The Pursuit of Hoppiness
- the voice of SOBA -

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plus lots more!

Your Craft Brewing and Pub Newsletter
“Beer for all the right reasons”
Kia ora and a belated welcome back!

IT’S BEEN A WHILE, but hopefully worth the wait! This edition of TPOH may be missing a couple of standard features this time around, but there’s plenty of topical articles and lots of mainly positive news on the craft beer and brewery front, which is what we all like to see.

A feeble excuse for late publication revolves around a four week trip to the UK in October, my first return visit in five years. On visiting several favourite old haunts plus a few new ones, one overriding theme kept recurring, this being how empty many of the pubs seemed to be. The combination of the recession, tough drink driving laws and discounted supermarket beer prices appeared to be hitting hard, especially in more rural areas. More closures look inevitable, meaning the focal point and a key part of the social fabric of many a community risks being lost forever.

On a happier note, the craft beer market in the UK continues to thrive, mirroring what we are seeing here in New Zealand, although personally I would like to have experienced a greater degree of experimentation in the product ranges on offer from some of the newer players. It was certainly reassuring to be served a beer in a measure that you knew was definitely either a pint or half pint, rather than the random volumes dispensed into the plethora of different shaped and sized Kiwi vessels. Don’t get me wrong here - there’s nothing wrong with being served a Maredsous Brune in a goblet - but do you really know, or care, what size measure you’re actually paying for?

SOBA’s membership continues to grow steadily and there is a mixture of both old and new faces on the new committee, who are all profiled on pages 4 and 5. It was pleasing to see such a good turnout at the AGM, which conveniently preceded the Saturday lunchtime session of Beervana at Wellington Town Hall. The tight schedule meant starting proceedings in the splendid Ilott Theatre, but finishing off upstairs in one of the Civic Suites, but a lot of issues were covered. Look out for the new SOBA website, due to be launched in the near future, which will include invaluable beer ratings and bar location sections. Stylish plastic membership cards are also on the way and the new ‘ex-officio’ post of Press & Publicity Officer is due to be created to ensure our organisation features regularly in the media.

On behalf of SOBA, I would like to take this opportunity of extending congratulations to Richard Emerson and all his team for scooping the New Zealand Champion Brewery Award at BrewNZ 2009. His brews featured strongly in all the major categories, with the final tally of three Best in Class Trophies, two Golds, two Silvers and one Bronze, meaning this year’s result was never in doubt.

On a more personal note, a special thank you to friend and fellow Brooklyn Northern United footballer, Brendon Mackenzie of Liberty Brewing, for supplying his BBB - Brendon’s Bahrain Bomber - for my pre-All Whites match party in Pukerua Bay. His Kiwi take on an American Brown Ale went down a treat, pouring well from a handpump in the garage and with Yeastie Boys Pot Kettle Black - The Remix, plus the new Golden Ticket Exchange Student also turning up in niggers, we were all in full voice well before kick-off at the Cake Tin. Once more, the result was never in doubt. Cheers & beers!

NICK PAGE, EDITOR
Nelson - the craft beer capital of New Zealand

Beer Fête ~ Dec 5 2009 ~ www.deadgoodbeerevents.com
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YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

The 2009 SOBA AGM was held in August in Wellington and was very well attended due to it coinciding with Beervana. However, the tight schedule meant that although a new Committee was elected, there was no time for each member to profile themselves. So let’s put that right with a look at the current team.

Geoff Griggs - President
During a twenty-year career as a video journalist for BBC Television News I visited and worked in most European countries, as well as Russia and parts of the U.S. During my travels I seized the opportunity to sample and to learn about many characterful and distinctive beer styles in their local environments. Before leaving England I was an active member of Britain’s Campaign For Real Ale (CAMRA) for eighteen years. Chairman of the Mid Chilterns branch for twelve years, I organised and judged at local beer festivals and competitions and have worked at CAMRA’s national ‘Great British Beer Festival’. I retain a life membership. In April 1995, soon after arriving in New Zealand, I began presenting educative beer tasting and discussion evenings on behalf of Wellington’s specialist independent beer retailer, Regional Wines & Spirits. These tutored tastings have continued for 14 years. Over the years I have written for Cuisine and Essentially Food magazines as well as a range of trade publications including Food & Beverage, Hospitality, Retail Today, Grill, FMCG Liqueur and BWS. In addition, I have a weekly column in The Marlborough Express and a monthly column in Capital Times. I am a former executive committee member of the Brewers Guild of New Zealand (BGNZ) and have also been a member of the judging panels at many national and international beer competitions.

Ian Caig - Secretary
I was first introduced to real ale whilst studying at nautical college in Liverpool back in 1978, subsequently signing up to CAMRA in about 1980. When a proposal was made to form a Darlington branch of CAMRA, I was accepted onto the inaugural committee. Over the next years my involvement revolved around assisting at beer festivals and encouraging new members of the local town’s rugby club second team to only drink in real ale pubs, post match. In 1994, employment took me first to Chile, then Belgium and, latterly, Argentina – whilst in Argentina I managed to meet up with nearly all the craft brewers and was CAMRA’s ‘man on the spot’. In 2005, we quit Argentina and moved to NZ, settling first in Auckland and then, a couple of years ago, moving on to Wellington. Once word got around that a beer consumer’s group was being formed, I signed up. With the move to Wellington, encouragement came to stand for committee and, whilst fairly quiet in the first year, I’ve subsequently taken on responsibility for the Wellington social calendar and assisting with The Pursuit of Hoppiness, by drumming up the advertising. I’ve assisted as a steward at the last two BrewNZ events and volunteered at Beervana. At the 2009 AGM I was elected as Secretary. I am a full mash home brewer.

Nick Page - General Executive & Newsletter Editor
I was weaned on Hook Norton Best Bitter in the heart of England and joined CAMRA back in 1979. After completing my Cartography Diploma at Luton 1977, I was based in St Albans and became a Committee Member on the local South Hertfordshire Branch, filling the posts of both Press & Publicity Officer and Newsletter Editor, throughout the 1980’s. After spells living in central London and Kent, I met my wife Elaine and we moved out to the depths of East Sussex to raise a family and drink lots of Harvey’s Best. We arrived with our daughter Helena for our big adventure New Zealand in 2005, after sadly leaving behind my collection of over 200 souvenir beer festival glasses amongst other assorted breweriana. I joined the newly-formed SOBA as member number 0015 and was elected to the Committee in 2007. I am a fervent campaigner relating to all things craft beery and my ambitions are to personally visit each of the current Kiwi brewers and to eventually see SOBA as successful in New Zealand as CAMRA has been in the UK and throughout Europe.

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Rob Owen - Treasurer
I have been brewing beer for 20 years and first discovered the great flavours and styles of beer while travelling overseas in 1992. I am married to Jill and our daughters are Holly 6 and Lucy 4. I live in Wellington and am CEO of a start-up company FlexiTime. My favourite beer style is American Pale Ale.

Martin Bridges - General Executive
I’ve been interested in craft beer since I went to Uni 20-odd years ago. At that time a pint of the wonderfully-bitter Holts Bitter cost about 60 pence (not much over a dollar!) in a pub in Manchester! My interest grew over the years and by the time I moved to London in the mid-90s I was a keen member of CAMRA. By the time I left the UK in 2007 I was helping to organise large beer festivals and helping to run a real ale bar in west London. When I arrived in NZ one of the first things I did was to join SOBA and begin seeking out as many different craft beers as I could.
I took on the job of trying to organise the Auckland members into a cohesive group and from that was invited to join the SOBA committee in 2008. I am very proud of the achievements of SOBA, even at the size it is and I look forward to it growing into a powerful voice for the consumers of quality beer in New Zealand.

Martin Bulmer - General Executive
I arrived in Wellington from the UK last year and have been a lover of real ale since old enough to drink it. Prior to coming to NZ I learned to homebrew and have been an enthusiastic proponent ever since. When in the UK I was on the local village society committee, as secretary and other roles, and was actively involved as one of the three key players in a local pressure group fighting a landfill application in the village. We succeeded in preventing a £50M turnover business from succeeding, mostly through a war of attrition! I was delighted to find and join SOBA, whose ideals run in parallel with my own. I hope that I can add my efforts to those of the rest of the committee in promoting the cause of craft beers in NZ. I see SOBA as a classic pressure group that has the opportunity to raise the voice of the educated and considerate consumer who wants to enjoy quality beer sensibly, at sensible prices. I live close to Wellington with my family (Heather and Kenan), temperature controlled fermentation cabinet and Corny kegs.

Nolen Smith - General Executive
I am a co-founder and director of a successful online learning business and, in my spare time, an avid homebrewer and beer geek. Growing up in the States during the 1980’s with the bland beer offerings of the big three US breweries, I ‘discovered’ real ale on a trip to the UK in 1991. After returning to the US, I realised that I no longer had a palate for American commercial swill and was quickly swept up in the US microbrewery craze of the early 1990’s – helping a close friend set up Arkansas’ first micro/pub brewery. I also began homebrewing, winning awards in US regional brewing competitions between 1992 and 1994. After a brief brewing hiatus when I moved to Wellington in the late 1990’s, New Zealand’s emerging craft brew scene rekindled my interest in quality beer and brewing. I’m now doing my part in helping education the general public about quality beer – going as far as installing a staff bar with beer on tap (only homebrew or craft-brewed beer allowed) and banning all DB products from Friday drinks at my office. I joined SOBA in early 2008 and am lending my business experience and knowledge of quality beer to help promote and advance their goals and vision.
JUST THE TICKET

Have Yeastie Boys started a welcome trend of contract brewing? Golden Ticket Brewing is the creation of experienced home-brewers Nathan Crabbe and Ally McGilvray.

AFTER several months of talking about the possibilities of producing their own beer, Nathan and Ally formed Golden Ticket Brewing in Christchurch in the winter of 2009. Inspired by the rise of craft brewing in New Zealand they became determined to brew the best beer they could on a seasonally changing basis.

Agreeing the only way they were likely to accomplish commercially viable volumes was through contract brewing, they approached Steve Nally and discussed brewing 1200 litre batches at Invercargill Brewery. With the volume logistics nailed they then worked on a suitable style for their debut release.

Having agreed that a pale ale would be most appropriate for spring, the remainder of the winter was spent brewing pilot batches in their respective garages and debating the merits of each batch.

Brewed in late September with assistance from the team at the Invercargill Brewery, the Exchange Student (so named because it’s ‘mysterious, exciting, and gone before you got to know it properly...’) is a balanced pale ale with a clean bitterness and an abv of 5.4%.

On its launch night at Pomeroy’s Old Brewery Inn, the beer was very well received and was back on their tap as November’s beer of the month.

Only available on tap, The Exchange Student made friends throughout the country. Anyone keen to try the Golden Ticket beers is recommended to become a fan on Facebook to get the latest beer and distribution information at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Golden-Ticket-Brewing/136908595898.

The next beer is already planned and is likely to be available nationwide as the boys look to bottle some of their beer to make sure everyone can try it. The finer details of the summer release are still under wraps, but Golden Ticket have been looking at the history books and style guidelines and are looking at releasing something unique for easy summer drinking.

The batch size will be 1200 litres to keep things fresh and the boys are keen to keep things different with their future brews to ensure the beer loving New Zealand public get to try some interesting styles.

For news on the other new start-up breweries turn to page 8.

The Pursuit of Hoppiness - Spring / Summer 2009

Nathan and Ally
The 8th Nelson Beer Fete will be on Saturday December 5th, 5pm - 10.30pm at the Founders Park in Nelson. The beer tasting bonanza features 22 craft beers from local and national breweries, a cider bar with 5 different ciders, 5 gourmet food stalls, music and the ancient game of Kubb. Local breweries include Founders, Lighthouse, Townshends, Mussel Inn, Moa, Monkey Wizard and Totora. National breweries include Croucher (Rotorua), Emerson's (Dunedin), Three Boys (Christchurch) and Invercargill Brewery. Plus, making their Nelson debuts are brews from Arrow Brewery in Arrowtown and Wanaka Beerworks.

Marchfest, at the same venue, will be on Saturday 17th April. Bands already booked for 2010 include Carmen Salvador Band from Chile, The Eastern from Christchurch and The Immigrants from Nelson. Visit http://www.marchfest.com/ for more info.

Liquorland festivals will be staged in Auckland at Ellerslie Racecourse on Saturday 13th February and in Wellington at Westpac Stadium on Saturday 6th March. Purchase tickets from: http://events.yahoo.co.nz/2010/feb/ellerslie/liquorland-nz-beer-festival.

Kapiti Food Fair 2009 celebrates local beer, wine, food and produce. Held at the Kapiti Campus of Whitireia Polytechnic, Lindale Exit, State Highway 1, North of Paraparaumu on Saturday 5th December. Neil Miller will be hosting a beer appreciation workshop. The BeerBoys will introduce Namibian Beers, Local Boutique Breweries and prize-winning beers, including local Kapiti brewery Tuarara. Entry Free. Tickets for tasting workshops are limited. Visit http://www.beerboys.biz and the Fair www.kapitifoodfair.net.

Project Marton are planning a Beer Festival to coincide with the completion of the barley harvest in March. This will be a small, ticket-only one-day event to be held in the Memorial Hall on a Saturday. Details to be finalised and published on the Brewers Guild website at http://brewersguild.org.nz/.

Beervana 2010 plans have already been firmed up with the event running from Friday 27th August to Saturday 28th August at Wellington Town Hall. Again visit the Brewers Guild website at http://brewersguild.org.nz/beervana/about for more information.

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**NEWS OF THE BREWERS**

Biochemist Soren Eriksen immigrated from Denmark, is currently assistant brewer at Renaissance and is now living the dream of having his own brewing company, **8 Wired Brewing**. The first beer - an American style brown ale called **Rewired** - is available on tap and should be on the shelves in bottles before the new year. Also coming soon is **HopWired**, a big New Zealand IPA. Rewired is very drinkable with a nice roasty finish and lingering bitterness.

**Nerdherder. Yeastie Boys** New Zealand pale ale for summer, is conditioning... Golden Promise, Caramalt, Crystal with Nelson Sauvin, Cascade and Motueka. The hops are a little nod to Stu and Sam’s favourite local pale ales of all time. Meantime their **Pot Kettle Black - The Remix** can still be found on tap around all the good bars. This year’s vintage is built upon the same malt base as the original but has fired up the ‘chocolate and orange character’ with more New Zealand Cascade hops and a zesty fistful (or 10) of imported Styrian Goldings. At 6.0%abv and 50ibu it is rich, hoppy and way too drinkable.

**Totora Brewing** is based in Wakefield, south-west of Nelson. Two locals have bought the kit from the Kohatu pub (about 45mins south of Nelson) that had been installed with the intention of becoming a brewpub but never got off the ground. They are relatively new to brewing and have created **Drover’s Draft** (4%) - a decent drop - not quite true craft ale but better than your standard DB/Lion range. Currently on tap the Free House in Nelson and selling well.

**Whitecliffs Organic Brewery’s Mike’s Whiskey Porter**, 10.5% abv, is a limited edition which started out in life as a dark, dry London Porter. Oak whisky barrels were sourced together with some cask strength whisky from the old Wilson’s distillery in Dunedin. After four months conditioning they managed to squeeze 402 hand-numbered bottles from the barrels.

**AROUND THE PUBS**

NEW “cult” beer bar **Hashigozake** in Wellington is certainly living up to both its name and the chalkboard claim at the entrance to the Taranaki Street basement bar. On yours truly’s visit last night the range comprised Maredsous Tripel, Three Boys Wheat, Twisted Hop Twisted Ankle (on handpump), Brew Moon Amberley Pale Ale, Emerson’s Bewilderated (latest Brewer’s Reserve, a 6% wheat beer), Emerson’s Pilsner, 8 Wired Brewing Rewired, Renaissance APA, and Lighthouse Dick’s Dark. The range is constantly rotating, so expect to further delights on tap in the run-up to Christmas.

The bar features regular tastings, with the next scheduled for December 15th and which will showcase a selection from the extensive imported bottled beer range, such as Nogne-O, Baird, Brunehaut and Rogue.

As detailed in the ad opposite, the bar is offering card-carrying SOBA members large glasses of tap beer (around 440 mls) for the price of small ones (around 300mls). This offer applies from Sunday to Wednesday and is in effect from now until the publication of the first SOBA newsletter of 2010. Maybe this edition should be delayed too! There are a stock of SOBA membership application forms so you can join on the spot and start taking advantage.

**The Pursuit of Hoppiness - Spring / Summer 2009**

Pencil in Tuesday February 16th 2010 for a special SOBA members evening at the **Malthouse** in Courtenay Place, Wellington, where host Colin Mallon has promised a few surprises and special treats.

Meantime, check out their humungous chalkboard for what’s on tap, what’s coming on soon and what’s the current favourite of the staff.
Downtown Wellington’s only Freehouse - 10 constantly rotating taps serving nothing but top quality craft beer. No Crap On Tap!

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SOBA Summer Offer: membership entitles you to a large tap beer for the price of a small tap beer, Sunday to Wednesday.

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COMPETITION

There were no correct entries for the competition in the last edition. The reasons for this are that you find the quiz a) too boring  b) too hard, or c) not worth winning. So this time we have a special prize - The Kiwi Beer Lovers Cookbook - kindly donated by Josh Easby of Hurricane Press Ltd. Simply identify these two craft beer bars to be in with a chance to win. The prize is reviewed on page 27.

E-mail your answers to: nick.j.page@paradise.net.nz. Put Newsletter Competition in the header and include your postal contact details and telephone number. Winner’s details will be published in the next edition. Good luck!

A.  
B.  

Answers to last edition’s competition were: A) Sunshine Brewery, Gisborne & B) Waiheke Island Brewery.
TUATARA BREWERY TASTES FAST 50 SUCCESS

WELLINGTON’S award-winning Tuatara Brewery has tasted double success on the latest Deloitte Fast 50 list. Last month, Tuatara was named as the fastest growing manufacturing business in the lower North Island region and the 37th fastest growing business in New Zealand overall.

Director Sean Murrie says the awards reflect Tuatara’s commitment to quality during a period of rapid growth for the company. “When we started business in December 2000, Tuatara beers were basically available from only two bars in town and the brewery. Now, our range can be found in a number of outlets both on tap and in bottles. To meet the ever growing demand, our brewery doubled in size in 2007 and then quadrupled in size again this year. Throughout that growth period, the focus has been on maintaining the quality of our craft beers,” he says.

Success on the Deloitte Fast 50 caps a great year for Tuatara Brewery. At the 2008 Brew NZ Beer Awards, Tuatara was crowned the inaugural Champion Brewery of New Zealand. “Staying focused on making great beer has really paid off. It is what we do best. As a result, we are getting new customers, expanding our distribution and even had the opportunity to launch a new beer – Tuatara Helles,” Sean says.

The Tuatara range comprises of the quenching Tuatara Hefe, easy-drinking Tuatara Helles, crisp Tuatara Pilsner, hoppy Tuatara India Pale Ale, decadent Tuatara Porter and boisterous Tuatara Ardennes.

Deloitte partner Matt McKendry says the fast-moving firms all felt the recession as but had a distinctly common approach about how to get through. “It’s always the same story. They focus on the niche rather than being a broad player, and if you get that niche with a strong value proposition you can keep that growth rate going,” he says.

Entry to the Deloitte Fast 50 was open to New Zealand registered businesses operating for at least three years. To be eligible for the award this year, companies needed revenue growth of 145% or higher between 2007 and 2009.
The article on Dunedin’s Bars prompted a response from Eureka...

To Richard Pettinger

In regards to your article in "In Pursuit of Hoppiness" Winter 2009 about visiting Dunedin bars, I have a few concerns I would like to raise.

I have been the owner of Eureka Café and Bar for the last 11 years, in which time we have always been a café and bar as the name states, so when you said we have divided loyalty between food and bar you couldn’t be further from the truth. The point of food versus bar was made quite clear to you by Nigel. Diversity these days is very important and we all don’t just go out for a drink.

The food side of our establishment makes up 60% of our turnover and we have never solely called ourselves just a bar. Our customers are well aware of the nature of our business and the food and alcohol that we provide. With most, if not all, of the other BARS you did visit alcohol is their primary source of income, but we couldn’t and shouldn’t be compared with them, as our business is completely different. Since when has food and beer not gone together? Most of the other BARS that you visited are primarily Emerson’s and have little or no choice of any other draught beer on top, and also have only five or possibly six taps compared with our 15. We are in the enviable position that we can pour any beer we like as we are not contracted to any brewery. At this stage we have three Emerson’s five Lion Nathan and seven guest beers. This has been a tremendous pull for us and allows us to support small micro breweries and different craft beers from around New Zealand.

On the occasion you visited our establishment we had Lighthouse Cheeky Lager on tap for the first time and, yes, it was a bit slow. You yourself also mentioned to Nigel that it was not the first Lighthouse keg you had struck with an infection. Not stating the name of the beer or the brewery puts the primary focus on the infection coming down to us, which I find totally unacceptable, as with food and health safety laws we are required to clean our beer lines regularly, which we do every two weeks.

We have also had Renaissance APA and Pink Elephant Mammoth infected, which we noticed on early detection and returned to the brewers. The brewers have had some problems with the cleaning of their kegs resulting in infections in the beer, further investigation on your behalf would have also most probably have come to the same conclusion.

Like every product we receive at Eureka we have to believe we are receiving the best and freshest product. Maybe as a beer lover and a believer that the customer should receive the product in the best possible condition you should start your quality controlling at the breweries where the beer is made, because we can only control the cleanliness at our end, and once the beer is kegged and maybe infected it is then out of our control. The very high possibility that the keg of Lighthouse was infected should have prompted you to name the beer and the brewery, rather than laying total blame at Eureka’s feet.

On a brighter note, you may be interested to know that we support Moa Brewery and have done so for the last four months, with beer varieties changing regularly. Currently we have on tap Moa Noir and Moa Original. We have also had four kegs of the 5 hop Winter Ale, which sold out in two weeks. Soon to be tapped will be Moa Marzenbier and Moa Russian Imperial Stout. Customers are loving the Moa beer and also the sourcing of other micro brewery beers, and have given nothing but positive feedback. Customers are also able to request beers, which we will endeavour to source.

We will continue to support the smaller breweries and have had product since with no problems. At the end of the day we are all striving for perfection and from time to time we make mistakes. Smaller breweries may not get it right all the time, but they are doing a damn good job. I will await your return to Eureka where I hope you will enjoy the WHOLE experience.

Sharleen Gardner, Managing Director

For Richard’s response see next page
Hi Sharleen

I know I will enjoy my next visit to Eureka (see below). I do apologise if my choice of words “divided loyalty” sounded negative to you. It was not intended to be negative. It’s fantastic that Eureka pays as much attention to food as it does to the drink they sell.

I was not intending to name any infected beer I found on our journey. I talked about this beforehand. It is generally agreed that it is up to those serving to ensure the quality in the glass. That means ensuring the shipment has arrived in perfect condition. The brewer would be mortified to find a brew that was sent in perfect condition arrived in poor condition, and would fix transport issues immediately. I guess, before beginning to serve a beer and from time to time while it is on tap, it is expected that quality will be checked, to reassure buyers. I know that not everyone can detect all infections but it’s not fair to take a risk, given some infections can make some people feel unwell. I’m sure you will agree, as with food or drink, nobody appreciates paying for something they cannot get through.

By the way, I’d love to do quality checks at breweries, but, really, it’s what’s in the glass downtown that matters.

Richard

By the time this edition is distributed, there will hopefully have been a successful inaugural meeting of Dunedin-based SOBA members. This will have been held at - you guessed it - Eureka on Wednesday 2nd December, where I am sure Richard and Sharleen will have exchanged further views over a beer or three.

At the end of the day, what we’re talking about here are not mass-produced, bland, fizzy drinks, but handcrafted, distinct and unique beers. This is precisely what makes sampling these products such an enjoyable and stimulating experience...well, most of the time!

ED

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Emerson’s Pilsner

It was extremely gratifying to receive a Trophy for the Pilsner at the recent BrewNZ beer awards. This sort of achievement is special for the brewery staff as it is our flagship beer.

The recipe has changed little in the past 14 years since its release in May 1995 and still retains the original philosophy of being different with ‘wow’ factor and yet maintaining balance and drinkability.

We are very proud of the Pilsner being a truly Kiwi beer with the malt sourced from Gladfields Maltings, an independent malting company on the Canterbury Plains and the signature hop flavour from Nelson hop fields. Can we get lower fuel-miles than this? Even the carbon dioxide, naturally emitted during fermentation, is put to good use in carbonating the beer at the end of fermentation.

Our Pilsner is the ideal companion to seafood on the barbeque or a lovely pan-fried flounder with asparagus on the side...yum bring on the sunshine!

Emerson’s on tap in Queenstown

Emerson’s is on tap at Atlas, a tiny bar on Queenstown’s Steamer Wharf. They have been serving Emerson’s since March and have developed a loyal following among locals and visitors. It is an ideal place to relax with a fine beer and watch the activities on the lake.

If you are in the Southern Lakes region over the summer, be sure to call in for a beer!

Cheers,
Richard Emerson
Head Brewer
The Emerson Brewing Co. Ltd.
NZ Champion Brewery 2009

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ALE AND CHEESE - THE PERFECT PARTNERS

Kieran Haslett-Moore continues his series on matching beer styles and cheeses, drawing on his experience as both homebrewer, cheesemonger, beer drinker and cheese buff.

New Zealand Pilsner and Swiss Cheese

With the summer finally upon us I thought it was time to have a look at one of the classic warm weather beer styles. New Zealand Pilsners are an indigenous beer style to this country and something that the New Zealand beer community is rightfully proud of. However when it comes to matching these beers with cheese I always struggled to find a pairing. With an overt fruity New Zealand hop character and a relatively lean malt profile the zesty dry nature of these beers tends to jar with most cheese style. However when I was researching this years annual Regional Wines and Spirits Beer and Cheese tasting I hit upon the idea of matching the overtly fruity and nutty character of Swiss Emmental with the zesty fruity hop character of a New Zealand Pilsner.

The Cheese

In New Zealand Swiss style cheeses are marketed with scant regard to the traditional Swiss cheese styles, something that rings familiar with those of us who are aware of exactly what style of beer Speights Gold Medal Ale and Tui East India Pale Ale are. The two Swiss cheese styles produced in this country are Emmental, sometimes spelt Emmenthal and Emmentaler, and Gruyere. Confusingly most cheese sold as Gruyere in New Zealand is Emmental style. There is also a style known as Maasdam which is a Dutch interpretation of Emmental introduced to New Zealand by the Dutch immigrants who have indelibly left their mark on the New Zealand Craft Cheese industry. Maasdam has a very similar flavour profile but is produced in the same moulds as the Goudas the Dutch cheese producers are used to rather than the much larger moulds the Swiss use. A good Emmental under any of its guises will look like the classic cartoon Swiss cheese with large ‘eyes’ or holes and a firm slightly rubbery texture. It should have an overtly fruity aroma and taste with a range of fruity tropical notes which intensify as the cheese ages. The cheese should also be reasonably sweet with the natural sugars from the milk sometimes creating mildly caramel flavours.

continued on p15
For this match its this overtly fruity almost yeasty character of Emmental, Maasdam or ‘NZ Gruyere’ that we are looking for. Good examples include any of the imported Swiss Emmental brands, Kaimai Emmental, Meyer Maasdam, Kaarikaas Maasdam, Barry’s Bay Maasdam and at a push Mainland Special Reserve Gruyere.

The Beer

New Zealand Pilsners are the life blood of many of our craft breweries. I think it speaks to the inventiveness of New Zealand brewers that they have been able to take the most mass produced generic style on earth and inject it with a good dose of character and make it their own along the way. New Zealand Pilsner differs from traditional Bohemian or German Pilsners in that they tend to be heavily hopped with overtly fruity New Zealand grown and bred hop varieties. New Zealand Brewers also tend to add a good chunk of the hops late in the boil, sometimes even in maturation rather than the traditional method of adding all the hops early in the boil. All this results in an incredibly aromatic hop driven zesty beer underpinned by a firm crisp malt profile. Good examples include Emerson’s Pilsner, Tuatara Pilsner, Croucher Pilsner, Three Boys Pilsner, Invercargill Biman, Twisted Hop Sauvin Pilsner and Mac’s Hoprocker.

The Match

The descriptor overtly fruity seems to have popped up several times through this article and that is what this match is all about. The big zesty hop driven ‘sauvignon blanc-like’ fruit character of the beer compliments the tropical fruit salad notes in the cheese while the rich pale malt character in the beer should compliment the slightly sweet caramel notes in the cheese. Finally the considerable carbonation in the beer will lift the milk fats off the palate and cleanse the mouth for another bite. The result is a very fruity summery combination that would no doubt be improved even more by adding some fresh tropical fruit to the cheese board.

Next issue I will look at Hard Sheep’s Milk Cheeses matched with Strong Mild’s and Old Ales.
SOBA scores victory in trademark battle

DB Breweries is in the process of cancelling the registration of its Saison trademark with the Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ). The company has held the trademark since April 2002. DB Breweries’ general manager marketing Clare Morgan says the decision to cancel the trademark was a logical one given the company hasn’t produced Saison for a considerable time. “We haven’t brewed Monteith’s Saison for six years and we have no intention of re-launching it to the market as it no longer fits our current Monteith’s portfolio”. Saison is a recognised beer style brewed around the world and SOBA is delighted that DB Breweries’ action means any brewers or importers wishing to sell Saison-style beers within New Zealand will now be free to do so without the threat of legal action from DB. Expect to hear some very positive news regarding the Radler trademark soon.

Dominion Post championing craft beer

Two excellent pieces promoting craft brewing featured in the same week recently in the Dominion Post. First Bruce Holloway’s Tastings column in the Your Weekend supplement showcased Yeastie Boys and this was followed by a feature in the daily, which urged punters to try out the delicious tap beers available at Regional Wines and Spirits in Wellington.

Plans for Summer Ale Festival

SOBA is in discussion with both brewers and bars with a view to staging a Summer Ales Beer Festival around the pubs in Christchurch. More news on this event will feature on the newly re-vamped SOBA website.

New World Beers Tasting

Friendly Hashigozake barman Dave Wood turned Host for the evening when New World Beers were the feature of the latest SOBA Tasting and Social at City Centre Wines in Wellington. Ably assisted by partner Denise Garland, the pair led us through the following ‘pairs’ of beers:

- Wanaka Brewski v Emerson Pilsner, Sierra Nevada Pale Ale v Renaissance Discovery APA, Sierra Nevada Torpedo IPA v Epic Armageddon, Deschutes Black Butte Porter v Hallertau Porter Noir.
- Epic Armageddon was the outright winner on the night. One fascinating description branded a beer as “having an aroma of pigeon or bat guano, man wee” and “possibly quite good for cooking”, but I shall leave the identity of both the brew and the sampler anonymous, through fear of retribution.

Upcoming Weekend Away Socials

The ‘North Island’ SOBA weekend away is planned for the weekend of 19th-21st March 2010. Details are still to be firmed up but the basic plan is to stay in Hamilton on the Friday night, visiting the Ruakura Campus Club (best beer bar in the Waikato!) for beers. On the Saturday we’ll drive down to Rotorua for a tour of the Croucher brewery, and drinks at the Underground bar. On the Sunday we’ll head to Tauranga for a tour and drinks at the Brewers Bar before returning to Auckland. For further details email Martin Bridges at martin.bridges@gmail.com.

The ‘South Island’ SOBA weekend away is tentatively planned for the weekend of 16th-18th April 2010. Your Newsletter Editor is still to be pressgangged into organising, but a plan is being hatched to follow last year’s successful format, centering around a visit to Marchfest, but this time taking in Nelson area brewery visits on the Friday. To register your interest email nick.j.page@paradise.net.nz.
Tell me more, tell me more, was it love at first sight

three boys Ale Golden
4.5% Alc/vol
THE SUNSHINE BREWERY

Checking out the home of ‘Gissy Gold’

This brewery was first set up at a time – 20 years ago – when it was only possible to obtain a licence to sell beer by either buying up an old hotel, closing the hotel and transferring the licence to your new establishment or by building your own brewery – the guys at Sunshine, decided building a new brewery was the easier option!

The intention was to sell the beers ‘in bulk’ direct from the brewery and this still remains one of the principal points of sale for the brewery’s beers.

The brewery, best known for its flagship beer “Gisborne Gold”, brews two 2500 litre brews each week. The beers tend to be brewed to a higher gravity and then weakened to their sale strength. The conditioning tanks are rather unusual, in that they are actually the tank section of a beer tanker, with the wheels removed – this from the time when many bars dispensed their beer from tanks rather than kegs.

Co-owner Gerry Maude and the conditioning tanker

Apart from Gissy Gold, the brewery also produce a number of lesser known beers:

Gisborne Green – a hoppy, export lager. The origin of the name of this 5% has been lost/forgotten but is not meant to reflect any modern “green” connotation.

Black Magic – a 4.6% strength stout having raisiny and dark malt flavours and some port wine notes.

Reserve – a 4% ale.

Moonshine – a 7% beer ...most of these beers are produced as seasonal beers so as to inspire a degree of interest in the local drinking populace.

Gerry is very frank in admitting that much of the fire that he and Geoff had, when they first set up the brewery, has waned in view of the largely apathetic, local drinking population, and time – some new blood is needed.

Beers are very reasonably priced – the Gisborne Gold selling at $4 per litre, when bought from the brewery itself.

IAN CAIG

STOP PRESS

SOBA Executive Member, Martin Bridges, has just had a call from TVNZ about Galbraith’s apparently winning (or coming joint first) in the most recent Wetherspoons Beer Festival in the UK. They’re hoping to run the story and maybe doing some filming next week. Better get that SOBA t-shirt washed Martin!

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AN AMERICAN BEER GEEK IN NEW ZEALAND

Drinking Alone

THE DMLY LIT interior of Gailbraith’s pub was a welcome respite from the rain outside. The large room was mostly empty at four in the afternoon, save for a few scattered businessmen, and several employees. I nervously pulled up a stool to the wood-paneled bar and ordered a Grafton Porter. The beer, served in a nonic pint glass, poured dark brown with hints of red and a thin cream-coloured head. The nose was sweet grain, chocolate, and toffee. The beer was creamy smooth on the palate, with restrained notes of dark chocolate bitterness and caramel malt.

This was the first of many beers, had alone, in dimly lit pubs, in a foreign land. 21 years old, and recently graduated with a degree in Economics, I had come to New Zealand to work for Green Man Brewery in Dunedin. While there, I quickly found myself exploring the craft beer scene of the country in more depth then I had expected. The following is a summary of what I found in my four-month stay in New Zealand.

Green Man Brewery

On a quiet street at the edge of Dunedin’s industrial quarter in a building, unmarked save for the Green Man van usually parked in the driveway, I learned how a small brewery operates. From my first day, to my last, my duties at the brewery evolved, spanning everything from carrying malt sacks up stairs, to shoveling spent grain, to conducting in store tasting. Green Man beer also became a large portion of my beer diet while in Dunedin, and the wide range of beer offered by the brewery, symptomatic of the healthy and diverse production culture of the New Zealand beer scene.

My access to the wide range of Green Man beers was supplemented by the wide selection of local brews to be found in the New World supermarket just a short walk from my flat. Every trip to the grocery store was a temptation-filled experience, as I tried to balance my desire to drink everything New Zealand’s breweries had to offer, with my modest budget requirements.

While most of the selection is influenced by New Zealand’s close connection the UK, one can find a decent range of German and even a few Belgian Styles crafted. However, the very way in which I characterize the selection, as a range of styles originating in other countries, speaks to a potential concern amongst New Zealand’s brewers: namely, the production of beer that is uniquely kiwi. Fortunately for beer drinkers and philosophers alike, I found there are a few breweries that are beginning to address this concern.

Emerson’s

Curious beer explorer that I am, I made a trip to Emerson’s relatively soon upon arriving in Dunedin. Eventually, I found myself invited to help the Emerson’s team with their annual Beer and Pie competition. On what was probably one of the most memorable and pleasant days of my stay in the country, I also tasted one of the more memorable brews I have tasted in my beer drinking days.

At some point after the tasting, Richard Emerson brought out a bottle of bourbon porter that must have been sitting in a dark corner of the brewery for several years. The bourbon came through straight away on the nose with a big hit of booze and the accompanying vanilla and oak from the casks. There was also an interesting savoury soy sauce or marmite-like note to the nose from autolysis of the yeast. The palate was much more subdued than the nose. The malt backbone had held up well over three years, lending structure and a brown sugar like sweetness across the palate. The finish was super dry with yeast and a bit of bitterness at the back and a pleasant warming sensation down the throat.

Emerson’s Bourbon Porter is indicative of a level of experimentation and commitment to perfection that distinguishes the brewery’s beers as something uniquely kiwi. The brewery’s effort to locally source as much of their raw material as possible only furthers this distinction. While the Bourbon Porter may be the most memorable Emerson’s brew for me, the most well developed manifestation of the local philosophy is Emerson’s popular and eminently drinkable pilsner. This is a beer that shares little in common with the German and Czech beers by the same name save for its pale color and drinkability, managing to reference the style but not at the expense of local expression.

Moa

It is not often that a beer takes me completely off guard. Opening a bottle of Moa Brewing Company’s Pilsner did just that. I expected clean biscuit grain and grassy hops on the nose and was met with funk. I expected the same grain and spicy noble hops on the palate and was met with sourdough yeast. It was readily apparent that this brew was quite different from the traditional pilsner. Again, I had found an example of a beer, brewed with the Pilsner style in mind, but with enough creative energy to produce something unique.

continued on p21
Moa’s three staple beers, the Noir, Original, and Blanc are all good examples of beers that are unique to New Zealand, each referencing a European style but each with a unique yeast profile brought about through innovative bottle conditioning practices. In the context of New Zealand’s brewing culture as a whole, Moa serves as another example of a brewery where the brewer’s tastes and creativity play a large role in recipe formulation. Perhaps Emerson, Moa, and their beers hint at the future for New Zealand’s craft brewers, brewing European styles with New Zealand ingredients in a creative fashion to produce beers that are truly kiwi.

In-Store Tastings

To this point I have done a good deal of writing on the beers produced in New Zealand and my experiences drinking them. However, any discussion on a country’s craft beer culture would not be complete without a section on the country’s craft beer consumption.

My general impression, as a resident of a country with a very healthy appetite for craft beer, is that craft beer consumption in New Zealand lags behind craft beer production. This impression was formed in part by the hours spent conducting in-store tasting for Green Man, hours in which I saw the following countless times: Someone come into the store and walk right past the beer aisle directly to the wall of coolers populated by the brightly colored bottles of alcopops. Or, someone come up for a tasting, and comments on how the beer was too bitter. The two occurrences are related in my mind, and speak to a general preference for sugary beverages and corresponding aversion to the bitterness found in many craft beers.

Another interesting point, one raised by Chris O’Leary on a visit to Emerson’s brewery, is the generally under-developed brewpub presence in the country. Again, this is only a limited example, but the town of Ann Arbor, where I attended University provides a good comparison for Dunedin. Ann Arbor is about the same size as Dunedin and home to an equally large University. Ann Arbor is home to four brewpubs. Dunedin is home to none. While this is only a small example from a limited perspective, the power of the brewpub to grow craft beer drinking culture cannot be underestimated.

Final Thoughts

Looking back on my time in New Zealand, recklessly consuming as much craft brew as possible, brings warm thoughts. The healthy beer production culture surprised me to my last days, as I finished my survey of New Zealand’s craft beer with two uncharacteristically big brews, Moa Imperial Stout and Epic Pale Ale. These beers, while unusual for their strength of flavour, are typical of the diversity and quality of beer being produced in New Zealand. One can only hope that more New Zealanders wake up to the bed of hops right under their nose, and supports their local breweries as they explore New Zealand’s beer identity and create new and interesting brews.

RYAN SLOAN

Many thanks to Ryan for this fascinating visitor’s insight into the state our current craft beer industry. You can checkout Ryan’s beer blog at http://bonesnz.blogspot.com.

ED

SOBA Newsletter
LION TO CLOSE MAC’S BREWERY IN WELLINGTON

First Stoke, now Welly

“LION NATHAN has decided to relocate the Mac’s Craft Beer production capability from Wellington to the Canterbury Brewery, Christchurch and close the Mac’s Brewery in Wellington.

The Wellington Brewery is a higher-cost facility relative to our other breweries but up until now we considered this a component of our investment in building the Mac’s brand and its reputation for brewing innovation.

However the brand has developed to a point where consumer adoration for Mac’s no longer depends on the Wellington Brewery underpinning the brand’s reputation for brewing innovation. The maturity of the Mac’s brand and the introduction of the Mac’s Brewbars throughout the country have contributed to this change in consumer attitude, to the extent that we can now no longer justify the expense of operating the Wellington Brewery.

As well, as the demand for the Mac’s Craft range has grown, the limited capacity of the Wellington Brewhouse has been stretched, and in the past 12 months the brewery has been operating 80% ahead of our forecast production plan to meet demand.

This means it makes good commercial sense to transfer the Mac’s Brewhouse to Canterbury Brewery. There we will effectively operate a craft brewery within the brewery, with the flexibility to meet current and future production requirements for Mac’s far more effectively than within the constraints of the Wellington site, while maintaining the 40hl craft brewing capacity.

Mac’s has a strong heritage of innovation and excellence in craft brewing and this decision allows us to build on that tradition and position the brand for continued success.

We will maintain a dedicated Mac’s brewer who will still brew the craft beers with the same passion and hand-crafted approach as now, while being able to call on the resources and support of the Canterbury Brewing Team to ensure that the Mac’s Craft Range continues to delight craft beer drinkers.

The Mac’s Brewhouse will be positioned within the Canterbury Brewery so that the fermenters are showcased on Antigua Street and the Mac’s brand is given profile externally at the Brewery.

We aim to cease brewing at Wellington mid-February 2010 and to have completed the transfer of the Brewhouse and be brewing at Canterbury from May 2010. The decision affects six roles at the Wellington Brewery”.  

LION NATHAN

A victim of its own success? Another corporate balls-up? Come back Colin Paige? What’s your view?
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1. Tui East India Pale Ale won a gold medal in the 2009 BrewNZ NZ Draught Ale Category, competing against how many other entries?

2. When the water used in a brew is said to have been 'Burtonised', what type of mineral is typically added?

3. What do the following have in common - Limburg, Kea and Martinborough?

4. Who said 'You can't be a real country unless you have a beer and an airline. It helps if you have some kind of a football team, or some nuclear weapons, but at the very least you need a beer'?

5. From which SE Asian city does the beer SABECO originate?

6. Which is the odd one out - a) Pelican, b) Anchor or c) Full Sail?

7. What nationality is renowned beer writer Roger Protz?

8. New Zealand Hops Ltd is a co-operative currently involving how many individual owner-grower hop farms - a) 17 b) 18 or c) 19?

9. What is the commonest pub name in the UK?

10. The classic Belgian Blonde Ale, La Chouffe, translates as The Chimney. True or False?

The following question from our last edition prompted a response from Katherine Littler of Wellington (but formerly of Timaru)...

8. Timaru currently has a commercial operating brewery – true or false?

Katherine claims the answer is in fact true as there is a rather large DB factory in Washdyke, which is the northern most suburb of, and part of Timaru.

As a cartographer by trade, my reputation is on the line here Katherine! I dig my heels and say that Washdyke is separate settlement to Timaru, rather than a suburb. Anyway, do DB actually make anything classed as beer? ED

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten contributions for publication.

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The Kiwi Beer Lover’s Cookbook

AT LAST! A beer recipe book suitable for New Zealand food. Although the beers in the recipes are all from the two big breweries, in his Foreword the author (who is writing under a pseudonym, and is said to be a Kiwi chef with experience overseas) says:

“Experiment with different styles and brands of beer. Find what works best for you - that’s the fun of cooking.”

I suspect he only used the standard brands because they are available throughout the country, and are unchanging.

But what I really liked about this book was his use of ingredients that are freely available in New Zealand, the recipes are not complicated or exotic, and they are the sort of thing any everyday cook can use.

The chapter on “Starters” includes six dips, cheese fondue, cheese on toast, wedges, fritters, satays and salsas. One of the most interesting chapters is the one on “Bread and Muffins”, and includes 12 breads and 4 muffins. A good selection of soups are included, and some interesting vegetables and salads (I had never thought of cooking braised cabbage or carrots with beer, or making a dressing for potato salad with beer, sour cream and mayonnaise). A good selection of sauces, gravies and marinades is followed by a fish chapter, which goes much further than the ubiquitous beer batter (although a beer and vodka batter might turn out to be interesting). Stews and casseroles are well covered, and the “Meats and mains” chapter includes lamb shanks, chicken paella, steak pie, corned beef (I tried this one - I think I would have preferred a stronger tasting beer than the one we used), shepherd’s pie, a couple of curries and lots more. Even sweets are covered (mostly cakes), although the chocolate mousse with the recommended beer of Monteith’s Black sounds interesting, as do the chocolate truffles with the recommended beer of Speight’s Old Dark. These two recipes obviously call for a chocolate stout. And there is even that old Kiwi favourite afghan biscuits with beer icing.

I would recommend this book to anyone who cooks. The recipes are unfussy, practical and things you could cook any day of the week. It is published by Hurricane Press and I bought it at Paper Plus for $34.99.

FRANCES VERRITY
**WHAT'S ON**

**WELLINGTON AREA**

*Contact: Ian Caig, email condor@soba.org.nz*

**Tuesday 1st December, 7.30pm**
Monthly Social

*Mac’s Brewery Bar, Taranaki Street*

**Tuesday 5th January, 7.30pm**
Monthly Social

*Bar Edward, Newtown*

**Tuesday 2nd February, 7.30pm**
Monthly Social

*Parrot and Jigger, Hutt Road, Lower Hutt*

**AUCKLAND AREA**

*Contact: Martin Bridges, email martin@soba.org.nz*

**Saturday 5th December, 2.00pm**
Monthly Social

*AGWB BBQ, Ellerslie*

**Saturday 9th January, 2.00pm**
Monthly Social

*Brew on Quay, Auckland*

By completing and signing this form you agree to the following conditions:

1. I will abide by the charter of the Society Of Beer Advocates Incorporated (hereafter “SOBA”) and accept club rulings.
2. I absolve SOBA from any liability that may arise due to my participation in SOBA events or meetings or by using SOBA equipment, or other property, except as provided by law.
3. I will pay the specified membership fee of $30.00 within 90 days of completing and signing this form.
4. Membership, when granted, is active for one year from the date your membership is processed.
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- Voting rights at SOBA meetings and the AGM
- A soba.org.nz email address, if you’d like one

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**FRONT COVER IMAGE**

*Team Townsend at Beervana*

Cask conditioned Catchcarts NTA, No. 9 Stout and the superb ESB were all available on handpump at the festival and awesome they tasted too.

Cheers & Happy Christmas. ED

*The Pursuit of Hoppiness - Spring / Summer 2009*