14 IN ‘14
BEST OF SAN DIEGO BEER READER POLL

BEST BEERTENDER: NATE SOROKO
see more starting on page 25

+ BRANDON HERNÁNDEZ’S COMPLETE GUIDE TO SD BREWERIES REVIEWED,
DYNAMICS OF SENSORY ANALYSIS, AND MORE!

VOLUME 4 NO. 14  ENJOY #SDBEER & ENGAGE SOCIA LLY @WESTCOASTERSD
A NEW IPA OVERRUN WITH WILD HOPS

We’re among the first brewers to get ahold of the untried Neo-Mexicanus hop. It’s long grown wild in the American west, a beacon of untapped flavor atop the high desert hills. The final IPA in our 2014 Harvest series billows with the apricot, peach, and herbal layers of Neo-Mexicanus.

Available November 2014
Happy Holidays!

MERMAID MAKEOVER!
LOOK FOR OUR NEW PACKAGING COMING SOON

2014 WORLD BEER CUP® CHAMPION MID-SIZE BREWING CO. & BREWMASTER
170 ORANGE AVENUE | CORONADO, CA 92118 • 1205 KNOXVILLE STREET | SAN DIEGO, CA 92110 • 875 SEACOAST DRIVE | IMPERIAL BEACH, CA 91932
FREEDOM TO POUR

44 CRAFT BEERS ON TAP

POUR YOUR OWN BEER

DAILY 4:00 to 6:00 pm

1261 GARNET AVE
PACIFIC BEACH CA 92109
BARRELREPUBLIC.COM
PH: 858-270-9922

Drink Good Beer
Craft Beer Marinated Meats

Specializing in authentic Santa Maria Style BBQ

Let us cater your next event!

grillfellasbbq2004@gmail.com | tel: (760) 845-7578 | www.grillfellascatering.com

Photos by Tim Wong
What a year! Here at West Coaster we have a bird’s eye perspective of the beer scene, and we try our best to share that with you each month while keeping our personal opinions out of the limelight. That said, I thought this would be the right time to share my opinion-heavy look back on 2014:

My favorite beers of 2014 have been narrowed down into three choices. Pizza Port did a hell of a job getting its Ponto cans out throughout SoCal, and seldom did I pass up a chance to load up a few in my grocery basket. The prices are unbeatable, and I’d frequently overlook similarly-priced 16 oz. 4-packs or 12 oz. 6-packs for the 16 oz. 6-packs of Ponto, which is a fantastic low-ABV hop bomb that delivers. Pizza Port should be proud.

Karl Strauss dropped Mosaic Session IPA on my unsuspecting palate during 2014. This beer is magnificent: a lightly sweet, resin baby IPA that is easily my favorite Karl beer ever. There was a time when it was readily available on draft everywhere mid-Summer, and it was glorious. I heard that the next batch is coming early 2015. If you’re one of the folks that overlooks Karl Strauss for whatever reason, give this beer a try next time you see it.

Beyond the pale of hops, Modern Times’ Lomaland has matured nicely. With its Belgian yeast character, plus floral and just slightly funky notes, I could drink this beer forever. In 2014, I tried. The cans are readily available, too. Modern Times gets a lot of love this issue, but Lomaland still deserves a mention.

A large goal of West Coaster is fostering gentrification through fermentation. This is a fancy term I cooked up that means I like seeing beer spots open in non-traditional beer neighborhoods, because these cool businesses often improve the communities they become a part of. I’ve been most impressed by Oceanside, which saw Bagby Beer Company open in 2014. Simultaneously, other cool beer spots popped up on my radar of the area: Local Tap House, Surfside Tap Room, and Legacy Brewing Co. Combine that with existing spots like Breakwater Brewing Co., Tap That’s Taproom, and Stone’s “company store” tasting room, and I’ve seriously considered moving to Oceanside based on the relatively low seaside rents and increasing beer availability.

As the San Diego brewing community matures beyond its present craziness into an established hardcore beer town, I’m looking forward to being continuously surprised and impressed. Our native product, craft beer, is changing the DNA of what it means to be a San Diegan. Not just perfect weather and pretty faces anymore, we’re now blessed with nearly 100 breweries that are enacting positive changes in communities by cultivating a consumer that supports businesses that hold themselves to a higher standard of quality.

Let us never be jaded.

Mike Shess
Publisher and West Coaster ISO the perfect beer town
NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

O'Sullivan
BROS. BREWING CO.

Handcrafted Ales & Lagers

Come visit us in Scripps Ranch!
Tasting room open
Wednesday-Saturday 1PM-8PM

9879 Hibert Street Suite F, San Diego, CA 92131 | osullivan-brothers.com

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

WINGS NIGHT

50¢

MINIMUM ORDER: 3 WINGS

EVERY MONDAY
4PM-11PM

$3 KILL THE KEG
PIZZA & GROWLERS TO GO

HILLCREST
BREWING COMPANY

1458 University Ave • 619.269.HEAD • hillcrestbrewingcompany.com
Sam Tierney is a graduate of the Siebel Institute and Doemens World Beer Academy brewing technology diploma program. He currently works as a brewer at Firestone Walker Brewing Company and has most recently passed the Certified Cicerone® exam. He geeks out on all things related to brewing, beer styles, and beer history.

INTO THE BREW

Ryan Reschan is a long time resident of North County San Diego, and he first got into craft beer during his time at UC San Diego while completing a degree in Electrical Engineering. Skipping the macro lagers, he enjoyed British and Irish style ales before discovering the burgeoning local beer scene in North County and the rest of the country. After his introduction to brewing beer by a family friend, he brewed sparingly with extract until deciding to further his knowledge and transition into all-grain brewing. Between batches of beer, he posts video beer reviews on YouTube (user: StumpyJoeJr) multiple times a week along with occasional homebrew videos and footage of beer events he attends.

THE CARBOY CHRONICLES

Brandon Hernández is a native San Diegan and the author of the San Diego Beer News Complete Guide to San Diego Breweries (available on Amazon.com). In addition to his on-staff work for West Coaster, he is responsible for communications for local craft beer producer Stone Brewing Company; an editor for Zagat; the San Diego correspondent for Celebrator Beer News; and contributes articles on beer, food, restaurants and other such killer topics to national publications including USA TODAY, The Beer Connoisseur, Beer West, Beer Magazine, Imbibe and Wine Enthusiast as well as local outlets including The San Diego Reader, Edible San Diego, Pacific San Diego, Ranch & Coast, San Diego Magazine and U-T San Diego.

THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Gonzalo J. Quintero, Ed.D. is a San Diego native, three-time SDSU grad, career educator, and co-founder of the popular multimedia craft beer discussion craftbeertasters.wordpress.com. An avid homebrewer, Cicerone Certified Beer Server, and seasoned traveler, Dr. Quintero takes great pride in educating people about craft beer and the craft beer culture. By approaching the subject from the perspective of a scholar and educator, Dr. Quintero has developed a passion for spreading the good word of local beer.

ON THE COVER: Nate Soroko, the oft-boisterous Islander found behind the bars at Toronado and Modern Times, is the Best Beertender of 2014 according to our online reader poll. In this photo, photographer Tim Stahl captures Nate in his element -- the tasting room of Modern Times -- which coincidentally won for Best Tasting Room. See more starting on page 25.
Craft Beer Garden

at Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines during
FARMERS INSURANCE OPEN
FEB 6-8, 2015

- FREE ADMISSION
- SELECTIONS FROM SAN DIEGO’S TOP BREWERIES
  - Friday-Sunday 1-6pm
  - + Live Music 3-6pm
- Food Selections:
  - Fish & Carne Asado Tacos
  - Brats and Pretzel Bites

Located on the Torreyana Terrace

#beermetorrey

Must be 21 years or older.

Winter Brew Fest
san diego, ca

FEBRUARY FR 20th & SA 21st
Celebrating Craft Beer

at the Hall of Champions in Balboa Park
Buy Tickets Online

SanDiegoBrewFest.com

This event benefits

San Diego Mountain Biking Association

OUTDOOR OUTREACH
BEER ON THE RADIO

In mid-October, West Coaster was invited on 107.9FM The Mountain’s Happy Hour San Diego talk show along with Ballast Point Specialty Brewer Colby Chandler to speak about the state of San Diego beer, with hosts (and fellow beer lovers) Rich, Jere and “Big Fry.” The fun news/comedy program airs every Thursday, 7-9 p.m. and frequently hosts brewing industry folks along with a musical guest. Listen live or to archived programs online: themountainfm.com

FM 94.9 has been hosting the weekly Rock and Roll Happy Hour for over three years. Host and homebrewer Jeremy Pritchard and Stone Brewing Co.’s Ken Wright invite brewing community members to speak about upcoming events or recent beer happenings every Friday from 7-8 p.m.. Every weekday at 4:40PM, the station also airs the Who’s Tapping WHAT?! segment as well.

On the AM airwaves, November saw the launch of Craft City Listing on KCBQ 1170. Hosts Dave Werth and Andy Killion focus the weekly recorded program on beer, business and real estate every Thursday at 7 p.m. Rotating guests from the San Diego brewing world will be featured with the goal of giving listeners an insider’s perspective. At time of press, their first show featuring West Coaster Publisher Mike Shess was available online at craftcitylisting.com.

Online, occasional West Coaster contributor Cody Thompson of ThreeBZine.com has been recording a regular beer-centric podcast for well over a year now, focusing on beer news, tastings and more. More than 40 episodes are available on iTunes (see ThreeB-Zine.com).

San Diego Beer Talk Radio is the newest podcast covering local beer. It’s the brainchild of Greg Homyak, San Diego Craft Brew Society’s founder, an 800+ human strong meetup.com group that organizes beer events around the county. The promising podcast that is now 6 episodes in, with their most recent episode focusing on Helm’s Brewing Company’s Brew-It-Yourself concept. Listen online at sdbeertalk.com and check out meetup.com/San-Diego-Craft-Brew-Society if you’re looking to drink with fellow beer lovers.
NOVEMBER GROWTH

The month of November 2014 saw tons of growth in the San Diego Beer World, with several new beer spots opening up. North Park, for example, saw lots of changes: Fall Brewing Co. is now in soft-opening mode on 30th Street, while restaurants Safehouse and Berkeley Pizza are now serving craft beer, adding taps to the already-beer-soaked neighborhood.

Local beer-art creator Craft Beerd and beer-cupcake purveyor PubCakes both secured some storefront space within Simply Local, which caters to San Diego-made goods on 3013 University Avenue, next to Bottlecraft.

Down in South Park, the second brewery under the watchful eye of the Blairs is slated for a late 2014 or early 2015 opening. South Park Brewing Co. will be manned by 2013 GABF Gold-winner Cosimo Sorrento, who will also continue to head Monkey Paw, which just received a brewhouse-upgrade from Escondido-based Premier Stainless.

In Kearny Mesa, Kilowatt Brewing posted their ABC license in November and will be in the same office park as Council Brewing Co.

East Pacific Beach will see a brewery opening called Bitter Brothers, which will be located not far from Karl Strauss’ main production facility off Morena Boulevard.

GUILD FEST’S BIG TURNOUT

While the numbers are still being crunched, San Diego Beer Week organizers report a strong 2014 turnout. Guild Fest organizer Matt Dolman elaborates: “We set a record on attendance and ticket sales. Both days were sold out, and we’ve had lots of good feedback from board members and breweries.” On Friday evening, for the VIP session, attendance was 1340 and on Saturday, attendance was 3254; both days were above expectations. Sales were around 10% above 2013, and more than 3% over expected sales.

The majority of the attendees were from Southern California, with solid attendance from Northern California, the Midwest and the East Coast. Beer drinkers also came from Brazil, Canada, Mexico, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

Dolman credits early bird ticket sales and a strong social media presence for helping sales this year. Improvements for next year include reducing the attendance for the VIP Friday session, increasing visibility for restrooms and giving more love to designated drivers.
SDBC PRODUCING HOUSE KOMBUCHA

Grantville’s twenty-one year-old brewery, San Diego Brewing Co. (SDBC), recently added a house-produced kombucha to its lineup. Kombucha is a lightly effervescent, fermented, low-alcohol drink made with tea and a culture of yeast and bacteria. The first “R&D” batch, a blueberry-pomegranate variety, was released at San Diego Beer Week’s closing event; the five-gallon keg kicked in three hours. Kombucha brewer Cary Dinapoli produced more of the same flavor for tapping on December 1.

SDBC’s beer brewer Jeff Drum described the beverage for WC: “It comes in at 0.56% ABV and a 3.0 pH, so it’s pretty tart, but balanced. It’s made with filtered water, organic black tea, organic cane sugar, and organic blueberry and pomegranate juice. It pours with a nice, rocky head on it, moderate carbonation, and has funk flavors reminiscent of a Belgian sour beer, but with the inherent refreshing qualities of black tea, and of course very low alcohol.”

Drum went on to say that the establishment plans on not just serving the beverage as a stand-alone, but also as a component of both beer and distilled-liquor cocktails.

BREWS IN OTHER NEWS

Candace Woo at EaterSD.com reported on November 13th that the Quad Ale House will open in the space that was formerly Gaslamp Tavern. The 5,000 square foot pub will serve 28 taps. Serving as “mentor” on the project, Tomme Arthur (Port Brewing / The Lost Abbey) suggested the name, while The Brew Project’s Beau Schmitt will curate the tap handles. Beer chef Brandon Brooks is consulting on the menu, which will focus on a “healthier take” on barbecue.

Local non-profit news organization KPBS has recently ramped up their coverage of local beer online, on the radio and streaming video. A November 14th article highlights the Vista brewing scene featuring SD Brewers Guild Vice President / Mother Earth Brew Co. Chief Branding Officer Kevin Hopkins, Bruce Glassman, publisher of San Diego Brewery Guide and Toolbox Brewing Co.’s Peter Perrecone & Amanda Elder speaking on the North SD neighborhood.
BEST DAMN BEER SHOP

DOWNTOWN
1036 7TH AVE
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

GOLDEN HILL
2511 C ST
SAN DIEGO, CA 92102

www.BestDamnBeerShop.com
Over the next two pages, we’ll share some of our favorite photos from Instagram that were uploaded using the hashtag #sdbw.

Warning: Thirst for a tasty, locally-brewed beer may occur.

Over the next two pages, we’ll share some of our favorite photos from Instagram that were uploaded using the hashtag #sdbw.

Warning: Thirst for a tasty, locally-brewed beer may occur.

@_instajoe_
@alltypesoffuckery
@au_sec

@aylon
@bagbybeer
@berniewire

@biybrewityourself
@blindedbylensflares
@blindladyalehouse

WestCoasterSD.com | 13
Follow @westcoastersd on Instagram, and don’t forget to use #sdbeer in your uploads!
Our favorite #sdbeer photos will appear in the February issue of West Coaster San Diego
LET US BE YOUR GUIDE

- 20 new breweries added!
- Tasting notes on more than 600 beers
- Essential facts & trip-planning advice
- Dozens of maps
- Fits in your back pocket!

THE SAN DIEGO BREWERY GUIDE 2ND EDITION

Essential trip planning advice, at-a-glance facts, and tasting notes on every brewery from A-Z

www.georgianbaybooks.com
I

t may seem like a foregone conclusion that this magazine will only have glowing things to say about a book penned by one of their own staff writers. It’s basically the media equivalent of tacking your kid’s artwork to the refrigerator. However, I can assure you that is not the case here. I actually opted out of assisting with the latest edition of Brandon Hernández’s “Complete Guide to San Diego Breweries” purely on the chance I’d find an outlet to publicly expose all its failings. I’m diabolical like that. And then he had to go and ruin my fun by having it not suck...

To understand how ambitious this guide is, one must only imagine how long it would take just to produce an index of the nearly 100 operating brewpubs in San Diego. Then tack on the satellite tasting rooms and breweries in progress as well. We haven’t ventured to write anything of substance about these businesses yet and I’m already short of breath. It is a mind-boggling volume of brew-slingers that no consumer could reasonably expect to keep track of, let alone intuit whether a trek there is a worthy expedition. “Complete Guide to San Diego Breweries” seeks to rectify that.

The black and white, boilerplate content feels a bit spartan, but it reflects the book’s core values. The reviews are built for efficiency, encapsulating the wares, whereabouts, and worthiness of every brew venue in a scant 6”x8” area. Obviously some nuance gets lost when an entire operation is encapsulated in 100 words or less, but there is a clear effort to illustrate the strongest and weakest aspects of the venue.

Inasmuch as one can assign numerical values to opinions, the evaluations are data-driven by defined point ranges for beer quality, service, setting, and various value-adds. Were I to chart out the distribution of the overall tallies (which, as a not-so-closeted geek, is hardly beyond me) a rough bell-curve would emerge. This acknowledges that while San Diego’s suds scene may trump most others, when pitting its participants against one another it demands something profound to really stand out. Hernández does an excellent job teasing those factors out and indicating how they shape the experience.

It’s likewise important to note that these are not simply the arbitrary opinions of a lone beer snob. The scores are based on anonymized ratings from up to 40 different industry professionals, ranging from professional brewers and pub owners to certified beer judges. In fact, Hernández weighed his input the same as all who contributed, rendering his outlook just another voice in the chorus. It’s a level of academic rigor that suggests any disagreements one might have with a score could mean it’s their own opinion that needs revisiting.

Crowd-sourced data has the additional benefit of assuring that scores are not forged entirely from a single interaction with a disgruntled employee or the one time a batch of beer wasn’t up to snuff. Any business can have an off-day and the scoring apparatus provides some buffer for that. However, the year over year scoring (new to the 2014 edition) also holds such businesses accountable for integrating feedback into their practices and seeking to improve.

The highest praise I can offer “Complete Guide to San Diego Breweries” is that it truly does feel complete. This pocket reference has everything required to plan an extended brewery touring vacation or uncover a previously overlooked neighborhood pub. As a fellow member of the beer journalism family, I would be honored to share this book on my fridge. I’m going to need to borrow one hell of a magnet from someone, though.
sushi • steak • seafood
swine • chicken • 26 craft taps
natural meats & seafood
local & organic produce

MONDAY
All local drafts $4

TUESDAY
$2.50 Sculpin pints

SAT & SUN BRUNCH
10:30am-2pm

SUSHI & TAPAS SERVED
THURS TIL 11PM
& FRI - SAT TIL MIDNIGHT

4902 Newport Ave SD, CA 92107
619-222-TAPA • www.TheJointOB.com
YOU BREW
WE CODE
ANY QUESTIONS?

Easy to install, easy to use, easy on your budget
the alphaJET mondo™ inkjet system is the perfect
solution for cans or bottles, wet or dry.

For a in-house product demonstration by our
local representative, please call 781-878-0456
e-mail info@geminkjet.com or visit us at geminkjet.com

GATHERINGS
WHERE WILL YOURS BE?

HOLIDAYS  NEW YEAR’S EVE  THE BIG GAME

We have focused on Belgian style beers for our winter menu, highlighting all 14 regularly available Belgian style yeast strains throughout our selections.

WHITE LABS TASTING ROOM  858.693.3441  •  9495 Candida Street San Diego, CA 92126  •  WWW.WHITELABS.COM

facebook.com/WhiteLabsTastingRoom  @whitelabs  whitelabs.tumblr.com  instagram.com/whitelabsyeast
EAT MORE PIZZA  DRINK MORE BEER  BE MORE HAPPY

32 ROTATING TAPS
OUTDOOR BEER GARDEN  COME VISIT US AT OUR NEW LOCATION!
NEW YORK & CHICAGO STYLE PIZZA  DELIVERY | PICKUP | CATERING

4150 REGENTS PARK ROW #100, LA JOLLA CA 92037   |   858.550.0406   |   WWW.REGENTSPIZZA.COM

SC WELDING & METALWORKS
Mobile Process Piping & Repair
Specializing in sanitary piping for breweries in the Southern California area

Charlie Middleton
619-507-1042
Call for a free quote and mention this ad!
Charlie@SCWMetalworks.com

3770 Hancock St. Suite C
San Diego, CA 92110

SIX CRAFT BEERS
50% OFF
8AM-4PM
7 DAYS A WEEK

Coaster Saloon

52 BEERS ON DRAFT
744 Ventura Place
San Diego, CA 92109
858.488.4438
www.CoasterSaloon.com
Whenever people visit Firestone Walker, we typically start a tour in the lab, because square foot for square foot, it’s the most important room in the brewery. This small space is where the people and machines that ensure that our beer maintains the highest level of quality are found. Looking around, you can see some fancy instruments like a gas chromatograph, spectrophotometer, and alcolyzer. Then there are more familiar things like a microscope and some computers to round it out — all important pieces of equipment that allow us to perform a multitude of quality tests on our beer. There is also another type of instrument that you will only see in action a couple of times a day if you come at the right time, and it’s the most important of all. It may look like any ordinary person in a brewery work shirt, but a trained sensory analysis panelist is one of the cornerstones of a brewery’s quality control and assurance program.

Rob Emery runs the sensory analysis program at Firestone Walker and sat down with me to discuss just how breweries are able to reproduce high quality beer. “Sensory analysis is a science that uses statistics and human instruments in order to evaluate products, in our case, beer,” he said. “In a brewery, sensory analysis is used to assure that the final product is consistent and tastes
good. It is also used in order to make decisions involving process and ingredient changes.”

Amidst the broad spectrum of tests performed in a brewery lab, sensory analysis has a key place. “To assure consistency and quality, a good QA program needs to include analytical, microbiological, packaging, and sensory analyses,” Rob explained. “And while we can measure the crap out of beer with gadgets and machines, it is extremely important to see how beer is perceived from a human point of view. After all, humans are the ultimate drinker of the beer!”

I started as a sensory panelist during my first week at the brewery, first by simply going through the panel sessions with a little guidance from our sensory analyst. I then underwent a series of training sessions to make sure that I was a well-tuned machine, a process that still continues more than three years later. Over time, I learned just how many specific tests there are that can be utilized to determine various things about our beers. The main test that we routinely perform is “product release,” in which panelists are given recently packaged samples of beer and are asked to rate the beer for oxidation on a scale from 0 to 6, as well as to give “pass” or “fail” marks for the appearance, aroma, taste, and mouthfeel of the beer. Panelists can also provide additional written comments. Finally, the panelist is asked if the beer is true to brand, and if it is okay to release to trade. By using this data with multiple panels each day, we are able to get an overview of how each batch of beer is tasting before it leaves the building, flagging any irregularities for further review and providing a broad view of how we are doing day to day.

In addition to product release tests, we regularly conduct blind triangle tests to determine if panelists can detect a difference between two samples, or to determine which of two different samples is preferred by the panelists. In these tests, panelists are presented with two sets of three beers, one beer in each set being different than the other two. Each beer is labeled with randomly generated numbers only. The panelists are then asked to identify the one different beer from each set and to declare a preference. If panelists cannot pick out the different beer more than 50% of the time, there is no statistically significant difference between the two different samples. These tests are important for maintaining a consistent flavor profile in a beer while adapting to changing ingredients or processes, or for determining which change to go with if trying to modify a flavor profile or develop a new beer recipe. With as many barrel-aged beers as we do, sensory panels are often a valuable tool in determining what the final blend of a beer will be.

Now I know what you’re thinking: ‘Tasting beer at work, how fun is that?!’ But the reality is that sensory panels can be mentally taxing and require you to be in the proper physiological state to correctly perform. A clear head and palate are needed to really determine anything meaningful while tasting, and the coffee you just had when you came into work, or the burrito you had for lunch can be especially problematic. It is also important to note that all panelists are different. Some are “blind” to certain aromatic chemicals, meaning that they cannot perceive them at all or only at very high levels.

Panelists are “calibrated” just like mechanical instruments, in order to determine how well they detect various compounds. Rob explained that “to help maintain panelist calibration, panelists are occasionally exposed to spiked beers during product release panels.” Those that can consistently and correctly identify spiked beers become validated for those off-flavors. Common off-flavors that are included are diacetyl (buttery), dimethyl sulfide (canned corn), and acetaldehyde (green apple or latex paint), which are caused by brewing flaws. Other included off-flavors like lactic, acetic, or butyric acid are caused by spoilage organisms. Old beers from the warm library are also thrown in from time to time to see how well panelists are at rating unexpected levels of oxidation.

Another common sensory test is a “vertical” test of different age batches of a beer. Samples are presented in a random order from fresh to very old and panelists are asked to rate each beer by the amount of oxidation. This is used to determine at what point people find a beer to no longer pass on the oxidation scale and fail the “true to brand” test. This is often done with both warm and cold-stored samples to see how storage conditions affect aging. My biggest take-away from participating in these kinds of tests is that most beers are best fresh and cold storage is vastly, vastly better for beer than warm.

Becoming a trained sensory panelist is a rewarding part of working for a brewery, but it does have one major downside: it can sometimes make drinking beer for fun outside of work less enjoyable, either from constantly recognizing off-flavors in beers, or the inability to turn off your critical palate and just enjoy the beer in front of you. Thankfully, I have been able to mostly overcome the latter, though once you learn to recognize various off flavors, you will never be able to ignore them again. When it comes to drinking beer, ignorance can be bliss, though brewers (hopefully) don’t have that option and sensory analysis is therefore a integral part of producing consistent, high quality beer.
In past years, West Coaster ran a feature covering who we thought would be the movers and shakers of the upcoming year. Now, for 2014, we’ve opened up the feature to our readers by way of an online poll that isn’t about predictions; it’s about results. The 14 in ’14 highlights 14 different categories across San Diego Beer and our readers chose their favorites in each. The result? A snapshot of the past year in this beer-soaked county.

**{ BEST BREWERY OF 2014 }**

**SOCIETE BREWING CO.**

Born over pints at O’Brien’s, Travis Smith and Douglas Constantiner came from very different backgrounds to create Societe Brewing Co. Smith began his professional brewing career in 2004 with an apprenticeship at Russian River Brewing Co. in Santa Rosa, which developed into a full-time brewing position in 2005. In addition, he tended to the joint hopyard of Russian River & Moonlight Brewing Co. In 2009, Smith moved to The Bruery in Orange County to take on the Lead Brewer position, where he met friend and current business partner, Douglas Constantiner.

After realizing the breakneck pace of investment finance wasn’t for him, Douglas Constantiner attended the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago and promptly moved to San Diego after graduation. Starting out at Pizza Port Carlsbad, he also interned at Oggi’s and worked on the bottling line at Green Flash. Later, he moved on to The Bruery, washing kegs and bottling at first, eventually taking control of the cellar and packaging operations before starting as a brewer. In that position, he befriended Travis Smith and learned how to brew professionally.

**{ BEST BREWER OF 2014 }**

**TRAVIS SMITH, SOCIETE BREWING CO.**

In 2010, Smith moved down to pursue a head brewer position at the now-closed La Jolla Brew House, but the two friends kept in touch by meeting up at O’Brien’s. When it became known that the Brew House was not meant to be, the friendly meetups turned into business planning sessions. Societe Brewing Co. opened in 2012 with a 16,000 square foot facility and a 20 barrel brewhouse. Their offerings include West Coast, Belgian and barrel-aged. If you haven’t already, plan a trip to the well-appointed tasting room and try the Harlot, Pupil, Butcher and any specialty they have on tap to understand why readers chose Societe & Travis as the best Brewery and Brewer of 2014.
The store that launched a thousand beers. The eldest location in the rapidly-expanding Ballast Point empire, Home Brew Mart started as a humble brewing supply outpost in 1992. Jack White, an avid homebrewer recently graduated from college, started the shop as a hobby. At the time, only one other supply store existed in the county in El Cajon, so Home Brew Mart successfully catered to San Diego’s centrally-located homebrewers. White eventually needed some help, so he put out a newspaper ad seeking employees. Yuseff Cherney stopped in responding to the ad, and was the store’s first hire (he’s now the Chief Operating Officer & Head Brewer/Distiller). Early customers include Lee Chase (Blind Lady Ale House/Automatic Brewing Co., Panama 66, Tiger!Tiger!) and Vinnie Cilurzo (Russian River).

Perhaps the store’s greatest contribution to San Diego beer was the partnership forged between Chris White and Yuseff Cherney. White was a post-graduate student at University of California, San Diego and took a homebrewing class that Cherney was teaching. The two started homebrewing together, and noticed a need for fresh, pitchable yeast to replace the inconsistent dry packaged yeast that was the norm at the time. White eventually started selling vials of California Ale Yeast to Home Brew Mart. This marks the beginning of White Labs, which is now an international supplier of brewing yeast based out of San Diego. Yeast is a highly perishable and super critical ingredient in the brewing process, and by selling fresh yeast over the counter, Home Brew Mart became pivotal in the formation of San Diego beer as we know it. A 15 barrel brewhouse was added to Home Brew Mart in 1996, thus creating Ballast Point Brewing Co.

Home Brew Mart completed a 2,200 square foot expansion in 2014, adding bar and table seating along with a new 40-tap draft system. Although much more polished than its original incarnation, the store continues to foster the San Diego home brewing community, which in turn drives the growth of the professional brewing industry.

The greatest beer of 2014 comes from the unincorporated mountain community of Alpine on the Eastern edge of San Diego county. During a 2003 vacation in New Zealand, Pat and Val McIlhenney discovered the Nelson hop growing region. After returning home, he had the hops ordered, put together a recipe involving rye and the Nelson Sauvin hop (among others), and developed the first incarnation of Nelson.

The 7% ABV Nelson gives a citrus, floral aroma that leads to a slightly creamy taste that focuses on the tropical, resin character of the hops. A dry finish leaves you ready for the next sip. Nelson enjoys a rare 100 out of 100 rating on RateBeer.com and an equally-rare 100% rating on BeerAdvocate.com.

Up until very recently, Nelson was only available outside of the brewery at select draft accounts and through limited bottle release. In 2014, Alpine and Green Flash Brewing Co. partnered to create a 3,000-barrel release of three Alpine beers brewed at Green Flash, with Nelson being one of them. This led to the acquisition of Alpine Beer Co. by Green Flash in November 2014; expect to see much more of this fantastic beer in 2015 and beyond.

Watch West Coaster’s video on the production of Nelson IPA online at youtube.com/WestCoasterVideos
{ BEST BEERTENDER OF 2014 }
NATE “ISLANDER” SOROKO

A chef by trade, Nate Soroko came into the local beer scene by chance. Looking for a second job after moving to San Diego, he answered a Craigslist ad calling for help at a burger joint called the Liar’s Club in 2004. The beer scene was a much different place ten years ago; there were only a handful of places where craft beer was served, including Downtown Johnny Brown’s, Churchill’s, and Liar’s Club.

“Alpine beer was always on sale. Nobody would drink it because it was from East County, and Pliny the Younger would be on tap for weeks,” Nate recalls. He got to know the regulars at the bar, which included Lee Chase (Blind Lady Ale House/Automatic), Dennis Borlek (Fathom Bistro), Scot Blair (Hamilton’s/Small Bar/Monkey Paw), Ian Black (Toronado) and Greg Koch (Stone). Nate also took up gigs cooking at Pizza Port Carlsbad and Lost Abbey festivals; at the time, food trucks in San Diego were virtually non-existent. After working at Liar’s club for a spell, he’d go out for drinks around town, meeting people and hearing, “Oh yeah, you’re the Islander from Liar’s Club,” and his nickname was born.

After Liar’s Club closed in 2007, Nate continued cooking for various beer festivals, but took on a full-time job with the Gaslamp Marriott. In 2010, he picked up more shifts at Toronado while moonlighting at Lost Abbey and Alpine. The founders of Modern Times began meeting in Toronado to discuss their then-new brewery venture, and Nate learned quickly that it would be something he wanted to be a part of. Currently, you can find him behind the bar at Modern Times or Toronado, depending on the day.

When asked about the state of beer then versus now, he responds, “I wish people weren’t so jaded, but at the same time I’m happy to see so many beers like Sculpin on tap that were so hard to find. It’s a yin-and-yang situation that comes with the growth.” Nate continues: “The diversity has also opened up a lot. Before, it was just 40 year old white dudes and now you’re seeing all different kinds of people drinking better beer. I think it’s reflective of an industry that’s really open and accepting.”

{ BEST BEER NEIGHBORHOOD OF 2014 }
NORTH PARK

Starting out as a lemon grove in 1893, the current incarnation of North Park is the product of gentrification that began in the 1990s. Then, North Park was in a state of blight, with numerous storefronts mothballed. Residents of the area, interested in the rich heritage of their historical craftsman homes and improving the neighborhood, began working together. North Park Main Street was organized to help draw businesses to the area, and to keep them there. A small newspaper, North Park News, was launched to help residents informed about local happenings.

The result is the world class pedestrian neighborhood that is North Park in 2014. Home to craft beer-heavy bars such as Toronado and Seven Grand, the neighborhood also has four breweries: Thorn Street, Mike Hess Brewing, Poor House Brewing Co., Fall Brewing Co., and two brewery tasting rooms: Belching Beaver and Modern Times. The Homebrewer serves 92104 with brewing supplies, and restaurants such as Tiger!Tiger!, Ritual Tavern, Underbelly, Waypoint Public, and URBN serve quality food with strong draft selections to boot. Each month, the DrinkAbout bus follows a route along 30th Street, ferrying beer drinkers to and from select beer spots. For the lover of beer and food, North Park has both in quantities unparalleled in the county. Its sheer variety along with its walkability were no doubt in our readers’ minds when choosing the Best Beer Neighborhood of 2014.

Fun fact: West Coaster was founded in 2010 on 28th Street, in the same bungalow that spawned North Park News in 1992.
PIZZA PORT BREWING CO.

Pizza Port is a collection of brewpubs that span the coastline of Southern California from San Clemente to Ocean Beach. Gina Marsaglia purchased the original Pizza Port in Solana Beach in 1987. Her brother, Vince, came out to sling pizza and surf, eventually opting to stay in Southern California working at Pizza Port instead of returning to college to pursue electrical engineering. Gina moonlighted at the original Karl Strauss location in downtown to better understand the brewpub model, and Vince started speaking with homebrewers that were regulars at Solana Beach. In 1992, after receiving an expansion loan, a brewhouse was built, and the first beer, Shark Bite Red, was created under the auspice of Solana Beach Brewing Co.

Solana Beach led way to the opening of the Carlsbad Pizza Port in 1997, and then a location in San Clemente shortly after. A bottleshop was added next to the Carlsbad location in 2008. Pizza Port Ocean Beach opened in 2010, and finally, a large, more production-oriented brewpub opened in Bressi Ranch in 2012 complete with a massive canning line. All Pizza Ports are family friendly brewery restaurants, complete with on-site brewed beer as well as beer from other ‘Ports, plus guest taps from around the world.

Their brewing team has earned prestige many times over at the Great American Beer Festival and World Beer Cup. Former brewers such as Tomme Arthur (The Lost Abbey), Jeff Bagby (Bagby Beer Co.) and Yiga Miyashiro (Saint Archer) have moved on from Pizza Port to other successful ventures, and current head brewers Nacho Cervantes (Carlsbad), Devon Randall (Solana Beach), Sean Farrell (Bressi Ranch), Trevor Walls (San Clemente) and Mike Aubuchon (Carlsbad) presently lead brewing operations at their respective locations.

Each Pizza Port location is worthy of the Best Brewpub title on their own, and are considered by many to be the gold standard for a no-nonsense brewery restaurant. Combined they create a formidable family of flavor that serves San Diego-style craft to thirsty folks countywide (and beyond). Bressi Ranch produces competitively-priced six-packs of 16-ounce cans, effectively bringing Pizza Port into the hands of even more beer drinkers.
{ BEST BEER FESTIVAL }
SD BREWERS GUILD FEST

The two day festival that officially launches the ten day San Diego Beer Week festivities is one of only a few official events thrown by the San Diego Brewers Guild. Taking place at the Port Pavilion on Broadway Pier, the location serves for overflow cruise ship parking when the other two piers are being used, and is open to host public events when not.

The Guild Fest is broken up into a VIP Brewer Takeover on the first Friday evening of Beer Week, and a larger San Diego Brewers Guild Festival on the following Saturday. This year, the Friday session hosted 50 breweries, while the Saturday session featured 55. Each festival allows for unlimited tastings of beers from only San Diego County. The VIP Takeover hosts various restaurants that provide unlimited small plates of food, and the Guild Festival has food available for purchase on the large outdoor space at the western end of the pier. Prices for 2014 were $75 and $35 respectively, with an option to buy a 2 day pass for $100.

Proceeds from the two-day event directly benefit the San Diego Brewers Guild, and beer drinkers from all over the world attend. In the land of seemingly perpetual beer festivals, this one stands out above the rest because of its organization, SD-only focus, and unique atmosphere.

Read more about this year’s Guild Fest in our Brews in the News section, page 9.

{ BEST BEER RESTAURANT }
WAYPOINT PUBLIC

Having opened a little over a year ago, beer-heavy restaurant Waypoint Public occupies a prominent location on 30th Street. Executive Chef, homebrewer, and former Top Chef contestant Amanda Baumgarten (pictured) brings a blend of classical culinary experience and a homebrewer’s eye for creativity to the kitchen. In our March 2014 issue of West Coaster, Brandon Hernández sat down with Amanda: “I’ve always brewed in restaurant kitchens. I find the close proximity to an industrial ice machine a great help,” says Baumgarten. “I love that beer is a blank canvas. The possibilities are endless when it comes to developing nuances in flavor and texture.”

Offering dishes such as cassoulet, veal osso bucco and fried green tomatoes, the menu is meant to represent the eclectic nature of California, borrowing freely from different cultures. When teamed up with partner Brian Jensen, who curates the draft and bottle selection at Waypoint (and who also owns both Bottlecraft locations), eaters are treated to world-class food and drink in the heart of North Park.
Not surprisingly, this was one of our most contested categories that saw the most variety of votes. Out of all the beer bars in the “Capital of Craft,” Hamilton’s earned the most votes and here’s why: this bar has it all. An outstanding, well curated and maintained draft lineup that spans the gamut of styles alongside solid pub fare and bolstered by an insane schedule of regular & special events in a non-pretentious atmosphere. Whether you’re showing up after work for chicken wings and a pint, or talking loudly with a group of friends over a shuffleboard game on Saturday night, Hamilton’s delivers.

And this is not by mistake. Scot Blair and his wife Karen have poured their collective souls into creating this masterpiece of beer culture on what was once a quiet corner on the southern end of 30th Street. Tap lines are meticulously maintained, cleaned or replaced following the rotation of craft beers from all over. Weekly and monthly events include Firkin Friday, a weekly guest cask beer special, and Second Saturday, a monthly special showcasing established as well as up-and-coming breweries complete with complimentary food. Special events like a Padre’s excursion on a double deckered bus or Disk Golf Tournament (The Fling) are guaranteed to be a blast, as well.

From the minds behind Hamilton’s came Small Bar, then Eleven, then Monkey Paw, and soon, South Park Brewing Company. Each bar has a distinct personality and is worthy of the title, but Hammie’s was where it all started, named in honor of Herman Hamilton, a Montford Point Marine who lived next door to the bar. Although he didn’t drink, he was a frequent patron of the bar and a three decade-plus resident of South Park until his death at the age of 84 in April of 2011. A photo of Herman rests inside, above the entrance.

“I don’t care if you’re gay, straight, black, white, hipster, biker, whatever -- you are welcome at our bars. Leave your social group at the door and come be a human being.” -- Scot Blair, West Coaster February 2011

With 56 tap handles and more than 35-40 kegs rotating per week, it’s a full time job keeping Toronado’s beer offerings tasting fresh. “If we have a keg and it’s replacing the same style that just blew, we’ll clean the line. If there’s a new style coming on, we’ll replace the line,” says Toronado’s Eric Shelley. Both Eric and owner Ian Black are responsible for tending to the nearly 150 kegs Toronado has in both cold boxes at any given time.

They wouldn’t have it any other way. “It makes a world of difference,” says Ian. “I’d rather be in the cold box than at the bar.” Toronado uses a direct draw draft system, meaning the giant refrigerated room, known as a cold box or walk in, is located only a few feet from the tap handles. “Our lines are anywhere from two to eight feet long,” Eric states. The short draw of beer from keg to tap is important because tap lines are susceptible to contamination. Dirty lines can become gardens for bacteria, yeast and even mold. The longer the line, the greater the chance of contamination and harder the chore of cleaning or replacing. Good beer bars regularly clean their lines, while superior beer bars replace draft lines frequently.

While they are not the only beer bar in town adamant about clean, fresh beer, Toronado makes sure the selection served is appropriate. “Not all beer should be on keg. I’d prefer to have a Belgian style in a bottle than on tap,” says Ian. Toronado’s tap lineup is frequently hop-heavy, as hop aromas and flavors are the most perishable. Similar to having fresh vegetables in your fridge, hoppy beer is best enjoyed quickly and on tap. Between draft and bottle offerings, any beer enjoyed beer at Toro tastes as the brewer intended.

“I don’t care if you’re gay, straight, black, white, hipster, biker, whatever -- you are welcome at our bars. Leave your social group at the door and come be a human being.” -- Scot Blair, West Coaster February 2011
Since 2010, Bottlecraft has been operating as an embassy of craft beer in Little Italy. A selection that’s 700+ beers strong is impressive, but what makes Bottlecraft stand apart is its unique liquor license which allows beers to be consumed on-site. Combine that with the clean, no-nonsense aesthetics that permeate the brand and store philosophy, and you have a space that sponsors the best elements of beer drinking.

“The best part is seeing strangers become friends over a bottle of beer. Random people will sit next to each other with their own bottles and then spark up conversations,” says Brian Jensen, the French Culinary Institute & Point Loma Nazarene graduate and owner of Bottlecraft. The hybrid tasting room / beer shop creates the perfect environment for impromptu bottle shares. Taster flights are offered daily and organized by various themes (Belgians, IPAs, East Coast vs. West Coast, etc.), and homebrew tasting and brewery-specific tastings led by members of the beer community are frequent.

In early December 2014, Bottlecraft moved from its original location to a new one, a block North. “A new landlord took over our old building and I wanted to make sure we could operate here in Little Italy indefinitely,” Jensen tells West Coaster. “This neighborhood keeps getting better,” he says, eyeing Ballast Point’s Little Italy brewpub, located catty-corner. Better indeed, as the new Bottlecraft now has a patio and 24-tap draft system to accompany the bottle sales and merchandise. “What we have now is a more custom fit space for Bottlecraft.” The Best Bottleshop of 2014 just got better.

Born and raised in Colorado Springs, Ken Schmidt’s first batch of homebrew was in 1966 using a can of malt extract to create a Pale Ale. “Blue Ribbon Malt Extract with hop flavor was the only ingredient you could get at a grocery store,” Ken recalls. At the time, homebrewing was illegal and would remain so for another 12 years; there were no books, homebrew supply stores, or groups. “It turned out to be such a terrible beer. I didn’t try again for several years.”

An avid fisher and diver, Ken came to San Diego in 1970 to pursue a career in marine biology. “I love liquid and bubbles, so homebrewing makes sense.” Combine that with a passion for the Hawaiian Islands, and the Aloha Plenty series was born. Beers include Pele’s Breath, a spicy German wheat, and Aloha Plenty, which was the winner of Stone’s annual homebrewing competition in 2009. Winners of the competition get to team up with a professional brewer of their choice to brew along with Stone’s Mitch Steele and crew. The resulting beer is entered in the ProAm competition at the Great American Beer Festival. For Aloha Plenty, Ken chose Garrett Marrero of Maui Brewing Co. and the trio completed the Kona coffee and macadamia nut porter.

Ken won Stone’s competition again in 2012 with his Pillow Mint at the Ritz Chocolate Imperial Stout. This time, he chose Brandon Sieminski of Vista’s Iron Fist Brewing Co. as the guest professional brewer. “The Iron Fist family does a great job of getting fine beers out,” he said. Fast forward to 2014, and Ken collaborated with Brandon again, recreating Aloha Plenty and Pillow Mint at Iron Fist. Those two beers, along with a few others from his series, saw a limited bottle and draft release at a Hawaiian-themed party at Iron Fist in late September.
THE AMERICAN REINTERPRETATION OF THE TRADITIONAL ENGLISH PUB

51 CRAFT BEER TAPS
UPSCALE PUB FOOD CLASSICS

SUNDAY BRUNCH MENU 9AM-12:30PM

URGEGASTROPUB.COM

16761 BERNARDO CENTER DR. SAN DIEGO, CA 92128

NOW SELLING BEER AND WINE TO GO!

North County’s Premier Specialty Cheese, Charcuterie, Meats, and Bottle Shop with unique tasty sandwiches, healthy salads, and other fine grocery items.

855-850-2787  @BROSPROVISIONS
WWW.BROTHERSPROVISIONS.COM

“BEST BEER RESTAURANT”
-West Coaster Reader’s Poll 2014

“ONE OF 19 BEST NEW BEER RESTAURANTS IN THE COUNTRY”
- DRAFT Magazine

3794 30TH STREET · SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA · 92104
619-255-8778 · WAYPOINTPUBLIC.COM
2957 RANDOLPH AVENUE, UNIT B, COSTA MESA, CA 92626
BARLEYFORGE.COM
FACEBOOK / INSTAGRAM / TWITTER @barleyforge
COSTA MESA’S FIRST PRODUCTION BREWERY
TASTING ROOM NOW OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK
BEER ON TAP
GROWLERS
BOTTLES
FOOD
ALL AGES WELCOME
GRAND OPENING EVENT ★
SATURDAY NOV 15

Experience.
San Diego Craft Beer in Solana Beach
Taste.
20 weekly rotating San Diego Craft Beers
Take Home.
300+ Craft Beer Bottle Selection

BEERWORKS
CELEBRATE THE CRAFT
www.sandiegeoisbeerworks.com

Our neighbor Angelenos joke about going behind “The Orange Curtain” when they cross the county line — like some Cold War-era spy sneaking into the Soviet Union. We get it. It’s different here in Orange County. But we invite you to cross that line and try what we have to offer, like this India Pale Ale. Dry and crisp, with some Maris Otter malt for a bit of sweetness and a mix of West Coast hops. We trust you will enjoy this great tasting beer and find that it’s not so scary down here behind The Orange Curtain after all.

THE ORANGE CURTAIN
INDIA PALE ALE
77
ALC 6.2% BY VOL
12 FL OZ
BARLEY FORGE BREWING CO.
COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA
BARLEYFORGE.COM
FACEBOOK / INSTAGRAM / TWITTER @barleyforge
COSTA MESA’S FIRST PRODUCTION BREWERY
TASTING ROOM NOW OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK
BEER ON TAP ★ GROWLERS ★ BOTTLES
FOOD ★ ALL AGES WELCOME

★ GRAND OPENING EVENT ★
SATURDAY NOV 15

NEW HAPPY HOUR 3PM - 7PM & ALL DAY SUNDAY SPECIALS:
$4.50 CRAFT BEER; $3.50 DOMESTIC BOTTLES; $3.00 GLASS OF WINE & $4.50 APPETIZERS
MAINTAPTAVERN.COM FOR WED. CASK LINE UPS

CORONADO PUB ★ TASTING ROOM
CORONADO, CA 92118 ★ SAN DIEGO, CA 92110
www.coronadobrewingcompany.com
Brewing is our middle name.


BRINGING THE SAN DIEGO CRAFT BEER SCENE TO YOU.
EXPERIENCE NEW CRAFT BEERS WEEKLY!

We’re located at 437 South Highway 101 in the BeachWalk Center. (right next to California Pizza Kitchen) Just a short walk from the Solana Beach train station.

www.coronadobrewingcompany.com
The craft beer industry, like any other, is in a state of constant flux due to many market pressures, some of which aren’t seen by the average consumer. For example, what if a brewery wants to get a particular hop for a signature taste that their fans have grown to love? Well, they’ve got to make sure they get the right hop contract within a timely manner, or risking having to change their recipe. And what if a brewery has the perfect business concept, but no location yet? In that case, permits, trademarks, and licenses are only part of the story when building out a dream spot. But fear not; it’s not all doom and gloom, and San Diego did not become “The Craft Beer Capital” of the U.S. by resting on its laurels. On the contrary, all of these challenges mean nothing more than opportunity. These opportunities are the result of the mother of invention making her presence known. Her name is Necessity. Necessity breads innovation and fuels the spirit of invention and innovation. What follows are trends that are emerging throughout San Diego heading into 2015.

TRANS-BORDER CONNECTIONS

The U.S.–Mexico border at the Tijuana crossing is the busiest port of entry in the world, and craft beer is just going to add to those numbers. Over the last year or so, we have seen our local brewers take part in trans-border collaborations with friends from Northern Baja. Pizza Port Ocean Beach Head Brewer Ignacio Cervantes brewed collaboration ales with Mexicali’s “Cucapa”, which is one of Mexico’s oldest and largest craft beer breweries. Port town Ensenada is home to “Cerveceria Wendlandt” led by Eugenio Wendlandt, who visited San Diego’s East Village where he and his team worked with Cosimo Sorrentino on a Monkey Paw collaboration. Late in 2014, Stone famously collaborated with Tijuana’s “Insurgente” (Winner of Mexico’s Brewer and Beer of The Year Award 2014) to bring Chris Banker’s homebrew recipe to life on a grand scale. Most recently, one of Mexicali’s most popular breweries, The Big Bad Brewing Company, teamed up with Pizza Port Solana Beach Head Brewer Devon Randall for an all-female
brewed ale brewed at the Solana Beach brew pub. Northern Baja, particularly Tijuana, is proving itself to be the craft beer capital of Mexico, and his trend of trans-border collaborations will likely result in bigger and higher profile collaborations and trans-border business ventures.

Coffee is reinvigorating craft beer in more ways than one. Veteran breweries such as Ballast Point and Karl Strauss have known for some time now that coffee isn’t just for mornings, late night cram sessions, or cafes. Ballast Point has a friend in North Park’s own Caffé Calabria which roasts the rich blend that goes into Victory at Sea, while Karl Strauss collaborates with Bird Rock Coffee Roasters on the seasonal stout Wreck Alley. Bird Rock Coffee Roasters has also found success in the family ties of its Head Roaster, Heather Brisson, who has collaborated with her wife Kim Lutz-Brisson and team at Saint Archer. One of San Diego’s oldest breweries, AleSmith, is no stranger to coffee as well, releasing everal highly coveted coffee variants of its much celebrated Speedway Stout this past year, most notably the Jamaican Blue Mountain variant brewed with Ranch Bernardo’s Mostra Coffee Roasters. As breweries such as these display commercial success and critical acclaim, it is safe to say that others will follow suit. Moreover, coffee beers are one thing, but craft beer centric restaurants such as Nate’s Garden Grill, The Cork & Craft, and Toronado have added dedicated draft lines for cold brewed coffee on demand. Additionally, and perhaps most intriguing, is the trend of many craft beer aficionados dusting off their own coffee presses and randalls in an effort to infuse their favorite beers with various roasts, resulting in their own custom blends.

Whether renting, leasing, or even buying a parcel of land, breweries are starting to deal with increasingly savvier landlords, many of whom have a new found appreciation for craft beer. It is no secret why you find breweries in industrial warehouses and business parks; San Diego real estate has always come at a premium. Why not save money by being situated in these cost-friendly, albeit less aesthetically pleasing locales? Landlords have caught on to this trend, however, and the owners of craft beer breweries, bars, and restaurants are starting to see higher rates, shorter contracts, and hardball business tactics when negotiating. As these terms become increasingly cost-prohibitive, we are beginning to see breweries leave the once affordable business park and industrial zones for locales that are more affordable, including urban and non-urban residential areas.

It is no secret that our region is facing an unprecedented drought, the likes of which we have not seen for generations. As water becomes a more highly respected and coveted commodity its cost will reflect its rarity. Larger breweries will likely easily absorb this cost and pass the burden on to the consumer, who will barely feel the pinch with, perhaps, a pennies per bottle price increase based on the sheer volume of the operation. Inversely, smaller breweries with razor thin margins will feel the impact more heavily, resulting in a measurable impact on their bottom line, which may make operations unfeasible altogether due to the cost of water. These emerging trends of cost prohibitive water will likely lead to the necessity of reducing, reusing, and recycling of water throughout the brewing process, and will therefore lead to innovation.

The neighborhood watering hole, in the form of a brewery, has been gaining traction for some time now, and SoNo Park is leading the way with this trend. Thorn St., located in South North Park, has grown in popularity since 2012, with their 7 barrel brew house that mostly supplies their tasting room and growlers of their neighbors in the very walkable neighborhood. South Park Brewing Company, brainchild of Scot and Karen Blair along with brewer Cosimo Sorrentino, will soon have an operational 5 barrel brew house which will be nestled next door to their other South Park craft beer venture: Hamilton’s Tavern. These operations, though modest in size, dwarf some of San Diego’s newest breweries in planning, breweries that are already facing the challenges of these emerging trends. Lifelong friends and home brewing companions Jonathan Barbarin and Bill Lindsay will be brewing at Miramar’s newest brewery in planning “Thunderhawk Alements.” The issue of being eco-friendly has greatly influenced their business plan. Jonathan says that they’ll be brewing on an electric one-barrel system with four two-barrel fermentors, and the team are shooting for 95% efficiency and a ratio of 5:1 in terms of water used to beer created.
These trends are emerging, will continue to grow, and will undoubtedly evolve into different trends and issues all together. Will we see San Diego breweries investing whole heartedly in coffee roasting facilities under their own brands? Modern Times is already doing it. Will Baja California become the home of a San Diego satellite brewery? Green Flash and Coronado have already begun to distribute to Mexico. If water becomes a premium product, will we see innovations in water sourcing, recycling, and reclamation? Thunderhawk’s entire business model was influenced by this factor. Moreover, the return of the nano brewery in San Diego is emerging as the result of the market pressures brought upon by the trends of both higher rates for rent, in conjunction with the projected scarcity and increasing cost of water. Innovation in terms of placement of these projects will result in different communities and segments of society being exposed to craft beer. Industry pundits wax poetic about the craft beer bubble and whether or not it will burst. These market pressures, however, will not be the collective prick that causes the craft beer “bubble” to burst, but rather, it will serve as the pressure that causes the craft beer “bubble” to change shape.
They say, "tis better to give than to receive. Come this time of year, many of us do our best to hide our anticipation of receiving, putting on a generous front as we mentally prepare ourselves to don our new ornamental attire, fire up a cutting-edge piece of technology or add some more liquid assets to the beer cellar thanks to items gifted to us by family and friends in the spirit of yule. Hey, if getting wasn’t so much fun, there would be zero joy in giving and, thus, inspiring such receptive elation.

I recently found myself in a rather blissful state of mind thanks to the generosity of a friend at colleague, Tyler Graham. A talented videographer, photographer, homebrewer and all-around swell guy, he bestowed upon me a cherished recipe for beer bread for a pumpkin beer dinner I prepared in November. (Readers of this column will remember that gourd-centric menu from the October issue of West Coaster.)

Having tasted different versions of that recipe’s finished product from Tyler’s kitchen, I knew it was a versatile recipe that lends itself as well to porters and stouts as IPAs and Belgian-style beers. That’s pretty rare when it comes to beer-infused recipes, and something to be coveted for sure. What I didn’t realize going in was how utterly simple the recipe is to execute. Having tried numerous other beer bread formulas, some can be very detailed, requiring a great deal of time, attention and ingredients. I wasn’t really in the market for that when baking up what would be one of dozens of components for my pumpkin beer dinner, so simplicity was crucial.

But even having tasted the proof of this recipe’s tastiness and knowing its key assets, I was still shocked to discover just how good this recipe is when I ventured into my kitchen to give it a whirl. Get this. All it takes to bake up a hefty loaf of this bread is six, count ’em, six ingredients. I can’t remember the last time I relied on a humble sextet of items to bake up anything. All you’ll need to procure is flour (all-purpose, you don’t even have to spring for cake flour, self-rising or anything fancy like that), baking powder, sugar, salt, one 12-ounce bottle of beer (not a problem for anyone reading this publication) and a stick of butter. It’s likely most people have these on-hand already, which ups the ease factor.

Assembling the ingredients is the toughest part, because all you need to do to mix them up is combine everything but the butter in the bowl of an electric stand mixer (or a bowl big enough to use a handheld mixer) and blend them until everything is completely incorporated and you’re left with a sticky mass of dough you will then transfer to a greased loaf pan. So, what’s the butter for? Melting, then pouring over the dough to create a golden-brown exterior that takes this bread from, in Tyler’s words, “soft and sad” to “crispy and bomb.”

An hour in the oven and you are done. It’s just that elementary, and once sliced and adorned with a pat of butter, truly exception-
PROUDLY ANNOUNCING
Fresh & Invigorating Beer!
At the one & only
SOCIETE BREWING COMPANY
TASTING ROOM
EXTRAVAGANZA
Brewed on premises & poured from clean taps
7 DAYS PER WEEK!

WHEREABOUTS:
8262 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, San Diego 92111
Steer your horseless carriage into the industrial park and take the first driveway on the left.

HOURS:
Monday-Wednesday: 12-9pm
Thursday-Saturday: 12-10pm
Sunday: 12-8pm

SOUTH BAY LIQUOR

OVER 800 BOTTLES
OF CRAFT BEER!

HOURS: 8AM-12PM

FRIEND US!  @SOUTHBAYLIQUOR  @SOBAYLIQUOR

1355 BROADWAY CHULA VISTA, CA 91911  |  619.422.1787
Five Wee Heavy Bells
HOLIDAY SCOTCH ON SCOTCH ALE

A wee heavy scotch ale aged on scotch-soaked oak chips. Cheers.
Monday
1/2 off All Wines By the Glass (all day)
2 for 1 Moscow Mules (all day)

Tuesday
Tequila and Taco Tuesday
$5 Single/$7 Double Margarita (all day)
$1.25 Street Taco
2 for $5 Fish Tacos (all day)

Wednesday
$3 Draft Beer (all day)

Thursday
No Corkage or Capage on
Wine & Beer (all day)

Friday
Sweet Friday
2 for 1 Desserts (all day)

Saturday
Wings & Wells
Half off Basket of Wings | $4 Wells (all day)
Brunch with Epic Bloody Marys
Bottemless Mimosas (11am-2pm)

Sunday
20% Off for Current SDSU Students (5pm-close)
*Restaurant Only with Valid Student ID
Brunch with Epic Bloody Marys
& Bottemless Mimosas (11am-2pm)
al…provided you select the right beer. Yes, I realize I just infused this recipe with a shot of potential complication, but bear with me. Selecting the right ale or lager simply means choosing beer and, potentially, additional seasonings and ingredients that suit your personal tastes. You already know what you like, so how tough can it be, really? Experiment away!

For my pumpkin beer dinner, I, of course, reached for a pumpkin beer—Uinta Punk’n Harvest Ale, to be exact. Looking over the list of ingredients in the recipe, I could see that it would be up to the beer to convey the flavors I was looking for, and did it ever. The bread tasted as though I’d added a good amount of cinnamon and nutmeg, but didn’t turn out sweet. It was exactly what I was looking for. But that doesn’t mean you have to let the beer do all the heavy lifting. Mix-ins like nuts, chocolate chips and fruit, or even savory items like olives can take the bread to new heights.

Tyler recommends Belgian-style ales when adding sweet ingredients (“residual sugars go boom!”) and India pale ales for savory supplementary items. Stouts are good for sweet or savory add-ins and give the bread a good-looking, dark brown color. Some of his favorite combinations to date (and instructional commentary on them) are as follows:

**Savory Stout Bread:** Add 1 heaping teaspoon of fresh, chopped rosemary leaves to the dough, then grab the pepper mill and give it enough turns to bore you.

**No-Brain Sweet Bread:** Add a handful of berries from the fridge. I like raspberries. Also, 2 tablespoons of loosely packed brown sugar, the darker the better.

**Holiday Doughnut Bread:** Don’t use beer. Go for cider—apple, pear, whatever—then add ¼ cup of white chocolate chips and ¼ cup pomegranate seeds.

When going for a sweet bread, it’s important to remember to up the amount of granulated sugar in the base recipe. Other than that, everything remains the same. Again…it’s easy, especially considering how complicated and testy recipes for baked goods can be.

So, in the spirit of giving, I want to pay it forward and gift readers with Tyler’s recipe. In doing so, I’ve made sure to communicate it in the style that he did when emailing it to me, for he is a much more entertaining communicator than I am, and his big personality and unique way of conveying a recipe are things that shouldn’t become lost in translation. May this warming, delicious treat elicit many a smile among your holiday guests, and may those guests bestow upon you many a great present, because giving’s nice and all, but there’s something to be said for a December influx of goods—baked or otherwise!

---

**Beer Bread**

Yield: 1 loaf

- 3 cups all-purpose flour, sifted*
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 12 ounces beer**
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted***

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Place the dry ingredients in the bowl of an electric mixer and mix thoroughly. Watch out for lumps of sugar and baking powder. Sugar lumps [expletive] up the baking and baking powder lumps just suck when you eat one. If you’ve already got the sifter out, use it to mix the dry goods thoroughly. (I usually just use a fork and look for lumps to break it up.) Add the beer and mix. It’s a thick dough and I have better results leaving it kind of lumpy. If you beat the [expletive] out of the dough and get it super fine, the bread tends to lose the “rustic-ness” you want from beer bread. If you have mix-ins, now's the time to add them. Transfer the dough into a greased loaf pan and bake that [expletive] for 1 hour. Remove from oven and let cool on a rack.

**Notes**

* If you take the time to sift out to 3 cups, you get lighter, fluffier bread. Conversely, if you pack 3 cups, you end up with super dense bread. Yay, baking!
** I’m routinely amazed at how much the beer affects the bread flavor. It’s a little easier to pour your beer first, so it gets as flat as possible prior to mixing. Otherwise, it gets foamy when you mix. It doesn’t affect anything. It just annoys me while I stir.
*** I’ve skipped it and the bread is soft and sad. I’ve also used fake butter, which works, but note that the fake [expletive] is super salty and will affect the flavor negatively in my opinion. So, if you go for margarine, use ¼ cup or even 2 tablespoons…basically enough to paint the top of the loaf so it gets all crispy and bomb.

- Recipe courtesy of Tyler Graham
PIVO
IS JUST A WORD
FOR BEER.

SORRY TO DISAPPOINT if you were expecting a clever name dripping with irony, an insider joke, an odd innuendo, or random irreverence. Nope. Brewmaster Matt Brynildson just wanted to call his Hoppy Pils “Pivo”. In Czech, pivo simply means beer. Kind of refreshingly appropriate for a beer that doesn’t claim to be anything that it’s not. Just a West Coaster’s hoppy take on the classic Czech Pils. Word.

FIRESTONE WALKER
BREWING COMPANY

SAN DIEGO’S ONLY TAP HOUSE ON THE WATER
FATHOM
BISTRO, BAIT & TACKLE

15 TAPS OF LOCAL AND NOT SO LOCAL BEERS
SAUSAGES, BURGERS & KIMCHI MADE IN HOUSE
ISLAND BRUNCH WEEKENDS 10AM - 1PM

ON THE SHELTER ISLAND FISHING PIER
1776 SHELTER ISLAND DR., SAN DIEGO, CA 92106
619.222.5835 FATHOMBISTRO.COM
Diamond's Standing Room Only (SRO) men's urinals are the perfect addition to your special event or gathering. With 4 bays of waterless urinals per unit and a large waste tank our SRO units can handle the heaviest of use. Free-standing privacy screen obscures the entrance and interior from the public.

Call 888-744-7191
Southern California’s Preferred Portable Toilet Rental Company
www.diamondprovides.com
Mother Earth Brew Co. Vista, CA
Since the dawn of humanity we have been sustained by nourishment from our mothers. But never has such nourishment been so convenient and publicly acceptable. Love your cans. Love your Mother.

got cans?
[1. Eureka!
718 Ventura Pl. | 858.488.1274
www.SDTapRoom.com
11. 1775 Garnet Ave. | 858.483.4746
www.LuigisAtTheBeach.com
3210 Mission Blvd. | 858.488.2818
8. Latitude 32 Pub
www.IronPigAleHouse.com
1520 Garnet Ave. | 858.412.4299
1710 W Mission Bay Dr. | 619.225.2125
www.StoneWorldBistro.com

[BEER PUBS & RESTAURANTS]

[1. Karl Strauss Brewing Co.
1044 Wall St. | 858.228.9305
www.BelmontPark.com/Restaurants/
858.228.9305
967 Garnet Ave. | 858.230.6567
www.BarrelRepublic.com
1261 Garnet Ave. | 858.270.9922
www.OBKabob.com
4902 Newport Ave. | 619.222.8272
The Joint
2750 Dewey Rd. | 619.398.2660
12.375 Greenwood St. | 619.546.9694
1. Modern Times Beer
3801 Ingraham St. | 858.581.3663
www.ThePromiscuousFork.com
3825 Sports Arena Blvd. | 619.226.6333
www.OBKabob.com
980 Turquoise St. | 858.488.7474

[FINISHING]
Best Bottleshop & Beer Bar in Clairemont

Enjoy draft beer at Balboa’s & take bottles home from Jimbo’s!

Jimbo’s Liquor

4411 Genesee Ave.
San Diego, CA 92117
858.278.6440

Open 8am to 11pm everyday

Jimbo’s Special

Buy (6) 22oz bombers, get the 7th for $0.10
(up to $6.99)
Must show this ad. Some restrictions apply.

Ballooa’s Tap House

4421 Genesee Ave.
San Diego, CA 92117
858.277.8226

32 rotating craft beers on tap

Coupon:
$3.00 first pint, any draft
Must show this ad. One per customer.

HOPPY MONDAYS
$4 pints all 32 taps

Beer vault filled with bottles
Pitchers of craft beer starting at $10
Full kitchen

Hours:
Mon-Thurs 1pm-11pm
Fri-Sat 11am-11pm
Sun 9:30am-11pm

Updated craft beer selection!
1000+ bottles of beer, liquor and Wine

4411 Genesee Ave.
San Diego, CA 92117
858.278.6440

4421 Genesee Ave.
San Diego, CA 92117
858.277.8226

Friend us!
Follow us!
#JimbosLiquor

32 rotating craft beers on tap

Coupon:
$3.00 first pint, any draft
Must show this ad. One per customer.

HOPPY MONDAYS
$4 pints all 32 taps

Beer vault filled with bottles
Pitchers of craft beer starting at $10
Full kitchen

Hours:
Mon-Thurs 1pm-11pm
Fri-Sat 11am-11pm
Sun 9:30am-11pm

Friend us!
Follow us!
#JimbosLiquor
Noche de los Muertos

An award-winning, intense Imperial Stout with a hint of cinnamon spice. Big, rich and black as the night. Roasted Barley and Pale Chocolate malts add complex character with a balanced bitterness and mouth feel.

“Aztec’s Imperial stout is terrifyingly dark and deep, but bright hops and cinnamon supply a happy ending...light on the tongue and smacks of bittersweet cocoa, deeply roasted coffee, cinnamon and vanilla.”

Peter Rowe
UT San Diego, October 2014

Also available: Hop Serpent Imperial IPA, Sacrifice Red IPA, Chipotle IPA and Hibiscus Wheat

Aztec Brewing Company
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

2330 La Mirada Dr., Vista 92081
800-706-6324 • AztecBrewery.com

Visit our tasting room.
Wednesday–Friday 3-9pm,
Saturday 1-9pm, Sunday 1-6pm.

© 2014 All rights reserved
Aztec Brewing Company®
and Aztec Sacrifice®
are registered trademarks.

Tank Tops, T-shirts and Hoodies available at the tap room or online at www.aztecbrewery.com
‘TIS THE VICTORY AT SEASON

BALLAST POINT

DEDICATED TO THE CRAFT
BALLASTPOINT.COM