

CRAFT BEER,  
A LOOK INTO  
THE FUTURE

## PART 1 The Craft Beer Revolution

This is the first of four articles, each of which looks into craft beer's future. This first one is a view of the craft beer industry (primarily locally) yesterday and today. The three articles to follow are intended to stimulate thoughts and influence tomorrow's choices.

Fueled by interest and driven by flavor, the future of the craft beer industry is, in a word, growth. While sales of craft beer grew by 5.9% in 2008 and 7.2% in 2009, the total U.S. beer sales were down 2.2%. And, since craft beer sales are only 4.3% of the total beer market, there is plenty of room for rapid growth and every reason to believe it will happen. (Data is from the Brewer's Association website, see *Information on Craft Beers* below.)

From 2008 to 2009 the number of breweries in the U.S. increased 3% to well over 1500 - the largest number since before prohibition (1919). After prohibition was repealed in 1933, the number of breweries quickly grew from 0 to about 700. Effective marketing campaigns in the ensuing years changed America's beer preferences from beers with distinctive flavor to light lagers. By the late 1970's, the number of breweries declined to about 44 and experts predicted a further consolidation to just five.

With the decrease in the number of breweries and the dominance of light lagers, a home brewing culture began to emerge and thrive. The quickest and easiest way to get a variety of richly flavored beers was to make them yourself. These home brewing roots gave birth to what is now known as the "Craft Brewing" industry - small breweries with brewers dedicated to supply their local communities with full flavored beers made



Barry Bailik owner Thirsty Monk/Pint House, it's about the flavor.

with their interpretation of old-world, brewing traditions. In 1980 there were eight craft breweries; by 1994 the number had grown to 540. Today most Americans live within 10 miles of a craft brewery.

Asheville's beer scene started in 1994 (and in many ways paralleled the national scene) with local craft brew pioneers Jimi Rentz of Barley's Taproom and Pizzeria, Oscar Wong of Highland Brewing Company, and the Asheville Citizen Times Entertainment editor and columnist Tony Kiss (The Beer Guy). Jimi and his partners introduced craft beer to the area and, a short time later, its first and highly regarded beer festival Brew Grass. Oscar's company was Asheville's

first brewery and quickly became known for its high-quality, richly-flavored beer that captured the interest and taste buds of local and regional beer drinkers. Tony's writings about beer, beer flavors, new beers, and beer happenings began the education process and stimulated interest and excitement.

By 2001, Green Man Brewing, Asheville Pizza and Brewing, and French Broad Brewing joined the scene and built on that foundation. In 2005, Asheville's beer scene erupted when Pisgah Brewing opened, followed quickly over the next four years by Wedge Brewing, Oyster House Brewing, Craggie Brewing and the L. A. B. Each of the breweries have tasting rooms with distinctly different vibes, excellent brewmasters, and a variety of flavorful, savory beers. Together these breweries are a part of a beer community that attracts national attention and makes Asheville a beer destination.

To round out the Asheville beer scene are the new pioneers - Barry Bialik (The Thirsty Monk/Pint House), Jason and Julie Atallah (Brusin' Ales), and Mark Lyons (The Brews Cruise). While the early pioneers established craft beer's flavor credibility, the new pioneers demonstrate its flavor diversity with the added element of education and fun.

The Thirsty Monk introduced the many, interesting, unique and savory flavors of Belgian Beer. The Monk's recently opened Pint House has 16 taps with a changing line-up of craft beers from across the US. They have some special nights to enjoy the beer, have new cask conditioned beers weekly, and regularly bring brewery representatives in for a visit.

BY JOE ZINICH

Brusin' Ales, a beer-only store, offers over 800 different beers from around the U.S. and the world, bi-weekly tastings, an incredible knowledge of beer styles and flavors, expertise on beer/food pairings, and beer dinners at local restaurants. They, too, bring guest brewers and beer celebrities for meet-and-greet events.

The Brews Cruise provides a safe and fun way to visit local breweries. It offers a comfortable, relaxed, informative ride where you'll tour the breweries, learn about beer production and styles, and taste each brewery's signature brews. Don't want to ride? They offer a variety of walking tours as well.

This incredible growth of the Craft Beer Industry is a direct result of the wide variety of high quality, richly flavored beers offered and the rapidly growing number of people who choose to discover and regularly enjoy them. It will continue as more and more people find that craft beer is equally at home



Mark Lyons owner Bruise Cruise, on one of his more exotic cruises.

in a bar, restaurant, kitchen or any other place you develop a thirst and want to relax.

## Beer News

Brusin' Ales is featuring a barbecue and beer dinner at 12 Bones Smoke House on Wednesday, April 21. Check the website for time, menu, and price.

Highland Brewing Company has a new seasonal "Seven Sisters Abbey Style Ale" - a Belgian "dubbel" made to style using Belgian yeast. It has a copper-color and a smooth, complex flavor profile, with a slightly sweet finish; 6.5%.

French Broad Brewing Company introduces an "Easy IPA". Expect low to medium hop bitterness, with bright citrus notes and intense hop bouquet; all the wonderful hop aromas and flavors with only a little pucker.

Craggie Brewing Company kicks off April with their new Antebellum Ale developed from the original 1840's American recipe. It includes molasses, ginger and spruce tips; 5%. If you want to try a good barleywine, stop by for their "Meet Your Maker Barleywine" an English style strong ale with warm notes of toffee and raisins, 9%. Be sure to ask about the name.

Thirsty Monk's April 7 pint night is a kick-off party for Oskar Blues' new imperial IPA "Gubna"; 10%.

Their April 22 Earth-Day cask night features Mother Earth Brewing Company; excellent new brewers and as eco-friendly as their name implies.



Jason (left) and Julie (right) Atallah, owners of Brusin' Ales, with Sam Calagione, owner of Dog Fish Head Brewery.

## Information on Craft Beers

Thirsty Monk - [www.monkpub.com](http://www.monkpub.com)  
 Brusin' Ales - [www.bruisin-ales.com](http://www.bruisin-ales.com)  
 Brews Cruise - [www.brewscruise.com](http://www.brewscruise.com)  
 Barley's Taproom and Pizzeria  
[www.barleystaproom.com/asheville](http://www.barleystaproom.com/asheville)  
 Highland Brewing Company  
[www.highlandbrewing.com](http://www.highlandbrewing.com)  
 French Broad Brewing Company  
[www.frenchbroadbrewery.com](http://www.frenchbroadbrewery.com)  
 Tony Kiss - [citizen-times.com/beerguy](http://citizen-times.com/beerguy)

## Brewers Association

[www.brewersassociation.org](http://www.brewersassociation.org)  
 See About Us (tab): History of Craft Brewing; See Business Tools (tab): Craft Brewing Statistics

## Craft Beer, a Look into The Future

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*Rapid River* - July 2010



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**CRAFT BEER,  
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## **PART 2** Try and Compare: How to Conduct a Tasting with Friends

This second article of a four part series looks into the future of Craft Beer. The first article was about the dramatic growth of beer sales and number of micro breweries. That growth is driven by availability, variety of styles and flavors, and the public's desire to try and enjoy new taste sensations. This and the remaining articles are intended to help expand your flavor palate and influence your choices.

When I was younger, I selected beverages based on the social situation; wine for food and family, beer for pizza and parties, liquor for conversation and contemplation. As I learned about and sampled an ever-increasing variety of imported and craft beer styles, I realized my old habits and prejudices prevented me from full enjoyment of the

### **Brew News**

**Craggie Brewing** unveils its Antebellum Ale (based on an 1840's American recipe that contained water, molasses, ginger, a touch of yeast, and spruce tips), a pale ale spiked with the flavors of molasses, ginger and spruce, 5%. They collaborated with The Hop Ice Cream Cafe (thehopicecreamcafe.com) to produce a delicious Antebellum ice cream.

**French Broad Brewing** has opened a new beer oasis, their back patio. Buy a beer and enjoy it and the weather out back. Opens 3 p.m. daily, weather permitting, through the fall.

**The Thirsty Monk** has a pint night with Magic Hat Brewing that features rare and unusual kegs with a custom Monk/Magic hat logo glass; week of May 10, both locations. On May 20 or 21, they will have a special event with Terrapin Brewing Company from Athens, Georgia. One of the founders, Brian "Spike" Buckowski, the creative force behind Terrapin's uniquely flavored beers, will be in attendance.

**Wedge Brewing's Witt bier** is now on tap; a delicious Belgian style wheat beer, spiced with coriander and orange peel, light and refreshing, 4.9%. The outdoor movie series starts Saturday, May 1 and continues every Saturday through September. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy; a drive in without the car.

**Asheville's Beer City Festival** – The festival showcases the beer from 40 North and South Carolina breweries and is scheduled for Saturday, June 5 at Roger McGuire park in downtown Asheville. Tickets (\$35 each) are available at all nine local breweries, Brusin' Ales and Barley's. Buy early, it's expected to sell out.

occasion. Experience improved my taste preferences and flavor became my objective. So why not use a robust porter to make a rich beef stew and enjoy it with a Scottish ale instead of a cabernet. A quiet conversation can be enjoyed with a barley wine or oak aged porter as readily as a top shelf brandy. One beverage type does not exclude the other but rather provides additional options.

To really appreciate what you eat or drink, it helps to consider and discuss why they are enjoyable — the look, the aroma, the flavor. Although my preferences were developed over a long period of time, yours might be expedited by having a tasting that features wine, beer, or a combination of the two. For advice and suggestions on how to conduct a tasting, I spoke with some local experts; Rob Campbell (Wine Guy), Alex Buerckholtz (Hops and Vines) and Jason Atallah (Brusin' Ales).

The experts agree that first and foremost a tasting should be simple and fun. A time when you and your friends discover and enjoy new flavors and share why you like them. It's not what's best in the show, it's what's best in your show. All tastings have a number of common elements — a theme (unifying factor), glassware or plastic cups, water to drink, food to clean the palate, paper and pencils, time to record and discuss your impressions, and an amount of beer or wine appropriate for the number of people attending. Also provide a receptacle for people to pour unwanted samples.

The theme for a tasting can be as simple as presenting 3 bottles of red or white wines that you enjoy, or as complex as a comparison of California, Australian, and French cabernets (for example three of each priced under \$15). For beer the theme can be a comparison of pale ales, one from each local brewery or, more elaborate, styles that are associated with a country, like a German pilsner, an English pale ale, an Irish stout, a Belgian abbey, a Flemish sour, a U.S. IPA. Serve drink samples in order from lightest to richest in flavor; which is normally lightest to darkest in color.

Appetizers and water should be served to refresh the taste buds. The food can be very simple; for example, serve a mild bread with a cheese selection that varies from mild to strong. Cheese is a good choice because it



**Rob Campbell, wine consultant and author, Wine Guy.**



**Alex Buerckholtz owner of Hops and Vines.**

BY JOE ZINICH

goes well with both wine and beer. The key is to provide food that does not overpower the taste and aroma of the beverage.

Since a tasting is about the discovery of new flavors and aromas and why you like them, supply a pencil and paper or a scoring card (these can be purchased or found online). Present a description of each beverage served; this will help participants to find words for flavors and aromas, enliven discussions, and help them remember their favorites. Plan for the tasting to take 1 to 3 hours (sometimes more) to complete.

For a wine tasting, each sample should be 2 ounces (or less); one 750-ml bottle can serve 10 – 12 people. To prevent palate fatigue and potential inebriation, serve a maximum of 6 – 8 different wines (the equivalent of 2 – 3 glasses per person). For a more complex tasting, serve the wines in flights of 3 (4 maximum) and don't mix red and white in a flight. A "reception" wine (white for a white wine tasting, red for red, champagne for either) gets the palate ready for the tasting to come. Put a numbered cover over the bottles and serve everyone a sample of each wine in the flight then ask them to record the number of their favorite. Tally the votes, uncover the wines, and discuss the results. Repeat for the remaining flights.

For a beer tasting, each sample should be 4 ounces (or less); one 12-ounce bottle can serve 3 people. Plan to serve a maximum of 8 to 10 beers; the equivalent of 2 – 3 pints per person. If a certain style of beer is presented (example, all IPA's), put a numbered cover on the bottles. If the tasting is more about exploring beers from around the world, numbered covers may not be necessary. Then serve, sample, record, tally and discuss.

As might be expected, a combined beer and wine tasting is best done with food. This tasting is different than the others because the combination of food and beverage together is what's being explored. As an example, invite some friends, grill some red meat, select a shiraz, a stout, a porter, and a lager. Have everyone take a sip of cabernet then eat a cube of meat and record their



**Jason Atallah, owner of Bruisin' Ales.**

**Alex Buerckholtz's** passion for home brewing and love of flavorful beers and wine led him to open **Hops and Vines** in West Asheville. Alex is an award winning home brewer, conducts home brewing lessons at his store, and is ranked as a recognized beer judge by the prestigious BJCP organization.

[hopsandvines.net](http://hopsandvines.net)

**Jason Atallah** has been passionate about flavorful imported and American craft beers since the end of his college days. He and his wife Julie have researched and traveled the country to find the beers they enjoyed. Acknowledged "foodies", many of their favorite recipes have been as an ingredient. Together they own **Brusin' Ales**, an all beer (800 different kinds) and beer merchandise store ranked number three in the world.

[brusin-ales.com](http://brusin-ales.com)

**Rob Campbell** successfully opened Atlanta's first wine bar and restaurant. In 1999 he moved to Asheville and opened the **Wine Guy** stores. A wine professional for over 25 years, he is a judge for local and international competitions, a writer for the Laurel of Asheville, and a consultant for wine related events.

Contact him at [wino4now@aol.com](mailto:wino4now@aol.com)

experience. Follow that approach with the lager and finally the porter. The discussion should prove to be fun. Most people find the flavors of the shiraz and the lager will contrast with the roasty, caramelization of the meat, the flavors clear. However, the roasty, caramely flavors of the porter enhance and harmonize with the flavors of the meat, the flavors linger.

It's all about flavor. Take the time to taste, enjoy, and explore.



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## **PART 3** Cooking with Beer: Interviews with Local Chefs

### Beer Recipe

Judd Lohof of Café Azelea share's the Beer Cheese Soup recipe he used for a recent beer dinner held with Craggie Brewing ([craggiebrewingco.com](http://craggiebrewingco.com)). The recipe features Craggie's Dubbelicious, a Belgian-style double ale.

#### Ingredients:

½ cup of a fat (bacon grease, butter, canola oil, etc.)  
½ cup of flour  
1 large onion – diced  
3 cloves of garlic – minced  
1 quart of half and half  
2 cups of Craggie's Dubbelicious (if not available, a brown ale or porter)  
2 cups chicken broth  
1 tbl. each of brown mustard, worcester sauce and paprika  
1 tsp. of sugar  
½ to ¾ lbs of cheese (gouda, smoked gouda, or a sharp cheddar)

#### Directions:

Sweat onions in fat; cook at low heat until translucent. Add flour to onions; stir vigorously for a few minutes.

Add the 3 liquids (half and half, beer, broth). Bring mixture to a boil: stir frequently.

Turn down to a simmer. Add everything else. Simmer for about an hour.

Shred cheese, then melt it into the mixture. Salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with well toasted rye or pumpernickel bread: good for dipping.

This is the third installment of the four-part series which takes a look into the future of craft beer. While the first article demonstrated the phenomenal growth of the industry and the second focused on the exploration of beer flavors, this chapter discusses the use of beer as a food ingredient. And what better way to learn more about using beer in a recipe than to talk with some local experts.

I spoke with chefs from three of Asheville's independently owned restaurants — Adam Bannasch of Zambra Wine and Tapas, Judd Lohof of Café Azalea; and Polly Harding of the Village Wayside Bar & Grille. Each not only shared suggestions on cooking with beer but offered insights on a chef's responsibilities. I learned a chef manages the kitchen from the employees (dishwashers, prep cooks, sous chefs), food purchase, menu development, quality of the food served through to profitability. They, much like brewmasters, work long, hard hours and are driven to create and cook for the sheer pleasure of having people enjoy their creations.

Most chefs learn to cook in the classic French tradition which uses wine in many dishes. With the explosive growth of craft brew's availability over the past 5-10 years, beer has become more prevalent in food recipes. Beer's variety of flavors provides the chef more tools in their flavor toolbox. Its versatility can enhance, contrast, or add a subtle nuance or layer (more noticeable in its absence) of flavor to any dish.

#### *So, what suggestions did they have?*

1. Keep the initial amount of beer low, more can always be added. Almost all beer can bitter a recipe if it is cooked too long.

2. With light colored food use light colored beer; and vice versa. Use a lager (example, pilsner or kolsch styles) in recipes with flaky white fish. Use an ale (example, brown ale, porter, or stout) in recipes with meatier or strongly flavored fish.

3. Target flavor balance in the recipe. Take care to not allow the beer flavor to dominate.

4. Cook with the beers you enjoy drinking.

5. Because a beer pairs well with a food does not mean it will cook well in that recipe.

6. Be careful, two pale ales or two of any style of craft beer will have different flavors. Cooking with two types of wine will normally yield about the same flavor result. This is not true with beer.

7. Belgian beers and IPA's can be difficult to use in a recipe because they "bitter" very quickly. The sheer variety of flavors and aromas are harder to pair with other recipe ingredients.

8. Don't get discouraged. If the recipe doesn't work out, order a pizza, drink the beer, and try again.

If you're not an experienced cook or a risk taker, there is a treasure-trove of recipes and tips on line. For those with experience or who are risk takers, forget the rules and experiment. The reward is worth the effort.

Craft beer's explosive growth is driven by people that are excited by new taste experiences, in a beverage, a cooking ingredient, and in combination. Challenge yourself and find out why.

BY JOE ZINICH

### BREW NEWS

**Craggie Brewing Company** in partnership with Asheville's own instrumental quintet, Toubab Krewe, released (mid May) its newly crafted, Toubab Brew – a crisp, malty, and slightly hoppy Bavarian Zwickel beer (lager).

For each keg of Toubab Brew sold, Craggie will donate \$5 to Instruments 4Africa, a non-profit selected by Toubab Krewe.

**The Thirsty Monk** (downtown location) hosts "Perfect Pint Night" with pints of Sam Adams Lager served in their "perfect pint glass" on June 2.

That will be Followed on June 4 by "Firkin Friday" which features four local casks, one each from Craggie, Green Man, French Broad and Highland. A first for a bar in Asheville and a fun warm-up for the Beer City Festival on June 5.

Visit the Monk on June 10 for "Hatter Day" – a chance to taste five rare beers from New Holland Brewery's (Michigan) Hatter Collection.

**Pisgah Brewery** hosts the WNC Highlands Celtic Festival the weekend of June 21. They are also brewing a new, as yet un-named, hoppy beer to celebrate their 5th anniversary. Check their website for a big event planned for the July 4th weekend.

**Green Man Brewery unleashed.** With new ownership and increased capacity planned, Green Man beers will become more widely available and brewmaster John Stuart will gain more room to flex his creative brewing muscle and provide a greater variety of specialty beers.

New owner Dennis Thies, a former Green Man employee with a long history in the beer industry, intends to keep the standard line up of Green Man ales intact, and, as well, retain Dirty Jack's (the tasting room) eclectic, comfortable, and relaxed atmosphere.



**Adam Bannasch**, chef at Zambra Wine and Tapas, began his career while in high school when he worked as a dish washer for a Florida restaurant. He progressed through

busser, server, prep, and then line cook and knew this was his future. After high school, he attended culinary school (New England Culinary Institute) and continued to work at various restaurants as cook, sous-chef, and chef. After a 3-year stint in New Orleans restaurants, he moved to Asheville and soon became the chef at Zambra's.

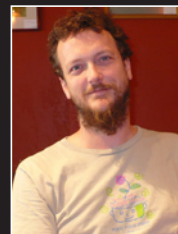
[www.zambratapas.com](http://www.zambratapas.com)



**Polly Harding**, chef and co-owner of the Village Wayside Bar & Grille, was born and raised in the food industry. Her father, a cook and baker, owned and operated a catering business

and a pastry shop with a commercial kitchen on their property. She helped in both businesses and loved cooking but never considered it as a career. After graduation she worked in the restaurant industry where she met her future husband Mark, and, shortly after marrying, they opened the Village Wayside Grill.

[www.villagewayside.com](http://www.villagewayside.com)



**Judd Lohof**, chef and owner of Café Azelea and also a Florida native, worked in restaurants in high school and college for

extra money. After college, he discovered what he learned and experienced in various restaurants excited him far more than anything he learned in college. He wanted to be a chef and, after working in diverse restaurants across the country, he moved to Asheville and opened Café Azalea.

[www.cafeazaleaasheville.com](http://www.cafeazaleaasheville.com)



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### COMING NEXT MONTH

Part 4, She Said Beer, He Said Wine: Create a dinner with a beer and wine selection for each course.



## CRAFT BEER, A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

### PART 4 She Said Beer, He Said Wine:

#### Create a Dinner with Beer and Wine Selections for Each Course

This is the final installment of a 4-part series that looks into craft beer's future. Previous articles spoke to the industry's meteoric growth, the drivers of that growth, the ever-growing availability of flavorful beers, and the many ways to explore and enjoy them. This column combines the information in earlier articles with the new in this one to help you create a dinner event that will excite and please your friends.

For guidance on how to present a dinner with both beer and wine for each course, I asked Julie Atallah (Brusin' Ales) and Rob Campbell (Wine Guy) for their suggestions. As an example, they chose the beer and wine to complement the dinner menu shown in the sidebar. Their advice on how to plan and conduct a dinner follow.

Julie and Rob both suggested two ways to prepare for this type of dinner. Start with the choice of the beer and wine to be served and decide on the menu, or start with the menu and decide on the beer and wine to serve. The easier way is to begin with the menu. Also, be clear on the purpose of the get-together -- a focus on the food and flavors or on events planned around the dinner (for example a birthday party). Under all circumstances plan with a sense of fun and adventure.

The menu itself can be very informal (five types of pizza from your favorite pizzeria) or, if you love to cook, a multi-course dinner from appetizer to dessert. Whatever your menu there is a wine and a beer selection to complement the food and spice up the conversation. To select each wine and

beer visit your favorite wine and/or beer store for consultations with experts. Or, you could ask an invited guest -- a beer, wine "geek" -- to make the choices. A more adventuresome approach is to ask friends to bring a sample of favorite wines and beers. Be flexible; be creative. There are many ways to create great flavor combinations. Just remember the basic rule -- the flavor of the beverage should not overpower the flavor of the food and vice versa.

Once the food, beer, and wine selections are made, consider time frame, portion size, beverage amount, tasting order, and (more formally) discussion topics and detailed information. Plan for the dinner to be a 2-3 hour event. Allow time to enjoy each course, each wine and beer, and for discussion. Portions should be relatively small; tapas size. Serve 3 to 4 ounces of wine and 4 to 6 ounces of beer with each course; just enough for guests to taste, savor and return home safely.

At the start, suggest everyone take a sip of the wine and appreciate its flavor. Next, sample a portion of food with the wine and consider the flavor combination. Follow this with a sip of water to cleanse the palate. Use



A toast to flavors at the 12 Bones, Brusin' Ales dinner.

BY JOE ZINICH

the same approach with the beer selection. Continue in this manner for the courses that remain. Discussions can be prompted with information (obtained on line or from an expert)

on each beverage and food selection or entirely impromptu, whichever works best.

Attend a beer/wine dinner and learn from the professionals; throw a dinner with the help of professionals; or create a dinner from your own imagination. Each choice is a fun way to entertain and to share in the discovery of new flavor combinations.

This four part series was designed to encourage active participation in the craft beer revolution. The articles provided ideas and tools to begin or enhance the experience. The Craft Beer scene in general and Asheville's in particular is a very social world of fun and flavor; enjoy.



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### Brew News

**Green Man Brewing** is open every day at 7 a.m. to show World Cup matches. Beer fans; their "Easy Rider" Wheat, an American style wheat ale, is now on tap.

**The Pint House** hosts Sean Wilson former president of Pop the Cap -- the group that got the law changed to allow a new variety of full-flavored beer to be produced and sold in North Carolina -- will present his Fullsteam Brewery "southern beer" to Asheville beer lovers. A special ticketed-event is planned for **July 19** that includes 4 different beers, a matching food tasting menu, and an opportunity to listen to and speak with Sean. For more information, ticket prices, and availability visit [monkpub.com](http://monkpub.com).

Their second anniversary will be celebrated on **July 3** with the introduction of their version of the Randall called the "Holy Hopper". The Randall is a device that allows infusion of interesting, delicious, and sometimes challenging flavors into beer.

Asheville won the **Beer City USA** title for the second year in a row. A testimony to our brewers, their beer, and the Asheville beer community. Of course some "sore loser" comments came from the wanna-be cities, but to them I say, "we may not have the most breweries or the most festivals but we do have the most enthusiastic supporters. Deal with it!"

**Brewgrass** sold out in 21 hours; good news for the organizers and the people who got tickets, bad news for the local, long-time supporters who didn't. Perhaps we, as a group, could suggest to the Brewgrass folks to support local by selling tickets at select local stores and breweries for a week and then offer them online; the Beer City model.

The first annual **Brew Off**, Asheville's home brew competition & tasting, was held in the Wedge Brewery parking lot with well over 40 brews available to taste. It was presented by the non-profit organization Just Economics ([justeconomicswnc.org](http://justeconomicswnc.org)), an advocacy group for a strong, sustainable WNC economy, and was a rousing success. Attendance was strong and our local home brewers excited the crowd with flavors that were a challenge and a delight.

Visit [www.rapidrivermagazine.com](http://www.rapidrivermagazine.com) to read all four parts of "Craft Beer, a Look into the Future."

### Beer/Wine Dinner Menu

The following menu was developed by 12 Bones smokehouse ([12bones.com](http://12bones.com)) for a beer dinner sponsored jointly with Brusin' Ales. The menu came first and Julie and Jason Atallah chose the beers. I asked Rob Campbell to recommend wine choices. What follows is an opportunity to learn from the experts.

#### Lamb Sausage with Sage and Apricots and a Parmesan, Baby Artichoke Risotto

**Beer Selection:** DE, Dogfish Head Aprihop, an IPA made with apricots. IPA's work well with spicy, rich foods. The apricot flavor in this version pairs well with the risotto.

**Wine Selection:** France, Houchart 2006 Cuvee Rouge, is a Shiraz/Cabernet blend: Shiraz pairs well with lamb but is too light for the spices in sausage. The addition of Cabernet adds weight. The French blends are earthy with an aromatic spiciness.

#### Borracho Beef Short Ribs with Fennel Au Gratin and Plantain Puree

**Beer Selection:** CA, Bear Republic Big Bear black stout: Full Bodied with a roasted scent and flavor that complements the beef. This version is loaded with hops that contrast with the fennel.

**Wine Selection:** Australia: Rawley "Raw Power" 2008 Shiraz: Australian Shiraz are big, rich wines with fruity, licorice flavors. Will stand up well to strong flavors of the short ribs while the licorice enhances the fennel.

#### Honey Lager Gelato with Cornbread Biscuits and Roasted Brazil Nuts

**Beer Selection:** Belgium, Bier du Miel, Saison with honey: a hint of honey sweetness with a champagne effervescence.

**Wine Selection:** Italy, Sant' Evasio 2009 Moscato d'Ast: made with muscato grapes which have a honey character. The Sant' Evasio is a light, slightly sweet sparkler.

#### Smoked Skate Wings with Citrus Salad of Clementines and Meyers Lemons.

**Beer Selection:** Germany, Plank Bavarian Hefeweizen: the style goes well with seafood, Plank has a hint of banana and clove to complement the salad.

**Wine Selection:** CA, Pomelo 2008 Sauvignon Blanc: the style with its crisp acidity complements fish. The California versions have a whisper of smokiness.

#### Duck Confit Taquito with Fig, Goat cheese and Lavender Dipping Sauce

**Beer Selection:** England, Traquair Jacobite, Scotch Ale spiced with coriander: this ale presents a beefy but complementary contrast to the duck. The coriander flavor supports the sauce.

**Wine Selection:** OR, Bethel Heights 2008 Pinot Noir: this grape has an earthy but light flavor great with duck. Its level of acidity (the French versions are too acidic) does not overpower the sauce.