The Pursuit of Hoppiness
- the voice of SOBA -

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Your Craft Brewing and Pub Newsletter
“Beer for all the right reasons”
SOME of my close friends were mildly shocked when I divulged that I was still a Hashigozake Beer Tasting virgin at the age of 54. For sure, I have flirted dangerously with 8-Wired, frequently been under the Brew Moon and have encountered several Epic adventures, but the invitation to the recent Hophead’s Picnic was always likely to prove to be a life-changing experience. Yes, I had been saving myself, waiting for the right moment, the ideal attraction and had taken precautions (a late lunch comprising copious amounts of bacon and egg pie). But, gosh, all those exotic sounding, masculine characters, like ‘Pliny the Elder’ and ‘Mike’s Organic Double’ – would I fall hopelessly under their spells, or remain decently objective and selective?

I sat nervously on the couch with my legs crossed awaiting the first encounter – a blind date of all things! The fellow turned out to be none other than Dave the Friendly Barman’s ‘US Limitation’. He called it a minimum, but it was big enough for starters for me at 4.5%. A dead ringer for Hallertau Minimus, wearing a medal round the neck bearing the inscription ‘Silver NHBC 2010’, this new Kiwi-kid on the block has potential alright.

Next up was a visitor from Mendocino, California called ‘Anderson Valley Boont’. This guy wasn’t quite what I expected and was very up front with his sweetness. Dominic mentioned that Andy Deuchars from Renaissance had a fling with him for a while, so no wonder he tasted like a malteser. A mixed up dude for sure, as later on he got very dry and seemed unbalanced. Apparently a 6.8% ESB, so I took this to mean Especially Silly Boy.

Arriving without a visa was another Californian who seemed familiar. Although a bit of a mouthful, ‘Sierra Nevada Southern Hemisphere Hop Harvest’ was easy to take a shine to. Then of course I realised why – he had that bit of Kiwi freshness in him. The opposite of Boont, this Chico-kid was sooo balanced and I really wanted to get my lips around some more.

Flying the flag for Europe was ‘Mikkeller Nelson Sauvin’, all the way from Denmark. Apparently there was some Kiwi in this fella too, but Dave the Friendly Barman let on that this old geezer might leave a bit of an odd taste in the mouth. Jeeps, I nicknamed him Mukkeller, not my type at all. If want to suck on a band aid, I go to the medicine cupboard not the bar.

‘Russian River Blind Pig’ – now there’s a name to get the juices flowing. Forget any thoughts of Rasputin though, this fine young West Coast American smells so fresh and fruity I couldn’t wait to have a taste. He didn’t disappoint, reminding me of Hopired, another love of my life. At 6.1%, not the biggest boy in the lineup, but hey, it’s not always abv that matters.

Next it was time to spice up the evening with a touch of the oriental, courtesy of ‘Baird Suruga Bay’, from Japan. I recall spotting him before, hanging around the bar in Hashigozake, but tonight he seemed a lot more mature, almost bland in comparison with the ‘Pig’, although he was impeccably dressed as always.

There was distinct tingle in the air when ‘Russian River Pliny the Elder’ showed up. If ever someone deserved the tag imperial, then this 8% big boy would be the one. I can see why my friend Neil Miller is so besotted, but I reckon Pliny’s one that could easily take advantage of you, especially as he appeared to slip into the country unnoticed.

Continued on page 3
Great to see a Kiwi that’s taken on a new lease of life in recent times closing off the picnic in style. The ‘Naki monster - ‘Mike’s Organic Imperial’ - put a few of the foreign upstarts firmly in their place. Hard to believe this guy is already on his third subtle makeover, courtesy of brewery neighbour Jo Wood and he’s definitely more approachable now. Show me the way to Amarillo baby.

Outside in the breeze over a cigarette, I reflected on my experience. Oh how the world has changed in the last few years - there’s now such a choice of nationality, intensity and style! These are happy days indeed for a craft beer slut in Wellington and I can’t wait for a few more blind dates at the Regional’s Beer Options later this month. Catch you there – I’ll be the one wearing a SOBA cap and a skirt 10cm above the knee.

Cheers!

NICKY P, EDITOR

Note: Use of sexual innuendo in the above may be the result of preparing this article whilst still under the influence of Chinook, Amarillo, Simcoe and Nelson Sauvin.

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SOBA Newsletter
**BREWERY NEWS**

**McCashin’s launch**

The McCashin family have now officially launched their range of Stoke Ales. Stoke Gold is a 4.5% golden lager, sweet and aromatic on the nose, with a hint of fruitiness. Stoke Amber is a 4.5% ale with a malty body, smooth honey tones and a dry finish. Stoke Dark is a 4.5% dark lager with coffee and chocolate aromas, malty body and subtle bitterness. Look out for specialty brews next year. Apparently there were heavyweight tactics from Lion Nathan, attempting to ensure that the Mac’s brand name was not used, but the Stoke brewers had already decided to use their hometown as their moniker.

**Tuatara pops up**

Tuatara beers appeared at the recent ‘pop-up’ restaurant in Sydney and also found their way to the Great Japan Beer Festival (see article by Hashigo Zake’s Dominic Kelly on on page 22). The company already exports to China, USA and more recently Denmark.

The Waikanae brewery has actually improved its ranking five places from 39th to 34th on the Deloitte Fast 50 index which measures the fastest growing Kiwi businesses over ten years.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of Tuatara, Head Brewer Carl Vasta produced the huge, crazy, strong Belgian beer he had wanted to make for years. The result was Tuatara X which was launched at Beervana 2010 and promptly sold out. Now X is back in bottle and it is currently available only at Malthouse, Hashigo Zake and Long Beach Café in Waikanae.

**More Aftershocks**

Three Boys brewer Ralph Bungard was brewing his first batch of Golden Ale on the Wednesday after the earthquake when a 5.1 aftershock hit, knocking out power for 45 minutes. The cut prompted Ralph to wing it with a new beer, reducing the batch to 1200 litres of strong 7.1% ale, which has been branded Aftershock. The odd keg has appeared as far afield as Wellington and the brew has also been spotted in special wax-sealed 330ml bottles.

Apparently Three Boys also sold 400 litres of the beer to Twisted Hop Brewery in Christchurch, which transformed it into a summer ale, labeled Magnitude 7.1. Anyone had a taste of that one?

**Great year for Croucher**

It’s been an awesome year for Rotorua-based Croucher Brewing, Croucher Plisner took Gold Medal and Best in Class Trophy at BrewNZ and demand has led to both this beer and the Pale Ale to now be produced at Auckland’s Steam Brewing. New look 500ml bottles are finding their way onto supermarket shelves.

The 600 litre Rotorua plant will still be used for seasonals and specials and one of the most recent has been the superb Patriot, a black IPA.

Croucher beers are now a permanent feature at Galbraith’s Ale House in Auckland.

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CELEBRITY CORNER

Te Radar
Eating the Dog and drinking beer

Te Radar (Andrew J Lumsden) is an award winning satirist, documentary maker, writer, stage and screen director, and amateur historian. He can be seen on TV in repeats of Off the Radar and Radar’s Patch, screening on TVNZ’s Heartland, during which he attempts to become more sustainable on small blocks of land and brew the perfect Te Whenua beer.

He is currently touring Eating the Dog, which celebrates his favourite people in New Zealand’s past; the misfits, the failures, and those who died trying.

This show won New Zealand Comedy Guild Award for Best Show in 2009, and also won Best Local Show at the 2009 NZ International Comedy Festival, and Best Comedy at the Dunedin Fringe Festival. At the 2009 New Zealand Comedy Festival he won the FRED AWARD for Comedy Achievement. In 2008 he was awarded the New Zealand Comedy Guild’s prestigious ‘Kevin Smith Memorial Cup for Artistic Achievement’.

Tonight I’m planning to...spend my first Friday night at home in months, in a much needed break from performing most nights every week. When you are on the road there is such a joy in a home cooked meal, a quiet beer, and strolling through the my-sky trying to figure out what, if anything, to watch. Mostly I’ll be distracted by the long list of chores to catch up on.

It always makes me laugh when...something inappropriate happens, especially in a social setting.

The thing I love most is...laughing with friends and family members, especially those long rolling bouts of laughter that comes from easy familiarity and a long history and that result in tears in the eyes and clutched stomachs.

It annoys me when...sanctimonious hypocrites spouting some religious nonsense try to tell people how they should live their lives.

My most decadent pleasure is...illegal in many countries.

In my fridge I always have...room for a lot more things and a couple of plates of leftovers on the cusp of edibility.

My ideal meal is...my mother’s weiner schnitzel, deep fried in dripping, with mashed potatoes and mushroom gravy.

Washed down with...an Emerson’s Pilsner.

My ultimate beer drinking companion would be...picking up the tab for the travel and the food - although I would be happy to shout the beer.

I am most at peace...on a sunny day, in the car, trundling through the countryside with nowhere in particular to go.

My favourite beer is...crafted with love and passion by small brewers. It doesn’t come with a faux lineage created by overpaid ad execs trying to tell me who I am and what I think by the bottle of swill I’m holding.

My biggest letdown was...soon eclipsed by the next letdown, which was soon eclipsed by the next. One can’t dwell on these things, otherwise you are eaten up with regret. Onwards, always onwards, relentlessly into the future.

If there’s one thing in life I want to accomplish it’s...not to die too young. But then isn’t it always too soon?

ED

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PUB NEWS

Wellington Focus

THERE has been a licensed establishment at 132 Lambton Quay since the early days of European settlement of Wellington. It started off life as the Queen’s Hotel, became the A1 Hotel, and finally the Royal Hotel. The Cyclopedia of New Zealand published in 1897 states “The Royal Hotel has long been favourably known to the travelling public and the citizens of the Empire City”. It was originally a two-storeyed building built in wood, and in the 1890s was partially rebuilt in brick, with another floor added. By 1931 it was described as “having outlived its usefulness”, but nevertheless managed to hang on until 1967, when it was demolished and replaced by the current high-rise building. The Royal was reinstated in this new building on three floors, and it has been a licensed establishment under various guises ever since. Some of us well remember the “spook in the cage” in the basement during the 1960s.

The latest venture on this site is Keenan’s Independent Ale House. They are serving Emerson’s Bookbinder, Pilsner and London Porter on tap, and Tuatara Pale Ale, also on tap. Other brands are Mac’s Gold, Speight’s Gold Medal, Guinness and Stella. The décor is a bit dark and gloomy (as it has been for as long as I can remember), and the furniture solid and wooden. Although they still have three floors (basement, ground level and first floor), I understand the basement (which has a pool table) is rarely used. They also have outdoor seating on Lambton Quay, a great place for people-watching during the day (you just never know who might walk past). They offer a $10 lunch, which we didn’t have time on our visit to try, but will do so. It looked a usual “pub lunch” menu, but nothing wrong with that!

I doubt that this will get much night-time business, being way off the beaten track for the night life of Wellington. However, it is probably worth a visit for lunch or a quick after-work drink on the way to the Railway Station.

Reference: Lawlor, Pat, Old Wellington Hotels, Millwood Press, 1974

FRANCES VERRITY

NOT CONTENT with their venture on Lambton Quay the same team behind Keenan’s will be opening a new outlet on the corner of Willeston and Victoria Streets before Christmas. The cafe bar is expected to have approximately 30 taps with a good percentage of craft beer.

Still on the theme of new outlets on the horizon, look out also for the opening of the Hop Garden on the site of the old Geek taverna Kosmos in Pirie Street. The bar is the latest project by James Henderson, owner of Bar Edward in Newtown. Expect up to 90 different competitively priced beers, with a menu of Mediterranean tapas options.

The Beervana ‘Pub Passport Scheme’ spawned a new crop of interesting craft beer outlets, perhaps none more so than Pollux on Manners Street. Several seasoned Beervana attendees were spotted on more than one occasion during the event, retiring to this intimate bar adjacent to the Opera House, to partake of Moa Imperial Stout served on handpump. Other Moa beers have made an appearance, including Five Hop Winter Ale.

Meow Cafe, tucked away in Edward Street is now selling Mike’s, Mata and Emerson’s beers on tap. Lots of organic options on the menu, plus a large range of gluten free choices too.

Congratulations to Regional Wines and Sprits for taking out the Capital Times ‘Best Bottle Store Award’ for 2010 and also for staging another super Beer Options evening at Wellington College. Not unexpectedly, the formidable ‘Ali Saaz’ team took the title at this event for the second year running.

ED
THANKS to all who entered the 2010 National Homebrew Championships and congratulations to all who achieved medal status, best in class and major awards.

There were a massive 294 entries, with beers entered in 68 of the 77 different style categories and 84 of them earning medals. For the second year running Dunedin’s Richard Pettinger won the Champion Brewer.

Great job done by organisers Greig McGill and Martin Bridges who staged the event in Hamilton and a huge thank you also to sponsors, Farra, Hallertau, and Liberty Brewing.

Also thanks to Martin Bridges and Stephen Plowman for hosting an excellent awards presentation ceremony recently at Hallertau. Look out for Dale’s BPA next year, which will be commercially brewed at Hallertau as prize for winning Champion Beer.

The major Awards were:
Champion Brewer - Richard Pettinger. Proudly sponsored by Farra Engineering
Champion Beer - Dale Holland (16B. Belgian Pale Ale). Proudly sponsored by Hallertau
Champion Ale - Richard Sherratt (13B. Sweet Stout). Proudly sponsored by Liberty Brewing
Champion Lager - Richard Pettinger (1A. Lite American Lager). Proudly sponsored by Liberty Brewing

Gold Medals
13B. Sweet Stout - Richard Sherratt
13D. Foreign Extra Stout - John Colics
16B. Belgian Pale Ale - Dale Holland
18A. Belgian Blond Ale - Andrew Cherry
27A. Common Cider - Nathan Crabbe
CAMPAIGNS UPDATE

Website
SOBA has re-engineered its online application BEERMAP, making it even easier to post tastings and bar reviews and to view their locations. Each month SOBA will be giving away a Hashigo Zake bar tab, or if you're not in Wellington, a delivery of yummy beer valued at $100, to the member with the most valid BeerMap tastings. The promotion runs until March 2011.

AGM
The SOBA AGM was held in August and the newly elected Executive comprises:

Geoff Griggs – President, Greg McGill – Secretary, Rob Owen – Treasurer, Martin Bulmer – General Executive / Press Officer, Nolen Smith – General Executive / Merchandise, Nick Page – General Executive / Newsletter Editor and Martin Bridges – General Executive / Homebrewing Liaison Officer.

There was a healthy debate over the apparent restrictions surrounding market opportunities for craft beer in New Zealand and as a result working parties have been set up to investigate and report back on the following:

1. Tax incentives for micro-brewed beers. This topic has already been researched by Martin Bulmer and Nolen Smith and an in-depth review can be found on pages 28-29 of this newsletter.

2. Relaxation of multinational brewery ties on public houses. This topic will be investigated by Nick Page and Dan Lord and findings reported during 2011.

Christchurch Earthquake
SOBA is supporting efforts to rescue at least one historic Christchurch building by giving it a new lease of life as a craft brew-pub in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Christchurch is famous for its historic buildings which define its character and bring enjoyment to many. The earthquake has presented an opportunity for some less far-sighted individuals who want to level many such buildings that have been damaged in the pursuit of a fast buck or higher ‘land utilisation’.

SOBA supports the efforts of local campaigner Richard Sewell to preserve the essence of Christchurch and at the same time attempt to provide another venue for craft beer in Canterbury.
Hashigo Zake takes extreme pleasure in announcing our 2011 Summer Line-up. In addition to New Zealand and Australia’s finest craft beers, we welcome the following:

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CAREERS IN BEER

My Experience of the Massey University Short Course Introduction to Brewing 6-11 November 2009

AFTER 17 years in the engineering industry I had been made redundant for the second time. It was at this point that I decided I needed a change and with home brewing being one of my favourite pastimes I decided to look into a career in the brewing industry.

After speaking to several highly respected people in the industry and discovering the Massey Course at Beervana, I spent some money I didn’t really have and booked a place on the course with the hopes that having the course under my belt would make me more appealing to a prospective employer.

Not really knowing what to expect I rocked up at Massey on the first day which happened to be a Friday afternoon where we all had the opportunity to introduce ourselves and have a few beers. Interestingly I was one of several at the course looking for a change in career.

The five days that followed where incredibly intense. Our tutors Peter Aldred and Frank Vriesekoop from Ballarat Uni in Australia along with the Massey tutors and staff crammed us full of information.

Beginning with an overview of the brewing process, we worked our way through the basic components of beer, how they are made, used and the effects they have on the beer itself.

Then a breakdown of all the brewing process starting with wort production and working through to fermentation/packaging. Scattered amongst all this theory were the sensory evaluation sessions which involved smelling, tasting, comparing and evaluating different beers for their particular characters and also faults.

I found the session where we evaluated the “spiked beers” particularly interesting; all the beers had been “spiked” to clearly demonstrate brewing faults and how the different chemicals affect the taste/smell of a beer.

The class was also split into two groups for the brewery practical and the visit to the maltsters Malteurop in Marton.

For our practical we brewed a Helles Lager and the second group a Wheat Beer. The brewery was very interesting; partly computer controlled with lots of different little projects that will eventually lead to simplifying the brewing process. This was all the more impressive because it has all been designed in house.

We obviously didn’t get to try our beer in the 5 days we were there but I did get a letter a few weeks later offering a taste when it came ready.
The trip to Malteurop was amazing - just the quantities of materials involved was astounding - we got to see the malting process in progress from start to finish.

The last day involved a road trip to the breweries; starting with Tui, then Mac’s and finally Tuatara. It was very interesting to see the extreme differences - Tui for example was very much automated including continuous fermentation, then Tuatara where it was very much hands on and batch brewed.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the course especially the tutors and my classmates who included some highly respected people from the brewing industry! Also the people from Malteurop, Tui, Mac’s and Tuatara.

I very much enjoyed the course came away from it with a head full of ideas! Finding a job within the brewing industry has eluded me so far but I’m not going to give up!

Cheers

CHRIS BANKS

Participants of the 2010 Brewing Short Course

Massey University will hold its second short course in brewing at the Manawatu (Palmerston North) campus in November 2011. Participants will live in. Visit the website http://www.massey.ac.nz and use keyword brewing for more info.
FIRST SOUTH ISLAND BEER FESTIVAL

“This is great! We should have more than one of these a year!” was a frequently heard comment at the inaugural South Island Beer Festival. The event held at Ilam Homestead in Christchurch at the end of October was blessed with an unseasonably warm and sunny spring afternoon. The homestead’s famous azalea gardens were in full bloom, the grass outside the Homestead was nice and dry and the crowd in attendance had a great time sitting on the lawn and sampling the finest new beers from 20 New Zealand breweries.

The event had a very relaxed vibe. There were small queues for particularly sought-after beers like Epic’s Apocalypse and Three Boy’s Aftershock but everyone was good-natured and chatty while they waited for their beer to be poured. In fact everyone seemed to be in a tremendously good mood all round, from the drinkers to the brewers to the bar staff. Even the small crew of volunteers who were collecting and washing the glasses seemed to be having a great day. You’d have been hard-pressed not to see beer being swirled and sniffed and mulled over. It was really an afternoon for chatting with friends and family while you decided which of the 27 beers on offer was your new favourite beer.

Many Christchurch beer fans will remember the annual Brews Blues and BBQs event that was held in the city each summer until it ran out of puff about 10 years ago. The South Island Beer Festival isn’t attempting to emulate that event but it fills a similar niche on a small scale. There was even live music courtesy of Marc Sam on the homestead’s piano, which had been hauled out onto the deck for the afternoon.

Various claims have been made about how many people attended the event. Since there were no admission tickets (people could come and go as they pleased) crowd numbers are nothing more than guesswork. We do know that roughly 2000 glasses of beer were served and given that any reasonable person would have tried at least four beers, we could reasonably guess that were 400 or 500 people there.

continued on p15

The Pursuit of Hoppiness - Spring 2010
The University of Canterbury Staff Club who like to call Ilam Homestead home and Charles Swettenham, the manager of homestead, were very pleased with the way event went. They were also very grateful to Craig Bowen from BeerNZ who played a huge role in putting the event together and to the brewers who came along - Richard Emerson, Ralph Bungard from Three Boys, Mark White from Harringtons, David Gaughan from Golden Eagle, and Sean Harris and Dave Stanaway from the Twisted Hop. They were asked along so that guests would be able to meet some of the stars of the local brewing industry but went above and beyond, installing taps, delivering kegs and even working on the bar. One was asked if a particular beer was any good by a drinker who clearly didn’t know he was talking to that beer’s creator. The brewer smiled and said something along the lines of ‘you pays your money and takes your chances’.

There was never any question about the festival being the first of many. The question is now – as the many punters on the day suggested – should there be more than one a year? That, we don’t yet know, but we can reveal that there will be another South Island Beer Festival at Ilam Homestead on Saturday the 12th of February next year.

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BEERVANA AND BREWNZ 2010

ALTHOUGH now fading in the memory, a special mention should be made of the superbly well organised event that was Beervana 2010. Everything appeared to run like clockwork, with plenty of volunteer staff, many of whom were SOBA members. Over three separate sessions, all beers sampled were generally of excellent quality and the seminars again proved popular.

This year all beer stands were sited on the ground floor of the atmospheric Wellington Town Hall and while there were the odd pinch points, access was generally free flowing and easy. From a SOBA perspective it was pleasing to be offered a promotional stand and many punters seemed to enjoy stopping by for a chat and indeed more than a dozen new members were signed up.

Whilst some brewers may complain about the costs involved in participating at this flagship event, it should surely be viewed not purely as a commercial venture, but more as public relations exercise in educating the public into the delights of discovering craft beer.

And the champion brewery of New Zealand for 2010 is..........DB!!

For sure, the accolade received a mixed reception at the BrewNZ Beer Awards which preceded Beervana, but there has been a lot of politically correct claptrap talked about how deserving the multinational was of the award. Make no bones about it, the Brewers Guild shot themselves firmly in the foot this time and a re-vamp of the category structure is well overdue in order for the event to retain some kudos.

The champion brewery is currently selected by adding up the points for each brewery's top three medals – three for gold, two for silver and one for bronze.

DB got two gold medals (Export 33 – low-carbohydrate beer, Tui Blond – New Zealand lager) and two silver medals (Tui – New Zealand draught, Monteith's Black – European lager) for a total of 10.

Snapping at their heels was Three Boys Brewery from Christchurch which also picked up two golds (Oyster Stout – Porters and Stouts, Pineapple Lump Porter – festive brew), plus a silver (Golden Ale – European ales) and a bronze (Wheat – wheat beers) for a total of 9.

Auckland's Steam Brewing was only one point further back after striking gold twice (Fuggles – European ale, Monk's Habit – New Zealand, US and international ales), and bronze (Dirty Blonde – wheat) for a total of 7.

Whilst DB won the mainstream categories, Three Boys and Steam undoubtedly succeeded in the more challenging classes. Next year let the big boys fight over their own meaningless best pap trophy and let’s have a proper one for the small champion brewery of New Zealand.

ED
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In part two of an article on drinking in the UK, PETER MAYES continues his in-depth look at cask-conditioned ale and where to find it...

SO what about the beer? The Romans were probably the first to set up breweries for their troops and followers in the first century AD. The water was unfit to drink so Ale was a good alternative. Artesian wells were dug and the water used. One of the main centres would have been Burton on Trent, where the water was particularly suited to making beer. Since that time the phrase ‘Burtonised’ has been used to indicate a local water that has the natural chemicals found in Burton, added.

The church followed, making beer for their priests and then supplied it to travellers, setting up rest houses which later became ‘Inns’. Then came the Public Houses which made their own beer, then one would buy beer from another and breweries would be set up to supply a number of pubs. These grew until the big ‘money men’ came along and bought out the smaller breweries, replacing them with large “efficient” ones run by accountants (booo) not brewers. Now the wheel has turned full circle and the small breweries are coming back (hoorah!). Government legislation has helped, forcing the large brewers with over 2,000 pubs, to offer an independent’s beer as well. Yes in many cases they have got round this, but also a large number of pubs have become available to the ‘Free Trade’

The UK is a small place but with a long history and so much to do and explore. Whether you travel fast and try to see as much as possible or whether you hire a Canal Barge (maximum speed 6km per hour) and chug gently from one canalside pub to the next, at least there are no limits on drinking and driving a barge. Plan well ahead and enjoy.

Beer Festivals are found all over the UK. The largest is held at Olympia in London. Others are found in towns and even small ones in individual pubs. Wetherspoons have two each year, in May and November. 50 different beers are available over a period of 10 days at all of their 700 plus pubs. They offer cider as well. For each one, four brewers are invited to England from around the world. They are then given the use of a brewery, to produce one of their brews from their own recipe. You may recall Luke Nicholas from Epic brewing an award-winner at Everards in Leicesterhire.

Kent and Herefordshire have been the main hop growing areas for decades. They became few and far between as the major brewers started sourcing hops from the Eastern Bloc countries, but now are re-planting and producing the variety of hops that are required by the micro brewers. In the period before and after the second world war hundreds of people from the East End of London would spend their ‘holidays’ hop picking. Special trains would take them to and from the hop growing areas and some would even go on horse drawn carts. They lived in very basic huts using the same one year after year and leaving the necessities in the hut from one season to the next. Cooking was done on open fires. Family groups would work together, the men folk having returned to their jobs in London, during the week. Each group would have a large bin made from hessian, supported by cross legs at the ends.

Hop vines were cut down by the farm workers and taken to a nearby bin, the hops were then stripped off by hand. As the bin filled up, a tally man would come round and measure out the hops in a Bushel basket, placing them into the large hop ‘pokes’ He would give a ‘tally’ for each bushel, that was then changed for payment at the farm. The Salvation Army came around the fields, selling mugs of tea. The local pubs did a great trade, especially at weekends when the menfolk returned. They probably took more money in those few weeks than the whole of the rest of the year.

continued on p19
Cider has always been a part of farming especially at harvest times and whole orchards were devoted to producing the apples that were required. Consumption dropped off as a matter of fashion and many of the trees were so old that they were not commercially viable. With the renewed popularity of cider, orchards are being planted with varieties that are easily picked from the ground. (Health and Safety at Work had a lot to do with that). At Middle Farm, Berwick in East Sussex, the shop has around 70 different ciders that can be tasted then bought in 1 and 2 litre plastic containers. They also have some Real Ale from local breweries. Just around the corner is The Cricketers Arms at Berwick, where unusually they still serve the beer direct from the barrels, which are kept in a cool ‘cellar’.

Accountants as well as public health inspectors can be blamed for the demise of the wooden barrel. The former, because the content of the barrel, was never exact. Over a period of time they would shrink and a new stave would be added to ensure that there was never less than the claimed amount... a good publican would be able to get extra pints from a barrel if he was careful.

Some publicans were careless in not sealing used barrels and by the time they got back to the brewery, no amount of washing could remove the sour tainting. Each barrel was ‘sniffed’ before filling. Stainless steel barrels are a uniform size and can be filled with an exact amount of beer.

Real Ale should be served ‘cool’ not cold. The flavour is lost when cooled too much. There should be a natural tingle on the tongue from the naturally produced CO2 in the barrel and the head should ‘hang’ on the side of the glass, long after it is empty. Too much ‘head’ on a glass of beer indicates that the beer is either too young or too old. Or in these times, a ‘sparkler’ has been used on the tap, to make it look as the beer is in good condition. Use of a ‘sparkler’ can indicate poor cellar management, or it is pandering to the clientele who want a large head on their pint. A least drinking a real ale you don’t get full up with gas that has to find its way out! To get the ‘Creamy Head’ found on Guinness, Tetley’s Cream Flow, Murphy’s Irish Red Ale Boddington’s etc Nitrogen is added as well as CO2.

The ‘Cask Marque’ name will be seen in some UK pubs. It indicates that the cellars, serving temperature and general quality of the beers meet the standards set. It is monitored by an organisation that has no allegiance to any brewer.

Wherever you are, look out for Real Ale served from a hand pump and not too cold and enjoy!

The Cricketers Arms, Berwick

So what is ‘Real Ale”? It is a term used for ales that have not been filtered and pasteurised. They are still ‘alive’ in the barrel and are served without the aid of top pressure CO2. (In some cases CO2 is used as a neutral gas to replace the beer as it is drawn from the cask, rather than air from the surrounding cellar which could be contaminated.) As the yeasts are still working in the barrel, the sugar content reduces and the alcohol increases as the days go by. However, this leads to beer becoming ‘vinegary’ and cloudy. Because of this secondary fermentation a sediment is formed and this together with the hops that are added after the barrel has been filled, falls to the bottom of the cask, hence the shape of the casks, with the bung above the bottom level. Because of this, Real Ale only has a life of 3-5 days from the time the barrel is tapped, unlike your ‘keg’ beers that have a long shelf life even when in use.

SOBA Newsletter
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Dear Editor Nick

This is somewhat advertorial but Golden Ticket Brewing are returning to the market with the Black Emperor - its another style defining beer, being an American Schwartzbier. I'm looking at bottling for the first time so should be available nationwide for the first time. Only 600 litres and despite its dark appearance is quite a crisp and thirst quenching beer and hopefully we'll get some nice weather to enjoy it.

Brewed again by Steve Nally at Invercargill, I'm coming back smaller as Nathan has left and Golden Ticket Brewing is now only me. Hopeful this one will go down well - the American hops shine through (or they do in the pilot version) and I'm looking forward to trying some.

Cheers

ALLY McGILVRAY

Dear Editor Nick

I would like to take this opportunity to sing your own praises on two counts, and to put in a plug for volunteering. Why sing your praises? Well, I don't want you to think that you are in a thankless job!

I mentioned to you at Beervana that I had never seen the first edition of “The Pursuit of Hoppiness” and kudos to you for sending me an e-version on, from memory, the following Tuesday – even if the pages were in a random order! No big deal to put that right; my collection is now complete. Secondly, I read with interest earlier in the year your review of Noumea’s Les Trois Brasseurs, because I was heading that way myself at the end of the third school term with a group of students. (We arrived in Noumea the day before New Caledonia Day, a public holiday, and it was a shock to read in the paper on the outward flight that, in an effort to curb public drunkenness, there would be no retail sales of alcohol until after midnight Saturday … in my humble opinion, a bit of overkill!) However, I did make it to Les Trois Brasseurs, where I received a very warm welcome, and yes they did know about SOBA, and of course I could taste a selection of their beers (the current special being an excellent cherry beer, with the next one to be a chestnut brew), and no unfortunately they couldn’t sell me one of the polos the bar staff were wearing, but they were able to give me another souvenir. It was a pleasure to chat to the staff in French and in English and watch the brewer on the other side of the bar going about his work. There were few patrons there late afternoon, but I heard later from a local that the place is very popular with young people because of their music scene. Work out the implications of that for yourself! Anyone else heading to Noumea – don’t miss it!

I was a volunteer for my maiden visit to Beervana in August, and I thought the weekend was absolutely brilliant. I ended up with a wide range of different jobs during my two shifts on Friday, and thoroughly enjoyed my free session on Saturday. Any readers who are thinking of going to a future Beervana – do consider volunteering, as it is great fun, the work isn’t that hard, you meet a lot of like-minded people, you have a lot of laughs, and just as important, you certainly don’t go home thirsty! One highlight, while greeting guests at the main entrance on Friday night and putting wrist bands on, was the punter whose response to the polite “Good evening Sir, are you thirsty?”, was “Thirsty! I’ve drunk nothing since Sunday, and all I’ve eaten today is salt.”

MARTIN WEREN - Hamilton SOBA member

Missing a copy of TPOH?
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email nick.j.page@paradise.net.nz
GREAT JAPAN BEER FESTIVAL

One-a tara, Tuatara

ON THE 18th, 19th and 20th of September this year, three of Tuatara Brewery’s beers were served alongside many of Japan’s finest, and a number of other imports, at the Yokohama version of the Great Japan Beer Festival. This was surely a first for a New Zealand craft brewery and represented a bold play for a stake in the vibrant Japanese craft beer market.

The origins of the venture lay in an approach from the brewery to Hashigo Zake looking for contacts in Asia that might lead to export opportunities. The subsequent advice from Nagano Trading, Japan’s leading importer of US craft beer, was to exhibit in the GJBF. This was easier said than done. Between the peculiarities of the market and the intricacies of Japanese bureaucracy, the equivalent of months of preparation had to be squeezed into a few weeks before a pallet of kegs and bottles set sail in late August. In the end there were just hours to spare when the beer arrived at the Osambashi Hall in Yokohama on the morning of 18th September.

Flying out of the Wellington winter to meet the beer and represent Tuatara’s interests were David Bernard of Tuatara and myself, in my capacity as “the guy who once lived there and knows some people”.

Before we started the hard work of dispensing New Zealand beer, 50mls at a time, there was a free day in Yokohama and Tokyo, spent at as many of those cities’ serious beer outlets as time would allow. There was the Nakameguro Taproom of Baird and the Aldgate and Craftheads in Shibuya and Yokohama’s own Thrashzone. At all four bars the stamp of Nagano Trading was evident. Many taps were pouring immaculately fresh beer from a variety of US brewers, even at the Baird Taproom, which sets aside four of its 28 taps to guest beers. It was eye-opening to see the impact one importing company has had on the Japanese market, particularly in Tokyo, whose beer drinkers might just be the most spoiled on the planet. Not that these treats come cheaply. A US pint glass (474 mls) can cost between 1000 and 2000 yen (SNZ15-30).

Indulgence is certainly the theme at the extraordinary Thrashzone. It starts with the owner, Koichi Katsuki, who indulges his two loves - extremely noisy thrash music and “extreme” beer. He manages to squeeze eight kegs into two kegerators – most of them high octane and highly hopped. A few are local but probably the majority are imports. There’s no concession to anyone seeking a session beer and very little room to do anything except sit or stand, drink and admire the heavy metal videos on the big screen behind the bar. But amazingly when some well lubricated foreigners wandered in late one evening, he willingly agreed to a request to “put some Queen on”.

On the morning of the 18th we arrived at the venue. The Osambashi Hall is part of a huge, modern equivalent to Wellington’s overseas terminal. It extends more than 400 metres into Yokohama Bay. The hall itself occupies a portion of the terminal, with 2000 square metres of bright, open exhibition space. The exhibitors line the sides, leaving vast open space for festival attendees to mingle. Tuatara are with other imported beers, most of which are American, but we also find ourselves rubbing shoulders with Italy’s Revelation Cat. Curiously one of their taps is pouring a lambic, dry-hopped with Nelson Sauvin.

The paying guests start to arrive and a steady trickle wander up to see what we’re about. On offer are Tuatara’s IPA, APA and Ardenness. Signs are improvised to explain what the beer names signify, and a map appears with an arrow to Otaki. The Japanese seem comfortable ordering an IPA or Belgian Ale and tend to overlook the APA. Fortunately a different dynamic is at work on the other side of the trestle tables and the APA is quickly in demand from our fellow workers. In fact it becomes clear that amongst the plethora of highly hopped and/or flavoured beers from the USA, there are few, if any, classic American Pale Ales.

Continued on page 23
Overall the feedback is quite encouraging. While Tuatara’s IPA is far too nuanced and moderate to compete in an environment like this with the American IPAs, the APA is fresh and aromatic, has stood up to the sea journey across the tropics and is popular. One influential player stresses the need for original beers showcasing New Zealand hops. While his case is valid and I agree up to a point, he eventually has to concede that the reception has been too consistently positive to ignore.

By the third day of the festival the managers of several prominent bars have been through and expressed interest in getting access to the beer. Our ally says that it’s a matter of waiting and seeing how many calls come to him from bars asking for kegs. But there are extra kegs in this shipment and all the signs are that these will be snapped up by Tokyo bars.

While future orders are far from guaranteed and the hard work of adapting to the target market has barely started, there are signs that Tuatara might have a new export market. This should be great news not only to them but to all New Zealand craft brewers. Between sessions at the beer festival we took several cases of New Zealand beer, naturally including Tuatara, but also Renaissance, 8-Wired, the Mussel Inn and Emerson’s to an informal tasting for many of Tokyo’s most prominent beer lovers, writers and, well, pissheads. The reception was universally positive. There is little doubt that beers like Emerson’s Pilsner, Captain Cooker, Hopwired and Stonecutter Scotch Ale would gain an instant following if we could simply get a consistent supply of them to Japan.

I’m sure there is plenty of scepticism about the export potential of New Zealand craft beer. We came across it when another local brewery applied for funding to help get to the GJBF too. The dismissive tone of the poorly-informed functionary who turned them down sends shivers down my spine. Even if the craft brewing industry here is small and immature, sceptics overlook the trail being blazed by our hop industry. New Zealand hops are the height of fashion amongst leading brewers like Mikkeller, Baird and Sierra Nevada and are probably being used with little fanfare in many other famous beers. At the GJBF we found ourselves next door to an Italian brewer boasting about his use of New Zealand hops. Aficionados are desperate to taste beers brewed in the land where these very hops come from. It’s time some of the resources bestowed on cinderella industries like wine, fashion and software were donated to something we have a natural advantage at.

Reproduced with permission of DOMINIC KELLY. Extracted from his blog THE LADDER at http://theliquorladder.blogspot.com.

In addition to Dominic’s site there is now an awesome range of craft beer blogs available to browse online. Here are some of my favourites:

http://www.nzbeerblog.com - Martin Craig - working its arse off to promote SOBA and our craft brewers and generally fighting beer mediocrity!

http://themothersmilk.blogspot.com - Kieran Haslett-Moore - all the latest news from the Masons Arms and further afield.


http://tuatarabeers.blogspot.com - the official blog for the Tuatara Brewery

http://luke.co.nz - Luke Nicholas with more Epic adventures

http://www.realbeer.co.nz - regular contributions from Neil Miller and Luke Nicholas amongst others

http://www.themalthouse.co.nz/index.php/blog - the official blog for the Malthouse in Wellington

5-MINUTE BEER QUIZ

1. The Sale of Liquor Act permitted the sale of beer in supermarkets in which year – a) 1997, b) 1998 or c) 1999?

2. What is the Maori word for hops?

3. Who said "We could not take time for further search or consideration; our victuals being much spent, especially our beer”

4. Who established the Main Trunk Brewery, Taihape in 1908?

5. The Morning Advertiser is a licensed trade newspaper published in which country?

6. Who produced a beer called Aftershock in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquake?

7. Which order of Trappist monks brew Orval beer?

8. If someone was taking a BJCP what would they be doing?

9. Which company recently sold its wine brands and assets, totalling $88 million, to Lion Nathan?

10. Which beer has the highest alcohol content – a) Dogfish Head 120 Minute IPA, b) BrewDog Abstrakt AB:02 American Strong Ale, or c) Sigtuna Ace of Spades Imperial Stout?

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten contributions for publication.
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TOP OF THE SOUTH

THE HOP HEARTLAND of New Zealand now has a fantastic range of craft beer bars and breweries. Local SOBA members have been busy collating a full and comprehensive list of all known outlets in the region and this can be found in the table below. Refer to the key for details of the beers on offer, opening hours and types of dispense.

Card carrying SOBA member discounts may apply at certain outlets - enquire for details.

List is correct at time of going to press, but SOBA accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions that may occur. List excludes numerous outlets exclusively selling either DB Monteith’s or Lion Nathan Mac’s brands.

KEY

Facilities
* = Restaurant with bar
# = Accommodation
! = Handpump beer

Dispense
B = Bottle only
T = Tap only
BT = Bottle and tap

Opening Hours
A = All day (from 10am ish)
N = Noon till late
C = Cafe hours
E = From 4 or 5 till late
Most are open from midday Saturday
Sunday and Public Holidays
and longer on some days.
Winter hours may differ.

Beers
B = Bays  F = Founders
G = Golden Bear  L = Lighthouse
Mc = McCashins  M = Mussel Inn
S = Sprig and Fern  T = Totara
Ts = Townshend  V = Various

Breweries with rigger fills
opening hours vary - ring for details

Lighthouse, Stoke, 547 0983
Bays, Stoke, 547 8097
McCashin’s, Stoke, 547 5367
Monkey Wizard, Riwaka,
Sprig & Fern, Richmond, 544 8675
Townshend, Upper Moutere, 543 2170
Founders, Nelson
THE GUYS AT THE MOUTERE INN, just west of Nelson, have been busy over the winter. Their Beer Tourist website - www.beertourist.co.nz - mapping the top of the South Island had proven popular so they decided to expand it to cover the whole of New Zealand. The Beer Tourist is now an interactive map of the country, split into 6 regions, with all breweries and 'Champion' craft beer outlets details shown.

The Beer Tourist started a year ago when the guys at the Moutere Inn were trying to source a range of craft beers from around the country. There were guides online, but few of them were up-to-date. With the craft beer scene rapidly growing they decided to map out exactly what was happening. They found 14 breweries in the top of the South Island alone!

And so, the Beer Tourist was expanded, and for the benefit of the craft brewing industry. There's no advertising on the website at all and no contribution to the cost has been asked for. But it would be good to have the help of other craft beer lovers and outlets out there. If you notice a mistake on the website or know of a new brewery or champion craft ale outlet please email them at. And if you have a brewery and are reading this, maybe you could provide a link to it on your website. It's not about competing with the brewery next door, but making sure that everyone is easy to find and helping grow the industry.

By the way, a 'Champion' outlet is one that must have a vast number of permanent craft beer taps and/or a huge selection in bottles and focuses on craft beer. It has to have that wow factor as a craft beer outlet and prove that it deserves to be included. No such barriers to breweries, apart from the big bland boys.

The Gentle Cycling Company Beer Country Ride is cycling as it should be - self-guided, no big hills and comfy bikes, with a cold beer at the end! The Ride starts and finishes at the Moutere Inn where a tasting platter of locally brewed beers is available. Rides will also visit McCashin’s Brewery along the way. For more info about the ride visit www.gentlecycling.co.nz or contact Rose Griffin on 03 929 5652.
PROGRESSIVE BEER DUTY

AT THE RECENT AGM, Hugh Grierson proposed that SOBA starts lobbying for tax incentives for micro brewed beers, similar to that offered in the US and UK. The members and committee discussed the motion and it was finally decided that we should investigate tax incentives for micro brewed beers, similar to that offered in the US and UK. SOBA Executive member MARTIN BULMER volunteered to carry out the research together with support from fellow Executive member NOLEN SMITH. This article is a summary of their findings and recommendations.

What is Progressive Beer Duty?

It’s a system by which smaller breweries pay less duty, or tax, on the beer they produce. It started as a concept in Bavaria, Germany where it is the foundation of the industry, allowing smaller breweries to get a foothold in a competitive industry where margins can be slim. In the UK, SIBA (The Society of Independent Brewers) lobbied the government for 20+ years before finally, then Chancellor Gordon ‘Mad Eye’ Brown included it in the 2002 budget. The system has also been adopted in the US along slightly different lines.

What was the tax break?

In the UK, breweries producing 60,000 Hectolitres p/a pay tax at a lower rate, on a sliding scale, with breweries producing less than 5,000 HL p/a (about 3,000 barrels) only paying 50% tax compared to the ‘big boys’. As soon as you brew >60,000 HL, you paid the full whack. The States’ system seems to have operated on a flat discount per barrel brewed, which to my mind does not sound very ‘progressive’. The rest of this article deals with the UK situation which I think is more equivalent to NZ.

What did they hope would happen?

In the words of Gordon Brown, PBD was to “encourage one group of small businesses: the nation’s small brewers”. The intention was that these small businesses would flourish and grow into more sizeable businesses, take on more staff and become regional employers instead of remaining the <10 staff outfits that most of them are.

What did happen?

According to Wyld, et al. (1) the effect was not as desired; the number of small breweries going to the wall was the same, pretty much, as the number of other small businesses failing. The tax break did nothing to counteract typical poor business practices it seems. However, since 2002 the number of breweries in the UK has more than doubled, with over 70 starting up last year alone.

The 5,000 HL 50% tax has led to a kind of glass ceiling. There are tons of tiny wee 2-10 staff micros with commensurate micro distribution zones: Crondall’s Best Bitter (my old local micro’s beer, lovely stuff!) is available within a radius that their Mercedes Sprinter van can comfortably and economically achieve in a day’s deliveries. So don’t expect to find any Crondall’s Best if you fancy a pint in say, Reading, which is only 21 miles away. Most of the 11 barrel brewery’s output is off-sales. Over on Arran off the west coast of Scotland, the Arran Brewery was apparently on to a nice little earner. Arran Blonde is a multi-award winning beer that Sainsbury’s picked up: seemed like Arran was in clover. In 2008 they went bust. Sainsbury’s were tight on price and demanding quantity which meant they were over extended, and for every bottle or barrel drunk off the island (popn 5,058) they had to pay the ferry costs to the mainland.

And there is the rub: as Pugh, Tyrall and Wild (2) say the disadvantage felt by smaller breweries is more to do with the fact that the big boys control the distribution. The brewery that can get its product known to, and distributed to, a wide market economically is the one that succeeds.

Meanwhile, the regional breweries with the marketing power to promote the beers that people know and buy – London Pride, ESB, Broadside, Spitfire, Landlord, SA, Old Thumper, Snekilifter, Summer Lightning – are the ones that are suffering. When local competitors have been able to charge 60 quid less a barrel on a 300 quid barrel of beer, brewers like Adnam’s, Fullers, Hook Norton and Timothy Taylor have seen production drop by as much as 100 barrels a week.


continued on p29

The Pursuit of Hoppiness - Spring 2010
A good pint of Summer Lightning, carefully marketed and widely available, is exactly the kind of beer that will tempt the mob away from crap lager. It’s unlikely to be the locally/micro produced one-off ‘Ferret’s Fart summer ale’ with the dodgy pump clip and ho-hum rustic charm. This is despite the fact that a pint of Ferret’s Fart might actually be a better pint; quality AND distribution is what counts...

UK PBD is under a great deal of scrutiny and it is likely to change. It certainly can’t stay as it is as the very mid-sized regional employers it was designed to grow are going to go out of business.

What does this mean for New Zealand?

I don’t think PBD is the answer for New Zealand. The purpose of the tax was to turn small businesses into larger, regional employers. At this it has more or less failed and I cannot see that pattern changing in New Zealand where the population is considerably less dense and the idea of a sizeable regional brewery doesn’t really hold water.

Of course the side effect of PBD was to encourage more breweries to start up. The problem that I can see is that the two majors control the distribution – i.e. the bars and vans. Try and get a bottle/glass of 8-Wired Hopwired or Liberty Summit in Foxton or Raetihi.

Which brings us to item two in the motions from the members:

“...that SOBA seeks to broaden the availability of craft beer by educating bar owners/prospective bar owners as to accessibility and how they can negotiate freedom into their supply agreement”.

My opinion is we need to concentrate on this issue first: encourage ‘suck’ demand rather than ‘blow’ production, but this is a democratic organization, what do you think? Have your say on the SOBA forum at www.soba.org.nz/forum.aspx.
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Check out nationwide SOBA events over the coming months....

**WELLINGTON AREA**
Contact: Rob Owen
email robert.owen@equator.co.nz

Socials on the first Tuesday in the month

Friday March 25th - Sunday March 27th
Weekend Away Trip to MarchFest
Nelson Area
Suggestions welcome for this year’s itinerary!

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

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

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

Socials on Thursdays

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

Friday 3rd December, 5pm and subsequent Fridays
Informal social drinks
O’Carroll’s, Vulcan Lane, Auckland City. We’ll maybe wander on elsewhere later in the evening.

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

Wednesday 8th December, 5.45pm
Note early start time!
Three breweries tour: McDuff’s, Green Man, Emerson’s “Meeting their markets, filling their niches”

Wednesday 9th February, 7.30pm
Social
_Inch Bar_

---

**Play it again Sam!**

‘Playing Favourites’ with Sam Possenniskie and Stu McKinlay of Yeastie Boys fame was a very enlightening, entertaining and intimate tasting evening staged at Regional Wines in late October.

For our session beers we were accompanied by Bjork, the malt accented beers by Sabres of Paradise, the yeast accented beers by Wilco, the esoteric beers by Tom Waits and the full-on encore beers by Loch Leven.

Plenty of tales of their student days, travels and early forays into homebrewing, with of course a few Yeastie Boys creations finding their way onto the table. Not so sure about the 100% whisky malt West Scottish IPA though lads - the randomest beer I’ve tried in a fair while!

Cheers
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.
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.