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MEET YOUR NEW EDITOR

Welcome to the first edition of Pursuit of Hoppiness that I’ve had the privilege of overseeing.

When I was asked to be editor of SOBA’s flagship magazine I didn’t hesitate – after all who wouldn’t want to be in charge of their own beer magazine!

But seriously, one of the reasons I jumped at the chance to edit Pursuit of Hoppiness was my love of beer and my equal affection and high regard for the craft beer community in New Zealand. To be able to reflect that community to a broad member base of beer lovers is an honour.

Second, I really admire what SOBA do – no more evident than in the Farmhouse trademarking scandal that our president Dave Wood talks about in an article in this magazine. Trademarks have become shark-infested waters and the ludicrous inability of

COVER: Jos Ruffell of the Garage Project uses a hot poker to make a blended version of their Cockswain’s Courage Porter. Garage Project was voted the brewery of the year by SOBA members. Photo: Jed Soane.
Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ) to understand the beer industry (despite having many of these battles played out in front of them) beggars belief. If we can't trust the guardians in officialdom we have to fight, and SOBA does a magnificent job fighting for causes it believes in and ensuring fairness for all.

Third, editing this magazine gives me a chance to live a dream – I was only half-joking further up the page when I said who wouldn't want to edit their own beer magazine. I look at the beer media in countries such as the US, Britain and Australia and realise we are way, way behind in terms of what we offer beer-loving readers and I believe there's a gap in the market for great articles about beer and the brewing industry gathered together in one place.

There's some amazing beer writers, bloggers and photographers in this country and I'm lucky to know most of them and hope to be able to lean on them to contribute to this magazine. My dream is that Pursuit of Hoppiness could one day transform from a quarterly magazine pulled together by volunteers to a regular trade publication that comes out six to 12 times a year, packed full of content you will want to read.

I know what I'd like to read – but how about you? Tell me what you'd like to see in this magazine. Recipes for home brewers? More beer reviews? Lists of events and festivals? More opinion pieces? Bar reviews? Information about clubs and groups that get together to celebrate beer? Stories about brewers?

I'd love your feedback – write to me at editor@soba.org.nz and tell me what you want. Or just write a letter to the editor for the sake of it – because that's one addition I'd like to make for the next edition: a regular letters column where you can express your opinions on the beer world.

OK, that's enough about the magazine – now here's a little bit about me.

I've been a journalist (a writer, a sports editor, an editor) for 25 years and a beer drinker for a little bit longer.

With beer I'd always looked for new beer and great taste experiences – but it was only when I started to make home brew that I began to realise how amazing the craft beer scene was in New Zealand.

This is going back a few years now when media-wise it was still something of an underground movement.

I like to think I played a small part in the mainstreaming of craft beer (or maybe I just hitched a ride at the right time) by convincing my editor at the Sunday Star-Times to ditch a wine column and run a beer column instead.

Kudos to him for having the guts to give me a go and let me rant about my favourite drops.
That small step into beer-writing (until then I’d only and almost exclusively written about sport) opened the door to some amazing people and the surreal opportunity to write a book about the history of beer in New Zealand.

Beer Nation – the Art and Heart of Kiwi Beer is something I’m incredibly proud of. And I’m proud that despite an optimistic print run of some 3400 copies it basically sold out in New Zealand. One day I’ll do an updated, improved, second edition as an e-book. One day …

I’ve left the Sunday Star-Times but still write a fortnightly column for Your Weekend magazine which appears in the Saturday editions of the Dominion Post, Christchurch Press and Waikato Times.

But right now, with my latest book – a beginner’s guide to home brewing – about to go the printers (look out for it around Father’s Day) the beer media that’s going to get all my love and attention is Pursuit of Hoppiness.

Let’s make it an even greater magazine than it’s been.

Michael Donaldson
March 2015
Disappointing connoisseurs of bland beer since 2009.

Sorry about that.

Save the date: Pacific Beer Expo 2015 -
October 24 & 25 (Labour Weekend)
I’m not surprised at all to see Garage Project top the SOBA awards list … after all the boys from Aro Valley came out on top in my annual assessment of the country’s best breweries.

This is what I wrote in my column for Your Weekend magazine earlier this year:

“Five hundred years ago The Germans came up with the so-called `purity law’ which states beer must be made from just four ingredients: malt, hops, water and yeast.

Someone obviously forgot to tell the boys at Garage Project.

Cornflakes, truffle, honeydew melon, seaweed, chipotle, mango, lime, cocoa, lemongrass,
garage ProjeC t grapefruit, grape juice, dried fish. Dried fish!? Oh Yes.

This time every year I sit down to replay my beer memories as I try to identify my brewery of the year. Most years, it’s incredibly difficult to single out one the many talented brewers who increasingly populate our brewing landscape.

Not this year. For me, Garage Project – like their elevated stand at Beervana – stood head and shoulders above the rest.

And it’s not just because they produced New Zealand’s best ever result at the Beer World Cup, winning a silver medal for their Cockswain’s Courage Double Barrelled Porter.

When this brewery burst onto the scene a couple of years ago with their wild and imaginative flavours, there was always a question of how long they could sustain the energy.

But the creativity of Jos Ruffell and Pete Gillespie is like a perpetual motion machine … ideas just keep coming.”

During Beervana I talked to Jos about where the ideas come from for beers as diverse as the seaweed - and fish-driven Umami Monster to Two-Pot Flat White … a shot of imperial stout followed by a cream ale charged with nitrogen to create a fluffy top. Like so many in this business, Jos had a “beer epiphany” in the United States – not one beer but a series of them – which showed him “beer could be a lot more than I previously thought it was”.

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With his background in computer gaming, it was a short step to see how beer itself “can be an amazing vehicle for creativity, for playing with flavours … then there’s elements of science and art.”

His video game background was also about art and science but that industry was all about secrecy and long-term planning whereas brewing is “immediate and tangible”.

“With gaming you can work on things for years – multi-years even – and you weren’t allowed to talk about it. In brewing, ideas can turn into real things very quickly.”

Umami Monster – which features 20kg of kombu and 30kg of katsubushi “we do brew with a lot of adjuncts but we don’t throw things in willy-nilly” – started life as a simple idea: “I just had a thought ‘what would it be like to brew an MSG beer’.”

After batting the idea around with partner Pete Gillespie and concluding people might not be ready for MSG in their beer, the pair settled on trying to brew an umami flavour and looked at what was happening in the culinary world with fermented foods and how they might brew the beer on a base similar to dashi, which uses katsubushi, preserved fermented fish, and kombu, an edible seaweed, “and suddenly we’re trying to buy 30kg of katsubushi from the local Japanese food warehouse”.

Amazingly that first batch of Umami Monster was brewed without any kind of test.

The team backed themselves to get the flavours right – and when you’re playing with
seaweed, fermented fish, smoked malt and salt water, that’s a pretty brave call.

Naturally says Jos, not everyone liked it. “Not my cup of fish,” was one response.

“But if everyone loved it you wouldn’t know where to go next. We’re OK with people not liking our beer as long as the beer is technically well made and the flavours work.”

Perhaps that’s why Garage Project are so popular with SOBA members – everyone it seems, can find a beer they like.

From Day of the Dead, conditioned on cocoa nibs and chipotle, to its little (or should that be big) sister La Calavera Catrina, brewed with watermelon and habanero chili, and their cousin Death from Above, with chili, mango and lime juice … to Wabi Sabi Sour, which features yuzu and honey dew melon and a kettle souring process.

Then there’s Mecha Hop – the beer made with entirely “industrial products” such as malt extract, hop extract and packet yeast. “We had no idea what that would taste like and we were blown away by it.” And one of my favourites for this time of year, Cereal Milk Stout, brewed with cornflakes and designed to capture that “bottom of the cereal bowl” taste.

Or what about Sauvin Nouveau and Chateau Aro, beers made with grape juice which came about when the team was asked to put on a keg of beer at a Pinot wine conference in Wellington. Actor and grape grower Sam Neill had already outed himself as a fan of Pils n Thrills so “it popped into my head … Pinot Pilsner,” says Jos.

While others were doing fresh hopped beers this time last year – “if we see people going one way we go the other way” – Garage Project took the Pinot Pilsner concept and tweaked it by brewing with Sauvignon Blanc grape juice and Nelson Sauvin hops.

For his part, Pete Gillespie is careful not to let Garage Project brews turn into tricked up beers.

“We never do something just for the sake of it – our beer might be weird, but there’s always a reason certain flavours are in there. I try to never do anything as a stunt because it will backfire and be one-dimensional, and people will know you are doing it for a reason.

“Umami Monster might seem like a stunt because it’s got fish in it,” he says, before pointing out that the savoury and smoke elements act as a balance to the sweetness of beer just as the bitterness of hops do in an IPA or sourness in a lambic ale.

“The best beers somehow balance the scales – but I do like beer that takes you on a journey,” Pete says.

It’s been some journey so far for Garage Project … and the beauty is that you never know what’s around the next corner.

See page 32 for full awards.
life’s a beach...
SOUR SERIES!

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EIGHT IS ENOUGH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Many of us have beer “epiphanies” – moments that change our drinking direction. MARTIN CRAIG lists the eight beers that changed his drinking life.

A handful of beers have had a big influence on me. Some have been long-term favourites; others have recalibrated my expectations of what a beer could taste like. Here’s eight beers that have changed the way I look at beer.

DB LAGER c1974

Probably the first beer I ever tasted.

When almost all of the beer sold in New Zealand was brown “Draught” lager, this one showed me other forms of beer existed. That seems a bit obvious, but it wasn’t then. It was quite possible to grow up in New Zealand in the 1960s and 70s and think that there were only two kinds of beer – Lion Brown and DB Draught – and they both looked and tasted pretty much the same.

My mother did her OE in the 1950s and discovered lager in Germany. Like many of the later craft beer pioneers, she returned to New Zealand with an appreciation of different beer varieties. So my parents drank DB Lager. I haven’t tasted it for years and I expect it would seem very sweet today, but I grew up knowing beer came in different styles. It was a start.

COOPERS SPARKLING ALE 1989

In Sydney in the late 1980s I flatted with a guy who was a bit of a hippy. He talked a lot of rubbish about The System and Corporates and how they were bringing us down, but he lived near a beach. He drank Coopers Sparkling Ale for two main reasons – it was produced by a family-owned business rather than The Corporates, and it was entirely natural so it had no toxins to give you a hangover.

Five-point-eight per cent of Coopers Sparkling Ale is the toxin ethanol, so, yes, it can give you hangovers, especially when you’re used to 4 per cent tap draughts. It’s strongly carbonated and cloudy, so it didn’t even look like the flat beer I had favoured as a uni student in Wellington.

Some people decry Coopers’ craft beer credentials, largely because it is the largest independent brewery in Australia. I think that’s just familiarity-bred contempt. Coopers is old, still family-owned, and it’s a craft beer I happily return to.
GISBORNE GOLD 1993
Sunshine Brewery in Gisborne was a recklessly brave craft beer adventure. When it started in 1989 there was little demand for craft beer and no independent distribution networks. Sure, they could make a better beer, but who could buy it? Fortunately these pioneers met the pioneers at Regional Wines, Bar Bodega and The Malthouse in Wellington. Brewers, retailers and bars combined like fuel, heat and oxygen, and our craft beer scene started to burn.
Gisborne Gold was a simple 4 per cent lager brewed with Green Bullet and Saaz hops. Its quality varied over the years, especially when demand took off in Wellington and the production equipment was strained beyond its limit. There are new owners now and a tweaked recipe, but Gizzy Gold proved there was a market for small brewers and many others have followed since.

EPIC PALE ALE 2007
After a thoroughly amateur birth, our craft beer scene went a bit stagnant. For maybe a decade the alternatives to the mainstream were fake English and Irish theme bars. Although these weren’t your standard draught ‘n’ Steinie kiwi pubs, they were still pretty boring and mimicked a foreign mainstream rather than a craft beer alternative.
Then Bang! Epic Pale Ale hit and nothing was ever the same again.
The archetype New Zealand craft beer is a hoppy New World pale ale - every brewer seems to do one. American craft brewers have long loved bold, unsubtle, hoppy pales, and Epic Pale Ale brought the style to New Zealand. We had pale ales here before, of course, but they were usually based on more discreet English styles, often Timothy Taylor Landlord. Looking back seven years on, this is no longer a big hoppy beer, but it certainly was in 2007. This was a game changer for me and the New Zealand craft beer scene.

YEASTIE BOYS POT KETTLE BLACK 2008
Everything louder than everything else – that’s what Deep Purple asked for on Live in Japan.
Yeastie Boys took that attitude to beer in 2008 with Pot Kettle Black.
It takes the intense malts of a stout and adds the big, up-front hops of a New World Pale ale carried by 6 per cent alcohol. It works, and now many craft brewers include a beer of this style in their range. What style? Good question. Some call it a black pale ale or black India pale ale. Others call it an American porter (it’s original name was Stu McKinlay’s American Porter – ed). The names are inconsistent but the balancing combination of hefty dark malt and brash hops works.
The revelation wasn’t simply that one beer can present big hops and big malt. The revelation was that the balance of both brings out flavours that aren’t evident in hop-bombs or malt-bombs. Balance is good in a beer.
THREE BOYS OYSTER STOUT 2010
This lovely stout isn't so much a game changer as a game over. It makes other stouts and porters obsolete.
There are various stories around that the oyster stout style was invented in New Zealand in 1929, as claimed by revered beer writer Michael Jackson, but he was wrong on this one. It’s much more likely that the style has its origins in Industrial Revolution England, when oysters and stout were both cheap energy sources for the factory fodder. No one seems to know how or why raw oysters were first added to the boil (and they are – vegetarians be afraid), but given there were beer recipes that included a raw chicken, it could be worse.
Three Boys’ was the first oyster stout I tasted. It’s strong, dry, umami and hearty. I certainly try other stouts and porters, but if this is on tap I’ll have one. At least.

EPIC HOP ZOMBIE 2011
Beer shouldn’t be able to be this big, this strong and this tasty.
After introducing us to New World hoppery, Epic came back and outdid itself in 2011 with Hop Zombie. This one takes the hopping to the extreme, with a combination of US and New Zealand hops. It is powerfully aromatic and although it has plenty of bitterness, this is matched by rich hop and malt flavours. Perhaps the most frequent comment about Hop Zombie is it is deceptively smooth and drinkable for a beer with 8.5 per cent alcohol and 80 IBUs. It has great mouth feel and the flavours are impressively balanced, making it dangerously drinkable. Epic is often labelled a ‘one trick pony’ for its emphasis on hop-dominated beers. It is, but it is a good trick.

PARROTDOG DEADCANNARY 2014
I don’t know yet if this is a game changer for me. It is my favourite beer right now. DeadCanary doesn't show off. It isn't a big show stopper and it won't change the direction of our brewing industry.
It is a well-made, balanced, pale ale at 5.3 per cent alcohol and combines English malts (good) and New Zealand hops (very good) in a way that brings out the best in both while letting you go back for another. This is what beer is for – it’s clever, classy and drinkable. Not sure if the name is a reference to safety in the mining industry or a secret ingredient.
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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WALK A WHILE IN SOMEONE ELSE’S BREWS

Walking tour of Wellington’s best beer spots is more than a grown-up pub crawl as our well-shod correspondent discovered.

It was an overcast, but warm, Saturday morning when I joined 12 other nervous, yet excited, people at Wellington’s popular Garage Project Brewery in the city’s Aro Valley. We had gathered for the inaugural public excursion hosted by the Wellington beer tasting company, Craft Beer College.

All armed with appropriate footwear, there was a good mix of attendees for the walking tour - both men and women, some were die-hard beer aficionados, others were just interested in taking a closer look at the city’s growing beer scene. There was even an American couple who thought it would be a great way to spend their only full day in Wellington.

One of our three tour guides, Steph Coutts, greeted everyone with a warm smile and a goodie bag, which included a Teku beer glass to take home. And then we were straight into it.

Tour guide Phil Cook, who also works at Garage Project, started things off by introducing us to the brew house and telling the remarkable growth story of the brewery. We were given three beer samples over the course of the Garage Project tour - Beer, Hapi Daze and Garage Project’s tour guide Phil Cook

Garage Project’s tour guide Phil Cook

Tour guide Phil Cook, who also works at Garage Project, started things off by introducing us to the brew house and telling the remarkable growth story of the brewery. We were given three beer samples over the course of the Garage Project tour - Beer, Hapi Daze and
Death From Above - all of which were also discussed in detail by Phil. We also got to check out the cluttered canning and bottling area next door to the brew house, which we were assured was as tidy as it ever gets.

Our third tour guide, Ryan McArthur, then led us to our next destination, the beer bar Rogue and Vagabond, pointing out Wellington beer landmarks along the way. We took a seat as our Teku glasses were filled with Panhead’s White Wall, and Steph chatted about the short history of the Upper Hutt brewery and the Rogue and Vagabond bar.

It was lunch time when we moved on to Little Beer Quarter, where a pint of Emerson’s Bookbinder awaited. Our guides discussed the selling of the brewery to Lion a few years ago, and since we were a few beers in by this stage, almost everyone chipped in their thoughts on the sale. The American tourists also shared some similar examples from the US. The conversation barely died down as the huge plates of fish and chips and beef burgers arrived at our tables.

Completely stuffed, we were grateful it was just a short walk to the Fork & Brewer. We tried a selection of their house brews, including a 7 per cent weisenbock called Hop Sin Vice, as we were told more about the brewery and its utilisation of space. We had the chance to take a quick look around the brewery and it soon became clear the comments about space were no exaggeration as we squeezed past tanks.

And then it was time for our last walk of the day. Our guides marched us to the ever-popular Golding’s Free Dive, which was unusually quiet and had enough room for us to spread out on the comfy bar stools. It was a very relaxed atmosphere as Garage Project’s Aro Noir was poured into our glasses, and after hearing more about Golding’s and the beer before us, we ended the tour chatting among ourselves and finding out more about each of our companions.
I felt the walking tour was good value at $122.50 per person - the tastings were generous and the size of the lunch exceeded my expectations. The guides were well-informed and all of the venues were incredibly accommodating and generous with their time. We spent plenty of time at each location too and it never felt like we were being rushed from place to place.

The walking itself was easy-going and the furthest walk - between Garage Project and Rogue and Vagabond - was not far at all. The guides also broke that leg up with plenty of information about Wellington's beer past and beer present.

The excursion would particularly suit overseas tourists and out-of-towners, or those wanting to get a behind-the-scenes look at some of Wellington's most popular breweries. Craft Beer College also has plans to offer other tour options alongside the Cuba Quarter excursion in the near future.

The details:
Craft Beer College Excursion - Cuba Quarter Walking Tour
Cost: $122.50 per person - all tastings and food included
Duration: Approximately 4 hours
Website: http://www.craftbeercollege.co.nz/

Pursuit of Hoppiness attended the Cuba Quarter Walking Tour courtesy of organiser Craft Beer College

"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
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Harvest Pilsner

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SOBA President DAVE WOOD outlines one of the key jobs SOBA does as an advocate for beer.

It is SOBA’s firm belief that no generic beer term should be the property of a person or company. But yet another generic beer term almost became a trademark recently, when IPONZ once again failed to investigate an application thoroughly.

The term in question this time around was “Farmhouse”. On October 28th IPONZ approved an application to trademark ‘farmhouse’ within the beer and cider sectors… Apparently failing to conduct even a cursory google search to realise the term is commonly used throughout both industries.

Once accepted, the public has three months to oppose a mark before it becomes registered. If a mark becomes registered, it is essentially the property of the holder and much harder to revoke.

Usually this would be the point where we contact the applicant trying to trademark the term, and ask them nicely to withdraw it. Unfortunately SOBA found out about the farmhouse trademark with just two days remaining in this opposition period, so fast action was needed to ensure it did not become registered.

As we are not IP law experts, we enlisted the help of the law firm Minter Ellison Rudd Watts. They promptly lodged an opposition to the farmhouse trademark, and extended the time before the mark became registered.

Thankfully at this stage the applicant did the honourable thing and withdrew the trademark, meaning farmhouse remains a term for all brewers to use. For this we thank them. This is also the reason the applicant is not named here, as they did the right thing in the end.

A huge thank you to 8 Wired Brewery for first bringing this to our attention, and to Minter Ellison Rudd Watts for their excellent lawyering.
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A PINT-SIZE ADDITION TO THE BAR

When AVA WILSON had her first child it changed her life behind the bar at POMEROY’S in more ways than one.

August 2013, I felt a little ‘funny’. Beer didn’t taste quite like it should and I was overly tired. Turns out I was pregnant with my first child.

At first I was overwhelmed with all the emotions and of course hormones that go with finding out that you’re growing a tiny human and then, I turned to something nearly as pressing… nine months of no drinking beer but more importantly, how was I going to be a mama and still foster and nurture my other love, my world of beer.

Being pregnant changed a lot and opened my world up to a few new opportunities. One that comes to mind is my involvement in Pink Boots Society. Pink Boots, for those who don’t know is a society that is set up to empower women in the beer industry through education. Last year, I got approached by one of my very dear beer ladies, Jayne Lewis, about taking part in Pink Boots International Women’s Collaboration Brew Day. This was the first of its kind and was organised by Denise Ratfield, Pink Boots committee member.

As I like a challenge, I put my hand up to represent New Zealand and from there things took off. Because New Zealand is the first in the world to see the new day, I was the first to mash in on this historic event and because I was seven months pregnant, I got a bit of attention. From that brew day my friendship grew with Denise and last August she was brought over to Beervana to launch Pink Boots in New Zealand. I wouldn’t say that being pregnant changed anything but I can say it showed me that the two worlds could co-exist.

Mako arrived. He was an alert little boy that showed up early one May morning and
Yeastie Boys

IRREVERENT ALES SINCE 2008

Pursuit of Hoppiness - Autumn 2015

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YEASTIEBOYS.CO.NZ
quickly filled my life with a love I’d never felt, a tiredness I didn’t know existed and lots and lots of washing.

In those early weeks I fast became overwhelmed about whether I could still wear my Pomeroy’s hat, Beer Baroness hat, newly acquired Pink Boots hat and still be the mama that I knew Mako deserved.

But I kept going, and at three months old Mako attended his first beer festival, Beervana. I nervously boarded the plane to Wellington with my parents helping me along and successfully spent a weekend working, pouring beer and hanging out with some very inspiring women in our industry – with my child strapped to my chest.

Work happens around my son. For the first few months, I was able to place keg orders, chat to staff and contemplate new beers with my baby boy asleep in a carrier. Now as he approaches 10 months and requires all of my attention, work happens in other ways. My mum is a star and looks after him when and where she can, I work when his daddy is home and our lovely maitre d’ likes to spend her down time hanging out with him. But honestly, the kid has so many ‘aunties and uncles’, I can take him to the pub and by the time he’s done the rounds of saying hello to everyone, I’ve done my work and we’re ready to go home.

Things have changed. Last week we had a group of brewers in at the pub and rather than being there I opted to cook dinner, hang out with my boys and wear my comfy pants…
sign of becoming a mama or maybe just a sign that I’m getting a little older?

I don’t drink as much beer as I used to. I do miss that but right now I can’t bear the thought of feeling a little scruffy and being woken up at 6am. I will say that my palate is far better than it used to be, I pick up flavours that I may have missed pre-pregnancy. I put that down to taking a forced break from beer for nine months… as a reward my senses became razor sharp!

My appreciation of the New Zealand craft beer community has grown even more. Our industry is filled with damn good people! People understand when I send emails at 3am, reply to phone calls late and show up to a beer event with my child in tow.

Most importantly, it seems that we’re fast growing an attitude in this country that we shouldn’t let our children be exposed to alcohol. I’m busy breaking the rules because I want my son to grow up and appreciate a good beer, understand the work that has gone into it and how great the people are that make it. Will he work at the pub or brew beer? I do have a picture of him behind the bar fascinated with the taps… it’s probably too soon to tell but one can only hope.

This story first appeared on The Beerhive blog at stuff.co.nz.
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.

THIS AWARD-WINNING QUARTERLY MAGAZINE WILL:

- Help you plan a weekend away involving beer
- Tell you about upcoming events/festivals
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- Show you how to get started in home brewing
- Feature local breweries
- Tell you about new beers to try and where to try/buy them

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SEVEN WAYS TO WRECK YOUR BUSINESS: legal challenges for small businesses

The majority of businesses in New Zealand are classified as “small to medium enterprises” and this is particularly true of any area, like the beer industry, which is just beginning to come into its own and gaining public prominence. Transitioning from a passion into a fully-fledged business is hard thirsty work, and legal and regulatory issues can be chores, and seemingly offer little reward. Timing however, is everything, and knowing how to spot potential for trouble before it is irrevocable, goes a long way towards making sure your business will be around for a bit longer.

With the goal of helping talented brewers throughout New Zealand put more energy into brewing and less into trouble-shooting when it is almost too late, here are seven areas where ignoring risk in the early stages can wreck your business later on.

ONE: IGNORE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT...
We realise that not everyone is as interested in what happens in the Beehive as lawyers are. But not paying attention to what is happening in Government is one of the easiest ways to wreck a business – you don’t have to lift a finger and before you know it your compliance costs have gone through the roof as an unexpected side-effect of somebody else’s bright idea. While we don’t expect Parliament to pass an Anti-Beer Bill any time soon, Government never sleeps and there will always be a steady march of changes not just to alcohol legislation but to planning legislation, employment legislation, health and safety legislation. There isn’t much sympathy in Government if you miss your chance to have a say about something
important. Even keeping track of the big Government announcements can help you avoid a nasty surprise.

On the other hand, if you don’t want to wreck your business, you might be surprised to find that Government can actually help you! There is a lot of support and guidance coming out of Government for small to medium businesses with innovative new ideas that you can tap into – and if you’ve got a great idea for a law or policy change that will make New Zealand a better place to live and work, you might be surprised at how interested MPs can be. A little work at the start can pay dividends later on.

TWO: IGNORE LOCAL GOVERNMENT…

Many readers will have already discovered that local councils now have a range of levers with which they can make life difficult for craft beer brewers, bar owners and, of course, drinkers – Auckland Council’s proposed Local Alcohol Plan, and similar restrictions on single bottle sales around the country – are a case in point. But on top of this councils have plenty of other options like bylaws and planning restrictions which can easily put an end to your business. All you need to do is not pay attention to what the council is doing, and make sure that the council doesn’t know how their plans affect you or what you think about them. Most councils actually put everything they are proposing online. So if you do pay attention to proposals and make sure the council and its staff really understand what their proposals mean for you and the effect that they have, you are much more likely to get alcohol and planning regulation that is sane, rational, and doesn’t put you out of business. Making submissions to planning committees or hearing panels that could affect your business in person, rather than just in writing in, can also be a good use of time.

THREE: IGNORE OFFICIALS…

It’s not just central and local government that can damage a new bar or brewery. The humble civil servant can do a fair bit of damage as well. The saga over whether breweries would be allowed to say their beer was gluten-free under new food standards was a case in point. Nobody had really thought through the consequences of prohibiting beer from being labelled as gluten-free until it was almost too late. Some quick lobbying by the industry turned this potential disaster around, but who knows what other unintended surprises are bubbling away on officials’ desks? If you want to put an end to a promising new venture, just completely ignore everything civil servants are up to and we can assure that before long they will – quite unintentionally – have made your life a whole lot harder.

But once again – prevention is much better than cure. Civil servants are people too, and they don’t want to unintentionally harm Kiwi business. Pay attention to what they’re up to, and tell them what their ideas will mean in practice. More often than not, you’ll be pleasantly surprised to learn that as long as you make a good case, officials really are there to help.

FOUR: LETTING YOUR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS GO OUT TO PLAY…

Independent Contractors are an attractive option when you need regular help with the work – they are not employees so you don’t need to worry about PAYE, holidays, or personal grievance claims. There is benefit for the contractor too – they are usually paid hourly rates and have some say in when and how they work as well as being able to claim their own tax rebates. This is all good and well until your independent contractor claims to be an employee. It only gets worse when it turns out that in reality, they are indistinguishable.
from an employee. Both the IRD and the Employment Relations Authority won’t pay much attention to what you agreed over three beers and a handshake. Such a claim can involve tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid PAYE, penalties, minimum wages, and holiday pay. To stop this before it starts, record what you have agreed in writing, and make sure that: you always consistently call your independent contractors “independent contractors” (not “employees”, not “staff”, and don’t list them in the wages book alongside any actual employees); and treat them with some actual independence but not too much - give them a real opportunity to do other work and have control over hours for example, so long as they know that when they are representing you, they have to promote your business and not their own.

**FIVE: IGNORING YOUR WAGES BOOK...**

If you do have paid employees, make sure you have a record of the number of hours worked and days worked. This is required by law. It is also vital to ensure that, in the event of any dispute, you have some protection against claims for back wages, minimum wages, statutory holidays, and holiday pay, which can all add up. Be aware that if the employer does not have reliable wages and time records, the employee’s evidence will be accepted, with obvious consequences – or in other words, you can find yourself on the hook for a hefty chunk of cash.

**SIX: AGE RESTRICTIONS...**

The alcohol industry is one of the few industries where age restrictions apply. Persons under the age of 18 years should not work with alcoholic beverages (and if in doubt, take a photocopy of their ID). You don’t want to get a reputation as a business with a lax approach
Craft Whisk(e)y? Is that even a thing?

FEW Bourbon
70% Corn
100% Illinois

Koval Oat
100% Organic
0% Hype

to compliance with the law – neither the police nor your local licensing committee will be amused to find that you’ve broken a fairly well-known part of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act. If you have a young person in the back office doing paper work, remember that employment must not prevent them attending school (eg, get them in on weekends and school holidays only).

SEVEN: CAN YOU TELL YOUR INTERNS FROM YOUR VOLUNTEERS…
A person who performs work for “reward” will be considered an employee, particularly if they are performing work with some economic value for your business. Remember, if they are an employee, minimum wage rules apply (and you must pay in money not beer – payment in beer has been tried and the courts were not amused). A volunteer (who is not an employee) is someone who: “does not expect to be rewarded for work to be performed and receives no reward”. This means that you need to be upfront about status before the job starts, so everyone knows where they stand on the “work experience” you’re providing. On the good news front, volunteers can be reimbursed for their costs. This is another area where the handshake over a few beers is an easy road to trouble later.

We need to add the usual disclaimer: This article provides general information and is not legal advice. But we are happy to answer questions if you call or email us.

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INternational Whisk(e)y Day

Raise a Toast to Michael Jackson
March 27, 2015
Donate in aid of Parkinson’s
givealittle.co.nz/events/iwdsnz2015
GARAGE PROJECT AND AUCKLAND OUTLETS RULE THE ROOST

Who says Auckland doesn’t have a booming beer scene?

Yes, Wellington’s Garage Project took out the ultimate award – voted SOBA members’ brewery of the year. While Panhead Custom Ales of Upper Hutt were honoured with first and second in the best beer category with the popular The Vandal in top spot ahead of Black Sabbath, a rocking Barley Wine.

But many of the other top awards were taken out by Auckland outlets – best bar (Brothers Beer), best takeaway (Hopscotch) and best home brew store (Brewer’s Coop).

Yes there are a lot of Auckland SOBA members but it is also a reflection of the growing appreciation for beer in our biggest city.

Martin Bridges picks up the festival award on behalf of City of Ales.

AWARD WINNERS 2014

The Society of Beer Advocates (SOBA) is pleased to again announce the winners of the SOBA Awards. These awards are intended to recognise, reward and encourage those who are providing excellent products and services to the beer community and industry. SOBA is a consumer-based organisation with a mission to educate, promote, and advocate for the appreciation of, and access to, a diverse range of quality beer. These results are based on voting by the SOBA membership, all of whom are beer enthusiasts and many who are employed in the industry.
NATIONAL AWARDS
Best Brewery: Garage Project, 2nd Panhead
Best Beer: Panhead, The Vandal, 2nd Panhead, Black Sabbath
Best Home Brew Store: Brewers Coop (Auckland), 2nd equal The Brew House (Wellington) & Finney’s Homebrew Emporium (Christchurch)

Regional Awards

BEST BARS:
Brothers Beer (Auckland), 2nd Vultures Lane
Good George (Waikato), 2nd Little George
The Hour Glass (Taranaki), 2nd Mike’s Tasting Room & Cafe
Rutland Arms Inn (Whanganui)
Hashigo Zake (Wellington), 2nd Golding’s Free Dive
The Freehouse (Nelson), 2nd The Mussel Inn
Dodson Street (Marlborough), 2nd Grovetown Hotel
Pomeroy’s (Canterbury), 2nd The Volstead Trading Company
Tonic (Otago), 2nd Albar

BEST RESTAURANTS:
Depot (Auckland)
Gothenburg (Waikato)
Ortega Fish Shack (Wellington), 2nd Fork and Brewer
Pomeroy’s (Canterbury), 2nd Cassells and Sons, The Brewery
Ombellos (Otago)
SOBA AWARDS

BEST OFF LICENSES:
Hopscotch (Auckland) 2nd Liquorland New Market
Hamilton Beer and Wine Company (Waikato)
Liquorland, Fitzroy (Taranaki)
Regional Wines and Spirits (Wellington), 2nd Thorndon New World
Fresh Choice, Richmond (Nelson)
Fresh Choice, Parklands (Canterbury), 2nd equal Fresh Choice Merivale and Liquorland Riccarton

BEST BEER EVENTS:
SOBA City of Ales (Auckland)
Beervana (Wellington), 2nd SOBA winter ales festival
MarchFest (Nelson)
The Great Kiwi Beer Festival (Canterbury), 2nd South Island Beer Festival
Dunedin Craft Beer & Food Festival (Otago)

SOBA has also elected to honour the following people for their service to SOBA:
Grieg McGill
Alex McGill
Stephanie Coutts

On April 18, SOBA Taranaki will hold Mountain Ales, the first ever craft beer festival in New Plymouth. The venue is the New Plymouth Sportfishing and Underwater Clubrooms at Breakwater Bay in Port Taranaki and will run from 1pm to 5pm. Breweries who have confirmed that they will attend are Mike’s, Tuatara, Keruru, Zeelandt, Parrot Dog and Brewaucracy but there will be more.
The Imp

HAS BEEN RELEASED!

CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

ABV: 4.7%
IBU: 35
DRYHOP: >Armageddon

imp.epicbeer.com
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE BUDWEISER AD THAT RAN DURING THE SUPER BOWL TAKING THE PISS, SO TO SPEAK, OUT OF CRAFT BEER? THE TAG LINE WAS “PROUDLY A MACRO BEER” CELEBRATING THE IDEA THAT INDUSTRIAL BEER IS EXACTLY WHAT CONSUMERS WANT. THE DIVISIVE AD DIRECTLY TARGETED A MAINSTREAM CROWD WHO ARE INTO “DRINKING, NOT DISSECTING”, AND WHO ARE APPARENTLY A LITTLE THREATENED BY MOUSTACHIOED DRINKERS WHO “FUSS OVER” THEIR BEERS.

A FEW PEOPLE TOOK EXCEPTION BECAUSE BUD’S PARENT AB-INBEV IS BUYING UP CRAFT BREWERIES AS FAST AS ITS LAWYERS CAN DRAFT OFFERS AND IT OFTEN MAKES A CONCERTED EFFORT TO KEEP THE PUBLIC FROM KNOWING IT IS INVESTED IN PARTICULAR “CRAFTY” BRANDS.

SIMILAR CONSOLIDATION IN NEW ZEALAND HAS FOSTERED AN ONGOING DEBATE ABOUT CRAFT AND QUALITY. SOME ARGUE THAT IT IS ALL DOWN TO THE QUALITY OF THE BEER, AND NOTHING MORE. OTHERS CONTEND THAT CRAFT MEANS MORE THAN QUALITY.

JOHN HOLL OF ALL ABOUT BEER MAGAZINE (WHO SPOKE AT BEERVANA 2014) HAS DECIDED THE CRAFT CONCEPT DOESN’T MATTER. “ULTIMATELY, IT SHOULD BE ABOUT THE BEER IN THE GLASS, AND WHETHER IT TASTES GOOD TO THE INDIVIDUAL DRinker.”

BUT QUALITY IN THE GLASS NEVER STANDS ALONE. IF QUALITY WERE THE ONLY FACTOR, THE BIG GUYS
should be able to win every time. They have the money for R&D and the purchasing clout to put out the best product at the lowest price point, period. For some, there are other important factors.

**AUTHENTICITY**

Many craft drinkers are seeking authenticity, preferring to buy local products, and not just their beer. They choose products with specific origin and a personal story. It’s important to support the dream of the person putting their life into that product. They trust the small producer to share their values when sourcing ingredients and to price fairly. Small producers are seen as supporting creativity and variety over efficiency. So, if the quality is similar to a corporate brand, they will choose the craft brand, even at a higher price.

**TRANSPARENCY**

Sadly, this pull of an authentically crafted product is so valuable that there’s lots of incentive for corporations to simulate authenticity. Bud claiming Macro is fully transparent. AB-InBev trashing craft in a Bud ad, while buying craft labels is not transparent. Craft lovers then struggle to trust a once authentic brand after a conglomerate buys it. And if you simply can’t tell who is producing the product (as is happening in craft spirits right now with repackaged brands) it throws the whole sector into disarray.

Keeping track of the nuances is impossible. Instead many consumers rely on carefully curated collections of authentic products from their bars, bottle shops, importers and distributors.

And they need consumer organisations like SOBA to keep pressure on all producers to be transparent. That way that all parties can make choices based on the facts rather than emotion and inference.
For most of the year it is easy to forget that beer is a seasonal product. Brewing relies on both the early-mid summer barley harvest and the late summer hop harvest for its raw ingredients. The raw barley must then first be germinated and dried in a process called malting, and finally crushed, mashed and boiled in the brewing process. But without respect for the summer sun and harvest no amount of malting and brewing will turn out fantastic beer. The farmer lays the initial groundwork in the brewing supply chain, sowing in the variety chosen by the maltster for that year’s crop of barley.
Harvest is critical time for farmers; it is the sum of their year of labour and can be both a time of great stress and great reward. Like most crops malting barley needs specific conditions to ripen and mature into a quality crop. The farmer is looking for long hot sunny days to allow the plant to mature. Any extra stress on the barley can impact the quality of the harvested grain. If there are abrupt weather changes, or competition from weeds or insects that is all it takes to stunt the growth. What could have been a plump, clean and vibrant hectare of barley will result in a plot of skinny grains, under-mature corns and not much reward for that year’s labour. No one watches the weather like an arable farmer during summer!

The maltster is looking for those plump grains and clean disease free barley. When the crop has been well ripened in the field the grains will all germinate evenly, growing at the same rate and the same time. However stressed barley will be all over the show, it can have different speeds of germination, or different levels of water uptake, requiring much more control and adjustment from the maltster to make the same quality of malt. In the malting process variety is also of great importance. Malting barley has been cultivated over the years, selected for high enzyme production along with high extract and germination potential. To take a feed barley and put it through a malting plant will produce an inferior quality
product and put additional strain on those brewing with it to make up for the lack of quality. Barley nitrogen content is also of great importance to the maltster; too low and the barley malt will suffer from low enzyme potential and poor fermentability. If the nitrogen content is too high there is risk of too many steely or glassy grains which mill poorly and reduce the brewer’s yield.

A good harvest to the brewer means consistent quality malt all year round. Plump grains will yield a high extract potential and better husk to grain ratio. Too much husk can negatively impact the flavour of the finished beer, over-extracting tannins and husk materials. Malt with low extract potential will reduce the amount of alcohol in the finished beer. Alcohol is a key driver of many flavour compounds that are insoluble in the water. So low extract malt, will produce a low alcohol beer with less flavour. Well developed grain in the field will have all the nutrients the brewer is looking for to both complete his mash and feed the yeast in the fermentation process.

Whenever you crack open a brew, drink to the sun, drink to the harvest and toast to the farmer, the maltster and the brewer. Beer is a complex agricultural product that passes through more than a few steps to find its way into a pint glass. Look at the clarity and foam of the beer and think of the farmer who took steps to control the protein content of his grain, and to the maltster who treated the malt with care to not damage the grain. Enjoy the flavours that could only come about because that barley saw its share of warm sunny days in the previous summer.
At the end of February I was in Motueka and took the opportunity to have a look around at hop growing in the region. What a joy to see and smell the hop fields stretching over acres and acres of the region. And lo and behold, the first picking had just begun, and I was fortunate enough to visit Mac Hops Ltd on the day when processing equipment was just kicking into action.

Things have certainly moved on a pace from my earliest memories when kilns such as this, pictured right, were in operation in the area (with a not inconsiderable risk of fire), and the hop flowers were hand picked.

Tractors and trailers slowly move up the rows of hops, and the vines on the strings up which they grow were swiftly cut by hand by the operative on the trailer in the field I visited in Upper Moutere.

On arrival at Mac Hops each string is
manually placed on a conveyor and they enter an automated system for processing, their first stop being a machine which strips the hop flowers from the bines.

From there any remaining twigs and leaves are automatically removed by screens, and join the bines on the conveyor to the trucks which will take them for composting.

In the meantime the hop flowers make their way by conveyor to mats on the top of kilns which now utilize hot water to enable the drying process to commence. No more risk of fire! Once dried the mats then are rolled over the edge of the kilns to discharge the dried
hops onto the floor below. Here they are transferred into a hopper for bulk packing into bales and transported to NZ Hops for their final packaging for sale.

Needless to say the aroma of the Riwaka and Pacifica hops is mind blowing.

In this photo the row of kilns are on the left, and once dried the hops are discharged onto the collection floor below.

Machine stripping the hop flowers from the bines

**NEW SEASON HOPS**

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NEW SEASON HOPS

The automated system, utilising equipment from England and the USA ensures that the large volume of NZ hops to meet national and international demand are processed at their peak.

The new season’s brews will be available in April, enjoy them at a SOBA-endorsed bar near you!

Thanks to Kim for the visit!
Society Of Beer Advocates
Beer for all the right reasons

We have the following goals:
• To promote awareness of beer in all its flavour and diversity
• To protect and improve consumer rights with regards to beer and associated service.
• To promote quality, choice and value for money.
• To campaign for greater appreciation of traditional crafted beer.
• To seek improvements in all licensed premises and throughout the brewing industry.
• To act as an independent resource for both the consumer, the pub trade, and the brewing industry.

So you love beer, and you’d like to help advocate for a quality pint everywhere you go? Join SOBA today.

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Advertising booking deadline for next issue:
Friday 29 May 2015
Contact: advertise@soba.org.nz
LOCAL SOBA MEETINGS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Auckland
Brent Westein
brentwestein@gmail.com
Every Friday from 5pm
Check Twitter @soba_auckland for venue

Waikato
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
nzpilgrim12@gmail.com
First Tuesday of the month
7pm at the Rutland Arms

Palmerston North
Jono Galuszka
j.galuszka@gmail.com

Wellington
Dave Wood
president@soba.org.nz
First Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm

Blenheim
Mike Pink
mikepink@paradise.net.nz

Nelson
Peter Mayes and Bill Fennell
soba.nelson@gmail.com
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