The Pursuit of Hoppiness
- the voice of SOBA -

Bumper 32 page issue features:

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plus lots more!

Your Craft Brewing and Pub Newsletter
“Beer for all the right reasons”
EDITORIAL

KIA ORA and welcome to another bumper edition. The past weeks have featured several high profile beer and food matching events and no, I am not referring to the Monteith’s Wild Food Challenge in this category. Two of the most notable have been the ‘Great Emerson’s Degustation Charity Dinner’ at Logan Brown in Wellington and Bruce Holloway’s ‘Grain versus Grape’ face-off at House Bar in Hamilton. The annual upcoming Wellington on a Plate festival features a similar take to the latter in ‘Beer Takes it to Wine - The Tussle for the Table’, where American brewer Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Brewery, over from the USA for Beervana, will MC the evening. Sadly, for anyone wishing to attend this event on 24th August, it is already sold out, proving just how intense the interest has become in tasting quality beer with good food.

As consumers we should be especially grateful to those entrepreneurs in the hospitality business that have recognised a growth market in the form of craft beer and those that prepare a quality meal to accompany it. In the Wellington market, which I am most familiar with, special mention should be made of the likes of Colin Mallon of the Malthouse, Dominic Kelly of Hashigozake and James Henderson of Bar Edward who have been forward thinking, not to mention risk taking, in their commitment to promoting an exciting range craft beer styles from New Zealand and further afield.

The domino effect created by these guys now means that restaurant market has also begun embracing the opportunity to offer fine beer alongside wines on their menus. Two great examples, both on Marjoribanks Street, are Ambell, where the domestic range includes Invercargill, Epic, Croucher and Three Boys, and Ortega Fish Shack which offers a choice of Founders, Tuatara, Emerson’s, Three Boys, Galbraith’s, 8-Wired, Epic, Harrington’s and Renaissance.

Another outlet which appears to have taken a leap of faith, although quite possibly in the wrong direction, is Foxglove on the waterfront. Pack, the Auckland-based pubco company, said it had spent ‘well in excess of a million dollars’ refitting the former Loaded Hog, resulting in a kitsch new ‘Narnia-style’ lounge bar and restaurant. Sadly, the group have totally failed to recognise the discerning nature of the local Wellington beer consumer, with no independent Kiwi craft beer on sale from tap or bottle whatsoever, meaning that the opportunity to match food from an enticing menu with an interesting, flavoursome beer, is almost non-existent.

This year’s National Homebrew Competition will be held in October - entries will be accepted from 1st-22nd October, with judging taking place over the weekend of 30th October at the Ruakura Campus Club in Hamilton. The judging lineup is the best the NHC has ever seen:

Graeme Mahy - World Beer Cup judge, one of New Zealand’s most experienced brewers, and a former NHC champion himself!
Geoff Griggs - Another World Beer Cup Judge, SOBA president, beer writer, tasting guru, and all round legend.
Steve Plowman - Brewing’s ‘Nature Boy’, creator of Maximus Humulus Lupulus, and the man behind Hallertau
Ben Middlemiss - A piece of New Zealand brewing history. What Ben doesn’t know about beer isn’t worth knowing. Brewer of THREE beers in Michael Jackson’s top 500. Not a bad effort that! Currently brewing for the New Zealand Natural Brewing Company.
Albrecht von Walmoden - Home and commercial brewing legend, brewing consultant, and possessor of a palate tuned with German precision.

The website for the competition should be online by the time this newsletter goes to press, and will explain the rules and how to enter.

At the time of going to press, prizes are still being finalised but once again the overall Champion Beer will be brewed commercially at Hallertau (subject to some small conditions). Last year’s beer was the Coconut Porter which was voted Best Beer at the SOBA Matariki Beer Festival. Flyers advertising the event will be available in local homebrew shops soon.

NICK PAGE, EDITOR

Tasty pub food and ale at Brew Moon Cafe, Amberley

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SOBA Newsletter
BREWERY NEWS

Record entries in Beer Awards
To date 450 entries have been received for the 2010 BrewNZ Beer Awards, up from 348 entries last year. In its ninth year and run by the Brewers Guild of New Zealand, this is a record number of entries. The winners will be announced at the BrewNZ Awards Dinner in Wellington on Thursday 26 August.

As part of the celebrations, the Brewers Guild has invited famous US brewer Sam Calagione, owner of the fastest growing craft brewery in North America, Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, to speak at the Awards Dinner.

Sam Calagione will also be bringing with him a film crew to shoot an episode of his new Discovery Channel TV show, ‘Brewed’, which will focus on the New Zealand craft brewing industry. It will feature his own entry into the Festive Brew category of the BrewNZ Beer Awards, which he has brewed collaboratively with New Zealand’s Epic Brewing Company.

David Cryer, Chairman of the Brewers Guild of New Zealand, says that the rise in entries reflects the growth of the premium craft brewing industry in New Zealand, as well as growing demand by consumers for premium quality craft beer. “New Zealand now has more than 50 breweries around the country ranging from tiny enterprises from as far south as Invercargill, right through to the larger breweries such as Lion Nathan and DB,” he says. “Over the last year we’ve seen an 11% growth in premium craft beer sales, while overall beer consumption has declined by about 5%. This increase is following a similar pattern seen internationally with consumers’ growing interest in craft beer.”

Founders Specials
Anniversary Stout is currently on tap at Founders Bar. “This is a big beautiful stout that has a dark complex palate full of bitter chocolate, hints of cherries, and a warming winter malt sweetness. Partly aged in a pinot barrel with a touch of whiskey, this beer boasts many subtleties that unfold as you slowly imbibe.”

Anniversary Blonde (very special edition) is also on tap. “A robust golden lager, with plenty of body, a great hop aroma, and beautiful lingering hop bitterness, and to balance the weight of the extra ingredients we have increased the strength of the beer to 5.4% ABV.”

Founders are also pleased to announce the return of ‘Show Hopper’ for this years Nelson Arts Festival. ‘Show Hopper 2’ will be sold throughout the Festival from the Granary cafe and from the cafe/bar. There will also be a limited supply of bottled "Show Hopper 2" to purchase from the bar during and after the Festival.

Galbraith takes up the challenge
A few months ago Galbraith did a rant from his soapbox in the SOBA newsletter and bleated about someone needing to take up the challenge and brew a uniquely New Zealand beer. He was (not so gently) ribbed by a few of his peers and told to get off his arse and do it himself.

Always prepared to give but not take advice, Galbraith nevertheless decided to take up the challenge in his usual hoppy way and show the others how it should be done. The result is New Zealand’s first Cask Conditioned New Zealand Pale Ale. Galbraith’s Antipodean NZPA has big base of juicy malt with piercing bitterness, intense aroma from dry hopping with unique Southern Cross hops and a reasonable, but not crippling, 5% alcohol.

Not designed to stand up to the long sea journey to anywhere and totally devoid of foreign hops, Galbraith’s Antipodean is the first in what we hope will be a long line of characterful Pale Ales of this type with a very distinct New Zealand feel. Available in cask at Galbraith’s Alehouse to celebrate the 15th anniversary of New Zealand’s first real ale brew-pub.
...Pomeroys Pub on Kilmore Street in Christchurch has one of the best ranges of Craft Beer from around New Zealand. The range includes award winning beers from Emerson’s Brewery, Three Boys, Yeastie Boys and Invercargill—and we’re the Christchurch home of Epic beers. Plus we feature at least 3 new guest beers on tap every month.

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WHEN I told a friend I was spending a week in the north of France and would be trying the local brews he said “You might get some Belgian beer there but won’t it be all wine and frog’s legs?”

I had already done some homework and knew that the reasons that made West Flanders in Belgium good for hop growing applied equally well on the other side of the line on the map that separates Belgian Flanders from France’s Nord pas de Calais and Picardy regions.

My research had shown that there were many breweries in the area but a combination of doubt over whether they welcomed visitors (who only spoke English) and the logistics of getting to breweries by public transport (I’m not driving on the wrong side of the road), meant that my sampling would have to be outlets such as bars, brasseries and restaurants rather than the breweries.

My first day in France was in Lille and after dropping my bags at my hotel went for a walk and within 15 minutes had found L’Abbaye Des Saveurs, a shop selling “products from the region” but with a definite emphasis on beer. Packed into this small shop were 300 different beers including 90 from breweries in northern France. Many names I recognised from my reading but there were so many others such as Goudale (Good Ale), Belzbeth, Esquellbc, Ch’ti, Page 24, Choulette and Trois Monts; of course most with their recommended glass.

I mentioned to the owner, Franck, that I was from NZ and he told me about a new Italian beer which they were stocking called “Toccalmatto” which was brewed with Sauvin hops from Nelson — this guy knew his beer. Toccalmatto use the Sauvin hops combined with Hatteltau Mittelfruth to give a strong hop and fruit flavour to their “Grooving Hop” light golden ale. But it was French beer that I was here to try so Franck suggested that I go to their bar “Capsule” in the next street.

The name “Capsule” comes from “beer caps” and the bar specialises in French beers with several on tap. Unfortunately Capsule didn’t open until 6.00 so I stopped at a cafe and asked for a French beer and was served Petrus Abbey Ale. A very nice drop but made by Bavik in Belgium, not France – perhaps it was punishment for not speaking French so I took the punishment twice.

Later at Capsule I started with a Pax Romana (not memorable) but the Bracine Brune that followed was much more enjoyable with a strong malty flavour after an initial fruity taste similar to a Kriek. Bracine Brune is one of a family of beers brewed by Brasserie du Pays Flamand in Bleringhem, south-east of Calais. The brewery was only established in 2006 but is on the site of a 20th century distillery initially damaged in WW1 and then destroyed during WWII. Capsule also have Bracine Tripel on tap along with a Trappiste Quadrupel, Page 24 and a brew called Demon, which at 12% ABV I decided to leave until another day. Later at dinner I ordered Pelforth, as I had seen the name advertised outside many bars. Pelforth is Lille’s own brewery although it has been part of the Heineken group since 1988. The Pelforth logo is a pelican with the brewery name meaning strong Pelican. The brew which I had was Pelforth Blonde which while refreshing didn’t have the interest of the Bracine Brune which had preceded it.

40 km south-west of Lille is Arras where, in the arcade between the place de Héros and the Grand Place is Cellieres des Arcades, another shop with products from the region but this time with 500 different beers. I particularly liked the “metre of beer” a narrow one metre long wooden channel containing a selection of beers in 250ml bottles. I mentioned to the owner that I was travelling and not able to buy a range to take home so he suggested that I go to the bar next door which had a good range on tap. The bar was a Leffe Bar and as I can drink Leffe at home I looked around, but the other two choices were Irish Bars so I decided to try the Leffe Bar. And yes there was Leffe Blonde and Brune like at home but also others that I hadn’t seen before. Leffe Ruby is a sweet fruity beer which I should have had later with a dessert. Leffe 9° is a very drinkable abbey ale. After the second Leffe 9° I realised that the name indicated the ABV and not the recommended serving temperature.

Further south again is Amiens, home to France’s largest cathedral which contains a memorial to New Zealand soldiers who died defending Amiens and in the nearby Somme battles. Amiens is on the edge of France’s brewing region but was where, in the shadow of the cathedral, I found a small bar with a good selection of French beer with Les Maillets, 1664, Rebelle and Grimbergen on tap. Rebelle is a biere de garde brewed by Brasserie de Milly 30km south east of Amiens. The beer has a dense white head, some spicy flavours and a slightly sweet aftertaste.

Amiens was my last stop before the airport and my flight home so I was glad to have found a town with a good range of French beer. It had been an enjoyable visit and I had enjoyed some good beer but I was surprised to find a situation so similar to what we have in New Zealand. That is that bar and restaurant owners believe that their customers only want the big names (Stella etc. in NZ, Lefte etc. in France) and so that is what they serve. If they had the courage to stock a more varied range including local beers, they would find initially an interest and later a demand for them. At the same time they would be supporting local and regional businesses not just the big boys of the industry.

BRIAN JORDAN

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PUB NEWS

Auckland

O’Carroll’s Irish Bar on Vulcan Lane in Auckland City is now stocking craft beer, having just come off a long contract with one of the Big Two. They have Epic Pale Ale on tap plus beers from Moa and Harrington’s in the fridge, with more promised if the experiment is successful.

Also, Brew On Quay has started up a monthly Beer Club on the first Wednesday of the month, matching beers and food.

Dunedin

tonic continues to support NZ craft beer by offering a greater variety on tap from August with the introduction of two taps dedicated to NZ brewed pale ales and dark beers. These taps will compliment their existing guest tap, alongside Emerson’s Pilsner, Bookbinder and Brewers Reserve. Follow them on Facebook.

Nelson

Golden Bear is on 3 taps at the Leisure Lodge Motel. They have a new restaurant and Bar called ‘Flames on 40’ at 40 Waimea Road.

The Free House has accepted the Ecofest Challenge to stock only local beers and wines during the month prior to Nelson’s Ecofest festival which starts on 20th August. For a month, the pub will stock only local beers, ciders, juices and wine. Beer now on or coming up in the month include Renaissance Craftsman Chocolate Stout and Renaissance Voyager IPA, Townshend’s Three Piece Wheat, IPAs 1.2 and 3, Mussel Inn Whit Pig, Redwood Boysencider, Monkey Wizard Savvy Blonde, Fat Kelpie, Black Mass Stout and Abel Ale, Lighthouse Classic Stout and Summer Breeze, Founders Anniversary Blonde, Redhead and Long Black, Golden Bear Seismic IPA and Bodyczek pilsner, Totara Drover’s Draught and many more. Beer list updated every two days at www.thefreehouse.co.nz.

Rotorua

The Great Kiwi Ale House has opened at Hinemoa Street, Rotorua on the old Cobb & Co site. Tap beers include Croucher Pale Ale and Pilsner, Mike’s Mild and Mata Artesian. Various bottled beers, including Mata Feijoia and Manuka, plus Harrington’s Clydesdale Stout.

Blenheim

The Old Bank has now got a handpump on permanently with the prospect of another in the very near future. At present pulling Townshend ESB and alternating with Townshend NTA. New handpump brew from Renaissance follows.

Christchurch

On handpump currently at Pomeroy is Three Boys Oyster Stout to be followed by Founders and Renaissance beers subject to availability. 1st September is the launch of Eve’s NV cider on tap and following that Three Boys Golden Ale will be another permanent beer. August Guest Beer is Harvard Honey ale from Wigram. Follow them on Facebook.
Emerson’s Southern Clam Stout

Last year we brewed a small batch of Clam Stout which was only available on tap at the brewery shop and a very select few establishments. It was a hit. The success continued when we entered it in the BrewNZ awards where it earned a Silver Medal. Many people were sorry not to be able to sample it, but help is near!

In conjunction with Southern Clams this year we will do a limited bottle release of the only (as far as we know) Clam Stout in the world.

The beer has a dark tawny brown head and a subtle creamy roasty aroma with a hint of vanilla and ocean briny characters. Complex dark roasted characters prevail with more briny notes developing as you delve further into the pint glass. This celebration of Southern flavours will be available from the middle of September. 6% ABV.

JP 2010

The fourth vintage of JP is available now. An India Pale Ale brewed to the Belgian Tripel style with Belgian yeast and the addition of New Zealand and American hops. 8% ABV.

Food match: A pungent, tangy cheese.

Champion NZ Brewery 2009
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Notice of Annual General Meeting of Society of Beer Advocates Incorporated

The Annual General Meeting of Society of Beer Advocates (SOBA) Incorporated will be held at 10am on Saturday, 28th August 2010 in Thistle Hall, 293 Cuba St, Wellington.

Nominations for President, Treasurer, Secretary and four Committee Members should be proposed and seconded, and be with the Secretary, Ian Caig at or 11 Malda Grove, Wellington 6035 by 5pm on Friday, 20th August 2010. Candidates are requested to provide a short ‘C.V.’ such that the AGM attendees are a little more informed, as to the individuals that are standing and for which they are being asked to vote.

The Committee has asked that, in order to have an informed discussion, notice of any substantive topic to be raised at the meeting, should be advised to the Secretary by 5pm on Friday, 20th August 2010, for inclusion on the agenda. Forward via email to condor@soba.org.nz.

We have the use of the hall for the period from 10am to 1pm and the hall is situated approximately 10 mins walk from the Town Hall (Beervana venue), which should be borne in mind by any prospective Beervana

SOBA member number 500!

SOBA member number 500 is Trent Mankelow of Wellington. Trent will the lucky recipient of a special prize kindly donated by BeerNZ of Christchurch. Look out for the presentation ceremony at Beervana!
BEER DEVOTION
JOIN THE CULT
Why should Wellington have all the fun? Now the rest of New Zealand can enjoy the same cult beers that Hashigo Zake’s customers have come to love.
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LES BIERES DE LA NOUVELLE-CALEDONIE

ON A RECENT short break to New Caledonia my hopes were high for some winter sunshine, but rather lower for searching out a decent local beer. This chic, French speaking, tropical island is under a three hour flight from Auckland and the strong Gallic influence means imported French wine is de rigueur. Our tour was based on a circular trip around the south of the island and excluded the capital Noumea as a base, in an attempt to experience more rural, rustic charms.

First stop was the imposing Auberge du Mont Khogi, perched on the mountainside above Dumbea, 30km south east of Tontouta Airport. We chose the more affordable self-contained wooden lodge option in the grounds bordering the lush forest park. The Auberge itself has a Swiss chalet-style theme and has a very well appointed restaurant bar offering superb views to the coast. The ‘pression’ beers were the Number 1 pale lager at 5% from Grande Brasserie de Nouvelle-Caledonie (Heineken) and imported Kronenbourg 1664 (Carlsberg) at 5.5% and France’s number one selling beer. The former is pleasant enough and went well with the fish of the day.

We then travelled west on the RP3 via the Parc de la Riviere Blue and Yate township, before heading south on increasingly potholed roads, to arrive at the Kanua Tera Ecolodge, which is situated at the beautiful Port Boise Bay. All accommodation is in comfortable traditional style thatched bungalows and the restaurant bar was once again of a very good standard. Alongside Number 1 and Kronenbourg 1664 on tap, was another locally-brewed pale lager called Manta, which I felt had slightly more body and character to it than its Noumea rival.

Outside the Kanua Tera bar restaurant
The bottled selection included two interesting Belgian imports - Grimbergen Blonde and Dubbel – brewed by Brasserie Union (Alken-Maes/Heineken). The Blonde at 6.7% is an ochre coloured top fermented Abbey Beer that uses Gatinais barley malt to create a nicely balanced beer with a fruity malt taste. I had a dish of curried prawns with it, which, although perhaps not a perfect match, was still very enjoyable, if a bit messy! The Dubbel, Cuvee Ambree weighs in at 6.6% and has undergone two fermentations, which gives this ale a chocolatey, toffee taste with a warming brandy-like finish. This went down a treat with the mouille du chocolat dessert.

Les 3 Brasseurs Bar
Our route then took us west to the RP2 via La Madeleine waterfall and a large windfarm sprouting out of the ruddy volcanic dirt, then onto the straggly Mont Dore township and eventually Noumea. After visiting the excellent and spectacular Cultural Arts Centre, it was time to head across town to Baie des Citrons.

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This was in order to check out a one-liner comment from the Trip Advisor website about Les 3 Brasseurs Bar on the waterfront. This 8 hectolitre microbrewery bar exceeded expectations, not least by the fact that it actually existed on an island populated predominantly by wine, and to a lesser extent, lager drinkers.

A shop at one of the large Leader supermarkets failed to yield a decent selection of bottled or canned beers, the majority being variants of mass produced, French export market brands, such as Biere d’Alsace (Heineken).

So to our final resting place - Resort Rivland - situated close to the Baie de Gadgi, near the west coast town of Païta and therefore handy for airport departures. Once again, good quality food, accommodation, facilities and service. Once again the standard ‘pression’ beers, but this time with the welcome addition of a choice of two of the bottled Leffe (InBev) beers. The Blond at 6.6% is a pale abbey beer, with a full, sunny, golden colour. The smooth and full bodied taste matched surprisingly well with a tasty smoked ham salad. The Brune at 6.5% is maybe not a classic dubbel, but has a discernable aroma of fruits, spice and caramel. The flavour is sweet, dominated by the malts, but the yeast is also clearly present giving a hint of banana, so this made for dessert on its own!

Presented with a formidable choice of drinking vessels from ‘Le Demi’ (25cl), through ‘Le Formidable’ (100cl), to ‘Le Metre’ (a 10 x 25cl palette!), I opted for a more sensible 4 x 15cl tasting palette of the four permanent house beers. These comprised a White, Blonde, Amber and a Scotch. Whilst none were standout and all lacked a little hop character, they were representative of style and quite drinkable. Great to see the locals enjoying the Blanc, this being la bière, rather than le vin. The current special was a World Cup brew called Bire du Mondial, a variant of the Ambree. The staff speak good English, which is a rarity, a range of reasonably priced pub food is available and there is live blues-jazz music on weekend evenings.

Although New Caledonia is easily accessible, it has to rate as a very expensive holiday destination, with the price of a standard 50cl tap beer topping the $15 mark. However, it was worth it primarily for securing a few days escape from those Wellington southerlies and also for improving my daughter’s spoken French! Discovering Les 3 Brasseurs Brewbar was an unexpected bonus.

Salut!
DIARY OF A PRO BREW

In June SOBA member, home brewer and Regional Wines Beer Specialist Kieran Haslett-Moore, travelled to Dunedin to become the first person ever to brew their own recipe at Emerson’s Brewery. The beer that was produced was called Regional Special Bitter and was a collaboration between Regional Wines and Spirits and Emerson’s Brewing Co. What follows is his diary of the brew days.

R.S.B. - Day one

I step off the plane to an icy Dunedin morning. It’s the shortest day and I’m excited, not only because of the 3 days of fun with stainless that lies ahead of us but also because I love this city in the winter. Richard Emerson is there to pick up me and Jed the photographer. As always Richard is positively bubbling over with enthusiasm. As we drive through the rural hinterland that divides Dunedin from its airport Richard chats about other brewers, the weather, and how quickly the provincial airport is growing. We quickly find ourselves at the brewery, the warm smells of fresh bready malt fill the air as we sip coffee from large mugs and chat with Production Manager Chris O’Leary (or Father for short). Then it’s into overalls and gumboots and the weighing of grain begins, the old mill is started and we crush the grain, cleaning, cleaning and some more cleaning, yeast is fed and stainless tanks are doused in caustic before we head off to a prolonged lunch at Eureka and a visit to Al Bar. A Japanese Restaurant for dinner then back to Al Bar for a night cap of degassed Fullers London Porter from the handpump, divine, a refreshing walk to the motel, talk made easy by drink, alarm set for 5 and a good night’s sleep.

Five years ago I drank copious pints of Emerson’s strong American style brown ale from the handpump there, so much so that our night met oblivion. Yesterday’s visit was much more genteel. The same regulars were in the courtyard. An hour later Richard is parked outside the Motel, excited and ready to go. So am I. At the brewery we change back into ‘action brewer’ overalls and gumboots, the Fullers Yeast hasn’t woken up so it’s an American strain to the rescue. We heat the mash tun, and Richard presents me with the smallest mashing paddle I have ever seen. The one I use at home on my 60 litre plant is about three times as big, perhaps I’m compensating.

We mash in, it’s all action, sacks of malt are tipped in, alternating with me stirring like mad, Richard looks on intently plunging a thermometer into the grain bed every now and then and adding more hot liquor as he sees fit, Jed is snapping away with his camera, Bob the General Manager, enthusiastic ‘sensory analyst’ and all round top chap is filming it on the HD camera. We nail the temperature we want. Lay a blanket of hot water over the grain and cover her up. Its time for coffee. The whirlpool and kettle are cleaned, then the run off begins, it’s not so different to the my home brewery in Brooklyn, more knobs and buttons. The wort is dark and a little weak, we substituted Belgian Special B for English Dark Crystal, it’s different.

Checking the gravity © 2010 Jed Soane

The kettle is full enough to start the burner, or as Richard puts it the ‘Rocket engine’ - it’s seriously loud, the other brewers hate it, they can’t play their music - Richard loves it, he can turn off his hearing aid. The kettle is full and we have a boil, the kettle sits up on the main brewery gantry and great care has to be taken that it doesn’t boil over as people could be working below; also the gas bottle and burner are below. We weigh out the hops, and boil for 90 minutes to increase the strength. Every time we adjust the burners we lose the hairs from our arms on the side of the intensely hot kettle, this is a lot like homebrewing!

‘Mashing in’ © 2010 Jed Soane

R.S.B. - Day two

The alarm goes off, I was awake anyway. World Cup Football plays on my motel room TV as I pull my clothes on, lots of them as the wind is not long from the Antarctic and we set off for breakfast. The options are limited. I settle for a Steak and Mushroom Pie, a sandwich and a terrible cup of coffee at the bakery next to the legendary Inch Bar.

continued on p15

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The boil comes to an end and we release the beer into the whirlpool, it magically and perfectly dispenses the hops in the middle of the vessel, this is nothing like homebrewing! As the whirlpool works its magic we scrub the kettle. We run the brew through the heat exchanger and onto the yeast. I shovel out the mash tun, just in time to watch a farmer collect it for his livestock, I need neighbours with chickens.

The fermentor is fork-lifted into the warm room, we change, action stations are over its time for the pub. After lunch its back to taste some bits and pieces with the boys, then Tonic, many beers including a fantastic Westmalle Dubbel. An Indian Restaurant, Vindaloo and 1812, a refreshing walk to the motel and sleep, we do it all again tomorrow.

R.S.B. - Day three

Up at the 5am again, tea in bed in front of more football, off alone for breakfast this morning, a night on the beers and curry has left Jed worse for wear, I don’t order coffee this time. Richard appears doubly eager to get the job done today, we have a flight to catch, he has responsibilities. Action brewer wear is donned before the organised chaos ensues. A quick taste of yesterday’s fermenting brew to check we are on the right track, big fruity hops, citrus and berry fruit, orange sweet yeasty malt, young beer in all its glory. No Special B today, a pale brew will bring yesterday’s dark one down in the blend.

We nail our mash temperature, coffee, and then it’s time to run off. Today I do it almost totally solo, again I am reminded that the fundamentals remain the same, it’s all a case of scale. Today the malt gods have smiled and we have a high extract demanding we dilute slightly in the kettle to hit the right specs. Again we sing the hairs on our arms as we control the kettle, we up the hops, there is no point leaving Richard with odds and ends of NZ Goldings which he doesn’t use. Everything goes like clockwork and soon I find myself shovelling out grain into sacks. When I do this in the kitchen at home the dog forms a scrum at my feet jostling for her share of the sweet nutty spent grain, here what spills is hosed off the wet floor into the drains. We pump the last batch of wort into the vessel that is already half full of fermenting beer and return her to the warm room. We change and in moments find ourselves in the convivial surroundings of Maori Hill at a restaurant that cooks its steaks over open wood fires. Richard, Father, Jed and myself trade tales over good beer and wine, the food is out of this world. A long cab ride to the airport and we fly out amongst the fog and sleet, bound for home, mission accomplished. Fun with stainless was great but both Jed and I have families to get home to.

R.S.B. went on sale during Emerson’s Week at Regional Wines and four kegs sold out in 12 hours. One keg remains for Beervana.

KIERAN HASLETT-MOORE
MATARIKI WINTER BEER FESTIVAL

SOBA’s first ever beer festival at The Boatshed in Wellington proved to be a great success, serving up approximately 670 litres of craft beer to 250 visitors.

Sold out event with all tickets booked in advance via website

Jula enjoys pulling a pint

Big Warren supporting Golden Bear

Up close and personal with the beer list

Kieran gets the next batch of curry on

Dominic on the Hashi Bar

Hallertau Coconut Porter romps to the Beer of the Festival Award

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BIG BEERS AND BEER BARS IN NEW YORK

EARLIER this year I had the opportunity to go to New York for work. Along with working (of course), high on the agenda was touring the Brooklyn Brewery, finding some good American beers and beer bars. Due to some windy weather, and a diversion to Washington, I missed the Brooklyn Brewery. What I didn’t miss was going to some great bars, meeting dedicated craft beer imbibers and imbibing an impressive range of beers. I also took a few kiwi craft beers along for the journey; to rave reviews. More on that below...

My first free day happened to be St Patrick’s day so I took myself down to the famous parade. It was long and boring. It didn’t take long for me to decide I needed to entertain myself with a pint or two of something interesting. I found myself in Jimmy’s No. 43, a surprisingly cavernous, brooding bar, slightly below street level in the East Village. Jimmy’s was a retreat from the St Patrick’s day crowds at some of the more mainstream bars. It boasted an impressive beer menu - which changed three times in the few hours I was there - of draught and bottled ales, including vintage ales from Allagash, Green Flash and Brooklyn breweries.

McNeill’s Warlord Imperial IPA (8.5%) came first. It poured amber with some haze and a reasonable head. Piney notes from the American hops (there were some British ones in there too) and a slight caramel taste with bitterness on the aftertaste. Moving on, I came to the Six Point Gorilla Coffee Porter from Brooklyn Brewery (7.5%). This was probably my least favourite beer of the evening. While it looked good, the taste was slightly funky and green and it had a powdery cocoa texture. The Victory Yakima Twilight Black Double IPA, (8.7%) came next; the name reminding me of my favourite Yeastie - interestingly - the beer was reminiscent of PKB. It poured dark with a good head, had toasted malt character but a big piney hop aroma and long dry bitterness.

My final beer at Jimmy’s was the Chelsea Hoppy Holidays Ale (10.5%) from the cask. It was served in a Chimay glass and was flat as a tack with no carbonation whatsoever. It had a high alcoholic aroma, and an orange sherbet taste. The cask set up was supplied by Alex Hall...the Gotham Beer Imbiber (www.gotham-imbiber.com). Alex and I enjoyed a few more beers the next evening, where he introduced me to a range of dedicated craft beer drinkers, and I introduced them to some great New Zealand beers.

After the Holidays Ale, I thought I should head out for something to eat. Instead, I found myself crammed into McSorley’s Ale House accompanied by Dan Kelly, a regular who was presiding over the queues outside. Dan and I shared the McSorley’s only two ales, light and dark; both were rubbish but the atmosphere was jamming with McSorley’s being New York’s oldest bar and an Irish bar at that, credited with opening in 1854. I suppose it was appropriate that I stopped in on St Paddy’s day. I was also lucky the next day as I was just in time for the vintage ale tasting at Barcade (www.barcade.com).

Barcade is a garage-like bar with an impressive dedication to craft beer and old-school video games. It has an awe-inspiring number of taps, and they were flowing. I had a big night, and an even bigger hangover the next day. While I spent my time drinking the vintage beers I shared around some bottles of 8 Wired HopWired IPA, Mussel Inn Captain Cooker and Emerson’s Taieri George. Little did I know that Captain Cooker is being brewed in Utah, so should be available to US drinkers. They will be pleased as it went down to rave reviews; people struggled to put their finger on the flavour they were tasting. Telling them it was manuka didn’t help much!! The crowd was more familiar with the Sauvin Hops in the Hop Wired with one guy ducking out to the car to bring in his saison brewed with the Nelson hops.

Jimmy’s beer list

Jimmy’s is where you head for your fill of Belgian, British and Japanese beers in the East Village; I, however, focussed on the American. I started large, as large was all there was.

continued on p19
The next morning, I woke up with some hilarious photographs and a sizeable hangover. I headed to the famous Katz deli for a pastrami on rye to ease my troubled stomach, and then went beer shopping for some tasty offering to bring home. These included a Smutty Nose Big A IPA, Victory Brewing Saison, Pretty Things Sylvan Stout, Ithaca Beer Co Pale Ale, Goose Island Matilda Belgian style ale and an Avery Brewing Co, Brabant Barrel Aged Wild Ale. This final beer is like a seriously refined Porter Noir. I wish I brought six bottles of it, not just the one.

Awe inspiring number of taps at Barcade
The Taieri George was tasty, but in light of the beers on offer that night tasted slightly too young. There was much interest in the secret ingredient. Word around the traps is it’s a spice common to many Belgian ales (I’ll leave you to figure that out yourself).

Over the course of the night I tried a 2005 Flying Dog Gonzo Imperial Porter (9.5%) - this was a huge beer. It was as black as black could be, very little carbonation and huge raisiny flavours. I couldn’t quite drink the whole taster. The notes that came with it suggested pine, espresso and bitter hops - maybe originally, not the 2005 drinking in 2010! The Avery The Czar 2007 RIS (12.2%) was a tasty offering with hints of cocoa and caramel. It had aged well, as had the Dog Fish Head Raisin D’Etre 2008 (8%) a beautiful ruby amber in colour, possibly due to the beet juice. I followed this with another Avery, Hog Heaven. It was a 9.2% Barley wine from Colorado which held up well and had strong barley wine, candy sugar and fruity notes.

I finished the evening on the He Brew Jewbelation 2008 (12%). The notes called this beer an American Brown Ale. It was certainly a dark brown oily colour but I would say it was far too strong and too sweet with a dominant molasses flavour.

Serious beer shopping
If anyone is heading to New York, I recommend Alex’s website for listings of the fine establishments you can visit, and the fine ales on offer. If you stop in at Jimmy’s or Barcade, you may find Alex himself. If not, there will surely be some New Yorkers with great beer tastes who would be more than happy to make you a recommendation. If you happen to have the odd kiwi ale with you, they’ll be more than happy to share it.

STEPH COUTTS

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SOBA Newsletter
DAYS GONE BY

MR JOHN STAPLES, his wife and three children, John, William, and a daughter who died later, came from England to New Zealand in the ship Fifeshire in 1842. He established the Motueka Brewery in 1856, but this was abandoned in 1866, when John and his two sons departed for Wellington where they started the Thorndon Beehive Brewery on Murphy Street.

Staples operated the brewery until 1899 when it was taken over by a company with fifty thousand pounds capital. This was a solid sum for those days and was an indication both of the progress that he had made and of the fact that the time had come for the investment of large-scale capital in brewery enterprise. The Red Band label for bottled beer was introduced by the company - the idea coming from the red bands which the brewery then had on all of its casks.

The tower, designed by William Turnbull, was built in 1915 in the Edwardian Classical style. It was used for the gravity-fed system of brewing and was similar in style to several English breweries of the same era.

On 1st July 1923 New Zealand Breweries was established following the merger of 10 breweries, including the country’s largest, Speights of Dunedin and Staples Brewery of Wellington.

Staples would have been turning in his grave when, a century later, the company he helped to create plunged New Zealand into a beer-drinking dark age. It started when New Zealand Breweries and Dominion Breweries began buying smaller regional operations that couldn’t compete with the two companies’ highly efficient plants and huge, exclusive distribution systems. The number of commercial breweries plummeted to 22 in 1955, 11 in 1960 and reportedly to just four, including Lion and DB, in 1970.

Lion brewed on the site until cutbacks forced its closure in 1988 with operations relocated to Auckland and Christchurch. The building was incorporated into the newly-built New World supermarket that now occupies the site. The tower is registered as a Historic Place - Category I and beneath it the Staples legacy lives on through the fine selection of bottled craft beer on sale in the supermarket.
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5-MINUTE BEER QUIZ

1. Which two breweries enter beers in the annual West Coast IPA Challenge?

2. Who said "I'll have a pint of bitter...in a thin glass."

3. What is a kilderkin?

4. What is the name of the process where grain is moistened to make it germinate?

5. What is the main characteristic of a Lambic beer?

6. The full name of London-based brewer Fuller's is Fuller, Smith and ......?

7. In which Christchurch suburb is Three Boys Brewery located?

8. Which is the stronger - Chimay Red, Blanche or Blue?

9. If you asked for a snifter what would you get?

10. According to the website Ratebeer.com what is the highest rated beer in the All Stouts styles category?

---

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BOOK REVIEW

1001 Beers
You Must Taste Before You Die

I can heartily recommend a new world beer guide, 1001 Beers You Must Try Before You Die. Published earlier this year (by Quintessence, a division of Penguin Books), this hefty 960-page tome weighs almost two kilograms, so you will need a sturdy bookshelf. Not that you will want to put it down. The book features beers from all over the world, is packed with historical and brewing information, and has brief tasting notes.

With such a vast number of beers included, there were plenty I had never previously heard of, let alone tasted, but it’s a safe bet they will all be worth trying. Each was recommended by one of 42 specialist contributors from around the world. I can personally vouch for the 17 Kiwi beers that are included – I was responsible for them.

In my opinion, the book’s only downside is the way in which the beers have been categorised. Although they are indexed by country of origin and brewery, the chapters are based on colour, rather than beer style.

To my mind, this tends to reinforce the widely held misconception that all lagers are pale and ales are dark. I feel it would have been far better if the book had identified the differences between ale and lager yeasts and offered some explanation of the varying techniques employed by brewers to produce different styles. That said, it’s a fairly minor criticism in what is an otherwise excellent reference book.

Now all I’ve got to do is to live long enough to try all those beers.

GEOFF GRIGGS
Kiwi brewers old and new - did you identify them?

TOP LEFT
Luke Nicholas (Epic) & Kelly Ryan (Thornbridge)

TOP RIGHT
Terry McCashin (Mac’s) (centre)

CENTRE LEFT
James Speight (Speight’s)

CENTRE RIGHT
Paul McGurk (Wigram)

BOTTOM LEFT
Andy Deuchars (Renaissance)

BOTTOM RIGHT
Carl Vasta (Tuatara)

No correct answers received - will make the next one easier!

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PHIL & BETH’S BEER & FOOD MATCHING EXPERIENCE

Phil Murray is a SOBA member and a great friend of mine. It’s been a pleasure to watch as his love of beer developed over time. His partner (and no less a friend), Beth MacGibbon, is also advancing rapidly down the long and rewarding road of beer appreciation. Beth and Phil both have a love for the finer culinary things, and they’ve been working for a while on a beer and food matching experience for a group of friends. Beth suggested this might be an inspiring read for other SOBA members and offered to write up her experience for all to share. An excellent suggestion, I thought and I’m very pleased to introduce Beth to tell you all about it.


After a month and a bit of researching, planning and testing, the beer matching event finally took place.

A bit of background - Phil, my partner in crime, started bringing Epic Pale Pale to my parent’s house as his beer staple in substitution for the on-hand Speights. My Dad was quickly converted and the folks’ beer fridge has been stocked with the Pale Ale ever since (he has also joined SOBA). Conversation at my parents’ table had often steered towards discussing the glory and nuance of beer. I would say Dad was not completely in the dark when it came to different styles of beer, having home-brewed from kits for a long time in years past, but had not been exposed to the flourishing New Zealand craft brewing situation. Like many people, something ‘cold and fizzy’ was sufficient after mowing the lawns. So, after a Tuatara here, an Emerson’s there and a drop of Renaissance, Phil and I were called upon to do a beer and food matched dinner. Kind of interesting, considering we didn’t really know much about the subject.

That was about six to nine months ago. At the end of January I suggested to Dad that his birthday in early March would be perfect for this elusive beer dinner. He agreed and it was settled. Over the following weeks, Phil and I thought hard about how to approach this challenge. Food first? Or is the beer more important? It took meeting halfway to get anywhere. We discussed what would be good to eat and which beers we wanted to drink; then what food they go with and whether that connected back to the first clause.

First off, every good evening needs an introductory nibble, so cashews were planned with an India Pale Ale. Beer and nuts are a longstanding combination and we thought it would be a great way to ease into a long night of eating and drinking, especially as the beer is a somewhat safer style than some of the later offerings we had planned. As I mentioned earlier, our beer and food matching knowledge didn’t extend beyond liking a Thai curry with a good Pale Ale, and the hypothetical pairings from lengthy beery discussions with fellow advocates. Our second course of oysters with stout was another easy one to choose through, as it is a great classic (or so Phil informed me). It was important to me to think about what my father would like too, seeing as it was his birthday present, and oysters definitely fell into this category.

Part of the dinner’s objective was to introduce to the group some new, unusual beers. We bet on Boon kriek lambic causing a stir, as it is so far from the preconceived idea of what beer is. Carrying on with the few pairings we were personally familiar with, we planned chocolate fondants (aka molten lava cake) and vanilla ice cream for dessert, to go with the sour cherry beer, which we had experienced at the now closed OneZB restaurant in Hamilton.

At this stage you may be noticing a theme of quite simple food. This is true, there were no exotic ingredients that I needed to scour around for, and definitely no bloody Horopito. A complicated exciting recipe is certainly fun to try and challenges cooking skills, but sometimes it is very refreshing to emphasise the harmony between a drink and the honest flavours of uncomplicated fare.

With three courses sorted we started moving into the relatively unknown realm of matching. It was time for various forages into the interwebs. I found a great chart that listed an extensive range of different beer styles with their alcohol, colour, and flavour intensities; general food matches and the cheeses and sweet things each one goes well with (www.beertown.org). We still needed a starting point to navigate this wealth of information, which made us think again about which beers we wanted to serve. I really like German wheat beers, so I wanted to make sure we had a Hefeweizen somewhere in the mix. As Hefeweizens are a lightish refreshing drink, it was unsurprising that the chart indicated that a wheat beer went well with a light salad. A salad did seem appropriate during a multiple course menu, but we had to think about this one for some time. I mean a ‘salad’ is a rather widely encompassing term. My first attempt was a clove roasted carrot salad with baby spinach, chickpeas and roasted capsicum topped off with squeaky haloumi cheese and a simple dressing of lemon, oil and vinegar. My train of thought was that the clove and citrus would bring out those elements in the beer, and the cheese would give some substance. It was bloody delicious, and matched quite well, but we thought we could do better. Phil had a great idea of having a caesar salad, due to the creaminess of the boiled egg. After a little further research online, his thoughts were substantiated with talk of caesar salad and wheat beers being a good match.

_{continued on p29_}
Not being one to blindly follow a recipe, I decided to run with the general theme of a caesar salad (which in fact was not named after Julius, but Mexican chef Caesar Cardini, in the 1920s) but thought all that mayo would be a bit heavy. I substituted the usual dressing with a sharp yoghurt, with a pinch of clove to still complement the flavour in the beer, and kept the parmesan cheese, soft boiled egg and added shredded chicken.

Phil chose Twisted Hop IPA to go with the cashews, for its fruity New Zealand hop characteristics and a strong malt to complement the nuts. Although this match didn’t prove to be the stuff of legend, it was an enjoyable quality beer, and a pleasant start to the evening. I thought the bitterness of the cashews was a nice antidote for the powerful and slightly bitter hops. Phil started off the educational side of the night by explaining the interesting story of the origins of the India Pale Ale.

The oysters seemed to go down well for those who partook. Unfortunately there weren’t any Bluff oysters available, which would have made that course all the more enjoyable. The theory is that the roasted dry stout contrasts with the saltiness of the oyster. Phil picked Pitch Black from Invercargill Breweries as it is the best New Zealand stout being brewed, in his opinion. Although it has some sweet chocolate and malt character, it is still dry enough to work with the oysters. Though to be honest, it is one of the two foods I didn’t eat, and Phil decided he didn’t like oysters so we are taking the word of others once more to attest to its merits.

The third course came a good half an hour later to allow for appetites to return and the rich stout to be drunk at a leisurely pace. We allowed a small measure of beer per course, about 120ml each. We had chosen mussels steamed in a Gueuze lambic, rather than the traditional white wine, which also served as the matching beer. It was a real eye opener for most of the guests, and quite serendipitous as Helen has an allergy to white wine. Another simple, delicious recipe, and a match that we knew about from frequenting Belgian Beer Cafés, although our version was much tastier and I haven’t come across any using Gueuze. We originally tested this match with Orval, as there was no Gueuze readily available. The match was good drinking wise, but the beer lacked the dryness needed and ended up a bit bitter with nothing else left. The Lindemans Gueuze on the other hand worked well with the onion, thyme, celery and nutmeg, all mopped up with some ciabatta. A great combination, and the first really stand out match. Lindemans is not quite as funky as the quintessential Cantillon lambic, but still sour and dry enough for Phil to enjoy everyone’s first reactions. The Gueuze resembles a dry wine more than a typical beer.

The chicken salad and Tuatara ‘Hefe’ Hefeweizen came shortly after, and while visually it was a little 1970s, was well received. The full-flavoured Tuatara delivered the typical characteristic of clove and bananas, which complemented the salad perfectly. I enjoyed the crunch of the cos lettuce against the creaminess of the egg and yoghurt. Definitely a favourite of the evening.

For our main meaty number we thought about using a darker style of beer. We decided on venison sausages and mash with a rich chunky onion and coffee gravy which boosted the robustness of the dish. A straight forward but moreish favourite, matched with another wheat beer, this time the strong but drinkable Aventinus weizenbock. As with a Hefeweizen, Aventinus has notes of clove and banana but with stronger, dark malt, chosen to complement the sweetness of the caramelised onion and cut through the fattiness of the sausage. It was interesting for people to note the differences between two beers that obviously vary in strength and colour, but are very similar in some flavours.

By this stage I was doubting the room left for a rich chocolate dessert, but the ol’ reliable pudding stomach prevailed. Unfortunately, 11pm rolled around and the fondants hadn’t cooked, at all really. The call was made to serve them in the ramekins anyway. While it felt weird to be eating hot cake batter, it was very yummy and rich. And because the dessert seemed so much richer as a liquid, the cherry lambic was refreshingly tart, cutting the thick sweetness perfectly. Everyone loved the match, although most felt strange about drinking beer with dessert!

Finally, we finished the evening off with a 2003 Thomas Hardy’s, paired with blue cheese and walnuts, another prescribed classic. Although English stilton is the traditional pick, it was unavailable, so the Gouda cheese shop man helped me chose a milder Kikorangi Blue and a powerful Spanish ham ear made with goat’s milk. The Kikorangi was quite usual, according to the blue cheese lovers (I can’t stand the stuff), and the Spanish blue Quorum Valedon was a hit, though a little strong for some. Thomas Hardy’s falls under the style name of Barley Wine, and although it is a beer, it tastes more like a port, which is perhaps the reason for this happy marriage.

The guests left very full but happy, and they found the experience educational and interesting thanks to Phil and his enlightening discussions on each of the beer styles. We have already had a couple of requests for similar dinners, and having passed the first hurdle, have been gathering ideas for a new menu. There are still numerous beers to choose from, and an infinite array of scrumptious food to go with them, so we better get to it.

Bottoms up!

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Monthly Social  
TBA

Tuesday 5th October, 7.30pm  
Monthly Social  
TBA

CHRISTCHURCH AREA
Contact: James Pinamonti  
email James.Pinamonti@payglobal.com

Socials on Thursdays at  
The Twisted Hop, Poplar Street, Christchurch

South Island Beer Festival  
Saturday October 30th 12-5 pm  
more details to follow

WAIKATO AREA
Contact: Greig McGill  
email greig@hamilton.net

Socials on Thursdays

AUCKLAND AREA
Contact: Martin Bridges  
email martin@soba.org.nz

Socials usually every first Saturday in the month

DUNEDIN AREA
Contact: Richard Pettinger  
email petta@clear.net.nz

Socials, every other month, on the second Wednesday

Wednesday 13th October, 7.30pm  
Social - ‘Beers to Recall Your OE’  
Duke of Wellington

Wednesday 8th December, TBA  
Social  
Breweries tour

FRONT COVER IMAGE

Emerson’s Southern Clam Stout

My favourite brew from Beervana 09!

It’s back - in the bottle!

From September!

See ad on page 9!

Enjoy!

Ed

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MEMBERSHIP

Please join and support the Society Of Beer Advocates (SOBA) Incorporated.  
Go to www.SOBA.org.nz and complete the online application form.

SOBA Newsletter
There are two types of customer.
One that knows the yeast strain & hop intensity of their beer.

And the other, obsessive kind.

Luckily we stock 150 types of speciality beers and ales including 26 on tap, more than enough to satisfy the most demanding of palates.

Find us at Beervana in the West Court.