

'Imua Maui



Kōkua brew day at Maui Brewing Co

Photo Courtesy of Maui Brewing Co

by Daniel Drennon

'Imua. In Hawaiian...it is to move forward with strength and spirit.

Never has a word been so challenged to live up to its meaning as this one.

Lahaina's structures are decimated as if an atomic bomb had been dropped on the quaint, historic and revered oceanfront community in west Maui. Kula, in upcountry Maui, also devastated. But the strong people on this

beautiful island are resilient.

Some may be in shock. In mourning for lost loved ones and friends. Even paralyzed with grief. But make no mistake. They will move forward with strength and spirit.

They will overcome.

Garrett Marrero, the founder and owner of Maui Brewing Company, had been monitoring the fires on the island on Tuesday, August 8, as one was within miles of their main brewery in

Kihei on south Maui. By Wednesday morning, he knew that Kihei and his brewery had been spared, but that came with the horrific news that Lahaina had largely been destroyed.

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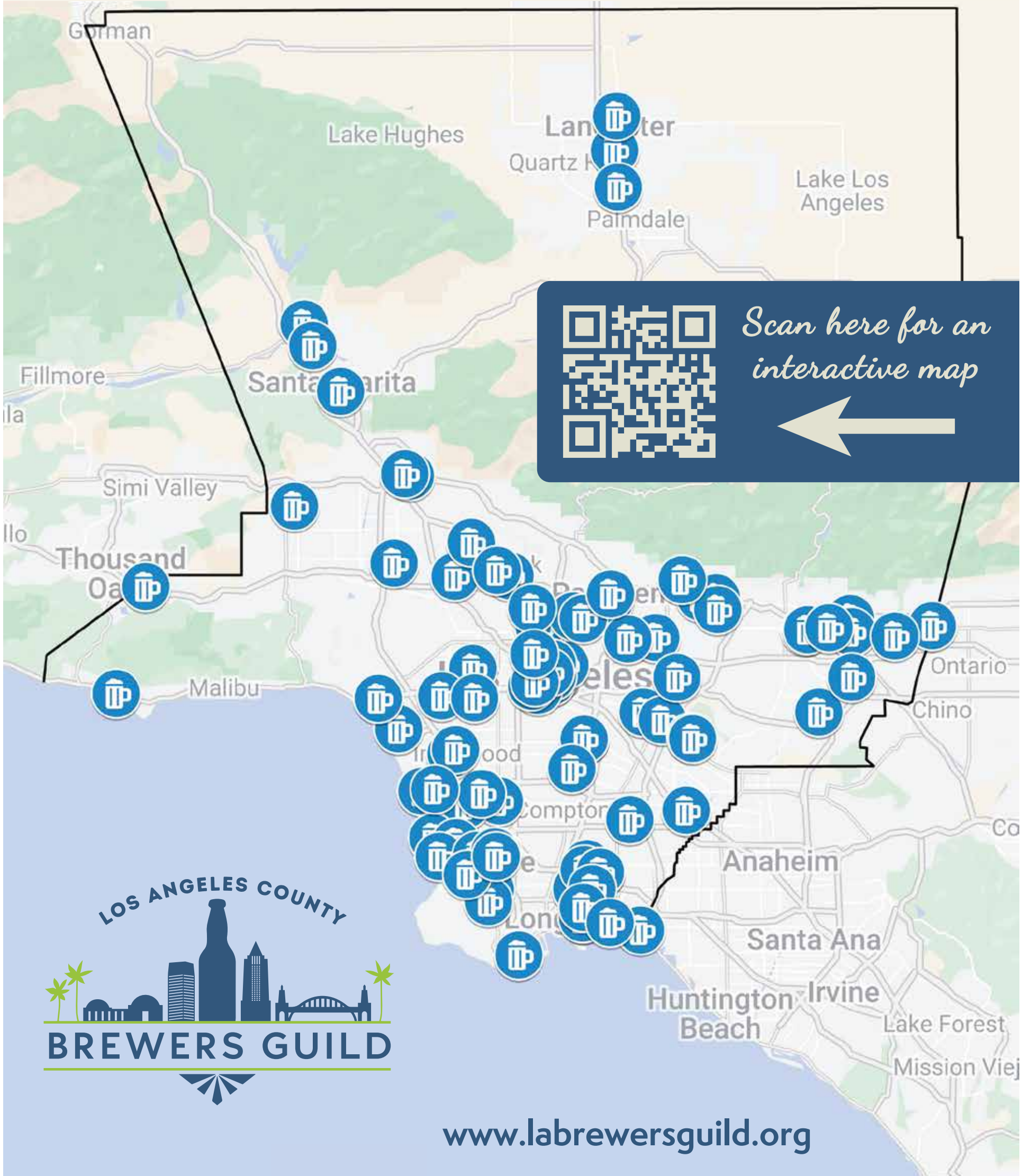
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HAVE BEER WILL TRAVEL

BACK TO REAL ALE-ITY

CONDITIONING MY PALATE FOR CASK COMPETITION

by Tomm Carroll



Champion Beer of Britain judges celebrate with Three Weavers and Anchor beers after judging session

All Photos Courtesy of Tomm Carroll

Seldom does a year, or maybe two, pass without my journeying to the UK for beer; to judge a competition, visit a festival or attend an event — or some combination thereof. But thanks to Covid, and the way it has affected such gatherings, let alone international travel, last month was my first trip to Beery Olde England since summer 2019.

As if making up for lost time, I participated as a judge in three competitions, all conveniently held in London within days of each other: The World Beer Awards, The International Beer Challenge and CAMRA's (Campaign

for Real Ale) Champion Beer of Britain — the latter an all-cask ale contest in conjunction with the Great British Beer Festival, which is also mainly a Real Ale celebration.

Speaking of Real Ale, that is chiefly what I drank after touching down at Heathrow. And not only because I hadn't had any authentic British cask-conditioned ale in four years — not withstanding the very-good-but-not-quite-the-same American versions of the same at LA's two cask-forward breweries, Van Nuys' MacLeod Ales and Torrance's Project Barley Square (formerly Yorkshire Square) — but also

because I would be judging a category of Real Ale in just a few days time, and I had to re-calibrate my palate to adjust to its subtle nuances. And you thought judging was just a lark!

I decided to start my training at some of the city's most historic Real Ale houses, conveniently located in one of London's older sections, Covent Garden. After visiting the highly recommended "Eyes of the Storm" exhibit of Paul McCartney's Beatles photographs of 1963-64 at the National Portrait Gallery (running through October 1), nearby, I made a beeline to The Harp. Dating back to at least 1805 with the name The Welsh Harp, it's been a perennial West London CAMRA Award winner since 2006, and CAMRA's National Pub of the Year award in 2010.

I started with what turned out to be my favorite pint of cask ale of the trip: Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, the flagship of the Sussex County-based brewery that dates to 1790. At 4.0% abv, it was silky, smooth and mildly fruity — obviously freshly tapped.

Then I tried a couple of Real Ales from Dark Star, an early craft brewery founded in a pub cellar in Brighton in 1994 by some Grateful Deadheads, hence the name. Initially purchased by London's Fuller's Brewery in 2018, it was acquired by Asahi, when the Japanese international beverage giant bought Fuller's the following year. Hophead, a 3.8% Golden Ale, was indeed hoppy with American strains, but not very complex, whilst American Pale Ale, at 4.7%, was similar, only stronger and less hoppy. Both paled (no pun intended) in comparison to the preceding Sussex, in keeping with my opinion that American hops don't tend

work very well in cask-conditioned beer. And that a Bitter (and a Mild) is best served, and appreciated, on hand pump.

Speaking of Fuller's, the previously-oldest-(1845)-independent-London-Brewery's flagship London Pride Original (Amber) Ale is ubiquitous on cask in the UK (though pretty hard to find even on keg in the US). I had the Real Ale version many times on this visit, and it was different every time. The pint I ordered at The Harp was clearly (literally) the best.

Not too far away was another, even older, OG pub — The Lamb & Flag, which claims to be the oldest in Covent Garden, "serving London with Pride since 1623," but apparently is actually some 150 years younger, and was originally called The Cooper's Arms. What's not disputed is that this was a favorite boozier of Charles Dickens in the 19th century.

In a Dickensian segue, I had a "Tale of Two Cask Ales" experience there. Endeavoring not to drink the same Real Ale twice, I opted for one I haven't seen in a few years: Gale's Seafarers English Ale, a tawny-colored, Mild-ish 3.6% beer that was malty, faintly fruity and refreshing.



The Harp, a historic Real Ale House, in Covent Garden



The Lamb and Flag, possibly Covent Garden's oldest pub



Dark Star's Hophead at The Harp

Since Gale's had been acquired by Fuller's, it too is now owned by Asahi.

The other was the self-described Juicy — obviously a hazy — from the impressive young (est. 2012) upstart Welsh craft brewery Tiny Rebel. Apparently a cask version of its bottled Tropical Golden Ale (which I've never tried) of the same name and same 4.8% abv, I found it surprisingly quite good, generally not being a fan of hazy IPAs; it lived up to its moniker but without really overpowering the more subtle aspects of Real Ale. New World hop fruitiness, without overt bitterness, appears to work well with cask ale, with the haze complementing the smoothness of the body. Who knew?

Cask Mates

It was at the Lamb & Flag that evening that I ran into a motley sextet of beer-loving punters in the midst of a cask crawl through Covent Garden. Interestingly enough, they were all ex-pats from outside the UK (two Americans, one Canadian, one Australian, one Venezuelan and one



Tiny Rebel's Juicy, on cask at The Lamb and Flag

Japanese) who live in London and met as members of a local amateur baseball (!) club. They were celebrating the imminent departure of one of the yanks, whose job was transferring him to its office in...Los Angeles. After learning where I was from, and fronting me a pint, they invited me to accompany them on their beer trail; I obliged.

Having been to the area's two pubs I was already familiar with, I was happy to visit some other Covent Garden delights. Among the highlights was the Marquess of Anglesey, where we had well-pulled — and well-balanced — pints of Adnams' Ghost Ship, a 4.5% Citrus Pale Ale, the best-selling beer from the Southwold-based brewery that dates back to 1880. The moderate use of Citra and other US hops keep the flavor and bitterness in check for a cask-conditioned beer.

I also had a half pint of Young's Original, another beer I hadn't see in a while. The Bitter, originally brewed in 1864 in the Wandsworth section of London, is now



Pulling Pints of Adnams' zesty Ghost Ship at Marquess of Anglesey

brewed by Charles Wells and Young & Co. in Bedford, since Young's sold to Wells and closed its London brewery in 2006. Unfortunately, the beer was pretty bland and did not taste fresh — especially after the mildly zesty Ghost Ship.

By the time we got to our next stop — and my last — it was my turn to buy a round. Fortunately, The Sun Tavern had one standout among its three hand pumps. It was easy to pass on the popular (but so-so) Doom Bar from Molson Coors-owned Sharp's in Cornwall, as well as another new one to me, Dizzy Blonde Amarillo Pale Ale from Robinson's, the nearly 190 year-old brewery originally based in Stockport (and best known for its multi-award-winning Strong Ale, Old Tom, which has been brewed since 1899).

Yes, the obvious choice was the classic 4.3% Landlord Pale Ale, a four-time Champion Beer of Britain, from Timothy Taylor Brewery in Yorkshire, which was founded in 1858. I had the pleasure of ordering seven pints of this elixir, and



Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, with the accent on "best," at The Harp

we were all glad it was drinking fresh and its subtle smoothness and creamy complexities were evident. I try to have this beer on cask at least once every time I'm in the UK.

Judgement Day

Despite prepping my palate, when the Champion Beer of Britain finals judging session commenced around 9:30 am at the Olympia London in West Kensington, preceding the opening afternoon trade session of the five-day Great British Beer Festival, I still found my assignment a challenge. My table, which included five CAMRA members from throughout the UK, was given nine beers to assess in the second-to-lowest abv category, Session Bitter (3.5-4.3%), just above Mild.

Ironically, despite the fact that was the alcohol range of most of the Real Ales I drank in the preceding days, and two of those even turned out to be in the judging

(HAVE BEER WILL TRAVEL continued on page 6)

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(HAVE BEER WILL TRAVEL continued)

flight — I didn't recognize either of them (not that I necessarily should have) — they tasted completely different to me in a blind setting.

The first beer was an anomaly — too light in color, way too hoppy with Southern Hemisphere strains, and dry-hopped. A very nice New Zealand Session IPA, perhaps, but definitely not a Bitter; this was in the wrong category. The remaining eight were all Bitters, ranging from tawny to brown in appearance. Most were okay, with slight to more significant deficiencies in aroma, taste and aftertaste. Some judges favored certain beers, others not so much. And vice versa. But the second-to-last beer in the flight hit our collective sweet spot, so to speak. No. 9 was also quite good, but we all agreed that it came up a bit short to its predecessor.

We did not need to tally our table's second and third place choice, just inform the organizers of our unanimous winner. While the judges socialized, enjoyed snacks — and some California beers from Three Weavers and Anchor breweries I smuggled in to share with my colleagues — we were informed of the competing beers and their breweries.

Our choice for the top Session Bitter was Darwin's Origin by Salopian Brewing from Shrewsbury (Darwin's birthplace) in the West Midlands, which opened in 1995. It had been named Champion Best Bitter three times previously. Our close second turned out to be...Timothy Taylor's Landlord! (At least I really liked it, but I



*The author, center, and his new six new cask mates at the Sun Tavern
All Photos Courtesy of Tomm Carroll*

thought it would've been entered in the Pale Ale category.) And third place was Captain Bob from Mighty Oak Brewing in Essex.

Also surprising to me was that Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter (which, as mentioned earlier, I absolutely loved on cask at The Harp) was in our flight — and we did not give it very high marks. My scratch notes indicate that it had a spiciness in the aroma, and even weirder, some bubble gum notes in the flavor! It didn't exactly

taste bad, just not like a proper Bitter. Must've been a dirty firkin?

Additionally, in keeping with the Darwinian theme of "Survival of the Fittest," Salopian's Bitter wound up earning a Bronze in the Champion Beer of Britain category, announced a few hours later during the GBBF trade session. The top overall beer went to the Strong Stouts and Porter category winner, 1872 Porter from Elland Brewery of West Yorkshire, whilst British brewing giant Greene



Seven pints of Timothy Taylor's landlord and one flamboyant barkeep at The Sun Tavern

King's Abbot Ale, in the Premium Bitter category, took the Silver.

Then it was time to go downstairs to GBBF and...drink more Real Ale.

Tomm Carroll will travel to just about anywhere to judge, drink and write about good beer. Contact him at beerscribe@earthlink.net.

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OC BEAT

BOO, BREW, AND FEST HAPPENINGS

by David Mulvihill

Firkenstein

Readers likely recall FirkFest, OC's premier cask-ale Festival and brainchild of Greg Nagel (OC Beer Blog) that ran for the six years prior to 2020.

After a 3-year hiatus, it returns to Downtown Anaheim next month (October 7th, 2023 from 4-8 pm) as Firkenstein Craft Beer Festival. Designated and promoted in previous years as a cask-only event, it was a celebration of unique and creative real ale from the firkin.

Given this year's expansion of theme, the cask-only limitation has been lifted. The only requirement for breweries is for them to bring something special made just for the event.

Nagel envisions Firkenstein an Oktoberfest/Halloween mash-up, "...a fall beer festival where you can get dressed up, but your beer can too...a zombie Oktoberfest?"

In addition to cask ales, beer suspects will likely also include an assortment of holiday inspirations and Oktoberfest-styles. The festival will also feature



Firkfest's Greg Nagel with Brandon Fender (The Good Beer Co) during 2017 Firkfest

Photo Credit: David Mulvihill

local chefs, music, and costume contest. Firkenstein proceeds will support the Anaheim Fall Festival and Parade.

Consult social media / firkfest website for tickets and updates on the OC and So Cal attending breweries.

OCBG Brewers Mash

Brewers Mash 2023 returns to Heritage Museum of Orange County the evening of Saturday, October 28. This annual event is brought to us by and for the benefit of the Orange County Brewers Guild, providing much needed funding for the guild and its goals, which support education, community, and inclusion. Attendees, Guild members, staff and volunteers are encouraged to come in costume. Grounds and serving stations will be decked out in seasonal themes. Live entertainment and

costume contest are on the agenda, along with a member-brewer showcase of the best craft beer, which will include special seasonal and Oktoberfest offerings. Food trucks will also be on hand.

The Mash also presents an opportunity to interact with Orange County brewers, owners and brewery staff in a festive setting away from their home breweries.

Tickets and complete info are available at ocbrewers.org.

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.



OC Brewers Mash

Photo Credit: Richard A. Kroenig

SOW A HEART

SOW A HEART AND HARVEST HOPS

by Sean Inman



Stephen Reeves and Kimberly Rice checking the hops

All Photos Credit: Sean Inman

When heading out to a hop field, I was certainly not expecting to see a flock of chickens rooting around nor was I expecting to see a waist-high white feathered turkey moving amidst the bines.

But Sow A Heart Farm is not your typical hop farm. One, it is just north of Los Angeles in Fillmore, California known for trains and its view of the Topa Topa Mountains and not as expected in the vast hop acreage of the Pacific North West. Secondly, the farm is home to not only the



Goat munching on spent grain

forementioned fowl but also sheep, goats, pigs, cows, horses and a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables. Grapes, avocados, olive trees, kale, citrus, pumpkins and even passion fruit and carob.

This is not a typical hop harvest. And that is setting aside the fact that even estimating when the hops will be ready is getting tougher due in no small part to climate change. The bines are pulled down not by machine but by hand. In fact most of the work is by hand. Hop cone by hop cone. Each string of hops was carted from the field to a waiting mobile hop harvesting trailer which pulled some of the hops off but each strand still had many on it that needed to be plucked off.

The humid and slightly rainy August day that I assisted with the harvest along with the team from MacLeod Ale Brewing Company in Van Nuys was spent mostly clearing leaves and other plant debris away from the hops so that head brewer Stephen Reeves could get the full twenty-eight pounds needed for their fresh hop pale ale, Itchy Fingers. Even brewery co-founder Alistair Boase was in attendance feeding the hops into the harvester alongside his brewer. By mid-afternoon, the initial harvest of thirty plus bines has netted a touch over twenty pounds.

I should backtrack and give a short, generalized primer on fresh hop beer, AKA wet hop beer. Fresh hop beers are brewed using undried cones, taken from the field into the brewing tank that day or in the case of Itchy Fingers Pale Ale, the next. They can be used like any other hop in a brewing process but are best used toward the end to maximize the effect of the unaged, unpelletized or frozen hop.

Leading this harvesting expedition was Sage Brewing and Vegan Bistro's head brewer Kimberly Rice. She was using her allotment of hops to create a hoppy blonde ale for her brewery in Echo Park. She was also the architect of last year's Wet Hoptoberfest held at the Pasadena outpost of Sage where multiple Los Angeles brewers poured fresh hop beers with the Sow A Heart hops.

That hop is primarily Cascade. It is a classic hop known primarily as the finishing hop in the famous Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and it has a grapefruit zest flavor and aroma backed by floral and spice notes. Other hops grown at the farm are Mt. Hood and Centennial but that duo tend to find the climate not super fun and

do not yield as well. No experimental or trendy hops to be found here.

Because there is a limited amount of hops, Los Angeles will never rival Oregon or Washington for fresh hop beers or fresh hop festivals but the small supply can be used to showcase the wide breadth of California agriculture as Boomtown Brewery highlighted with their fresh hop beer, Ode to Anchor. A table beer made to honor the impact of the now cruelly shuttered Anchor Brewing in San Francisco to the California craft beer industry. The Arts District adjacent brewery used Sow A Heart hops as well as malt from the California based Admiral Maltings for the beer.

As we filled crates and buckets with hop cones, across the farm goats were happily (and greedily) munching away on spent grains from MacLeod's brewing process. From the farm and back to the farm. The circle of beer life.

Sean Inman is a Glendale based beer writer who has been blogging about beer and Los Angeles beer since 2009 at the Beer Search Party blog.

A colorful poster for Upshift Brewing's Oktoberfest event. At the top, there are blue and white checkered bunting flags. Below them is a blue banner with the text "UPSHIFT BREWING" in white and "Oktoberfest" in yellow. In the center is a blue Volkswagen van with "UPSHIFT" written on its side, overflowing with beer and foam. At the bottom, the text reads: "16 GERMAN BEERS FROM SEPTEMBER 12PM TO 10PM MUSIC AND MORE! TAPROOM LOCATED AT 339 INDIANA ST, EL SEGUNDO, CA".

COVER STORY

‘IMUA MAUI

by Daniel Drennon

‘Imua. In Hawaiian...it is to move forward with strength and spirit.

Never has a word been so challenged to live up to its meaning as this one.

Lahaina's structures are decimated as if an atomic bomb had been dropped on the quaint, historic and revered oceanfront community in west Maui. Kula, in upcountry Maui, also devastated. But the strong people on this beautiful island are resilient.

Some may be in shock. In mourning for lost loved ones and friends. Even paralyzed with grief. But make no mistake. They will move forward with strength and spirit. They will overcome.

Garrett Marrero, the founder and owner of Maui Brewing Company, had been monitoring the fires on the island on Tuesday, August 8, as one was within miles of their main brewery in Kihei on south Maui. By Wednesday morning, he knew that Kihei and his brewery had been spared, but that came with the horrific news that Lahaina had largely been destroyed.

Immediately, while local government was ominously and regrettably silent, Marrero kicked into action, assembling a like-minded group of locals ready to do anything and everything to support the survivors and help the helpless. Marrero and others transported supplies of every nature from the south to the west side of Maui via vehicles, boats and even small planes. Marrero is a pilot as well. Every minute of every day for the ensuing two weeks, and still today, Marrero was and is leading a bad ass brigade of courageous

volunteers dedicated to doing whatever was necessary to provide assistance, relief, support and supplies. Most of all, care and comfort.

Hero is another word that has a challenge living up to its meaning.

But not in the case of Garrett Marrero. Nor his partner Kami Irwin, who also has been inspirational in her relentless commitment and boundless energy for helping others. And, let me clear, it's not just them because they would never want to be called heroes. In fact, each and every one of the first responders and other volunteers on Maui are heroes.

And they are the very definition of Kōkua — the Hawaiian word that means extending help to others in a sacrificial way, with no intent of personal gain and with no regard for self. Their selfless efforts are not about heroism. They are about stepping up in a time of crisis to help those in need. We are at our best as humans in those moments.

I implore all Californians to embrace our own spirit of Kōkua and do whatever we can to help our brothers and sisters on Maui. Mahalo.

DRENNON: Tell us about an average day, which I'm sure is not at all average.

MARRERO: The fires were Tuesday, on the 8th. We'd been monitoring the fires; we see fires a lot this time of year. We'd gotten word that the Lahaina fire was under control. I went into a meeting. When I came back out of it, it had sparked back up, and it was just devastation.



Garrett Marrero

All Photos Courtesy of Maui Brewing Co

That same night, the Kihei fire came within three miles or so of our Maui Brewing location. So we were there until 1:30 AM Wednesday, moving equipment and getting everything ready in case we had to fight a fire. We now own fire hoses, fire nozzles, and hydrant wrenches, and we were trained by local firefighters to at least tap the hydrants as needed.

We woke up on the 9th, cleared our cupboards and just went to work. Water, diesel, gas, ice, dog food, anything that people could throw in the back of the truck — we didn't know what people needed. But we knew the Westside needed us. I gained access for us, which was restricted mainly to law enforcement and first responders, and our efforts kept growing from there.

We went into action because it was days before the government was responding the way it should, and people were paralyzed by fear and not knowing how to help. I'm just one of those guys that keeps moving forward. We're gonna move in a direction and, if it's not the right one, we can adjust.

We did well in those first few days getting people stocked up, making sure they weren't thirsty or hungry. Since I'm a pilot, I flew medication to people. Then it was back to land-based missions Sunday and we even got to the point where people were saying they're overstocked.

DRENNON: So, what time are you waking up and what time does the day end?



MARRERO: Most days we're getting up at 5:45-6. Immediately it's coffee, feed Lui (our rescue pittie), and then we go into planning mode for the day based on the needs communicated by people over that night. By 8 AM, we're at the brewery: our rally point for the convoy of trucks. By 9-9:30, we're at spots designated by the Maui Police Department. Our final rally spot is always Maalaea, to do a briefing of all the drivers. Again, I've been the lead point to gain access to the Westside; so it really was like running full operations.

Bless the Maui Brewing team and Scott for leading that team. They really handled the brewery these past two weeks, so that I could focus on our community. They wish they could do more and I made it very clear to them that everything I did, they were working through my hands. They were there with me because they are taking care of the main house, if you will.

Oh, you wanted to know what time I go to bed... If I can keep my eyes open past 10, between 10 and 11, that'll work. Some days I woke up at 2 or 3 AM to do the East Coast morning news.

DRENNON: *Did your original brewery make it?*

MARRERO: So, our original location was the brewpub in Kahana. Then we built our first production facility in Lahaina and sold that to Kohola Brewing in 2013, once we had Kihei up and running.

I know the landlord there and Thursday he called me to ask, "Hey, what does my building look like? Did Kohola make it?" I said, "I'll go check. Let's stay positive." After the supply runs and missions were complete, I flew my drone for him and a few other people that wanted to check on some sites.

I could see that Kohola was gone. Waikiki Brewing had a location on Front Street that also burned completely.

DRENNON: *I did hear that, and I texted with Ryan Sweeney and learned*

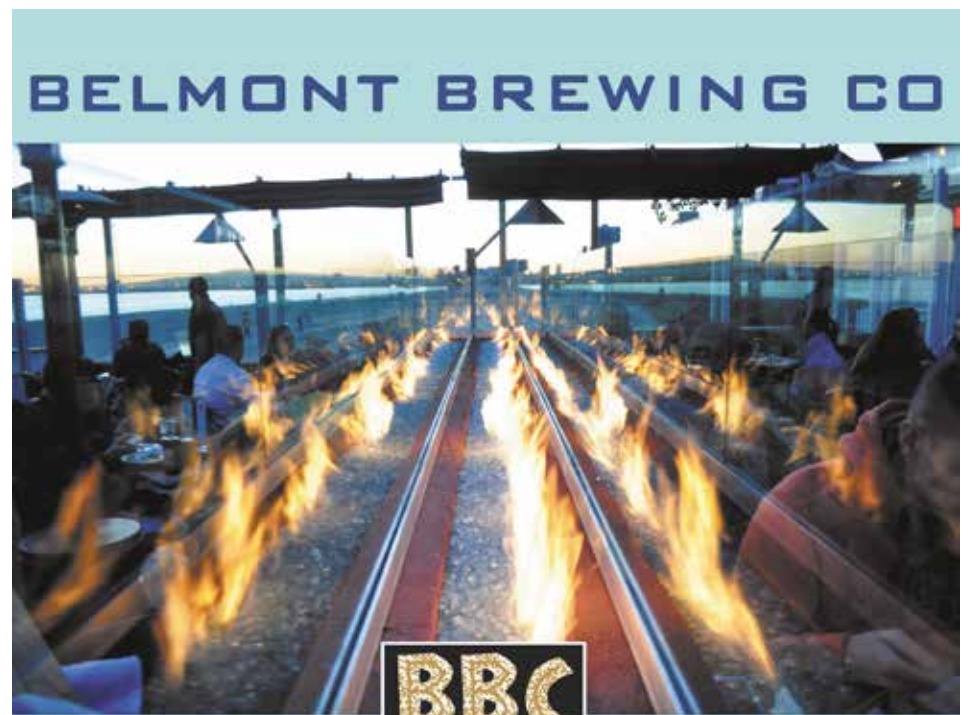


Friends coming together to support one another

that Dirty Monkey is also gone. I mean, it looks like anything on or near Front Street is gone. Even the first images we saw here... it looked like an atomic bomb dropped. It's devastating.

MARRERO: Yeah, I haven't used that likening, but it's accurate. Seeing it at eye-level on Wednesday, everything was still smoking and smoldering. When I left

(COVER STORY continued on page 12)



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(COVER STORY continued)

Wednesday night, trees were glowing red hot in the darkness, while electrical guys were out there trying to get power back on. This was just an army of dedicated people, from our first responders to the linesmen and everybody in between; dedicated to restoring Maui.

Everyday there was less and less smoke, but then there are still a lot of chemicals in the air. I got gnarly headaches from spending too much time in town on Thursday.

DRENNON: *I know your partner Kami has been right there with you, splitting up the missions to get stuff done. What are the roles and how do you two divvy things up?*

MARRERO: We're both really driven people. We went together on Wednesday. By Thursday, we had divvied things up. Basically, I was running land missions from South Maui over to the Westside. She then coordinated getting supplies and staging them, according to what area needed what. She handled all that as we

communicated via text. But also when I was going Westside, there was no cell service so I'd go dark. Then, at the end of the day, we'd hear about one another's days, since we hadn't gotten to catch up yet.

She also then coordinated getting a lot of donations from the mainland. The early message of, "hey, donate supplies" shifted to "donate money" to 501c3s, 'cause that's what we really need now. But she got 500 backpacks full of school supplies donated; she got 10 wheelchairs and walkers donated. I can't even remember all of the stuff.

DRENNON: *I saw your post that she was involved in getting the C17 too. How'd she pull that off?*

MARRERO: So Kami has a military charity called US13 in honor of the 13 service members who were killed when we pulled out of Afghanistan. Because of those connections, she was able to get the C17. Sort of a Black Ops mission.

DRENNON: *Wow.*

MARRERO: We were supposed to be going to Oahu for the weekend to judge a cocktail competition hosted by Mahina & Sun's at The Surfjack. Since we were unable to do that, they turned it into a donation site. The stuff they had, a couple hundred boxes, is what the C17 brought over.

DRENNON: *You used your Maui Brewing vehicles for supply transport, and also did medical flights? What's the ballpark on how many missions you've done?*

MARRERO: My flight instructor started a GoFundMe. We're paying for all the pilot's fuel to run these private missions over to Kapalua. So that was a huge benefit. I was able to get us private pilots access from the airport's director and the FAA to fly into the West Maui airport.

I think we moved mountains Day 1, before the government even really figured out what was going on. You said atomic bomb earlier... I liken it to war-torn, ravaged cities with just nothing left. When you're on the ground, eye-level with this, that's what it's like.

The worst part is, you know, you celebrated your anniversary at that restaurant, you helped build the draft system there, this is your friend's home, and that's your friend's mom's home. Your eyes are seeing something that your brain isn't comprehending, because it can't be possible. Then you realize it means you have to check in all those people and see if they're alive. Meanwhile, no cell reception.

The mental health here is really deteriorating. A lot of our residents are in hotels. Some were even homeless before. I'm trying to keep a light on Maui because with attention spans as fleeting as they are, we need to make a difference now. My goal is to make enough money to be writing checks to literally put people back in their homes. That's all I care about right now. Putting people back in their homes is how we rebuild a community. Once there's clean up and we can see some vertical construction, then there's something people can actually hope for.

DRENNON: *You've always been an environmental steward, with a commitment to sustainability in your state-of-the-art brewery, and community commitment first and foremost. Can you speak to why those things have been a point of emphasis since Maui Brewing's inception?*

MARRERO: Beer to me is something that brings people together. I always think of sitting on the beach, drinking a beer, and telling stories with a bunch of people you might not have known five minutes earlier. Not dissimilar from Hofbrauhaus, where you go in and sing songs and talk about community issues. You know Garrett Oliver (Brooklyn Brewing) says wine is a handshake and beer is a hug. I'm

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definitely a hugger.

We don't exist without the community, and beer doesn't exist without community. That's why we heard the call to action and we filled it. It's all about taking care of the community in which we live and operate, and call home. I like to think that if I needed help, someone would be there for me. We ultimately do it for no other reason than that the need is there.

DRENNON: You launched Maui Brewing in 2005.

MARRERO: We have five locations in Hawai'i. We had just opened the Ka'anapali restaurant Thursday prior to the fires. We turned it into a community kitchen. We had no power but were grilling food and giving it away to hungry people and stranded tourists, which there were still a lot of at that point. They were evacuating 14,000 people each day from Maui. Now the hotel is housing FEMA, aid workers, and displaced residents so we're serving 500+ meals a day.

DRENNON: Is there tension between native Hawaiians and tourists?

MARRERO: Four out of five dollars in the economy on Maui come from tourism. There's a group that is anti-tourism no matter what. There may be a few more people saying maybe don't come right now. Then there's people saying, please come, come to the South, to Wailea and Kihei. I think we're pretty universal on "don't go to West Maui" for the time being, but Maui is still open otherwise. We're trying to promote responsible and respectful tourism. We'd still love to have guests come, to experience Aloha, drink a Maui Brewing beer, and then go do something to serve the community. There's food banks, humane society, hopefully we'll be swinging hammers on houses soon.

DRENNON: I love your emphasis on responsible tourism. Now, tell me about the beer, Kōkua. I stated in the opening what its poignant meaning is given the goal of this beer.

MARRERO: That's our "Resilience" project (the Sierra Nevada collaboration beer that raised funds for the northern California wildfire victims). We have to remember that as much of the buildings might've burned, Lahaina still exists. We have to remember that there were at least four fires Upcountry and central Maui got hit with fires too. But it's not about the buildings on Front Street or elsewhere. It's about the people and the culture all across the island.

DRENNON: Absolutely. And the definition of Kōkua is so perfect. How'd you come up with the idea so quickly?

MARRERO: We'd done a Kōkua before, though a different style of beer. Going back maybe six years, we did a charity beer for the victims of flooding in Kauai, so we just revived that project. The team

(COVER STORY continued on page 14)



MBC turned its Kihei tasting room into a donation center



(COVER STORY continued)

jumped into action to fundraise and obviously to brew beer.

Terence Sullivan called me from Sierra Nevada and said, “I just want to let you know our whole team is right behind you, whatever you need. We did the Resilience beer and our team will guide you through the whole process and tell you what we learned. We’re here for you and we’ll be participating.” So, my team and the Sierra team had a call the following Monday, ironed out the details, definitely learned a lot from them and were saved from making some mistakes.

We already have **675 breweries** signed up to brew the beer and fundraise! That’s just in the last 10 days since it’s been live, it’s awesome to see the beer community come out strong like that.

DRENNON: Will it be available everywhere?

MARRERO: We’ll be the only ones to do the cans, much like Sierra did with Resilience, which mostly has to do with some rules and regulations. But I can say that all markets Maui Brewing distributes in will get it, and there might even be some burst distribution around the country. Our distribution partners have been super supportive, some are donating some portion of the profits sold of all Maui Brands for the month to local Maui charities.

DRENNON: What is the beer style?

MARRERO: It’s a Session IPA. My directive was, let’s make a popular style, something that we like to drink, and something that’s crushable because I want to raise a lot of money for the charity. I want to build homes.

I want people drinking a six-pack. Of course, be responsible. You don’t have to drink six. But you know we have a fantastic beer out right now called ‘Pacific Lite’ that’s a New Zealand-style Session IPA. So, it’s something along those lines.

We’re not saying that all the supporting breweries have to brew this recipe. We’ve provided the recipe and the concept we’re doing and saying make it your own cool beer. Then they can donate as much as

possible, though of course we know not all can donate 100% of the revenue. It’s really meant to be a fun project and a way for the beer community to support. Craft brewers truly are special.

And we’re suggesting charities, locally-based. All we care about is making sure that the money goes back to the people in Maui. All of our money is going to a third-party charity.

DRENNON: Have you even begun to get a sense of the timeline for a restored Maui?

MARRERO: I would say Upcountry will heal much faster, just because there were homes lost but not so much infrastructure devastated there. Westside, I’d say two to three years before we see real development again. Commercially, I think we’re at least five years out to see Lahaina town resembling anything of what it was.

DRENNON: Do you want to comment about the government response?

MARRERO: I believe in being critical, so long as you’re honest. I specifically was critical of how quickly they responded. We were over there Wednesday morning. That doesn’t mean police or fire weren’t there, but I’m saying there weren’t aid missions for even simple drinking water and fuel for generators, let alone medical supplies. It took 3 or 4 days before you saw those trucks go out. So up to that point, it was us residents of central and south Maui, who had that very limited clearance, who picked up the torch and ran with it.

We organized the caravans. We ran it, like I said, as close to a military op as I can imagine – and I’m not military. We had a briefing, everybody had an assignment and a location, and then it was either turn around and go back home or we need to reallocate supplies and re-deploy.

It was 100% on us in the beginning. The response was slow. The focus is still on the grieving, which I get, but leaders are meant to be strong, compassionate, but understanding what you can control and what you cannot. We can’t go back and prevent the fires, but we can avoid an economic disaster, we can get people in homes faster, we can do so many things. Then, we can grieve. Right now, we don’t have that luxury.



Kōkua brew day at Maui Brewing Co

My frustration with the government at all levels is: What’s the plan? Why don’t we have more information? I’m not ever going to be in politics, but I would’ve been on the radio every hour. Even if there’s nothing to update, people want to hear from you. I want to hear from our Commander-in-Chief or any level of government, “Here’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to immediately deploy intermediate housing because we know it’ll be at least 2 years before houses are built on the Westside. We’ve also expedited and issued the permits for all the housing developments that are currently in development on Maui. I’m going to change the SBA administration’s

loan program to make forgivable loans and allow them to refinance existing debt.” I’m not saying all of these things had to happen, but I wanted actionable leadership rather than stories telling us they know what we went through.

There’s a world of hurt out there. We were just crawling out of COVID and now this.

Maui’s not in a great economic situation right now. We need help. Responsible tourism can help cure many of these issues. We need Kōkua.

‘Imua Maui.



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BREWER'S CORNER

FROM PACOIMA TO LAHAINA

by Jared Gonzales (Head Brewer at HopSaint)

Pacoima, California: perhaps an unusual location to start for some, but not my family. One of the oldest neighborhoods in the San Fernando Valley, I wouldn't be surprised if you haven't heard much about it. To a random passerby, Richie Valens might be first (and only) thing you'll hear about it, but there's so much more beauty and history there. My uncle, Jerry Eisenberg, was one of the many in our family to make his start in Pacoima. The valley wasn't enough for Jerry; in 1976 he and my Aunt Angie moved to the islands in search of something new. After some time he established his cabinet making business Island Woodworks, and lent his clarinet skills to the local band, The Maui Pops Orchestra. They had two children on the island, Iao and Makani; as well as a few grandchildren, one of which who lives with them.

For 47 years, they thrived in the small historic town of Lahaina, located in West Maui. There is much beauty and history to be found there, I was lucky to visit early July and see it for myself. I walked Front Street and made my way to the Banyan Tree almost every day with my morning coffee. The sound of waves, chatter of

vendors, and the local musicians singing away... there's nothing like it. I swore I had awoken in heaven and this little town had taken my heart. Unfortunately the wildfires on August 8th, damaged or destroyed more than 2,200 structures in the area, most of which are residential. As of writing this, at least 388 are still missing as they scramble to get water, power, and essential items to get by while rebuilding happens. My family was able to escape, but lost their home and business.

Many have been displaced and some are even fending off looters trying to ravage what's left of their homes. While there has been support, so much more is needed to bring some sort of normalcy back to the residents of West Maui. A collaboration beer, named The Kōkua Project, has been designed by Maui Brewing Co., to help gather the funds needed to assist in said rebuild. Besides brewing Kōkua Project, we at HopSaint Brewing, will also be designing and releasing a few beers that we will be donating profits on to a few local charities helping West Maui residents and businesses that are suffering. More than 600 breweries have signed up for The Kōkua Project, please

take some time to seek out this beer as it's for a good cause. My Aunt has set up a GoFundMe for her brother Jerry, if you wish to make a donation. Donations will be used to help rebuild as well as get them through this time without their main source of income. Check in and keep reposting what's happening in West Maui, we can't allow the algorithm to crowd our feeds and we lose sight of our Hawaiian family and friends. If you can donate to a trusted organization, donate an air filter or necessity (these change daily/weekly), please do. There is so much that is needed to be done and we can't allow them to be forgotten in this constant 24 hour news cycle. I'm no English major, I'm sure you

probably are picking apart my words haha. Hey, if you made it this far... I thank you. My family thanks you, and the survivors of the wildfires thank you.

"Aloha and Mahalo for the love and support you give my family. It is the first time in my life to be in such a strange position. It truly humbles me to accept this help; may I be worthy of these gifts."

With love, Jerry, Angela, Felix

<https://gofund.me/56d796b8>

Jaerd Gonzales is Head Brewer at HopSaint Brewing Company in Torrance, California.



Jerry in his shop Island Woodworks

All Photos Courtesy of Sandy Eisenberg



Island Woodworks after the fires ravaged the area

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BOOK PREVIEW

THE BEER IS MIGHTIER THAN THE PEN

by Joel Peter Elliott

“Say it ain’t so” was all that the text message said. I hadn’t heard from him in months and months and months. Probably like more than a year, actually. He was just getting the news that Strand had closed.

Brian Yaeger is a writer and author and beer expert. He writes articles and books for a living and much of his work focuses on craft beer. So, when I started this book project, I reached out to him and asked if he would write an introduction for me. I think it surprised us both a little, considering our history. He agreed. Which surprised me a little, considering our history.

See, Brian wrote an article about LA craft beer that appeared in the November, 2012 issue of the now defunct *Beer West Magazine*. It was a beautiful book but I viewed the writing as far less than flattering, overall. This was at a time when we were all just getting started, really. The scene in Los Angeles was in its infancy and we were all working really hard to take care of the screaming baby in the middle of the night. So to speak. If you will. To coin a phrase.

If I’m being pragmatic, Brian’s point in the piece was that LA has some inherent issues that, in his view, are existential hurdles the region must overcome before it can be a true hotbed for craft beer. Like the fact that you have to drive everywhere. Far. With traffic. LA is huge. And then there’s the historically fickle nature of the crowd as a whole. Martinis tend to dominate. But he veered a little and included his personal distaste for the city and there was some comparison to the Kardashians. I can’t remember exactly what he said but it pissed me off. What we were trying to do wasn’t easy and I thought that we deserved slightly more leeway.

So I wrote a letter to the editor. They published it and then Brian responded. It was like a slow-mo duel of words that evolved over several months. A public pissing contest. As it turns out, it was also the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Although, I thought it was unfair that he got to go twice and I only got to go once.

It’s a little embarrassing to share this with you now. I’m not sure I was on my best behavior. In my defense, I wasn’t getting much sleep, we were living on dwindling savings and I was making like \$2.23 an hour. I think I wrote this over the course of two days while I was brewing on that little 7bbl system we started with. In Brian’s defense, his job was to be critical and he took that job as seriously as I did my own. I appreciate it more now than ever. And I love that he and I completely disagree.

Oh, it might help to note that in his

original article, Brian makes reference to *Escape From LA*, that corny 80’s flick starring Kurt Russell as Snake Plissken.

Letter to the editor re: Beer in La La Land;

It is approaching hour 15 of my second, consecutive 20-hour workday. By the time I get to bed, sometime early tomorrow morning, I will have worked as many hours in two days as most people work in an entire week. The other four days this week were relatively short – only about 12 hours apiece.

I own and operate a small brewery in Los Angeles. I am a brewer.

The schedule I describe has been the “norm” for nearly three years now. No breaks. No vacation. No getting sick. No excuses. I do it because I love it. What helps keep me going in the wee hours is the faith that I am helping to build something bigger in Los Angeles with regards to craft beer.

Having just read “Beer in La La Land” from the Winter 2011/2012 issue of *Beer West*, I am writing to tell you how absolutely insulted I am - and not because my brewery wasn’t included. On the contrary, after having read the article, I am glad I was not part of it.

Not only has Mr. Yaeger failed miserably at capturing the essence of the beer renaissance now taking place in Los Angeles, he fills nearly 3 pages, in what is an otherwise beautiful book, with little more than ugly justification of his distaste for Los Angeles and his lack of respect for its residents.

Mr. Yaeger is clearly under the impression that Los Angeles had its first sip of beer yesterday – that we are a town of unworthy neophytes. What he fails (or refuses) to recognize is that this region is home to a solid population of the most seasoned craft beer fans on the West Coast. (If you think San Diego got where it is today without significant help from Los Angeles, think again.) It is not that we have just discovered beer – it is that we are finally developing our own spin on it – our own ‘home team’ if you will. It simply has been that until now, craft beer fans living in L.A. had to get their beer elsewhere. Now this is changing.

Building on what Mark Jilg has been quietly doing for the past decade or so, several small breweries and some brave bar owners, over the past few years, have been working as a community to bring to Los Angeles what it has been missing for a long time: a local beer culture. The sheer volume of hard work, sacrifice and dedication taking place is truly inspiring.

Rather than focus on this, Mr. Yaeger chooses to write about Kim Kardashian’s “reality infomercials”, Wolfgang Puck’s

failed attempt at a brewery (including the current location of his used equipment) and a pair of defunct professional football teams, only before issuing a feeble apology for not having room to mention more breweries.

It is a shame that this article has missed the mark so painfully because what is currently happening in Los Angeles is unprecedented. The excitement here is palpable. A small group of people has come together and, with the help of beer lovers, begun to tear down walls. It is unlikely that anything like this will be seen again in American craft beer for quite some time.

For many reasons, it is notoriously difficult to get anything done in Los Angeles. The fact that there are now 10 production breweries where there were only 2 is an amazing feat and a significant leap forward. Comparing this to the 700+ breweries in Vermont is irrelevant and only serves to belittle what has been accomplished.

Despite our small numbers (and contrary to what some people like to assert), Los Angeles is hardly a beer wasteland. A community has already taken root. Now it is growing. At this point, no single brewery is going to come riding in on some golden steed and save us all. Anybody who says otherwise is asking others to ignore the hard work that has already been done.

The amount of respect Jeremy Raub deserves is significant. Along with his wife and his father, he kicked in a door that was so tightly sealed most people would have given up before even starting. He built a brewery in Los Angeles; one of the first in a very long time. It was no easy feat. I know because I watched it all happen. And despite what Mr. Yaeger writes, Nibble Bit Tabby is not a tale of failure, rather one of self-sacrifice. These gentlemen, with their ‘take no prisoners’ attitude, helped pave the way for the breweries opening today and the relative ease with which it can be done. No, they are no longer in business, and sadly, it may be partly due to the difficulty they had in opening. This was the risk one used to face here. They helped change it. Their short lifespan as a brewery deserves more than use as evidence for the argument that Los Angeles is a failure. (me: Velvet Underground, New Albion)

To cover up for his lack of research (and I suspect for his lack of empathy), Mr. Yaeger fell back on the first rule of writing: write what you know. Unfortunately, all he knows is that he doesn’t like Los Angeles.

Despite this article’s myopic point-of-view, L.A. is not L.A. without the surrounding areas. Any beer story dedicated to San

Diego which were to exclude Stone, Lost Abbey or Pizza Port would be immediately disregarded as rubbish. But hey, they’re not in San Diego, right? Can you imagine a Los Angeles that didn’t include Santa Monica, Malibu or Beverly Hills? It can be argued that Patrick Rue and his team at The Bruery (in Orange County, not L.A.) have done more for craft beer in Los Angeles than anybody else in the last 5 years.

So, how does one define Los Angeles? In terms of craft beer, this has yet to be determined. But, within the boundaries of what real Angelenos call Los Angeles, some of the most talented brewers in the country have dedicated their lives to help build and foster what Mr. Yaeger has just attempted to tear down.

Comparing Los Angeles’ burgeoning craft culture to 1980’s artificially flavored rainbow colored popcorn, overpriced miniature cupcakes and icing shots is unnecessary at best. To cite DUI statistics in support of the statement that “it’s clear that Angelenos either don’t have enough good drinking options close to home or make really poor decisions” is unthinkable.

This article is disrespectful. I don’t appreciate him writing it and I don’t appreciate you printing it.

A “beer snob”, as defined in the article, is: “One who uses his or her knowledge of beer to exclude, alienate, and judge rather than share, guide, and spread.” I believe Mr. Yaeger is, and has done, exactly that.

I’m glad you escaped, Mr. Plissken, for L.A. craft beer has room for neither snake nor snob.

*Joel Peter Elliott was the co-founder and brewer of Strand Brewing. Each month, Beer Paper will feature an excerpt from his forthcoming book, *The Rise of LA Beer...and the Fall of Strand Brewing*. You can follow Joel on Instagram @strandbrewingco or at strandbrewing.com*



FIELD TRIP

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BREWERY HAPPENINGS

by Greg Wellins

I may write for Beer Paper, but I spend a lot of time in brewery-rich San Diego County. Approximately 120 miles and several hours of traffic may separate Downtown Los Angeles from San Diego, with lots of cultural and other differences, but each city's brewery scene remains vibrant with continued growth, tying them together as maybe only breweries can do. Covid may have left some victims in its wake, but by my count, more breweries have opened post-pandemic than closed during it. Most Southland natives are familiar with the big guns of their southern neighbor, but may not be as familiar with some of the newer kids on the block. This article highlights these new breweries, each of which I've visited (my brewery count now totals 1,512, including every brewery in San Diego County!).

Downtown San Diego has several breweries and brewery taprooms new to the scene. The East Village Brewing Company opened its taps last Summer, with a focus on brewing beers in an environmentally conscious manner, in an open, airy taproom where you can enjoy its beer lineup, and perhaps hear the roar of the crowd from nearby Petco Park on game nights. One block away is the latest taproom for the venerable The Lost Abbey. Set in a Mexican Presbyterian Church built in 1906, The Church serves all of the great Belgian-inspired Lost Abbey beers – if you're pious about your beers, or in a reflective mood after another Padres loss, this may be the spot for you! The nearby Bankers Hill/Balboa Park neighborhood has a new taproom for the ever-growing Pure Project and a second location for North Park Beer Company – it's hard to say which of these two SD stalwarts make better IPAs (and barrel-aged stouts), but you can judge for yourself as they are two blocks apart.

If you had to pick one SD neighborhood known for its breweries, North Park would be at or near the top of anyone's list. One building on El Cajon Boulevard, known



The 'Brewery Igniter' in North Park has 3 new breweries All Photos Credit: Greg Wellins

as the "Brewery Igniter," has three new players. Seek Beer Co opened in '22, and has quickly made a name for itself among local beer aficionados (also known as snobs). Owner/brewer Dave Ohmer hit the ground running with some fantastic beers, including the sour slushies he became known for while brewing at Houston's Urban South Brewing. Adjacent to Seek is the just-opened Barley & Sword Brewing Company with a focus on a core lineup of traditional beers (bravely, they had no IPAs on my visit, though I understand they have an English IPA now on tap). Adjacent to B&S is the even more recently opened GOAL. Brewing, whose brewer, Derek Gallanosa, previously brewed at Karl Strauss Brewing, Abnormal Beer Co., and Moksa. GOAL's opening was highly anticipated, and the beers did not disappoint. GOAL, by the way, was the site of my 1500th Brewery, 23 months to the day after I visited my 1000th, so I'm clearly picking up the pace!

Not far from the "igniter" is the new veteran owned El Cid Brewing Company, that in early '22 took over the spot formerly occupied by the Home Brewing Co. El Cid was the name given to the goat that was the original US Naval Academy mascot, and the names given to the beers are all navy-inspired. The village of La Jolla has added taprooms for San Diego's Puesto, a lager-centric and Mexican food-themed small brewery chain, and Vista's Eppig Brewing, also known for its excellent lagers.

North County San Diego, that includes Encinitas, Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos and points beyond, has seen new breweries open at a faster pace than even San Diego proper. Carlsbad has had Carlsbad Brewing Company in business as a restaurant/taphouse for several years, though it is finally brewing its own house



Seek Beer Company



South Oceanside beer scene is booming



With Head Brewer Derek Gallanosa at GOAL, my 1500th Brewery



Anchors aweigh at North Park's El Cid Brewing



Vista's CoLab houses 3 new breweries

beers, so it is now a brewery to me! They also have an excellent guest taplist that included Pliny The Elder when I visited. Nearby Vista has a site called the CoLab Public House, that houses three breweries, a winery, and a couple of restaurants. I visited on three separate nights so that I could give the proper attention to Laguna Beach Beer Company, Barrel & Stave Brewing Company, and Breakwater Brewing, respectively. I've already visited Downtown Vista's Inzane Brewing Co. on multiple occasions – I really like the feel (and excellent beers) of this family-owned brewery (that now has live music) in the former Wavelength Brewing location.

Further afield, San Marcos has seen Backyard Brewery open, where I had a fun experience witnessing, and being a part of, the BarTalk 3G (now BarTalk TV) Podcast. Also in San Marcos, Blue Fire Brewing opened in '22, and it has quickly become a big part of the local beer scene (they get some killer food trucks too). Also, the ubiquitous Pizza Port Brewing Company has taken over the former location of The Lost Abbey (and original Stone Brewing location) – although it is currently just a production facility, I hear they may open a taproom soon. Stay tuned.

Finally, the underrated town of Oceanside has several new breweries, each excellent. South O Brewing opened last year, making some fantastic West Coast IPAs – you know a brewery is making good beer when you see several people from other breweries drinking there, as I witnessed during both of my visits. Also, in January of 2023, Heritage Barbecue &

Beer Co opened a restaurant and brewery in the former Mason Aleworks and Urge Gastropub location. Heritage has an award-winning chef (Danny Castillo), as the lines for his BBQ attest, and its brewer came from Pizza Port, so I knew the IPAs would be much to my liking. They were, as were the beers on its killer guest taplist! Also, Craft Coast Beer and Tacos opened in Downtown Oceanside during the pandemic, and has come through it with flying colors both on the beer and taco fronts. They are making some killer lagers, and delicious tacos!

New North County locations for existing breweries include Leucadia's Duck Foot Brewing (formerly Kings and Convicts Brewing), San Marcos' Creative Creature Brewing (in the former Stumblefoot Brewing site), and Oceanside's Artifex Brewing on Freeman.

We brewery lovers are very lucky to have so many new options, especially given that many did so on the heels of a global pandemic. The next time you make the trek to San Diego you should check some (or all) of these out, and as important, support these small businesses at a time when they really need it.

Greg's brewery count now stands at 1,512 – you can follow his travels through his Instagram Page, @gregvisitsbreweries, and don't be shy about messaging him with questions or for more information about the new breweries highlighted in this article.



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