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VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 12 | November 2022



Danny Priddy, Ian McCall, and Andrew "Moose" Dorsey

Photo Credit: Fernando Gomez

by Daniel Drennon

Riip Beer Co. first appeared on a BEER PAPER cover in August, 2018, Ian McCall, longtime Beachwood brewer, had accepted the head brewer job and within

months, Riip beers were evolving into clean, crisp, clear delicious delights. With his pedigree, we predicted awards and medals were inevitable and, sure enough, the Riip Beer team reappeared on our cover in November,

2020 after grabbing three medals at GABF. Sadly, that was in the thick of the pandemic shutdown and the newspaper was online only...meaning fewer people saw it and certainly didn't get to hold the issue in their eager

beer-drinking hands.

No matter. All McCall and the Riip Beer team have accomplished in 2022 is to firmly establish themselves as one of the best breweries in the world. Hyperbole

you ask? Here is a year in review of the small but mighty brewery in Huntington Beach, a stone's throw from the ocean.

[full cover story on page 10]



PAGE 4



PAGE 6



PAGE 8



PAGE 14



PAGE 18

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## BREWER PROFILE

# PHIL MCDANIEL - EUREKA BREWING

by Daniel Drennon

Phil McDaniel is a co-owner and the head brewer at EUREKA BREWING in Gardena. If attaining your goals is about paying your dues and doing your time, Phil McDaniel has climbed the ladder the old-fashioned way...he earned it. Like most pro brewers, he began with a passion for homebrewing and, once he realized his dream was to one day become a pro brewer, he marched into Bootlegger's and basically volunteered to work for free to get his foot in the door. He washed kegs, worked on the bottling line, and did anything and everything to prove himself.

Then McDaniel got the opportunity of an aspiring brewer's lifetime: he got accepted to the world-renowned Siebel Institute in Chicago where students also spend time abroad perfecting their brewing knowledge and skills at the Doemens Academy in Munich, Germany.

After graduating from Siebel with an International Diploma in Brewing Science, he returned to Bootlegger's as a full-fledged pro brewer. But it wasn't long before McDaniel's ambition led him to head south to Stone Brewing. There, he worked his way up the ladder from brewer to senior brewer to brewery trainer.

But after two years in San Diego, he missed LA. So, when the chance to become the lead brewer at The Bruery in Placentia presented itself, McDaniel took another step forward.

Finally, after two more years on the learning curve, McDaniel was ready and, more importantly, educated,

prepared, and qualified to open a brewery so he took a job as head brewer and a minority owner with King Harbor Brewing. McDaniel guided King Harbor for seven years before getting the proverbial offer he couldn't refuse.... to partner with his childhood best friend, Adam Ansari, and start a brand new brewery from scratch. Ansari had become a successful businessman since their days playing high school golf together. McDaniel's 15 years of craft beer experience paired with Ansari's business acumen created a perfect foundation to start a new brewing company. In the fall of 2020 McDaniel and Ansari opened Eureka Brewing Company.

Eureka grabbed a gold medal at the California Craft Brewers Cup last year for their Pils of Creation and this year they garnered a silver at the San Diego International Beer Competition for their Double Bogey DIPA and another silver at the Great American Beer Festival for their Methuselah Imperial Stout.

Riding that wave of success, Eureka just recently opened a second tasting room in Thousand Oaks.

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

**MCDANIEL:** Growing up, I played sports and I was a tinkerer. I played a lot of schoolyard basketball with my buddies. I also played a ton of golf. Golf is definitely my sport. Adam and I played for our high school team, and we still play golf today. It's a great



Phil McDaniel and Adam Ansari

Photo Courtesy of Eureka Brewing

sport that you can play your entire life.... and you can drink beer while you play!

I also liked tinkering around. I would build things out of whatever I could find in the garage. I was notorious for messing up my dad's tools and leaving his workbench in a state of chaos. As soon as I hit 16 years of age and I was allowed behind the wheel of a car, I began tinkering on cars. I love messing with mechanical things and solving problems.

Nowadays I am still a tinkerer. I need to understand how things work. Whether it is the equipment in my brewery, the ingredients I use, the flavor profiles I consider, the microbiology and chemistry at work in the beer making process, or the results of a brewing experiment.... I need to know how and why things are the way they are. If I feel that I do not fully understand what is going on, I will continue to investigate the topic until I do.

**DRENNON:** I presume that you're a sports fan now?

**MCDANIEL:** Absolutely! I'm a typical LA guy...Dodgers, Lakers, UCLA basketball and football, the Rams.

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

**MCDANIEL:** Either play a ton of golf, or drive off to somewhere super remote in the mountains. I like camping and driving on off-road mountain trails in my truck.

**DRENNON:** Tell us about Eureka Brewing. Seven successful years at King Harbor so it was quite the buzz in the industry when it came out that you were leaving to open Eureka. How did that all come about?

**MCDANIEL:** Leaving King Harbor was the hardest decision that I have ever made. I love King Harbor and everybody that has, and still works



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there. The truth is though that it was a pretty basic business decision. At King Harbor I was a component of a larger organization. At Eureka it's all me. I control my destiny. For better, or worse... Ha!

**DRENNON: What are your goals for Eureka and what is your philosophy of brewing?**

MCDANIEL: I would love to see Eureka beer available throughout all of Southern California. I like to brew creative and flavorful beer, but quality and technical proficiency are what's most important to me. Craft beer has gone through a lot of wild waves in the past few years, and I think it's important that Eureka fans know that our beer is going to be solid.

I will always pursue new innovations in brewing, but my favorite thing about beer is the classic beer drinking experience. Flavorful while also being easy drinking, thirst quenching, and not too strong. Enjoying a few beers with friends while doing fun things. Golfing, camping, cooking, beer gardens, etc.

**DRENNON: Who are the key members of the Eureka team and what do each of them bring to the**

**table to ensure a great customer experience?**

MCDANIEL: Opening in the Fall of 2020, we are still relatively small. I like to think that we are small, but mighty. All the beer is made by myself, and my two awesome assistant brewers Sam and Vanessa. After the beer is made, it needs to be sold. Alexis is our rockstar sales manager. She is everywhere all the time. If somebody wants to hear about our beer and try some, Alexis will be there. We also have two tasting rooms. At our brewery tasting room in Gardena... Morgan, Viri, or Kyla will be there to pour you a pint with a smile and a conversation. Up at our Thousand Oaks tasting room, our manager Colin is doing an amazing job with Autumn and Apolinario.

**DRENNON: Who and/or what inspires you?**

MCDANIEL: Ingenuity from other people, past and present. When I learn about an amazing idea (whether it be from a friend, a colleague, or historical figure), it motivates me to continue to work hard to create my own great ideas.

**DRENNON: Between talent and work**



Phil McDaniel and Adam Ansari

Photo Courtesy of Eureka Brewing

**ethic, which is more important?**

MCDANIEL: Work ethic creates talent.

**DRENNON: If you weren't a brewer, what would you be?**

MCDANIEL: Engineer for a racing team. Preferably Porsche or BMW.

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

MCDANIEL: Curious.

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## OC BEAT

# Orange County GABF Accolades

by David Mulvihill

Orange County Brewers fared very well in 2022's Great American Beer Festival competition, securing 11 medals.

Multiple medal winners included Stanton's Bearded Tang Brewing. First up was Carlos Danger, its Mexican-style lager. Given its stylistic makeup, the team (Jonathan Chiusano, Jerrod Larson, Jordon Friesen, and Kyle Coltrain) decided to enter it into the American Cream Ale Category. That paid off with a silver medal (115 entries in the category).

Bearded Tang's Kristal Weizen (filtered German-style wheat ale) also earned the team silver in the German Wheat Ale Category (209 entries).

Bearded Tang received GABF 2021 recognition as well, a gold medal for its Imperial Coffee stout, Vlad the Barista.

Riip Beer Company in Huntington Beach was the other OC dual medal winner. Out of 423 entries in the American-Style India Pale Ale Category the team was awarded a silver medal for Dankster Squad. Mosaic and Simcoe hops are the stars of this West Coast IPA.

Team Riip's highly decorated Black the Ripper garnered a bronze medal for 2022, having received GABF silver medals in 2021, 2020, and 2018. Results just released from San Diego finds that Team Riip was recognized with top honors at the San Diego International Beer Competition. Two golds (Flannels and Flip Flops Imperial Stout & Raider Bob West Coast Double IPA), two silvers (Black the Ripper & Death Coast West Coast Lager (collab. with Ghost Town Brewing)) and the Best-of-Show beer, Raider Bob, earned the team 2022 Champion Brewery (Riip Beer is featured as the cover story in this issue).

One of three OC GABF gold medals went to Docent Brewing and the brewing team of Bryan and Brett Giesen.

Their Super Tonic, an oatmeal coffee stout was the beer that continues winning awards for the team. Past achievements include 2020 GABF



Part of the Bearded Tang Brewing Team Jordon Friesen and Jerrod Larsen  
Photo Credit: David Mulvihill



Riip Beer Co's Andrew Dorsey, Ian McCall, and Danny Priddy  
Photo Credit: David Mulvihill



Docent Brewing's Bryan and Brett Giesen

Photo Credit: David Mulvihill

gold, and 2020 and 2021 gold ribbons from the San Diego International Beer Competition.

Beachwood Brewing's Full Malted Jacket came away with a GABF 2022 gold medal in the Scotch Ale Category. Earlier this year the beer garnered a silver plaque at the World Beer Cup Competition in Minneapolis. Barrel-aged versions of the beer received GABF bronze medals in 2020 and 2013. In his Instagram post shortly after receiving the medal, Julian Shrago thanked his team: "So proud of the entire Beachwood Brewing team. Their nonstop passion and drive is on full display in all they do."

Team Bottle Logic Brewing was also ecstatic to have received gold in the Wood- and Barrel-Aged Strong Beer Category for Flesh to Stone, an English-style 12% ABV Peach Brandy Barrel-Aged Barleywine. For this beer, Bottle Logic's Arcane Rituals English-style Barleywine (FOBAB gold medal and Best-of-Show winner) was aged in a peach brandy barrels, resulting in an intense but delicate explosion of intricate flavors of wood, fruit and spice that satisfyingly combine in each sip.

The Bruery, Placentia, received a silver medal in the same category for its 14th Anniversary Old Ale. Ivoire is a 17.2% ABV bourbon barrel-aged Old-style ale.

In the Historical Beer Category, Flashpoint Brewing Co (Huntington Beach) was awarded a bronze medal for Churchill Browns, a beer brewed in the Kentucky Common style. The beer was also gold medal winner at the 2021 California Craft Brewers Cup.

Radiant Beer Co. was a leader in two separate contests during the week of GABF. GABF Silver came in the highly contested Juicy or Hazy Strong Pale Ale Category (153 Entries).

Radiant's So Into You IPA combines Citra, Mosaic, and Cashmere hops into its 7% ABV mix.

Radiant Beer Co. also took top honors in the 2022 Alpha King challenge for Dig This Crazy Scene, a 9% ABV double dry-hopped double IPA.

Background on the Alpha King Challenge competition is provided in the section that follows OC's GABF coverage.

Trevor Walls and the Brewery X Team in Anaheim were likewise honored at GABF 2022 and the 2022 Alpha King Challenge. In the GABF Bohemian-Style Pilsener Category, Battlesnakes Pilsner received a Bronze medal. And, Third Place Alpha King honors went to Slap & Tumble West Coast Double IPA.

OC Alpha King Challenge Sweep  
In addition to the aforementioned

Radiant top honors and 3rd place for Brewery X, Alpha King Challenge Second Place went to Santa Ana River Brewing's More Hops Than Brains Double IPA.

For many years, the Alpha King Challenge has been hosted during the Great American Beer Festival. Not affiliated with the GABF, the idea for the Challenge began in 1998 by a couple of brewing industry hop enthusiasts. Their plan was to develop a competition that would inspire and award brewers for their ability to create the best representation hops in a drinkable and well-balanced beer. The



Brewery X's Trevor Walls dispensing the award winning brew  
Photo Credit: David Mulvihill



Beachwood Brewing Team Photo Courtesy of Brewers Association

name was initially inspired by Alpha King Pale Ale, a beer brewed by Three Floyds Brewing in Indiana.

The event was held from 2001-2011 at Denver's Falling Rock Tap House. It moved to Rock Bottom in 2012 to accommodate more attendees.

The Alpha King Challenge is currently sponsored by Yakima Chief Hops and

Three Floyds Brewing.

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



Team Bottle Logic Photo Credit: David Mulvihill



Radiant Beer Company's Jonas Nemura, Andrew Bell, and Billy Robbins  
Photo Credit: David Mulvihill

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**LA BEAT**

# LA AREA BREWERIES NAB 8 GABF MEDALS

by Daniel Drennon



Arrow Lodge team

Photo Courtesy of Arrow Lodge Brewing

The Great American Beer Festival returned to Denver in its full post-pandemic (can we call it post yet?) glory. Hundreds of independent breweries from all 50 states descended upon the Mile High City to celebrate well, just being able to congregate again, but also excellence in the art of brewing.

At the awards ceremony, eight LA-area breweries medaled (OC breweries are listed in the OC Beat).

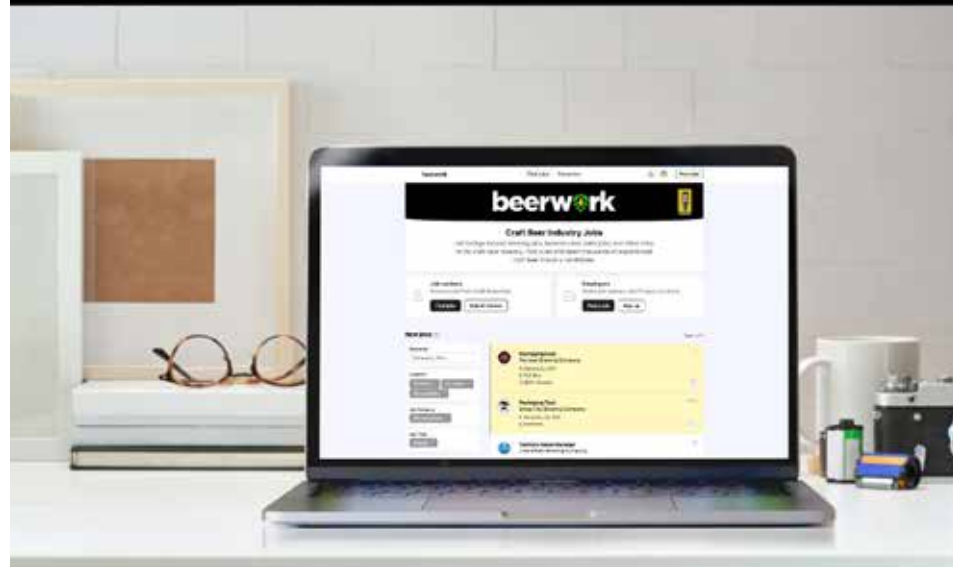
Unsurprisingly, Highland Park Brewery led the way with two medals, a gold for “Pillow” in the Juicy or Hazy Imperial IPA category as well as a bronze for their Double Dry Hopped Timbo in the India Pale Lager category. Others who grabbed the prized gold medals were Ogopogo Brewing for “Nix” in the International

Pale Ale category, Ritual Brewing, straight out of Redlands, for their “Big Deluxe” in the Imperial Stout category, and last month’s cover boys, Dan and Jesse Sundstrom of Ten Mile Brewing proved us to be prescient by garnering gold for “Hooked on Onyx,” their sublime American Black Ale.

Snagging silver medals were Eureka Brewing for “Methuselah,” their Imperial Stout and Lincoln Beer Company for “Railsplitter,” their American Amber/Red Ale which also grabbed a silver at the San Diego International Beer Festival.

Bringing him bronze medals were, in addition to HPB mentioned above, Arrow Lodge Brewing for “Chanclas,” in the American Cream Ale category.

Congratulations to all of the winners.



Brewing Jobs, Taproom Jobs, Sales Jobs, and other roles in the craft beer industry.



Owen Williams and his team

Photo Courtesy of Ritual Brewing Co





Ogopogo medals

Photo Courtesy of OgoPogo Brewing



Jesse Sundstrom and Dan Sundstrom

Photo Courtesy of Ten Mile Brewing

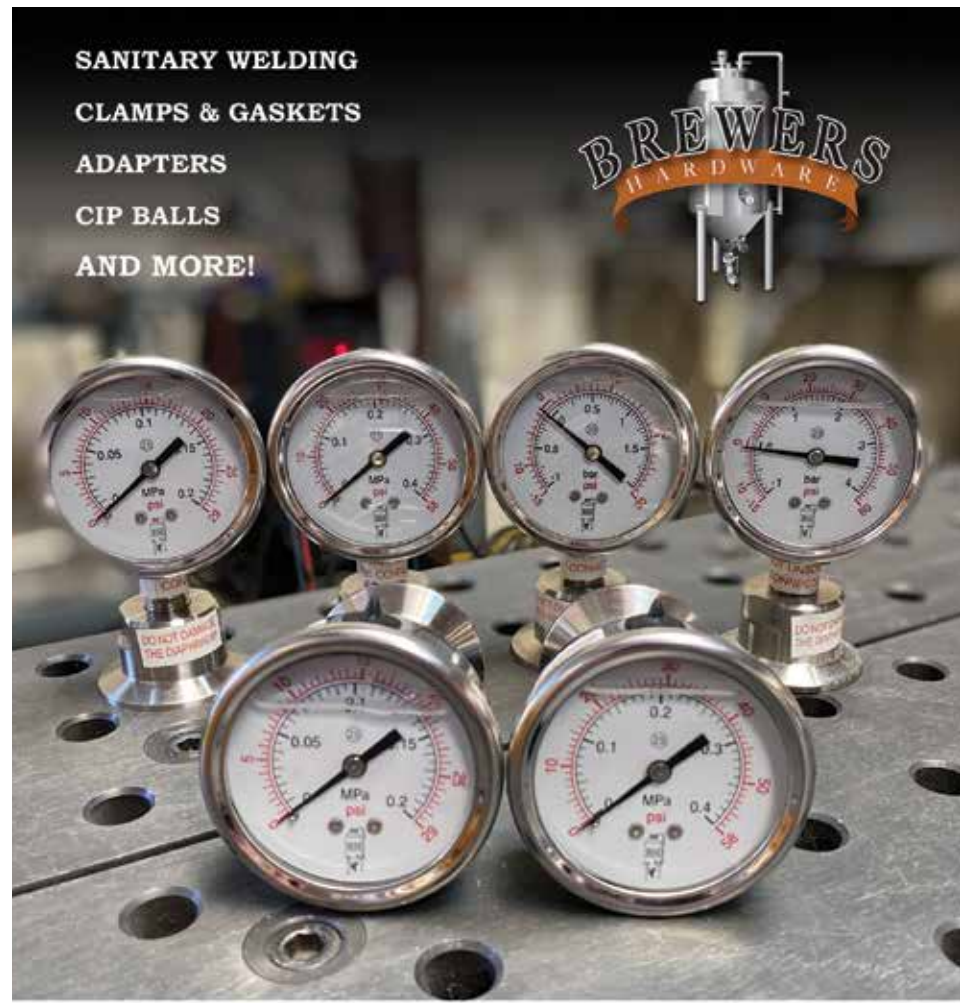


Pete Mauch with Eureka Brewing's Silver Medal Photo Courtesy of Eureka Brewing



Lincoln Beer Co Silver Medal

Photo Credit: Laura Dunn



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## COVER STORY

## RIIP'ED AGAIN!

by Daniel Drennon

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No matter. All McCall and the Riip Beer team have accomplished in 2022 is to firmly establish themselves as one of the best breweries in the world. Hyperbole you ask? Here is a year in review of the small but mighty brewery in Huntington Beach, a stone's throw from the ocean.

February. The Bistro IPA Festival in Hayward. Held during the San Francisco Beer Week, winning a Bistro medal against a veritable Who's Who of best breweries in the country is one of the most coveted in all of beer competitions. Tom Kelley, co-owner of El Segundo Brewing once told us he treasured their Bistro medal over a GABF medal. Riip started their 2022 by grabbing a Bronze for their 1020 West Coast IPA collab with Cannonball Creek, their pals in Golden, CO.

A few months later, also up against entries from every great brewery in California, Riip took first place in the highly-respected LA IPA Festival for Dankster Squad, a sublime West Coast IPA.

And the hits just kept coming. Moving south to the San Diego International Beer Competition, Riip snagged a Gold for Flannels and Flip Flops, a S'mores-inspired Smoked Imperial Stout collab with their homies at Heritage BBQ; another Gold for Raider Bob WC DIPA; a Silver for Death Coast, a West Coast Lager collab with Ghost Town Brewing out of Oakland; a Silver for Black the Ripper, McCall's signature Black IPA; and in a fireworks finish, Riip

grabbed "Best of Show," for Raider Bob and was named **2022 Champion Brewery of the SD International Beer Festival**.

How the Hell do you top that, one might ask? I guess you would have to go to the granddaddy of all competitions, Great American Beer Festival in Denver, and garner a Silver for that beautiful Dankster Squad WC IPA in the American-style IPA category, which is by far the largest and hotly contested with a whopping 423 entries and toss in another Bronze for Black the Ripper (totaling 4 medals in 5 years).

Another indicator that a brewery has ascended to world class status is that everybody and their mother wants to brew a collab beer with you. Check out Riip's portfolio of collaboration partners and draw your own conclusion:

Beachwood, North Park, Ghost Town, Liquid Gravity, Humble Sea, Burnin' Daylight, Tustin, Gamecraft, Ruse, Grains of Wrath, 1886, Chapman Crafted, Docent, Faction, Moonraker, Movement, Slice, Cannonball Creek, Westbound and Down, Arrow Lodge, El Segundo, Revision, Burning Barrel, June Lake, Topa Topa, Pizza Port Carlsbad, The Bruery, Long Beach Beer Lab, Hop Dogma, Flatland, Burgeon, Barebottle, Cooperage, Evergrain, Bearded Tang, Santa Ana River, Von Ebert, Hopsaint, Western Collective, Everywhere, Laguna Beach and last, but not least, Common Space.

Riip Beer Co. was founded eight years ago (they just held a star-studded stellar anniversary party) by Ryan Rasmussen and Ryan Hopkins. They also opened Riip Pizzeria in Huntington Beach this year.

Ian McCall's bad ass brew team is comprised of Danny Priddy and Andrew "Moose" Dorsey.

I sat down with McCall on the sunny patio at Riip to ask him to share his secrets for doing so well in competitions and living up to what were ridiculously high expectations.

**DRENNON: First of all. Damn, man. Congratulations on taking names and kicking ass in 2022.**



Ian McCall, Director of Brewing and Operations Photo Credit: Fernando Gomez

MCCALL: Thanks Daniel. I couldn't be prouder of what the team here at Riip has pulled off this year. It's been a whirlwind year for us and to top it off with GABF and San Diego wins is more than we could have hoped for.

**DRENNON: It's remarkable how certain breweries seem to just keep winning, just keep winning, just keep winning (play the FINDING NEMO soundtrack in your head, please).**

MCCALL: It's no surprise that we see the same breweries on stage, year after year. Dedication to the craft, the ability to be not only conscious but critical of one's beers is in my opinion a huge bridge that must be crossed. No matter what beer a brewer brews, there is someone out there to tell him or her that it's a "good beer", maybe even a "great beer". "You should definitely enter this beer in a competition" is a phrase I hear spoken to brewers by casual beer drinkers, but it doesn't work that way. Just because a beer tastes good or even great, does not mean that it will do well in a sanctioned competition. Knowing what the guidelines are for

each category and knowing what to brew for competitions is a skill that takes time to learn. I just finally did something I should have done years ago, I applied to be a beer judge at GABF. I have always wanted to see how the judging process works at a massive competition such as GABF. I'm told I will still have to wait a few more years.

**DRENNON: I've been told by many brewers whom I respect that brewing is a mix of art and science. How do you break down that relationship and what is your philosophy of brewing?**

MCCALL: I fully agree! Each brewer has their own blend ratio, but you can't build a brewery on simply one or the other. For me and the team here at Riip, I feel that we start with science, in that we have empirical evidence that certain grists, hop schedules, yeast propagations, will yield certain results.

Just like a chef making a roux, or bechamel. You start with what you know and follow your rule book. Then the art comes in, based on years of knowledge, we can guesstimate

what changing or adding different ingredients will give us. Rarely, but sometimes it's just a shot in the dark. I use the chef analogy a lot because there is a world of freedom in cooking if you master the basics.

We always circle back to science and take notes on everything we do. Every batch of beer has copious notes on standard measurements (pH, gravities, etc.) as well as any deviation from our standard process from kettle to package. If we really enjoy the new batch, we can recreate it. If it sucks or not up to our standards, we can go back to the recipe and figure out where and why we missed the mark.

**DRENNON:** *How important is packaging toward your chances of winning in competition? For our readers, breweries usually ship their entries in bottles weeks before the actual judging, such that there is a methodology (if not madness) to that process. Please address packaging.*

MCCALL: I have heard GABF, World Beer Cup and all the others called a "packaging competition," not a beer competition. This is because these events are such a huge undertaking by the Brewers Association (BA), or other sanctioning body, that all entries must be submitted 5 – 6+ weeks prior to the actual competition. This is for sorting and organizing, and I get it. GABF had 9,900+ entries this year.

Packaging is every brewer's enemy and our greatest headache. Every time a beer gets moved from one vessel to another there is an opportunity for oxygen to get into our product. Oxygen causes oxidation which shortens the shelf life of the beer and creates off-flavors that we despise. That's every time we transfer: Fermenter to brite tank, brite to keg, brite to can, keg to bottle, etc. Therefore, if packaging quality is not of utmost concern, then in 5-6 weeks the beer that is being judged will be too flawed and will not show well. Almost all the beers judged will show some sign of age, the question is which one was best packaged and has been degraded the least. (McCall laughs and grins) It's not as doom and gloom as I make it sound.

Once our entries are bottled and we feel good about the packaging run, we need to get our beers to the BA, outside of Boulder, CO. Most breweries will ship their beers overnight or jump on a group shipment that gets delivered via freight either with their brewers guild or other regional breweries. In 2020 I started

flying out with my entries, checking them in on a plane and then driving them to personally drop off at the BA warehouse. I know it sounds crazy or expensive (and it is, but not as crazy or expensive as you would think) but I have the comfort of knowing our beers arrived safe and sound.

**DRENNON:** *Breweries are also expected to submit beers that have been brewed for normal consumption in their taproom. I have heard rumors over the years to suggest some breweries may brew "one off batches" that are "amped up" to increase their chances of winning. Thoughts?*

MCCALL: (laughing) Yes, every brewer is trying to find an angle. I am no different, but what I want to focus on is treating every batch all year long like it's a competition batch. Our customers come to us because they want to drink the best beer we can brew.

In a perfect world, we would all be able to grab a four pack off the shelf and have it as fresh, lively, and rad as all competition beers should be. Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way.

We must keep pushing ourselves to improve our processes, source better ingredients and constantly critique our beers to improve aroma, flavor, body, etc. We are competing against breweries of all sizes. Our beer goes up against Firestone Walker, with a multi-million-dollar facility and QA lab to make sure their beer is as close to perfection as possible, as well as the nano 3bbl neighborhood darling around the corner, with a barely working pH meter.

I don't blame a brewer for brewing "special" batches for competition. I just don't believe it's a long-term solution.

**DRENNON:** *Our mutual friend Brendan Gough of Liquid Gravity once told me that two of the most important criteria for him (though, of course, not the only ones) in being able to become a world class brewer are recipe development and palate. Can you speak to the importance of each of those to your success.*

MCCALL: Palate, I like that. Having a palate is being able to distinguish between a good beer, great beer, and world class beer. Being able to identify off flavors and being willing to acknowledge when your beer has them is of key importance. If a brewer can't

(COVER STORY continued on page 13)



Ian McCall, Danny Priddy, Andrew "Moose" Dorsey Photo Credit: Daniel Drennon

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Danny Priddy, Head Brewer

All Photos Credit: Fernando Gomez

(COVER STORY continued)

acknowledge flaws in their own beer, they are destined to continue making flawed beer. Does that make sense? Awareness, reflection, and honest feedback all contribute to creating a quality palate.

At Riip, our collective palate guides our recipe development. We create a brand-new recipe based on historical styles, experience, or desire to brew with something new, but we let our palates guide the future and evolution of that beer in subsequent batches. I

don't ever want to rest on laurels and assume a beer is "perfected" because it won an award, or it sells well in our taproom. I think there is always room for evolution. Black the Riipper has won 4 GABF awards in the last 5 years and each time we made changes to that recipe that made it better in my opinion. That's a great example of our palates steering recipe development.

**DRENNON:** *On the science side, water quality, sanitation and process are all hyper-critical to turning out great beer. You were mentored by*

**Julian Shrago and Gabe Gordon at Beachwood for years. Now you find yourself mentoring your team of Priddy and Dorsey. How much of being a Director of Brewing and Operations is teaching and what advice do you have for fellow brewers?**

MCCALL: Julian and Gabe at Beachwood gave me the tools to create what we have at Riip. I am forever grateful for that time and tutelage. Stepping into the Director of Brewing and Operations at Riip has humbled me and taught me many unique lessons. It is about teaching, but more importantly it's about leading, encouraging, and empowering my team to step into the opportunity. I am beyond proud of the team we have here at Riip. Danny is a stellar head brewer, working diligently every day to crank out bangers and continually dial up quality. Moose is a hard worker, always up for a challenge, pushing himself to become a better brewer each day.

My advice would be: DON'T SETTLE! Don't settle on awards, don't settle on sales, don't settle on work-life balance. It's a grind, but it's worth it.

**DRENNON:** *Back to winning a boatload of awards, another topic I hear a lot about is selection of which categories to enter. Clearly, entering a category with 40 entries offers better odds than entering a category with 400. What guides your selection of which Riip beers to enter?*

MCCALL: We enter beers that we are excited about, beers that we think can win. Almost every brewer wants to win an American-style IPA award.

So, you know I am going to enter that each year (persistence pays off). We like to brew new beers all the time, sometimes those beers may be good for competitions, sometimes we know they wouldn't be. It's a matter of assembling everything we have talked about above, palate, recipe evolution, packaging, critique, and some luck. Yes. Entering a beer in a smaller category may yield better results overall, but I think each brewer should be true to themselves when deciding what best exemplifies their style.

**DRENNON:** *I noted your extensive list of collaborations in my intro. Not sure if I know of any brewery that has done that many over the past few years. What do you find valuable about collaborating and now that Riip is being solicited by other breweries for collab opportunities, how do you select which ones with whom to brew?*

MCCALL: Collaborations are instrumental in learning about and developing new ingredients, processes, and ideas. Although we all make beer, there are a multitude of ways that we can get to the final product. Like I said earlier, not all breweries are created equal. Some have the newest and hottest toys while some are bootstrapped, but in the end, both can make killer beers.

Collaborations for me are a way to nurture friendships built over many years and countless beers. Every craft brewer knows what it's like to grind, nose down, not feeling like there is an end in sight. Collaborations are a brief respite for weary brewers. A day to have fun, entertain friends and be entertained, learn something, or see something new, taste something new and make something new.

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I have always thought of collaborations with a home-brewer's mentality. Not, who would I like to hang out with and drink beer with all day... but rather, who is killing it and willing to put in the work and at the end of the day help me clean up. I want to brew with my friends who have a similar passion, drive, and love for brewing.

**DRENNON:** Riip is most well-known for brewing a variety of killer IPAs. What are the relative degrees of importance of hop selection, recipe and process to the aroma, body and flavor of the beers?

**MCCALL:** I have had a passion for IPAs for quite some time. We are a hop-focused brewery. By that I mean that brewing hop-forward beers is always front of mind. We dabble in

other classic, historical or hype-y styles, but ultimately, I want to brew the best West Coast IPA we can, and we work hard to source the best ingredients we can to facilitate that goal. We started traveling for hop selection a few years ago, Oregon and Washington, and I whole-heartedly believe that having a solid base of selected, bangin' hops is a great start. Maybe not more important than recipe or process, but damn close.

Recipe and process are integral in making killer, crushable IPAs. As I said earlier, we are constantly tweaking and evolving our recipes and processes (usually because of conversations during a collab) trying to eek out another increment of aroma or flavor. Recipe and process go hand

in hand and one without the other is of little use.

**DRENNON:** Discuss what Danny Priddy and Moose Dorsey bring to the table, I mean, brewhouse.

**MCCALL:** Danny Priddy has been my right-hand man basically since I joined the team at Riip in 2018. Priddy is a beast! One of the hardest working brewers around. We speak the same language and share one common goal, make the best damn beer anywhere! Danny stepped into our Head Brewer position this last year and is the soul of our brewhouse.

Andrew "Moose" Dorsey came to us in 2021 from Old Stump Brewing. Moose is an invaluable member of the team here at Riip, holding down our second shift and kicking ass in the brewhouse.

Riip Beer Co. would not be where we are today if not for these two bad asses.

**DRENNON:** If you got banished to Catalina Island for the next year and could only take three beers with you, which would you take?

**MCCALL:** Pabst Blue Ribbon. Trump Hands Session IPA – Cannonball Creek Any WCIPA from Ghost Town Brewing.

**DRENNON:** You know my favorite questions to end with: which is more important in becoming a great brewer, talent or work ethic?

**MCCALL:** You already know my answer. You must have both, but if you had to have more of one than the other, I would say work ethic. Purely natural brewing talent would be amazing, but I

believe it to be unrealistic in brewing. Brewing is hard work, it takes discipline, drive, and determination to become a good brewer. Long hours in the brewery, countless hours in books and the willingness to ask for direct feedback from one's colleagues and peers is just the start.

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

**MCCALL:** Dedicated.



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## TO LIVE AND DRINK IN LA

# From Pro Brewer to Professor

## DEVON RANDALL GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

by Tomm Carroll



Devon Randall

Photo Credit: Jamie Shen

Likely career moves for a successful brewmaster or director of brewing operations usually include a promotion to a more senior position at the brewery or the controlling entity, occasionally featuring an ownership stake. Sometimes, it's a jump to another brewery with advanced responsibilities, or even quitting the job entirely to launch a brewery of one's own.

Not all that often, however, it involves leaving the brewing business altogether. But *not* leaving the business of brewing. And that's precisely the kind of move just made by Devon Randall, soon-to-be-former Brewmaster and head of brewing operations for Pouring With Heart, parent company of three LA breweries: Homebound BrewHaus (née Imperial Western Beer Co.), Arts District

Brewing and All Season Brewing.

Beginning December 5, she is the new Assistant Professor of Brewing Science at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff — “a total dream job,” Randall says.

It was likely not even the inkling of a fantasy for her back in the late 2000s, when she was working as a licensed real estate assistant by day, and homebrewing during her off hours as part of the Culver City-based Pacific Gravity Homebrew Club (full disclosure: this author is a longtime member). But after getting her BJCP certification as a beer judge in 2009, then moving to San Diego County and getting a gig as a bartender and all-around handy-woman at the original Pizza Port brewpub in Solana Beach in 2010, as well as joining the Pink Boots Society, the pieces started to fall into

place for her to begin paving such a dreamscape as a reality.

As chronicled in a cover story in this publication several years ago (see the March 2016 edition under Back Issues on [www.beerpaperla.com](http://www.beerpaperla.com)), Randall soon became in charge of cellar operations and special projects at Port Brewing/The Lost Abbey in San Marcos — the sister production brewery of Pizza Port. By summer 2012, after some training at Pizza Port Ocean Beach, she was named head brewer at the Solana Beach brewpub where she got her start, and quickly won a Bronze Medal for her Oatmeal Stout at the 2013 Great American Beer Festival, and another Bronze for a Strong Porter at the 2014 World Beer Cup, among other statewide competition medals. And by mid-2015, she was hired by 213 Hospitality (now Pouring With Heart) to be head brewer at the new Arts District Brewing in DTLA.

Three years later, she transferred her base to the company's second brewpub, Imperial Western, located several blocks away, inside Union Station. After being shuttered for almost two years due to the pandemic, the space reopened late last year and was rebranded as Homebound. Which is where *Beer Paper* met up with Randall in late October after she had tendered her resignation (effective December 1) to discuss transitioning into the next chapter of her career in beer. Our interview took place in the brewpub's otherwise empty Streamliner side bar.

***Beer Paper:* Devon, when did you realize you wanted to transition from your career in brewing?**

Devon Randall: My fiancé and I have been thinking about moving to Arizona, specifically Flagstaff, for a while now — we have a house in Williams, about 30 minutes away — and I kept thinking about maybe a brewing job out there. And I also thought, “Man, wouldn't it be cool to work for the university, though?” But my skills probably aren't really transferable to a university job; I have

a BA from UC Berkeley in Mass Communications, but that was a long time ago and things have changed a lot in the ensuing years. So I wasn't really holding out hope for that. But then I found out there was a Professor of Practice position open at the Northern Arizona University for a Brewing Science program that had started back in 2019. But it didn't really get off the ground because of COVID.

I immediately applied. It was a really long application. There were five individual statements — statement of research interests, statement of teaching philosophy, a lot of very complicated things to write. I spent about two weeks every night, after we put the baby to bed, working on this application, and finally submitted it in early August. I didn't hear back for a while. Apparently, it takes a long time to hire for a university position. Then finally, I had the phone interview.

***BP:* And how did that go?**

DR: Really well. I really enjoyed talking to everyone there. They asked what might be a weakness for me. And I said, “All of my chemistry and biology is self-taught, so I don't know if that's up to your standards.” The class is through the Chemistry department, not the Business department. But they said just because it's housed in the Chemistry department doesn't mean that this has to be a chemistry class. They want it to have components of that, but said the reason they're hiring a Professor of Practice is to get a rounded view of what it means to be a brewer to help the students on their way to becoming brewers, and that they weren't necessarily looking for a career educator.

After another two weeks, I finally got the invitation for the in-person interview. They flew me out to Arizona. They had said the interview typically lasts from about 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and my jaw dropped when I read that. I've never been on an interview that was more than like two or three hours. Indeed, the schedule for the day ended up being 8:00 am to

5:00 pm, and then a happy hour, then dinner, so it was a really long day. But it was surprisingly low-key. I thought it might be really formal all day, but it was very relaxed and it was just getting to know all the different faculty members that I would potentially be working with. I thought that all went well. Another few weeks later and we finally had a deal.

**BP:** *So despite the location being the primary factor in your decision, you really did want to move into brewing and beer education, didn't you?*

**DR:** Yes, but I just never dreamed that getting to work with the university would be an opportunity that would become available to me. I had been lucky enough to work with you at UCLA Extension, lecturing and demonstrating the Malt portion of a couple of your Craft Beer classes, which was really great...

**BP:** *Right. But you had other educational experiences too that I remember from your resume — lecturing for UCLA Anderson Business Schools Craft Beer Club's Meet the Brewer event, and delivering a seminar on Smoked Malt for the Master Brewers Association's Technical Seminar.*



Devon Randall with Arts District Brewing's Dave Ziolkowski at Homebound

Photo Credit: John Schulz

**DR:** And I have done a lot of informal teaching, I guess. I was a tutor in high school algebra and geometry, and I was a camp counselor. So I've been in like a position of authority before. And I've done educational things with all of our staff at the brewery on an ongoing basis. I don't think that education was out of the realm for me, it just wasn't the path that I had taken. So I didn't look at it that carefully.

**BP:** *Too late to worry about that, Professor; you're gonna have to start teaching after the first of the year, aren't you? What classes are you doing?*

**DR:** Yeah, the semester starts January 17. So I'll just be doing two classes the first semester, which is nice because I'll be dealing with a lot of getting used to teaching and how to do everything — creating syllabuses,

running the courses and grading, which is actually kind of a complicated thing too.

One of the classes is Beer Basics, which is taught under the Hospitality department. That one has been taught before, so fortunately already has a syllabus. And for the text book,

(TO LIVE AND DRINK IN LA continued on page 16)



**Brewers Cocktail Throwdown at Arts District Brewing (2019), L-R: Devon Randall, Jim Wiggins, Dave Ziolkowski, Brian Herbertson, Erick Garcia, Alex Nowell, Yvette De Luna, Andy Black, Riann Van Nordheim, and Lee Bakovsky.**  
 Photo Credit: Matthew Garcia @momentsinbeer

(TO LIVE AND DRINK IN LA continued)

they've been using *Tasting Beer* by Randy Mosher, which is one of my favorite books to use with our brewing staff here. I think that's the only class I'm going to be teaching for Hospitality at this point. I'll also

be teaching a Quality Analysis class, under Chemistry, which usually has a lab with it, so we can taste the beer, but for reasons of which I'm unsure, we won't have the lab for the spring semester.

And next fall, I believe I am doing Intro to Brewing Science, which is housed within Chemistry, as well as Brewing Process Technology, and maybe Beer Basics again. There's also Principles of Brewing Science, which will be kind of a more advanced, deeper dive into the science of

brewing. So those are the classes on the docket for right now. We may move those around in the future.

**BP: How often will your classes meet?**

DR: Twice a week, and the semesters are 15 weeks plus a week for finals. So I've got a lot of classes...yeah. You know, just the sample lecture that I prepared kept me busy for a long time, so to come up with 60 of those...wow.

**BP: Is there a on-campus brewpub tied into the Brewing Science program at NAU, similar to Innovation Brew Works here at Cal Poly Pomona?**

DR: Not currently, but they're thinking that way. I believe there's a student project to come up with a business plan for how to renovate one of the off-campus buildings owned by the university into a working brewpub that would be managed by the Hospitality department. I'm not sure if that will happen, but I like where they're going with it.

**BP: But outside of the classroom, will you still be able to judge competitions and get involved with local beer, whether it's events with commercial brewers or maybe homebrew clubs?**

The advertisement is split into two main sections. On the left, a dark grey vertical panel contains the text "EUREKA BREWING COMPANY" in large, white, block letters. Below this, it says "EUREKA BREWING COMPANY BREWED WITH PRIDE IN CALI" and provides the address "13723 1/2 HARVARD PL, GARDENA, CA 90249". It also includes social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, along with the handle "@eurekabrewco". A small California state flag logo is present. At the bottom left, a street map shows the intersection of Harvard Pl, 139th St, Western Ave, and Normandie Ave, with a star marking the location. On the right, a vibrant, stylized cityscape in shades of red and orange serves as a background. In the center of this cityscape is a large, white, stylized owl logo with intricate feather patterns. To the left of the owl, the text "L.A. BEER DRINK LOCAL" is written in white, and to the right, "DISCOVER GREAT BEER" is written in white.





Devon Randall at Homebound BrewHaus

Photo Credit: Tomm Carroll

DR: NAU has a homebrew club [Northern Arizona University Craft Beer Association], as well as a very tight relationship with Flagstaff's Mother Road Brewing, which is very close to the campus. They do small batches, as well as things for larger distribution. I'm also looking forward to bringing in different vendors — people from Brewers Supply Group and some of the different hop farms. The chemical vendors have a lot of really interesting things to say, and they're a wealth of knowledge.

**BP: What about internships?**

DR: There are also plans for a internship program. At first I thought maybe they wanted to keep the internship program local. But I know a lot of people nationally, if there was an opportunity for students to intern at breweries in say, in LA, San Diego or Northern California. Being able to intern at Maui Brewing might be something that some students would be very interested in, even though they live in Flagstaff. I'm excited about that. And also just the cross-educational opportunities; the Business School should be involved to some extent because a lot of what people in the brewing world do when they don't see what they want or like is to go out and create it.

So I'm looking forward to making some new friends and talking to a lot of my old friends to see if we can get people to come visit as guest lecturers.

**BP: What other goals would you like to achieve at NAU?**

DR: I haven't been to Phoenix, or have talked to too many people there, but one of my goals is to form closer ties because there are a lot of breweries in Phoenix that I would like to get to know better, along with the universities throughout Arizona. It's another goal of NAU's not only to be interdisciplinary within the school, but with all the schools in the state to do more work together. And I like that idea.

**BP: It sounds like you're very jazzed to hit the ground running in Flagstaff come early December.**

DR: It's really very progressive for the Chemistry department — and the Hospitality department, which is also involved — to get behind this program and bring the real world experience to it. I think NAU's leadership has been very supportive of the faculty and is encouraging them to reach out and do different things. That's really cool and I'm happy to be part of that. This is a very exciting moment for NAU — and for me.

**BP: But you're leaving Southern California, and the LA brewing community, of which you've been a major part. What are you going to miss most?**

DR: Well, I'm gonna miss all my co-workers here at Pouring With Heart, especially Dave Ziolkowski at Arts District and Erick Garcia at All Season. They're good friends and great brewers who I've worked alongside for a long time.

I'll also really miss the LA Brewers Guild, which was very cohesive. I was so disappointed that I didn't get to go their Battle of the Brewery Bands this year. That's my favorite beer event ever...to see all my beer friends make music on stage. It was so inspiring. I'll miss the guild members because everyone was just so easy to rely on. If you needed yeast or advice — or just to go hang out with someone — everyone was really kind. And that's not something you hear about LA all the time.

And even in San Diego with its big, bad brewing scene, their brewers guild was nothing like our LA guild. I didn't feel the sense of community down there that we have at the guild up here.

And that's just kind of striking because that's not a very LA thing.

**BP: Geez, almost sounds like you're homesick already...**

DR: We have family out here so we'll be back for holidays. I get summers off, remember. I'm sure Drew and I will be bringing Genevieve back to see her grandparents and go to beach and stuff like that. So it feels like I'm going away, but I really think I'll be more in touch with some people than I even was before.

**BP: I know the LA beer community will miss Devon as well and, speaking personally as a member of this community, and an avid proponent and practitioner of beer education, I am totally supportive of anyone who is going to help make people smarter about all things beer. Because God knows we need it!**

*Tomm Carroll is a 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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## BEER BUYER

# THE ART OF BUYING BEER

by Daniel Drennon

For obvious reasons, here at *BEER PAPER* we focus almost exclusively on the art (and science) of brewing. After all, it is all about the beer.

But what about the beer buyer --- that individual at your favorite local beer bar who faces the daunting challenge of giving an eclectic mass of beer drinkers what they want.

I sat down with Ryan Rowland, GM at Bottlecraft Long Beach, one of our favorite beer bars, to ask him how he got the job, how he handles the job and what his favorite and least favorite things are about being a GM and a beer buyer.

**DRENNON:** For those who may not be familiar with Bottlecraft, please give them a quick overview of the company, the philosophy and your locations.

**ROWLAND:** Bottlecraft is a craft beer shop and tasting room with

an extensive selection of hard-to-find beers from around the world, established in 2011 by owner and founder, Brian Jensen. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff are passionate about beer and will help you find the perfect brew to enjoy in our bar or to take home. Bottlecraft specializes in those hard-to-find beers from craft breweries. Our philosophy is to create the best neighborhood craft beer tasting room, and we have locations throughout San Diego, at the Long Beach Exchange, and recently opened in San Luis Obispo.

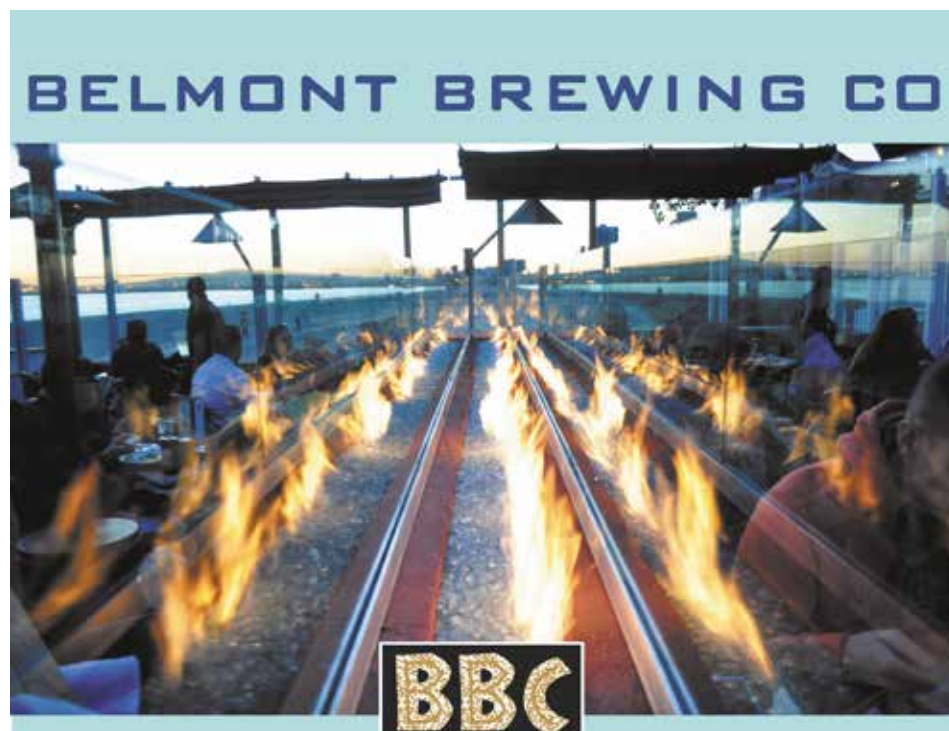
**DRENNON:** In case we have aspiring beer buyers out there, how did you come to be the GM and beer buyer at Bottlecraft Long Beach?

**ROWLAND:** My beer journey began at Ballast Point in San Diego, located across the street from the original Bottlecraft in Little Italy, where I had worked my way up from busser, to



Ryan Rowland, GM at Bottlecraft Long Beach

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt



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server/beertender and then manager.

Bottlecraft quickly became a staff favorite on breaks and after shifts to grab a drink to take home or sit and enjoy what they had in bottles/cans or on draft. I almost always enjoyed my after shift beer there, as I would rather try out what they had on tap because it was always new and they had the best beer. During that time I got to know the employees and the owner, Brian. After I was transferred to Ballast Point Long Beach to manage that location, he reached out to ask me some questions about the area as he was looking to expand. Once a location was secured, he asked if I had any interest to be the beer buyer for the new location – and I jumped at the chance. I went down to San Diego to learn more about what the job and responsibilities would entail and learn how to curate a beer list. I hadn't done something like that before, but knew I was all in.

**DRENNON:** How much research or studying about breweries and beer needs to go into having the knowledge to do the job well?

**ROWLAND:** First of all, I drink a lot of beer. I follow a bunch of breweries on social media. Any city I go to I try to find a brewery and find something

I've never had before. I'm also a certified beer server, which helps lay a foundation of basic beer information.

I think it's also important to stay on top of the current trends in the industry and new styles that are coming up. I keep an eye out for breweries that are winning medals at the various festivals around the country, specifically at GABF. I will scan those lists and look at which local breweries won and if I'm already selling those beers great, and if there is a way to get any of these medal winning beers, I will reach out. Constantly keeping an ear out throughout the year about new breweries that are popping up and getting hype. You want to be the one exposing your customers to new selections and being a resource for great beer.

**DRENNON:** How important is palate?

**ROWLAND:** Very important. I think it helps to have a strong palate to understand off-flavors, and if a beer is bad to understand why, and to learn the palate of your customers. To be able to offer similar beers that customers come in asking for is helpful for you both.

I've observed how palates change over time though. What a person enjoys



Ryan Rowland

Photo Credit: Tony Betancourt

right now might not be the same in a year, and that could, on a macro level, follow beer trends. We saw a trend of Hazy IPA's and smoothie sours. While they are still very popular, people are going back to hoppy beers, lighter styles or even non-alcoholic beers which are having a surge in popularity. As palates change, so do beer trends.

**DRENNON: When placing your weekly order with distributors or direct from breweries that self-distribute, what are your most important considerations?**

ROWLAND: First are my style needs for the week to satisfy the customer. As I scan lists and talk with beer reps, I am looking at what I need to fill the board – Hazy? Belgian? Amber?

From there, a consideration is based on freshness and dependability. Can I depend on them to fulfill the order on time and bring us consistently fresh beer?

And I always consider how good the beer is, but also, is it a brewery we want to support and that people are asking for? We are fortunate to have a great relationship with Russian River and are able to get Pliny the Elder regularly, which is always a crowd favorite.

We pride ourselves on creating a full rotating tap list. So, I am not putting on the same beer over and over. Our customers may be disappointed that the beer they enjoyed last time is no longer on tap, but we can almost always find something else they will enjoy. I keep an eye on how recently I had a beer on so we are making sure to have a fresh rotation. At the end of the day, my job is to buy beer that is going to sell and sell quickly.

**DRENNON: Do you use your sales figures to guide your allocation of which beer styles to carry and in what percentage on your beer board,**

**especially in IPA-crazy California?**

ROWLAND: I do not look at sales figures in regards to beer styles. For the beer styles we put up on the board in Long Beach - IPAs will be dominant. Those take up 1/3 of our tap list. I try to keep a mix of West Coast and Hazy IPAs. I also think about our regulars and the styles, breweries, and specific beers they enjoy. We have some customers that love Pilsners, Belgians, Bocks and Stouts and I have them in mind when I order for the week. I'll see a beer on a list and think "so and so would love this beer!"

I also try to have beer styles on tap that will match customers coming in looking for beers from macro breweries – beers that more people are generally familiar with. We love the opportunity to present them with a craft option that we feel they will enjoy even more.

**DRENNON: I know a key part of the job is navigating your way through a virtual sea of sales reps whose job is to get you to buy their beer. What advice would you give them to increase their chances...or is it all just about the quality of the beer they are offering?**

ROWLAND: Easiest advice is visit during slower times when I have time to talk with you about your beer. Samples go a long way. Especially for new beer or breweries that I'm not familiar with, the easiest way to get on our tap list is by letting our staff taste it and decide if we think it will be something our customers will want to drink. But if you are going to bring samples, bring me your Lager or Pilsner. You can't hide imperfections in Lagers and Pilsners, and can cover up anything with enough fruit. If I know your Lager is good, then I can be pretty confident the rest of the beers you're offering will be pretty good too.

Ultimately, the quality and freshness of the beer is the most important thing. While I understand it is their job to sell me beer, it is my job to buy beer that people are going to want to drink.

**DRENNON: How do you diplomatically say no thanks without hurting their feelings?**

ROWLAND: We have 27 taps available each week, and a limited amount of room to store beer on site. I find the best way to handle conversations is to be pretty straight forward. If I had a sample and I didn't think it was up to the standards of what we are looking for on our tap list, I'll tell the rep that. I let them know they are always welcome to stop in another time – maybe the sample was oxidized – but bring in something different and make sure it's fresh.

We have worked hard to garner interest from the top craft breweries around the country to want to be part of our rotating tap list, so it's usually simply a matter of not breaking through given the limited space we have available.

**DRENNON: To sum it up, what do you think are the three most important skills to have to be a successful beer buyer?**

ROWLAND: 1. Beer knowledge. Understanding the nuances between styles of beer is key. 2. Ability to curate an extensive list of different styles rather than focusing on beer you personally like to drink. 3. Organization. Creating a system so your staff knows what beer is being tapped next so that board always stays full of great options.

**DRENNON: And just for fun, let's play the desert island game. You can only take three beers. What would you take and why?**

ROWLAND: This is tough. Being such a beer fan and with all of the amazing beer out there it's hard to narrow it to only three but here we go: 1. Highland Park Timbo Pils. A crushable pilsner where you could drink it on a hot day and it's still full of flavor. 2. Party Cup from North Park Beer Company. One of my favorite beers from San Diego, the city where I began my beer journey. 3. The first beer I ever tried, Miller High Life - The Champagne of Beers... just kidding! It would have to be the Original Sculpin from Ballast Point. From the first sip I knew it was different from any other IPA I had tried up to that point.

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# GAME CRAFT 4 ANNIVERSARY



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