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Pursuit of Hoppiness - Summer 2014-15

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COVER: Here’s to a long, hot summer and long, cold beers!
Illustrated by Donovan Bixley, © 2013 Bach Brewing. Used with Permission – Cheers Bach Brewing!
HOPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN
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BREWING RETURNS TO MARTINBOROUGH
Craft beer drinkers will be pleased to know Martinborough will soon have something to quench their thirst.
Martinborough Brewery co-owners Hayden Frew and Stephen Fox are building a brewery on Ohio St, in the middle of town.
Mr Frew said the groundwork has been done and building will house a 1200-litre batch system.
The brewers released their first beer, Black Nectar, last year and have been making small batches at Mr Frew’s Martinborough home. “We were making it at my place, just a little operation for the last year-and-a-half.”
He said the purpose-built brewery would allow them to make more beer and more styles.
They were expanding because they couldn’t make enough beer to meet demand, he said. “We’re making beer people want to drink.”
Being surrounded by wineries hasn’t deterred them. Mr Frew said they are adding to the mix and catering to the booming craft beer market.
From **Wairarapa Times Age**

HOP AND BEER MUSEUM
The Hop and Beer Museum at Founders Heritage Park in Nelson will be open for summer 2014. Curator Sally Papps has a reputation for bringing together local stories and is delighted to be working on a project that has such rich family content and entertaining stories to share. The museum tells a tale of regional significance, featuring brewers and hop growers dating as far back as the 1840s, and is sure to delight visitors.
The museum will be set out in three parts, spanning three rooms:
The Hop Kiln: The raised Hop Kiln shaped roof creates a landmark for the park.

GODFATHER OF CRAFT BEER RECOGNISED
Beer writer Geoff Griggs has been recognised for his outstanding contribution to the brewing industry. Geoff won the inaugural Industry Achievement Award at this year’s Brewers Guild soiree. Geoff told The Marlborough Express he was thrilled with the accolade, which he rated as the greatest honour he had received for his work. In his acceptance speech, Geoff generously acknowledged the late UK journalist and beer writer Michael Jackson as a mentor. The late Grant Jones, founder of specialist beer retailer Regional Wines and Spirits in Wellington, was also an inspiration who encouraged him to pursue writing about beer.
From **The Marlborough Express**
The Imp

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imp.epicbeer.com
Visitors feel as though they are entering an actual kiln as they step inside, and gaze up at the impressive internal ceiling showing off the exposed ceiling rafters, fully sarked through to the high typical air vent of these structures. This room shows how the hops are dried ready for processing and Nelson hop picking stories are told.

The Brew House: As visitors walk into this room, objects from the park's collection demonstrate early brewing processes, including original vats, bottle labellers and cooling systems.

And the Office: This room tells of the history of Nelson's local brewing companies. The stories include the roots of our region's brewing families, the related soda siphon industry, and the impact of Nelson hops on national and international markets.

The Museum is at Founders Park, Nelson

**BEERVANA HOME BREW COMPETITION WINNER ANNOUNCED**

Dallas Miller and Mark Morrison created the winning beer in the 2014 Black Rock Home Brew Competition held at Beervana with their Death Valley Pilsner. One of 95 entries entered into the competition this year, the standard was very high, according to Head Judge Kirsten Taylor. “A lot of the beers were of commercial quality, some of them very complex and technically difficult to get right,” says Taylor, who is also Black Rocks’ Product Development Brewer. “The winning beer was a late hopped pilsner and was absolutely beautiful.” The second placing beer was Ulysses Flanders Red Ale, which was brewed by Brendan Bransgrove, who won the competition in 2013. “This beer was also exceptional,” says Taylor. “Technically it’s a very complex beer to make and it was better than many of
the commercially available beers of this style.” In third place, was a saison (all grain recipe), by Wellington based trio: Alex McKenzie, Lindsay Welsh and Phillip Murphy.

**BEERVANA MEDIA BREW COMPETITION WINNER ANNOUNCED**

The winner of the 2014 Beervana Media Brew competition is the Hallertau Brewery/Dish Magazine (Victoria Wells) Media Brew with their NZ Wild Ale with Horopito. Head Judge of the Beervana Media Brew competition, Tracy Banner, who is also Head Brewer and Owner at Sprig and Fern, says the quality of the beer entries this year was outstanding. “It was a sensory explosion, with so many different sensations, whether aroma or flavour, and such a diverse range of styles,” says Banner. “The winning entry by Hallertau Brewery and Victoria Wells, which is described as having aromas of fresh silage, a little creamy, and a lot tart, was just absolutely sensational,” says Banner. “When you know you’ve got good beer there’s often silence amongst the judges as it’s such a good beer. When everyone tasted this one, they just went ‘wow.’” Three additional awards were also announced:

**Runner up overall:** Liberty Brewing Co. /Metro Magazine (Simon Farrell- Green) J.A.F.A Beer

**Best Idea Award:** Fork Brewing /Lonely Planet (Brett Atkinson) Farmhouse du Fru Ju

**Most Innovative and Creative Award:** Parrot Dog/Fishhead Magazine (Hadyn Green) Dog Bone

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**GET HOPPED UPON PILS THIS SUMMER**
NEW ZEALAND POISED TO BE SUPERPOWER OF CRAFT BEER
The thirst for New Zealand craft beer is expected to triple over the next decade but there are concerns that brewers might not be ready to capitalise on the demand.
“New Zealand is well positioned to be a superpower of small brewers,” said John Bennett, ANZ General Manager Central Region for Commercial & Agri.
“Craft beer is where wine was 20 years ago. People with money to spend are becoming more sophisticated in their tastes, and they are looking beyond the big beer brands.
“Asia’s fast-growing middle classes are just starting to develop a taste for craft beer. The potential for exporters is enormous, up to 300 per cent in the next decade, but New Zealand brewers and hop growers will need to significantly expand production if they’re to take advantage of the opportunity.”
Craft beer is the fastest growing segment of New Zealand’s brewing industry, currently at about 25 per cent a year. In the US – one of New Zealand’s biggest beer export markets - demand for craft beer has grown 10 per cent annually while overall demand is shrinking 0.3 per cent annually.
Demand is also on the rise in Europe, but Asian markets, such as China, hold the most exciting prospects for New Zealand brewers, Mr Bennett said.

GIVE UP A BUCK AND TEAR THE ROOF OF THE SUCKA!
Wellington craft beer bar Basque is seeking crowdfunding to develop a rooftop garden bar. Details of the campaign are here:
https://www.pledgeme.co.nz/projects/2871-help-us-raise-the-bar

2014 PACIFIC BEER EXPO
Labour Weekend saw the ever-popular Pacific Beer Expo return to the Wellington waterfront. This year’s event came with some innovations. Firstly it singled out Coronado Brewing, the 2014 World Beer Cup Champion Mid-sized Brewery for special treatment. Eight Coronado beers were on tap. Some, such as the collaboration with Monkey Paw, called Monkey Island, aren’t usually available outside the Coronado Brewpub, while Barrel Aged Stupid Stout is incredibly rare. Secondly, we were luck to be hosting the first international guest brewer – Bryan Baird, founder of Japan’s Baird Brewing. He hosted tastings and Q&A sessions on both Expo days. Look out for more, exciting, international guests next year.

Expo organiser Dominic Kelly
Welcome to the award winning home of craft beer in Newmarket, Auckland. 15 rotating Taps of local craft brews, over 90 bottled beers, artisan wines and a huge bourbon selection all brought to you in an unpretentious yet elegant setting. As long as you have a good attitude you are welcome, kids, big and small appreciate the complimentary popcorn and boardgame selection. We encourage you to bring your four legged friends to enjoy our awesome patio looking out onto the green space of The Lumsden Green. Showing almost every sporting event, weekly popular trivia night, monthly comedy night and offering personalised beer tastings There truly is something for Everyone!

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TOWNSHEND BREWERY CROWNED NEW ZEALAND’S CHAMPION BREWERY

Nelson based Townshend Brewery has been named New Zealand’s Champion Brewery. The announcement was made at the 2014 Brewers’ Guild of New Zealand Beer Awards held in August in Wellington.

Townshend beat stiff competition, with a record 670 beers from 84 breweries entered across 15 different categories this year. In total, 74 New Zealand breweries entered the awards. Founder and brewer Martin Townshend said the award was the “icing on the cake” in what’s been an excellent couple of years for the brewery. “Being named New Zealand’s Champion Brewery is a massive accolade. It seems like only yesterday that I created my first brew in the shed. Like most things in life, the secret to success is passion, hard work and dedication to the task. I still enjoy brewing now as much as I ever have and I think most brewers will tell you the same. That said, it’s huge to be recognised and this award is the best possible recognition a brewer could get.”

Founded in 2005, Townshend Brewery remains a one-person operation, producing approximately 50,000 litres of beer per year. The 650 litre brewery is still at the Townshend family home in Rosedale, near Nelson.

The Champion New Zealand Brewery trophy, presented by Dish editor Lisa Morton was accepted on behalf of Townshend Brewery by Stu McInlay of Yeastie Boys, as Martin Townshend was unable to be present.

Townshend was also awarded the Champion New Zealand Manufacturer trophy and won the New Zealand Specific Style category for his Oldhams Tap Riwaka Pilsner. Twelve of his other brews also earned medals.

The Boston Beer Company claimed the Champion International Brewery award while the Morton Coutts Trophy for Innovation or Achievement went to Steve Nally from Invercargill Brewery. Nally conceived the idea of packaging low carbonated draught beer in 20 litre bags to be used in bars with traditional English style hand-pumps. Media/Beer Writer of the Year went to Wellington’s Neil Miller.

Competition Manager, Craig Bowen, said the Awards capped another vintage year for New Zealand brewing.

“Each year, more New Zealanders are getting into beer and cider brewing. And each year, the task of judging at these Awards becomes much harder.

“Whether it’s a one man band or the larger more established breweries, New Zealand is enjoying a golden period in terms of the variety and quality of beers produced. That’s what the Awards are about – recognising and celebrating excellence in our profession,” he said. A total of 61 gold, 121 silver and 169 bronze medals were awarded this year.
Fresh from the hop growing capital of New Zealand, we produce real craft beers and ciders at our brewery in Nelson.

Brewed under the watchful eye of Tracy Banner, Master Brewer and first Honorary Member of the Brewers Guild of New Zealand, our award-winning beers are 100% natural and unpasteurised to retain maximum flavour.

Visit our website for your nearest Sprig and Fern Tavern or stockist.

www.sprigandfern.co.nz
NELSON, YOU KNOW HOW LUCKY YOU ARE

Originally the title of this piece was to be ‘Nelson, you don’t know how lucky you are’, but everyone I speak to who lives there is ready to proclaim the many wonders in which the region is blessed: scenery, lifestyle, sunshine and most importantly for this piece, breweries.

I spent my formative years in Golden Bay and every return to the Nelson region is, for me, spiritually nourishing. I love the languid procession of the tides drifting in and out of shimmering Tasman Bay, the sparkling lazy rivers and the craggy beauty of the Takaka Hill. In my childhood the Takaka Hill was a literal and metaphorical wall that held back the outside world, leaving Golden Bay as the last place on earth that truly had magic. But my nostalgic ramblings are going to have to take a back seat to the real purpose of this piece: present day ramblings.

Nelson is heaving with colourful, inventive and characterful breweries. I shan’t touch on the craft beer capital of New Zealand debate, of which the Nelson is a participant because of the number of breweries per capita, but Nelson enjoys a wealth of brewing culture. A recent trip took me to the land of milk stout and honey ale and my odyssey began with a trek over Takaka Hill to the Mussel Inn. This is not the first time I have been to the Mussel Inn and my role now takes me over the Hill with gratifying regularity. I stop in the township itself and make the calls I have to make. Having come that far, it would be irresponsible not to journey a little further up the road and have an ale at this iconic brewpub.

Part of the mystique of the Mussel Inn is that the journey to get there makes it feel like the end of the earth. Outside the Inn is a pole festooned with sacrificial mobile phones, nailed there as a reminder that you’re not in Kansas anymore. The bar is all rustic bare timber and haphazard decoration that has grown organically.
Back of the Hill in Riwaka I pondered the hop bines. It seemed to me that there were many, many more hop growers in my youth, yet demand for nowadays one of New Zealand’s trendiest exports back then was falling. Where did they all go? Where are they now?

After briefly calling by the Hop Federation brewery I took the alternative route through Ruby Bay and Mapua around the bays to visit Golden Bear and the enigmatic and seemingly ageless Jim Matranga. The Golden Bear brewery is in a picturesque example of what makes this place what people imagine an idyllic lifestyle is life when in vacant or in pensive mood, Port Mapua.

I have resolved 100 times since leaving Tasman Bay and returning to Christchurch to sell everything, buy a housebus and a small boat and park it somewhere in Tasman Bay to let it rot with me in it, living a life of fishing, drinking beer and writing poetry. I probably ought to tell my wife.

By Jonathon Corfe. Follow Jonathon’s blog at bartlettandcorfe.co.nz.

For information on Nelson region breweries and venues contact soba.nelson@gmail.com and go to www.craftbrewingcapital.co.nz. Check out the beer-related events at www.icywingz.com
BAY OF ‘PLENTY TO DRINK’

Well before hotels, liquor was handled by the early traders for local consumption. White Island was said to have been sold to Hans Tapsell, an early trader, for two hogsheads of rum, though that story is unlikely. Even when towns like Whakatane and Tauranga had been established in the 1870s, not all liquor was sold through legal outlets and sly grogging was not unknown.

A member of the Armed Constabulary from the fort overlooking Whakatane, purchased a bottle of vinegar which, when he opened it, turned out to be whisky. The lucky person, and his mates, then went back to the store for more ‘vinegar’. Shortly after, the storekeeper became suspicious and found to his dismay the whisky had been put into vinegar bottles to keep it from the prying eyes of the law!

The first hotel in Whakatane was the Travellers Rest, situated near the Rock, then in 1874 the Whakatane Inn was built. This was short lived as in 1879 the Whakatane Hotel was built opposite the wharf.

Most of the hotels in the Bay of Plenty towns had stables, where visitors could leave their horses to be looked after, and there were several blacksmiths in all the towns in case the horses wanted shoeing.
At first the hotels were lit with kerosene lamps, but later acetylene gas generators were installed which greatly improved the lighting. Electricity didn’t arrive till 1922. The first Commercial Hotel in Whakatane, opened shortly after the Whakatane, had an interesting beginning.

The publican, Ernest Smith, was granted a licence in March 1893, providing the building was complete by June that year. As Smith couldn’t get a building erected and opened in such a short time, he bought an existing hotel building at Wairongomai, on the Thames goldfields. He bought it cheap, as the gold there had petered out, and so had the miners and their thirst. The building was cut into sections, loaded on to scow which sailed to Whakatane, where it was re-erected on the Smith’s site.

As usual with building jobs, there were the inevitable delays, and when the June deadline arrived, the building was far from complete. To satisfy the law, Smith erected the front door and its frame, properly adorned with his nameplate, and declared the hotel open. There was virtually no building behind the door, but a trestle table with two barrels of beer, so nobody died of thirst. And so he was cleared to operate by the law.

Bay of Plenty towns are still blessed with
a large number of hotels. Opotiki has two, Masonic and Opotiki, Whakatane has the two mentioned above, Tauranga still boasts its original hotel, Te Puke, Katikati, and Waihi, all have their original buildings. One old building stood the test of time up till the 1980s was in Taneatua, but was demolished to make way for another attractive building and was renamed Te Puna-Wai Tavern.

Breweries, however, never established themselves in the Bay, as the close proximity to much larger areas and good transportation meant there was no shortage of liquor. Publicans usually purchased their supplies from the Leopard Brewery in Gisborne, the Waikato Brewery in Hamilton, or from Lion Brewery in Auckland.

The author remembers calling into the old Taneatua Hotel many years ago. The public bar had a bare concrete floor and a large number of locals, all speaking their native Maori tongue. When I joined them they were very friendly and accommodating, something rarely seen in urban areas.

Then it was on to Opotiki to spend a weekend at the Masonic Hotel. Fabulous accommodation, hearty meals, talking to locals about the area’s history, what more could you want!

Cheers, Chris Rabey

In 1880, a patient, who, following an arm amputation, fractured pelvis and other complications, completed a stay of five months and fifteen days at a local hospital in the Bay, received the following ‘life restorative’ aids:

365 ozs of Brandy
696 ozs of Wine
216 ozs of Whisky
6 bottles of Champagne
10 bottles of Claret, and
88 bottles of Porter.
UPPER HUTT CRAFT BEER CLUB UNDERWAY

Upper Hutt is embracing the world of craft beer. Kereru Brewing Company and Panhead Custom Ales have both established their businesses here. Members of the Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club invited the breweries to separate evenings for tasting and information sessions, which were both, sold out with 80 plus patrons. The result has been the formation of what is believed to be the first craft beer club in such a venue. Monthly sessions take place on the fourth Wednesday of the month in the Upper Hutt Cossie Club’s Balcony function venue giving the club use of a dedicated bar. So far, staff from Garage Project, Tuatara, Fork and Brewer, Hashigo Zake and Regent 58 Brewery have visited the club to lead tastings and review the beers. Two taps at the club are now pouring Kereru beers.

Club members made a group visit to Beervana and recently spent an afternoon checking out Parrot Dog, Garage Project, Rogue & Vagabond and Fork & Brewer Bar in Wellington. When Gary Fisher, co-owner and brewer from Regent 58 Brewery and bar in Carterton, visited the Upper Hutt club he shared his life in beer. He started as a home brewer in the early 1990s as there was no craft beer around he could buy. He found there was a local demand so he purchased the old Regent Cinema in Carterton when he was 58 years old! They make English style malt beers in 600 litre batches. He sampled an IPA, a porter, a stout and ESB for club members. They use malt from Gladfield in Canterbury roasted at low temperatures. The club is keen to grow its contact with the craft brewing network and can be contacted on spellbound@xtra.co.nz
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The central North Island has mountains, lakes and ski fields, so it’s fitting that it now has an Austrian Bier Kafe.

Gregarious, ebullient, hirsute and polyglot Mein Host Anton Romirer comes from an Austrian brewing family. When Anton and wife Rebecca were looking for a new business venture, they decided to open a brewery and bar to celebrate that heritage.

While Anton had no previous brewing experience, his mechanical and IT expertise made the New Zealand-made Smart Brew System attractive. The brewery was installed in 2013. “We were essentially the prototype and were able to figure out how to make it work”, says Anton.

The highly automated system takes concentrated wort from Hamilton’s Good George Brewing, blends it with local artesian water, and ferments it on site in Taupo. The system is fully computer controlled – it can even be run remotely through a smartphone – and is self-cleaning.

Crafty Trout produces a rotating range of beers, and is developing a specialisation in flavoured ciders. Some of the favourites include Hook Vienna amber, Line pale ale, Sinker porter and Downrigger IPA.
Anton and Rebecca wanted the pub to be a place where people come to have fun. “We’re not PC here”, Anton says (frequently). “We wanted a place that felt like it was from an Austrian village where people could come in a share and talk with their neighbours. I watch people turn to the next table and join in the conversation and meet people and go home with new friends.”

Pursuit of Hoppiness recommends the pretzels!

Crafty Trout Brewing Co, 135 Tongariro Street, Taupo. Bier Kafe upstairs, brewery and gift shop downstairs. Brewery tours 11am and 1pm. Closed Tuesdays.
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CREATURES OF THE CLUTHA AND LANDS BEYOND

There’s something about the blueness of the Clutha River. It runs a turquoise ribbon through Central Otago, a sight in a region peppered with spectacles that demand attention.

I don’t know why, but I find rivers compelling things to look at and on my trip through Central Otago and Southland the Clutha was an elegant travel companion for a good many miles.

The south holds small but important components of New Zealand’s brewing landscape. Alongside noted contributors Emerson’s and Invercargill Brewery are smaller, sparkling new and burgeoning producers: Queenstown Brewers, the artisan Bannockburn Brewing Company and newest of all, the Jabberwocky Brewing Company. Jabberwocky is so new that it is still taking the metaphorical wrapping off itself, having taken over Wanaka Beerworks in the last two weeks. Because of the four hour journey, I was a little dusty on things when I arrived at the brewery. I am keen to elucidate the theory of beer tasting better within the shadow of the brewery for this column and I was grateful to be told that Jabberwocky would keep producing Wanaka Brewski in its current form for the foreseeable future. This is established and known in the market and the new owners have undertaken not to change

“I don’t like to drink a lot, I keep my wits about me, but now with Mash Tun crackers I can have all the beer I like”

Norman Golden, Whanganui celebrity
these or the other specialist Wanaka Beerworks labels, opting to produce them on a seasonal basis. My Brewski was poured into a tall, handled glass and looked bright golden in colour with a thick carpet of fluffy white head. Classic noble hop aromas abounded and gave the beer a tangy gooseberry zing that was immensely gratifying. What was notable was that this beer, which already sits in 97th percentile in its class on ratebeer.com, tasted brighter and better than its bottled counterpart sampled 400 kilometres away in Christchurch. Maybe it is the time and place factor? It could have been the combination of bright sunny weather and a long drive that would have amplified the enjoyment of just about any beer, but having gone through a similar experience with drinking Matutu Lager at the brewery in the Cook Islands, I would suggest that freshness and minimum handling from proximity were both factors.

Ruenell from Jabberwocky very kindly gave me some advance samples of their own labelled beer to take away and the outlook for their Central Otago Pale Ale and Red Rooster Amber look very promising. These are unfiltered, luscious, hoppy and characterful beers and should reward those who are not afraid of a bit of flavour.

After Wanaka I followed the turquoise thread through the country toward Southland where my dance-card for the day ended with a visit to Invercargill Brewery for some supplies. Before this though, I had hitherto not checked off a Southland tourism must: visiting Stirling Point in Bluff. Stirling Point is widely, and incorrectly, held to be the southern-most point of New Zealand. My learned off-sider from a previous trip to Southland lost a pint.
bet to me when he insisted that New Zealand’s southern-most point is actually Slope Point in the Catlins. Neither Stirling Point, ‘nor Slope Point is correct, it is Jacquemart Island, 1 kilometre south of Campbell Island. “Scallops,” says my off-sider, “…that’s not part of New Zealand.” “Well you should have said mainland New Zealand then, you silly sod.” And so I enjoyed drinking his beer, an Invercargill Brewery Stanley Green enjoyed from handpull. Delicious.

Anyway, it’s a strange New Zealand habit that when visiting landmarks we feel compelled to eat fish and chips at them. In fact, if there had been a fish and chippie at Everest basecamp, Ed Hillary would probably have taken a couple of fish, a scoop and some t-sauce up with him in 1953. I am no exception to this foible and I sat with my takeaways near the famous roadsing while a trio of jabbering female tourists did their best to ignore the scenery and get their photo taken beneath the sign while leaping in the air. I eschewed the cliché and took a snap of Stewart Island, some 30 kilometres distant and pottered off back to town to slake my thirst.

Invercargill Brewery now occupies handsome new premises on Leet St with a shop and tasting room stocking its products, beers from its client brewers and rotated offerings from an interesting array of New Zealand breweries. Drinking local was at the forefront of my thinking and so I left the building with a rigger of the new special release Hop Goblet. This is an IPA with heady yellow grapefruit aromas and flavours that disappeared with a rapidity that had me regretting not buying another. I haven’t missed out however. My schedule will have me back in six weeks and every six weeks after that.

Writing this column is hell at times.

By Jonathon Corfe. Follow Jonathon’s blog at bartlettandcorfe.co.nz.
ZEELANDT BREWERY

TASTING NOTES
All these Zeelandt beers are bottle-fermented and brewed true to style. This is a Euro influenced range – don’t come here looking for bold New World hop bombs, but do expect balanced and sessionable beers brewed to match their respective traditions.
The Helles is simple, refreshing, and won’t scare mainstream lager fans. The Pale Ale comes from the English tradition with slight minerally (Burtonised?) finish. The Kölsch is cloudy and strongly carbonated with a fruity nose, reminiscent of Coopers Sparkling Ale. The pick of the bunch was the Saison with its impressive thick white head and citrus finish.

BREWER’S NOTES
Zeelandt Helles (5.0% ABV)
“This Bavarian-styled lager has a creamy white head and is brewed with New Zealand hops of noble lineage. Medium to low hop bitterness, this beer is thirst quencher.”

Zeelandt Kölsch Style (4.0% ABV)
“Kölsch is a golden ale from the German city of Cologne; a style that embraces the fine flavours achieved during fermentation. This beer is soft and fresh with an apple and pear fruitiness. Brewed with New Zealand Pilsner and wheat malt and fermented with a style-specific yeast.”

Zeelandt Pale Ale (5.0% ABV)
“A classic pale ale that delivers a glass full of hoppy flavour. This bright, copper coloured beer has a malty backbone, wonderfully balanced with citrus hop flavour and a clean, refreshing finish.”

Zeelandt Saison (4.5% ABV)
“Saison is a Belgian Farmhouse style ale, originally brewed as a refreshing drink for farm workers during summer. The resulting beer is dry with good acidity and a complex aroma characteristic of this style, prefect for long summer evenings.”

Zeelandt Brewery supplied the reviewed beer.

Contact us at editor@soba.org.nz for information on submitting your beer for review by experienced beer judges and writers.
Home brewing without the hassles (or the home) has come to Wellington. Opening last winter, the Occasional Brewer gives anyone the opportunity to produce 40l of quality, full-grain beer for $149.

Entrepreneur Peter Leniston noted the interest generated by the New Zealand-made Farra Brewing Systems at Beervana 2013. He bought six and installed them next door to Crafters & Co bar in Victoria Street, Te Aro.
The venture has attracted a range of amateur brewers. Some are experienced home brewers who have taken advantage of the opportunity to go full grain and ferment the results in temperature-controlled facilities. Others are beer fans who want to experience the brewing process. Corporates use the exercise as a team-building event (with more team building opportunities coming a few weeks later).

It’s not simply a ‘time-share’ free-for-all on good kit. The Occasional Brewer experience provides all materials and offers a choice of 12 recipes, including an English Bitter, New Zealand-style pilsner and pale ale, and a black IPA “modelled on a popular example of the style made by a New Zealand contract brewery known for their innovative recipes”. Grain, hops and yeast are all provided, determined by the set recipes. All preparation and cleaning is also out of your hands.

Brewers book their 3-4 hour session on a weekend or evening and the grain is milled and ready to go. Thanks to an odd interpretation of the licencing laws, Peter and his assistant...
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Gary cannot touch the equipment once the brewing process starts. They can assist and guide, for example, pointing out your fermenter tap is open and the beer is pouring down the drain, but they cannot step in and get directly involved. Tough love!

Getting the licencing laws and regulations to come to terms with the Occasional Brewer’s innovative operation was not easy. It took a few weeks of negotiation and interpretation, which delayed the planned opening. Having got that sorted, there was initial feedback about low carbonation in early batches, which the Peter has addressed.

Pursuit of Hoppiness was invited to brew a batch in September and we went for the US-influenced Red Ale. My initial impression (as a former kit brewer, and a crappy one at that) was just how many things can go wrong in with timing, temperature and measurements. After bottling and resting for a month (the beer, not me) the result is a very good, clear home brew. It has caramel malts and is a deep brownish red, with low carbonation.

I enjoyed the process and bought a brewing session for my wife, a perceptive pilsner fan. As we go to press, the results have yet to be tasted, but that will change tomorrow.

Pursuit of Hoppiness made one batch as guest of the Occasional Brewer. Cheers! To learn more and book your session, go to www.theoccasionalbrewer.co.nz

Martin Craig
Golden Eagle Brewery

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www.goldeneaglebrewery.co.nz  Be sure to look for the eagle!
When a friend gets a new toy, it’s only right that he invites all his mates around to see how it works.

So when one of my friends told me he had just dropped a decent wad of cash on The Grainfather, it was only right for the Palmerston North Home Brewers club to converge on his house to see how the new home brewing system worked.

Launched at Beervana this year, The Grainfather is touted as an all-in-one home system set to “revolutionise” how people brew at home.

Well, there is an issue right from the start – it is not an all-in-one system. The 30L unit is, effectively, a very flash brew-in-a-bag system. You put the grains into the unit, then hauls the grains out of the liquid via an internal sleeve. You sparge the grains – having heated your water somewhere else, requiring another vessel, meaning it is not all-in-one – into the unit, then boil using the unit’s internal elements.
One big positive is the two internal elements, with one being more powerful than the other. While the internal pump recirculates the wort through the grain, you can leave the small element on to ensure your brew stays at the correct mash temperature without too many fluctuations. The big element can then kick in for boiling.

The pump has more than enough grunt to recirculate, and the electric interface makes step mashing a piece of cake.

The big time savings came during sparging. As you can recirculate the wort while mashing, all you have to do is pull the grain out and start pouring your sparge water through it. It can take an hour to recirculate and sparge on my three-tier system, but sparging a mash in The Grainfather took less than 10 minutes.

Most of the issues came at the end of the boil. The unit comes with a counterflow chiller, which decided to vomit cooling water out of all its seals despite our efforts to tighten them up. You could get around this by either buying a different counterflow, or dropping a copper coil into your wort.

Having to recirculate the wort through the unit while chilling, and the positioning of the dip tube, meant there was lots of hop matter going into the fermenter – or, at least, it would have been if we did not use a sieve. A hop spider/bag would be essential if you want to make highly hopped styles like IIPA.

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Getting your gravity high enough to do an IIPA would be no problem. The grain kit provided for the day – a Behemoth Brewing “Chur” clone – was supposed to have a starting gravity of 1.054, but the version my friend brewed clocked in at about 1.070. Either those grains were full of fermentables, or The Grainfather has ridiculously good efficiency.

All in all, The Grainfather is a good unit. The price point ($1000) is attractive compared to similar units, which are more than triple that price. Sure, it does have a few issues, but some add-ons or modifications would provide a fix.

For more information, see www.grainfather.com.

By Jono Galuszka. Follow Jono’s blog From Drinker to Brewer at stuff.co.nz
ALL IN ONE BREWING SYSTEM

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The Grainfather, is your all in one brewing system to make beer from grain better and more quickly than ever before. With its sleek look, user friendly design, and innovative features, this is the perfect brewing companion for both experienced and beginner all grain brewers.

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Visit our website to find out more
www.grainfather.co.nz
I recently (mid-August) had to return to the United Kingdom on a family matter but, whilst there, visited Lancaster, in the North West of England to take part in a game of 5-a-side football that has been going on for 32 years - that’s one, one-hour slot a week, for 32 years, by the way, not continual play!

After the game, as is traditional, some of the players visit a few of the bars in the city that serve decent beer – there are quite a number of them - and, on this occasion, I was taken into a bar that’s been through a refurb since I was last there in 2012 and is now called The Tap House www.taphouselancaster.co.uk

Imagine my surprise on seeing a pump clip with a Kiwi motif upon it. On asking about the brew, I was told that it contained New Zealand Hops and in fact they usually had two beers with New Zealand hops in on, and so I got a picture taken of me behind the bar with my SoBA card between the two beers, after they’d fetched the second pump clip out, as one wasn’t on that night.

That was the Wednesday night. On the Thursday night, I arranged to meet two of my old workmates in the same pub and was delighted to find that there was a “Meet the Brewer night” (although the “Brewer” turned out to be a salesman) from the very brewery,
York Brewery, who had brewed the Kiwi-hopped beers, who was there to give a spiel about the brewery and their beers. I missed out on the free samples, as I was already drinking it by the time the talk started but there was a good spread of traditional United Kingdom pub fare laid on as well.

The most interesting part of Jeremy Coward's talk for me was the revelation that York Brewery, one of only two or three breweries within the White Rose city's walls, had been taken over by the old Lancastrian brewing family, Mitchell's of Lancaster, Jeremy telling us that his grandfather now refused to drink their beer, as it was owned by the “Red Roses”!

The two beers, both using Rakau, Waimea, and Nelson Sauvin, were called Tiwha and Koma and details of them can be found here: http://www.york-brewery.co.uk/Beers/Categories/Off-the-Wall

I found the “pale” to be very much in the English IPA style, somewhat lighter and cleaner/smooth that I find New Zealand IPAs, could be the water I guess, whilst the “black” was smoother still.

Kevin Buckley, Wellington
Sour beers might just be the next beer craze to sweep New Zealand, they were noticeable in their numbers at both Beervana and more recently at the Pacific Beer Expo.

Having been in New Zealand for eight years, we thought it was about time for a return trip to Europe, so in August we departed on a five-week world trip. As my wife and I have developed a taste for sour beers in recent years, a highlight was a trip to the best sour beer maker in Brussels, Cantillon.

The brewery is a short walk from Brussels Midi Railway station. However, it’s in a really innocuous location in the Anderlecht area of the city - you could easily walk past it and there isn’t an obvious front door. Having guessed correctly you enter and are met with a wave of humid air laced with sour beer acidity and citric aromas.

The tour starts with a potted history to the business, the brewing process and to Lambic and Gueuze beers in a language of your choice. Then you are let loose on the brewery. It’s self-guided so you follow the numbered rooms and wander off about the building.

The tour was so good we went twice, Thursday and a Saturday. On the Thursday we almost had the brewery to ourselves whereas Saturday was much more a touristy affair but with locals turning up with wheeled carriers for their take outs (it was cheap).

We visited in September. Brewing takes place between October and May, given the more favourable conditions for cooling the wort in the open air and because there are too many unfavourable organisms in the air that could spoil the beer in summer. So we saw lots of bottling, but no actual brewing, but the brewery remains open for tours when brewing is underway.
The tour kicks off by wandering down the long narrow ground floor corridor parallel to the relatively modern bottling machine. This is by far the most modern bit of kit in the building. At the end of the corridor a large room opens up housing two mash tuns complete with archaic belt drives to turn the huge mash paddles.

Wheat (35%) and Malted Barley (65%) are fed from the crushing machine on the first floor via a hopper above the mash tuns. In the mash tun 1300kg of grain is mashed at 45C to 72C for two hours with the temperature slowing increased. Wort is drained from the mash tun, then pumped back up to the first floor and the boiling coppers, which is where you head next via a narrow set of steps.
The first floor is where you’ll see most of the stuff. The first room has the boiling coppers with fantastic coils for the steam (yes, steam) to circulate and propeller like contraptions to mix the wort and hops. Hops do play a role but only as an antiseptic. Dried hops (three years old) are used with quantities about 25kg per 10,000 litres of wort. Approximately 10,000L of wort is pumped into the two boilers.

The boil is up to 3 or 4 hours in duration. This results in 7500 litres of wort that is then pumped into the cooling tun in room 4.

The cooling room is next via a fleeting visit to the granary.

This is perhaps the most unusual room for those who have been round a “normal” brewery. The room is dominated by a large open rectangular copper vessel, which looks like a large deep cat litter tray. Okay may
be not the best visual analogy. The cooling vessel is shallow and offers a large surface area to cool the 7500L of hot wort, and also to maximize air contact to inoculate the wort with wild yeasts. The target temperature is 18-20C with cooling best achieved in the cooler months and overnight as mentioned earlier. There are shutters in the roof, eaves and holes (intentional) in the tiles of the roof. Spiders webs abound (it is bad luck to kill a spider in Cantillon) and the old roof tiles were retained in a recent bit of renovation to retain some of the yeast strains. Cantillon claim there are 100 different wild yeast strains in the brewery, 27 acetic acid bacteria types, 38 lactic acid bacteria and one Lambic type. No wonder the beers are sour.

These bacteria come into their own, with the yeasts when fermentation kicks in the barrels. That’s the room next door.

The next morning the cooled wort with yeast etc is transferred into Oak or Chestnut barrels (225 to 500L each). Generally these are old wine barrels, but not exclusively so.

Fermentation is vigorous if not explosive initially that barrels are left unsealed. This prevents explosions but 5 to 10L of beer will be lost this way. After 4 weeks fermentation
Barrel room has calmed down enough to allow barrels to be sealed. From here the Lambic is born after up to 3 years in the barrel.

The resulting Lambic will be about 5% alcohol and carry very little residual sugar. Some 50L will be lost in the fermentation process.

Barrel after barrels is lined up, some with glass ends to allow visitors to see the fermenting beer inside, and there is even a coopering room downstairs on the ground floor.

Gueuze, and the Lambics from which it is made, has been produced in the area about 50km from Brussels known as Payottenland and in Brussels itself. Gueuze (both ‘Oude’ and others) qualified for the European Union’s designation ‘TSG’ (Traditional Specialty Guaranteed). Lambics I think have the same status, bringing to mind the whole “Saison” trademarking here in New Zealand in the recent past.

The Lambic is the base beer and can be drunk in this form or from here different ages can be blended to create complex Gueuze, fruit added to Lambic barrels to create Kriek, Framboise etc versions.

Heading downstairs from the barrel room conveniently brings you to the tasting area, often with the owner, Jean-Pierre van Roy running the bar with true Francophile flare and contempt for attempts at spoken French by tourists. The choice here being two from a Lambic, Gueuze and a fruit beer, a Kriek when we were there. Having said that the rest of the range is available to buy by the 75Cl bottle, the Iris (dry hopped pale malt Gueuze) and Fou’foune (Apricot Gueuze) being favourites during the visit.
The bar area has extensive seating, and no one is in a hurry to leave. Why rush a sour beer? Just sitting watching unsuspecting tourists sampling a Gueuze for the first time is treat enough, it became known as the “sourface” expression resulting from unaccustomed taste buds being shocked into existence.

Cantillon, a must visit in Brussels to marvel at the antique machine and art form that is Gueuze and Lambic brewing. Add to that the Police popping in to the brewery for “a swift one” whilst on duty, only in Belgium.

There are specialist Lambic / Gueuze bars in the city centre worth a visit. La Becasse, just of the main City Gotte (Market) Square, is well known and very traditional, complete with surly French bar staff. Moeder Lambic (Place Fontainas) has a good range but equally has some really interesting Belgian beers and the habit of serving malted grain as a bar snack to nibble on.

**Story and photos by Mark Edwards**
I asked all our local brewers if they had noticed any trends in beer consumption. Which age group do they think are changing? Is it Male or Female, young or old.

Andrew from Mussel Inn replied – “One trend that I have noticed - and this is not just limited to the realm of beer - is that there is a general desire for ‘more’. More hops, more malt, more flavour, more pay, more holidays, more excitement, more intensity to just about anything. When we first made our Captain Cooker manuka beer it was way too much for a lot of people. Now they say it’s not as flavorsome as it used to be. When we first made our Bitter Ass extra bitter beer, it was a kick ass IPA. Now I have had to triple the hops and halve the brew length just to stay on the field. We recently had some Feijoa cider returned because ‘its not as tasty as it used to be’. Well sorry folks - that’s a seasonal product and God dictates that one. Make the most of our gold medal winning Lean Lamb sour ale - when the trend hits these shores big time it’s bound to end up the Lame Lamb. I feel somewhat sorry for people who burn their taste buds out and have to keep climbing higher to be satisfied. And it’s a tricky balance for us brewers trying to welcome newcomers to the party without scaring them off and also keep those already rocking, interested enough to stay. We live in hope that people will start to think more in terms of more balance, more drinkability, more suitability for the context - more good times.”
**OTHER NEWS.**

Nelson’s craft beer pub The Free House passed another milestone this year by serving its 600th different beer on tap since opening in April 2009. The lucky beer was ‘Wire Cutter’ a limited edition, 7.5% Scotch Ale. - a hoppy Scotch Ale brewed by Renaissance in collaboration with 8 Wired that is a “meld” Stonecutter and Hopwired.

Marchfest will be on 21st March 2015. The brewers have not been given any instructions as to contents of brews as in the past, but a competition was held at The Free House with 8 home brewers entering their beers. The winning beer is to be produced locally by one of our many breweries and will be on sale at Marchfest.

A new Beer and Hop Museum has been added to the Founders Park historical village. This will be another good reason to come to Nelson for Marchfest.

A new liquor outlet in Gloucester St has some and will increase the range as demand increases. There are also 3 Rigger Fill taps with Stoke beers at the moment. Urban has just opened in Hardy St. with 8 Golden Bear taps and almost opposite Panama Bar Restaurant with Moa Beers. Both these are close to the well established Sprig and Fern making a new drinking/eating craft beer ‘hub’ a short step and a jump (stagger) from The Freehouse, Royal Hotel and Hangar 59.
CHRISTCHURCH SOBA EVENTS

Quite a number of outings in this period the first of which was to a Hop Federation promotion at Misceos, a well-established suburban restaurant with a 6 tap bar of which 2 were pouring HF beers on the night (American Brown Ale was really good!). Simon Nicholas, owner/brewer of HF, gave a talk about his brewing background at Hallertau and the various challenges arising when he bought Monkey Wizard in Riwaka to establish HF. Simon provided samples of his full range in bottles (Golden gained Bronze at BGNZ awards) and the usual Q and A session ensued with platters of finger food supplied by Misceos.

A few days later, at the University Staff Club, we had the launch of Brick Lane, a curry tasting beer (Silver at BGNZ awards) which is a collaboration between Wendy Roigard (Valkyrie Brewing) and Charles Swettenham, our local SOBA organiser. The name stems from the London street known for its variety of curry houses and, in keeping with the theme, Charles personally made a magnificent Biryani as an accompaniment! The brewing team intend this to be the first in an ‘English’ series so watch this space!

Next on the list was a new restaurant/bar, Kaizuka, owned by Aaron Scott, a chef with 25 years hospitality experience, situated at the foot of the Cashmere hills. The premises are a converted garden centre so space is not an issue and the bar has 12 taps with Cassels, Twisted Hop, Golden Eagle and Zeffer cider available during our visit but Aaron intends to rotate various craft brews through the place. The fit-out is an eclectic décor with some earthquake relics as part of the furniture and a spacious outdoor area which would be great for summer brunch with a pint or two!
From plenty of space to absolutely the opposite when we visited The Institution, a quirky small bar in New Regent St in the CBD. The street is pedestrian only with the tourist tram running down it and flanked by colourful, Spanish Mission-style shops. The 4 tap bar (frequently varied craft beers) is upstairs and some two dozen SOBA members virtually filled it although there are a few more seats downstairs! A very cosy ambience makes this a great spot for an after work drink and it should be popular with the theatre crowd as it is only a few steps from the earthquake repaired Isaac Theatre Royal.

We were treading old ground when we re-visited Raindogs Brewery (shared with Golden Eagle and Eagle vs Dog) after meeting at Volstead Bar which is directly adjacent. Sean Harris, owner/brewer, brought us up to date with changes which include door sales for all three brands and some improvements/additions to the plant. Sean also gave us a rundown on the increase in Gladfield Malt’s range which improves the reliability of supply and generally makes recipe development easier. More Q and A then rounded off with a ‘roady’ in Volstead!

Finally, after a pint in Twisted Hop, Woolston, another return trip, this time to Three Boys Brewery just down the road. Operations Manager Misty Weed has worked her way up from part-time helper 5 years ago and hosted a sizable group with IPA and Wheat Beer while she conducted us on an explanatory tour. Developments include hosting Ghost Brewing which is mainly providing beer for Dux outlets with new recipes including Delicious Pale, Dux Pils, Norwester and Ginger Tom. This volume necessitates brewer Nigel Mahoney being on-site almost permanently as well as having some elements of their own plant in-house. Other developments are a small canning operation, improvements in the labelling/bottling process and expansion of door sales to the full range in bottles and bulk. Hot tip – look for Three Boys miniature (2l), stainless steel, refillable kegs at retail outlets – great as a gift and what an item to take to a party!
Now in its 7th year of celebrating the beer industry and lifestyle in Australia & New Zealand, each issue of Beer & Brewer serves up the latest beer news, travel ideas, beer & food matching, home brewing tips and recipes and tasting notes on beers, cider and whisky.

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THE SOBA NATIONAL HOMEBREW COMPETITION 2014 HAS BEEN DECIDED!

Karl Safi from Hamilton is the BeerNZ Champion Brewer. John Golics brewed the Champion Beer, sponsored by Hallertau. It was a delicious Rauch Bock, and will certainly be a best seller when it’s released commercially. Champion Ale was an American Style Fruit Beer by Dave Bryden and Matt Lory, and Champion Lager was a brilliantly brewed American Style Pilsner by Abe Guyer.

We judged our way through 417 beers, and two things became apparent - there were a lot of first time entrants, and the overall standard was much higher than in previous years. This speaks volumes to the health and growth of the hobby in New Zealand.
As always, most new brewers attempt two things - hoppy US style beers and the English bitter family. These are actually pretty hard beers to get right, so naturally, the standard in those categories was a lot lower, but there were still some great beers there and congratulations to all who did well.

Hamilton’s Ruakura Campus Club once again hosted the team of 24 judges, 26 stewards, and visitors from the press and public come to see just how this beer judging thing worked! We were extremely lucky to have attracted a bunch of wonderful sponsors also, without
whom, the competition simply would not have worked. Cryer Malt was our Gold Sponsor, continuing a long tradition of supporting grass roots beer events in New Zealand. Silver sponsors were NZ Hops and The Grainfather, and we had two excellent homebrew suppliers picking up the Bronze sponsor slots in beerstore.co.nz and Brewers Coop. SOBA is very grateful to them, and we'd encourage you all to support them where possible.

Huge thanks to Phil Murray for the website and systems, all the judges and stewards, and to everyone who entered! Roll on NHC 2015!

Full results are available at http://nhc.soba.org.nz/results

Greig McGill
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brentwestein@gmail.com
Every Friday from 5pm
Check Twitter @soba_auckland for venue

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Monthly meeting tbc.
Gareth Guitry
garethguitry@hotmail.com

Taranaki
Warwick Foy
wfoy@xtra.co.nz
First Thursday of the month at 5.30pm
See Facebook.com/TaranakiSOBA for venues

Wanganui
Peter Northway
nz-pilgrim@vodafone.co.nz
First Tuesday of the month
7pm at the Rutland Arms

Palmerston North
Jono Galuszka
j.galuszka@gmail.com

Wellington
Aidan Caig
aidan.caig@gmail.com
First Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm

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Mike Pink
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