when did you decide to become a brewer?

GOUGH: Like many brewers, I started out homebrewing. I was studying Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing at Cal Poly. My mom gave me an old homebrew kit that had been in the garage for a decade. She had purchased it for my dad and he never used it. As soon as I got the kit, I started doing research online and was instantly hooked, spending every free moment I had

(COVER STORY continued on page 10)

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Celeste Gough at Liquid Gravity Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

(COVER STORY continued)

listening to brewing podcasts, and honing my skills using an igloo cooler and a turkey fryer. After I graduated all I wanted to do was make beer. By that time, I had a part time gig at a local brewery and even though I didn't know how to turn my passion into a career yet, I was hell bent on making it happen.

DRENNON: How did you get the job at Firestone Walker, how long were you there and what did you learn from brewmaster Matt Brynildson and brew captain Dustin Kral?

GOUGH: I was at Firestone Walker for almost three years. When I got my interview up there I had basically no experience and no formal education at all. I was fresh out of college with my Marketing degree but all I wanted to do was make beer. Fortunately, I had a couple of good friends named Mark Fischer and Max Montgomery who I knew through the homebrew circuit and they both knew Matt Brynildson. As the story goes, Matt was looking to hire a brewer and Mark and Max had recommended me. At the time I was entering every local homebrew competition that I possibly could. I had won best in show at the Mid State Fair with a Kolsch and was becoming increasingly more obsessed with the art and science of brewing. So, even with very little experience and no formal brewing education I was able to parlay my reputation as a homebrewer into an interview at Firestone and the rest is history.

I credit Matt and Dustin with much of what I have been able to achieve as a professional brewer. Nobody executes with greater precision than the boys in Paso Robles. There's obviously a lot of new brewers out there these days

giving the old guard a run for their money but I'll be damned if you could find a better group of brewers than they have. To me, they are the process gods in this industry. No disrespect to anyone else but if you're having a fantasy brewer draft, Brynildson and DK go number one.

DRENNON: During your time as a brewer, you have won a number of World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival medals in highly competitive categories. To what do you attribute that success?

GOUGH: Honestly, there are a lot of factors, but I think being able to use your palate to make small recipe tweaks to improve the beers is really important. Other than that, building a recipe that fits into the style and making sure you have good, fresh raw materials and minimizing oxygen pickup are all really important as well.

DRENNON: I was about to go out on a limb (not really) and guess that recipe development is one of the most important elements in brewing fantastic beer. How did you develop and cultivate that skill?

GOUGH: I draw a strong connection between having a good palate and successful recipe development. One leads the other. If a beer doesn't taste the way I like, I need to decide what about it needs to change. To me, this is really the essence of brewing. Experimenting with new processes, recipes, and techniques to continually try and make better beer. Any given recipe will taste different on every brewhouse so it's up to the brewer to be able to understand what they are tasting and make adjustments.

DRENNON: Between work ethic and talent, which do you think is more important as a brewer?



Yesenia Rodriguez (left), Monica Duggan, Melissa Clark, Celeste & Brendan Gough  
 Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

GOUGH: That's a tough question. I think there are some inherent talents you need to possess in order to be a good brewer but I also think you can make up some shortcomings with work ethic. This question also brings up the interesting topic of what constitutes talent in a brewer. In other industries, I think talent is easier to measure. There are a lot of intangible qualities that go into being a good brewer. I know a lot of brilliant, engineer types that make bad beer because their palate is garbage. On the other hand, having a good palate certainly doesn't make you a good brewer in and of itself. Much of what I do is efficiency evaluation and problem solving but if the beer is not good does being efficient really even matter? Ultimately, I think the most important traits for a brewer to possess are a good palate, good problem-solving skills, a mechanical mind, an understanding of science and a strong work ethic. All of these pieces sort of work together.

DRENNON: So now you and your wife Celeste, aka The Hop Witch, own your own place. Liquid Gravity in your hometown, San Luis Obispo. That has to be equally exciting and challenging, especially when you toss in a pandemic during your first few months of operation. Tell us how you pulled it off.

GOUGH: It has certainly been a challenging time to open a new brewery. I think we've been able to hold it all together by remaining fluid and being able to adapt as things have changed. We started off with a business model to distribute in only three counties

with 90% of our beer being sold in kegs. Once Covid hit and everything shut down, we pivoted on a dime and moved our beer almost entirely into cans. As restaurants and bars in our area began reopening, we started bringing more draft back into the mix. Currently, we're pretty close to a 50/50 split between draft and cans. Looking back at it, I think this should have been our plan from the beginning. If there is a silver lining for us during all this craziness it is that we've ended up with what I consider a stronger and more balanced distribution plan moving forward.

DRENNON: What are your goals and also your biggest challenges?

GOUGH: The goal for our entire team every day is to make the best beer that we possibly can and to stay positive and have fun while we're doing it. We have an incredible team of all-stars that left good jobs to come and embark on this journey together. The challenges seem to change daily. As anyone who has worked in a brewery can tell you, it comes with a fair amount of stress. Tight deadlines, equipment failing and everything else that goes along with it. That's why I think it's so important to build that culture of family and friendship within the brewery. It's much easier to navigate these challenges when everyone is on the same page and working towards the same goals.

DRENNON: Do you have a favorite beer style to drink versus to brew, or are they one and the same?

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(COVER STORY continued on page 12)



Brendan Gough

Photo Credit: Dylan Grant of SLOBREW

(COVER STORY continued)

GOUGH: They are one and the same for me. My favorite styles to drink and brew are crisp and hoppy - German Pilsners, West Coast IPAs and Pale Ales. That said, I enjoy brewing and drinking a wide variety of styles and really take pride in trying to brew the best examples of each style at Liquid Gravity. On our menu board you'll almost always find a hazy IPA, a fruited kettle-sour, and an imperial stout. We offer a wide range of beers and I enjoy trying to make the best versions of those styles that we possibly can.

DRENNON: Since your IPA and hoppy beer resume establishes you as something of a "Hop God," what is your professional assessment of the West Coast-style versus the New England-style?

GOUGH: (laughs) I don't know about that but I do think there are some really awesome things about both styles. When hazy IPAs started making waves, I got on the hazy train pretty early and started making them regularly at CCB in 2016. I think the softer bitterness and fruit-forward expression of the yeast creates a fun and approachable canvas to present the hops. I drank a bunch of them when

they first came out but eventually started getting a little "hazed out". That said, I think brewing hazy IPA helped me improve our West Coast beers also. Back in the day West Coast IPA felt like a bitterness arms race. Everybody was trying to out-bitter the next guy which led to a lot of overly-bitter and undrinkable beers. I also think the low bitterness trend of hazy IPAs helped to create a more modern interpretation of West Coast IPAs. These new takes on the style are much more aroma and flavor driven than the overly-bitter IPAs of old. I also think a lot of drinkers who drink mostly hazy IPAs would love this modern take on West Coast beers but just haven't been exposed to them yet. A lot of people think they don't like West Coast IPAs because they don't like the bitterness but there are a lot of really great breweries pumping out awesome West Coast beers that aren't an all-out assault on your palate.

DRENNON: I'm almost positive you have zero free time, but what do you enjoy doing most when it is not surveying the world from your own brew deck or most excellent outdoor patio at Liquid Gravity?

GOUGH: My free time is certainly limited these days. I do still try to get out for a round of golf from time to

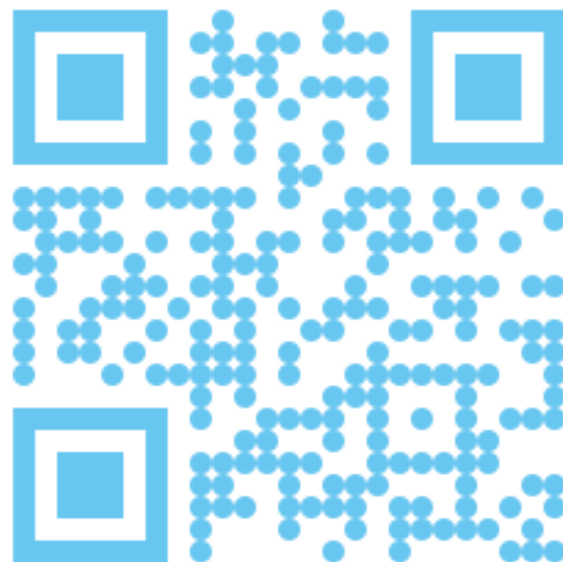


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time. I also have my wife, two kids and three cats at home, so if I'm not at the brewery I'm usually trying to get some family time in.

DRENNON: Let's play the desert island beer game. You can only take four, so what would they be?

GOUGH: Hmm...I haven't done this in a while. I'm going to have to go with Tipopils - Birrificio Italiano (runner-up is Pivo Pils from Firestone but Tipopils was the inspiration for Pivo so we'll go with the original); any West Coast IPA from the OG Alpine pub; Death & Taxes by Moonlight Brewing and, last but not least, Cantillon Gueuze.

DRENNON: Excellent list! So, if you weren't a brewer, what would you be?

GOUGH: A ballerina. And a damn good one.

DRENNON: (laughs) I'd like to say I can picture that, but I'd rather not. Let's wrap up with your own assessment of yourself. If you had to describe yourself in one word or phrase, what would it be?

GOUGH: I just asked my wife. She said neurotic. I think I'll get a second opinion.



Liquid Gravity patio

Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

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## OC BEAT

# GUILDED TOGETHER

by David Mulvihill

During March and April several member breweries brewed their own unique versions of the 2022 Orange County Brewers Guild Collaboration, Guilded Together. The goal this year was to allow for a broad interpretation of the chosen beer style in order to celebrate the individuality and diversity of our OC brewers. The objective was for breweries to brew an amazing IPA in the West Coast or hazy-style that would showcase individual brewer-brewery talents, give folks an additional reason to visit local tasting rooms, and raise money for the OCBG.

The OC Brewers Guild encourages you to get out and try as many as you can. Most participating breweries are offering Guilded Together on tap and in the can. Enjoy a pint at the brewery and then take a 4-pack home.

*Note:* The list of breweries and brews covered below is not all-inclusive,

so there may be additional Guilded Together IPAs brewed and available.

## Help from Suppliers

Ingredients and materials partners stepped up to contribute and assist with the effort.

Brewers Supply Group: BSG donated funds directly to the Guild to assist with label artwork, printing and the OCBG.

Country Malt Group discounted collaboration malts below base price. Malts available for the collaboration brew: Great Western Malting (GW): Pure Idaho, Superior Pils, 2row, White Wheat, Brumalt, Dextrapils. Canada Malting: Superior Pils, Superior Pale, and Oat Malt.

Yakima Chief Hops: YCH discounted a number of its hop varieties for use in the Guilded Together batches: HBC 630 Cryo, Ekuanot Cryo, Idaho 7



CCB Guilded Together WC DIPA

Photo Credit: Chapman Crafted Beer

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Cryo, and Sabro Cryo.

White Labs donated yeast for participant brews.

Berkeley Yeast, a company making strides in the area of yeast genetics, discounted its yeast to OCBG participating breweries for the Guided Together Collab. Berkeley also donated 15% of the total purchase price of the yeast (for the Guided Together brews) to the OCBG.

Capital Label Company, in addition to providing discounted pricing for labels, also provided a sizeable number of free labels.

**The Brews**

**Riip Beer Company's** Guided Together is a bright and bold 6.9% ABV West Coast IPA. Ian McCall and the Riip brewing team showcase YCH Mosaic T90, Idaho 7 Cryo and HBC630 Cryo hops in this beer. They combine exceptionally well in providing a complimentary mix of flavors and aroma. Base malts included GW Pure Idaho and Superior Pils from Country Malting.

*From the Riip Team:* "Fundraisers such as Guided Together allow us to provide educational opportunities to members, provide much needed guidance and support to breweries in OC, and throw fun festivals for our friends and fans."

Congrats also go out to the team for accolades received at The Bistro's 24th Annual West Coast IPA Fest in Hayward. 3rd Place was awarded for Riip's 1020 IPA.

**Chapman Crafted Beer's** David Hall and his team crafted an 8% ABV West Coast Double IPA for their version. Its stars are Huell Melon, Idaho 7, and Motueka hops.

*From Chapman Crafted's Brewing Team:* "This collaboration was very special for our team. The past few years have been hard on the craft beer community and to be able to come together (in person) to celebrate something we all love so much was momentous. We are honored to be part of the OC Brewers Guild and the OC craft beer community."

**GameCraft Brewing's** Guided Together is a 7.3% ABV West Coast IPA, clocking in at 50 IBU. GameCraft's Andrew Moy shared that he and his team utilized GW Idaho Pilsen malt in formulating the brew. Simcoe and Mosaic from YCH made up the primary hop mix, with a

bit of Warrior thrown in to impart a slight bittering. The finished product presents a clean malt profile, balanced by prominent piney-fruity aromas and flavor.

**Beachwood Brewing's** take on the OCBG collaboration is presented as a Beachwood-style West Coast IPA, 7.1% ABV with 55 IBU. Brewed with a 100% pilsner malt base and seeking to impart intense aromas of overripe pineapple and grapefruit zest, it was hopped with Ekuanot, Ekuanot Cryo, and Idaho 7 Cryo hops.

*RE: Cryo Hops:* Cryogenic hop processing separates whole hop cones into concentrated lupulin (*the yellow powder on the hop cone*) and bract (*the cone leaf layers*). Cryo Hops pellets are the concentrated lupulin of whole leaf hops, containing most of the hop's flavor and aroma.

**Brewheim:** Joey Fergusson chose the opposite end of the range for Brewheim's Guided Together Session IPA. Clocking in at 4.5% ABV and 42 IBU, the beer drinks refreshingly clean with subdued hops and bitterness. Joey, kept the ingredients the same as his Guided Together Double IPA brewed last year, but scaled them down for a session beer this time around. Malts consisted of 40% 2-row, 40% pilsner, and 20% white wheat. For hops, Amarillo went into the boil, with Simcoe and Citra in the whirlpool, followed by even amounts the three for dry-hopping.

**Broken Timbers** Guided was also brewed closer to the Session IPA range, 5.5% ABV and 45 IBU. The team's intent was to celebrate IPA by brewing one you can drink several of. Broken Timbers Guided Together was bittered with BRU-1 hops, followed by plenty of Idaho Gem and Sabro hops to provide for aromas and flavors of citrus and notes of cherry.

At press time, the **Dueling Ducks** version of Guided Together, a 7.2% ABV, 37 IBU Hazy IPA, was being carbonated, with plans for Daniel Kraus and team to debut the beer prior to the end of April. It was designed to showcase the tropical and fruity notes from the ingredients via fermenting with Berkley Tropics Ale Yeast and using cryo hops from YCH. Hops included Ekuanot, El Dorado, Mosaic, and Idaho #7.

*From the Dueling Ducks Brewing Team:* "This collaboration means everything to us. We started as the biggest fan of OC Brewers and as a new brewery, to be able to brew a



Guided Together Riip IPA

Photo Credit: Riip Beer Co.

"guild-wide collaboration" with our peers is a real treat and honor.

All American Brew Works was set to brew its version of Guided Together during the final week of April, so look forward to it's debut in the near future.

We encourage you to support your local brewers, breweries and brewers

guilds while satiating your taste buds at the same time.

*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.*

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## LA PROFILE

## AN OASIS OF CREATIVITY: BENNY BOY

by Sean Inman

To create an oasis in a city as large and loud as Los Angeles is not easy. To create that oasis when you are literally next to the constant thrum of the 5 Freeway is another degree of difficulty. And to create that oasis while the world was stuck in a pandemic added yet another challenging test to the equation.

But Ben Farber and Chelsey Rosetter have managed this impressive feat of opening their oasis, Benny Boy Brewing, at the end of March in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood ever so close to the Brewery Blocks and its iconic brewery smokestack.

The journey to opening has been long, wife-husband Rosetter and Farber researched centuries-old brewing and fermentation techniques throughout Europe for over five years. Add in Farber's over twelve years of brewing and you have a project that has been a long time in the making.

That research time leads to distinctive

pairings. Old World brewing methods used with new brewing equipment. Traditional/classic beer styles with a California twist. Beer and cider (and wine, from Pali Wine Company). But there are two other distinctive features of Benny Boy that will differentiate it from other breweries here in Los Angeles. One is that they only use unprocessed whole flower hops. That requires a slightly altered brewing process and will create an end product that is unique. Second is that the beer they serve will come straight from the tank. No wall of taps or ornate tap handles. There will be no kicking of a keg at Benny Boy.

The brewing ethos is important but the space to enjoy the beer is equally so for both Rosetter and Farber. The location is lovely and calm with fire pits and communal seating. Think of a close friend's well landscaped backyard, and that is the vibe. Yes, the freeway noise is there but I had no problem in hearing conversation or the



Benny Boy Brewing

Photo Credit: Sean Inman

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music being played.

Rosetter explains further, "We wanted to create an outdoor space that friends, old and new, and the community can share together. After all, it's as much about the experience you're having while enjoying a craft beverage as it is about what's in your glass."

All this would be for naught if the drinks were not on point. And both the beer and cider certainly are. Lincoln Heights Lager, a Mexican-style lighter beer was bright, spicy with an excellent corn base to it. Other Lover, an even lighter table beer, had notes of lemon verbena to it. They also pour a Basil Saison and a prickly pear and sage Gose as well as a Pale Ale and IPA but I would recommend the biggest beer on the current list, Midnight Swim, a Belgian Dark Strong Ale that reminded me of Belgian Christmas beers.

Crossing the courtyard, you will find dry and semi-sweet ciders that are filled with apple flavor, more than most ciders on the market currently or apple pies for that matter. I almost expect

an apple tree to sprout and one has in a certain way. There is a tree in the cider and wine building. A giant apple tree installation with red globe lights hung from rafter branches. Taking steps further, Benny Boy Brewing is collaborating with Downtown Los Angeles' The Spirit Guild to produce pommeau, a 17% ABV French aperitif made with apple brandy and premium apple juice, blended and barrel aged to perfection over three years. And cider talk turned to Perry as well, so maybe pears will come into play later.

Opening a brewery was hard enough in the before pandemic times. Now it is made far harder by recent times and events. But this duo have been resilient and have quickly embedded themselves into both the Los Angeles beer community and the Lincoln Heights community too. Before long, their red sign might become the more recognizable sign on the 5.

*Sean Inman has been blogging about beer since 2009. You can find his coverage of the Los Angeles beer scene and beyond at the Beer Search Party blog.*



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29 Brews  
46-200 Harrison Pl, Coachella

**3 Iron Brewing Company**  
898 Via Lata Suite A, Colton

**8 Bit Brewing Co**  
26755 Jefferson Ave, Murrieta

**Aftershock Brewing Co**  
28822 Old Town Front Street #108 Temecula

**All Points Brewing**  
2023 Chicago Ave Unit B8, Riverside

**Babe's BBQ & Brewhouse**  
71800 Highway 111, Rancho Mirage

**Big Bear Lake Brewing Company**  
40827 Stone Rd, Big Bear Lake

**Black Market Brewing Co**  
41740 Enterprise Cir N #109, Temecula

**Braemar Brewing**  
1609 S Grove Ave #109, Ontario

**Brewcaipa Brewing Co**  
35058 Yucaipa Blvd, Yucaipa

**Craft Brewing Co**  
530 Crane St suite c, Lake Elsinore

**Coachella Valley Brewing Co**  
30-640 Gunther St, Thousand Palms

**Desert Beer Company**  
77-770 Country Club Dr #D, Palm Desert

**Dragon's Tale Brewery**  
8920 Vernon Ave #122, Montclair

**Electric Brewing Company**  
41537 Cherry St, Murrieta

**Escape Craft Brewery**  
440 Oriental Ave, Redlands

**Euryale Brewing Company**  
2060 Chicago Ave #A-17, Riverside

**Evans Brewing**  
2440 Railroad St, Suite A, Corona

**Garage Brewing Company**  
29095 Old Towne Front St, Temecula

**Good Day Brew Co**  
130 W Walnut Ave, Suite A-8, Perris

**GreyWolf Brewing Co**  
1780 Town and Country Dr #101, Norco

**Hamilton Family Brewery**  
9757 Seventh St #802, Rancho Cucamonga

**Hangar 24 Craft Brewery**  
1710 Sessums Dr, Redlands

**Heroes Restaurant & Brewery**  
3397 Mission Inn Ave, Riverside

**Hops & Spokes Brewing Company**  
34324 Yucaipa Blvd, Suite A, Yucaipa

**I & I Brewing**  
5135 Edison Ave #1, Chino

**Idyllwild Brewpub**  
54423 Village Center Dr, Idyllwild

**Inland Wharf Brewing**  
26440 Jefferson Ave, Suite A, Murrieta

**Ironfire Brewing Company**  
42095 Zevo Dr #1, Temecula

**Joshua Tree Brewery**  
6393 Sunset Rd, Joshua Tree

**Kings Brewing Company**  
8560 Vineyard Ave #301, Rancho Cucamonga

**La Quinta Brewing Company**  
74-714 Technology Dr, Palm Desert

**Lake Arrowhead Brewing**  
329 Villa, Lake Arrowhead

**Las Palmas Brewing**  
461 N Palm Canyon Dr, Palm Springs

**Last Name Brewing**  
2120 Porterfield Way, Upland

**LouEddie's Pizza & Brewery**  
28561 CA-18, Skyforest

**Luchador Brewing**  
15941 Pomona Rincon Rd #100, Chino Hills

**Main Street Brewery**  
493 N Main St, Corona

**Mason Jar Brewing**  
29683 New Hub Dr, Suite A, Menifee

**No Clue Craft Brewing**  
9037 #170 Arrow Rt, Rancho Cucamonga

**Oak Hills Brewing Company**  
12221 Poplar St. Unit 3, Oak Hills

**Off The Grid Brewing**  
13615 John Glenn Road, Apple Valley

**Oscar's Brewing Company**  
29375 Rancho California Rd, Temecula

**Our Brew**  
2351 W Lugonia Ste B, Redlands

**Packinghouse Brewing Co**  
6421 Central Ave #101-A, Riverside

**Refuge Brewery**  
43040 Rancho Way, Temecula

**Relentless Brewing Co**  
42030 Avenida Alvarado, Temecula

**Rescue Brewing Company**  
167 N 2nd Ave, Upland

**Ritual Brewing Company**  
1315 Research Dr, Redlands

**Route 30 Brewing Company**  
9860 Indiana Ave Ste 19, Riverside  
3720 Mission Inn Ave, Riverside

**Rök House Brewing Company**  
1939 W 11th St #A, Upland

**Rowdy's Brew Co**  
10002 6th St A, Rancho Cucamonga

**Sandbox Brewing Co**  
4650 Arrow Hwy, Ste A9, Montclair

**Skyland Ale Works**  
1869 Pomona Rd Unit E/F, Corona

**Solaris Beer & Blending**  
41601B Cherry St, Murrieta

**Solorio Brewing Company**  
9395 Feron Blvd Suite K, Rancho Cucamonga

**Sour Cellars Brewery**  
9495 E 9th St Unit B, Rancho Cucamonga

**Stadium Pizza Main Street**  
169 N. Main Street, Lake Elsinore

**Stone Church Brewing**  
2785 Cabot Dr Suite 160, Corona

**Storytellers Brewery and Meet House**  
109 N Maple St Unit C, Corona

**The Stout House**  
1294 W 9th St, Upland

**Strum Brewing**  
235 S Campus Ave, Ontario

**Temecula Brewing Company**  
32125 Temecula Pkwy, Suite C, Temecula

**Thompson Brewing**  
9900 Indiana Ave Suite 7, Riverside

**Three Marm Brewing**  
23555 Knapps Cutoff, Crestline

**Vendetta Brewing Co**  
8939 Vernon Ave, Suite C, Montclair

**Wicks Brewing**  
11620 Sterling Ave, Suite C, Riverside

**Woody's Restaurant & Brewery**  
26060 Alessandro Blvd, Moreno Valley

Due to the pandemic, we realize the directory may not be 100% up to date. If you notice any discrepancies please notify Creative Director Josh Cortez at [joshcortez@gmail.com](mailto:joshcortez@gmail.com)

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