



sam DOG — & — OTHER sam

THOUGHTS ON PROVENANCE



INTERVIEW WITH **SAM CALAGIONE** / Dogfish Head Founder and President

I have been visiting a lot of breweries this year, and have just returned from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic, etc. I am struck by how common the conversation about provenance of ingredients is becoming in Europe and how the tone is different than with many brewers in this country. It seems to be a very hot topic and something that brewers are approaching in many ways, mostly determined by their scale and budget. However, particularly on the small scale, I'm struck by how many small brewers are either indifferent to the subject or are still owned by the convenience factor of buying from companies like Weyermann.

Can you tell me about how Dogfish Head sources its base ingredients?

SC: When we began in 1995, we were probably the smallest commercial brewery in the country, brewing 12 gallon batches. My intention was to grow with a model that was all about making super flavorful, all natural beers without adjuncts, but still referencing classic styles. Since we were so tiny, we weren't able to stand out by brewing just those styles, and I was studying food folks like Alice Waters and James Beard. We have such a beautiful culinary culture in this country, that I thought there would be a niche being the first culinary-focused brewery. The idea was to take the same ingredients from our kitchen to the brewery and then back to the table. We would get laughed at at beer festivals — folks were offended that we were fucking with tradition by putting raisins or chicory, or maple syrup or whatever in our beer. They'd reference the Reinheitsgebot which I always say is nothing more than a 500 year-old form of art censorship. For me to be able to travel to places like Egypt or Italy and to source the best ingredients from around the world is what I'm most proud of.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this process as your company has grown? Do you have better access? Is it becoming more difficult?

SC: I would say that we're the only brewery that in one year expanded and condensed our brewing volumes simultaneously. By that I mean in 2013 we installed a 200 barrel brew house next to our 100 barrel brew house, while in the same year, removed the 5 barrel brewery at the brew pub to install a 2 barrel system. So now we can be more experimental with more frequent smaller batches than when we were just getting started. We can be more calculated in our experiments with the smaller system. Usually beers start with me, with a narrative about a beer that hasn't been done yet, and then research is done through our eight-person R&D department.

I have always had the mission of selling beer as food to my customers — pretty fully rejecting the idea that I'm a "beer guy." I prefer to think of myself as an eater, a cook, an omnivore. As such, I believe that if we experience and evaluate flavor first, disregarding branding and style categories, that we have a much more keen ability to understand beer. Does this resonate with you as a brewer? If not, why?

SC: I think it totally makes sense. We try not to follow what any other breweries have done, but we have huge respect for the patriarchs who have paved the way for our success. For us, there's huge emphasis on deciding if unusual ingredients warrant a second sip. We want to cut our own path and go on an exploration of goodness while honing our ability to tell stories. Sensory and quality programs are central to our process here at the brewery.

You are known for being a visionary in business and in brewing. Can you tell me a bit about your trajectory and how you've managed to continue innovating and taking risks with unusual recipes and brands?

SC: In the words of Miles Davis "Don't play what is there, play what is not there." We try to never follow trends in craft brewing but set our own path. Sometimes it is painful because the beers we release don't have a lot of context at first, but in time, the quality and distinction is what makes them relevant. If you look at when we first released 90 Minute IPA as an Imperial IPA, or Festina Lente as an American wild, or Indian brown as a Black IPA, or Festina Peche as a fruit-infused Berliner Weisse I hope our tradition of innovating ahead of trend-curves speaks for itself.

I'm not sure if you've heard of our Beer Table Table Beer project, but if not, the basic premise is that I commission brewers to brew a beer that they can envision drinking one of every day for the rest of their life. I have a feeling this would choke you, but I'm curious — can you impulsively describe your reaction to that question?

SC: I love the idea. That would scare me though I'd love the challenge of making that beer. I'd worry that after we made it that three or four months later, would I still love it? We're recognized as a strong beer brewery, and for us, there's always a place for extremely flavorful session beers. But if low-alcohol isn't a part of the requirement, from our portfolio, I'd probably be inclined to drink Hellhound or American Beauty.

When Tricia and I visited you back in 2008 or 2009, you were so generous with your time. It made a huge impact on me that you were willing to show us around and share some beer with us. One thing I remember distinctly was your sense of pride at having 27 (I believe) beers in production and that you insisted on sending all of them for each of your markets. Is that still the case? I see a lot more in your list today. Can you reiterate your reasoning behind this?

SC: Yes — we still do this, and we require it of all of our distributors. One of our big goals is to negate the dependency of certain distributors to naturally move beers towards commodification in the context of selling Dogfish Head beers. Exploration of goodness is something that I really believe in. I drink a lot of 60 Minute and it is our best selling beer but I drink all of our other beers too and I want to make sure beer lovers have the chance to find their personal faves in our portfolio by exploring as many different Dogfish beers as possible.

INTERVIEW WITH **SAM RICHARDSON** / Other Half Brewing Co-Founder and Brewer

I have been visiting a lot of breweries this year, and have just returned from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic, etc. I am struck by how common the conversation about provenance of ingredients is becoming in Europe and how the tone is different than with many brewers in this country. It seems to be a very hot topic and something that brewers are approaching in many ways, mostly determined by their scale and budget. However, particularly on the small scale, I'm struck by how many small brewers are either indifferent to the subject or are still owned by the convenience factor of buying from companies like Weyermann.

Can you tell me about how Other Half sources its base ingredients?

SR: We choose our ingredients based on beer styles and what we feel is the highest quality available. When it comes to Americanized British styles (IPA, Stout, Pale) we almost always use Thomas Fawcett which is a traditional British malting company. The quality is outstanding and flavors from the malt really stand out. Generally, all brewers go through companies like Brewers Supply Group or Country Malt to obtain ingredients. In addition, we purchase malt from local producers like Valley Malt in Massachusetts. They source local malts, which is great, but they are too small to provide a brewery our size with all the malt we would need. When it comes to hops the best method is buying in a direct relationship with a grower. Otherwise you are going through Hop Union or a company like that. We also purchase New York state hops and have some relationships with some farmers in the state.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying based on your scale? Do you have better access being independent? Is it becoming more difficult?

SR: It's definitely more expensive to buy grain at our scale. The more volume you can buy the cheaper it gets. The advantage for us is that since we don't get much of a price break we can change up our malts all the time. If we were taking discounted silo loads of malt all our beers would have the same base malts. In our case we use the malt we think best suits the beer.

I have always had the mission of selling beer as food to my customers — pretty fully rejecting the idea that I'm a "beer guy." I prefer to think of myself as an eater, a cook, an omnivore. As such, I believe that if we experience and evaluate flavor first, disregarding branding and style categories, that we have a much more keen ability to understand beer. Does this resonate with you as a brewer? If not, why?

SR: I agree with the branding aspect. Nice branding is nice, but good beer is more important and it's easy to get caught up in the persona of a brewery. That said if you love a brewery's identity and what they stand for you should support them. Style categories can be important though. It gives people an idea of what to expect. If you call a beer a pale ale, it should fit within some parameters. If you want to make something out of style that's great, it's just nice to know that it is out of style. The more people understand styles of beer the better they can understand unique beers.

Can you tell me a bit about your trajectory as a brewer? What are the biggest risks you see yourself taking with your recipes?

SR: The biggest risk for us is not taking risks. We will make plenty of beers that most people can understand and relate too, but if we stop there, we aren't learning as much as we can as brewers. Sometimes you make a beer that is difficult, some people hate it, some love it. It's similar to art, if you are not being challenged sometimes, what are you learning? I see our brewery continuing in that direction, lots of beers that are enjoyable and easy to understand and then the occasional beer that is much more challenging.

I'm not sure if you've heard of our Beer Table Table Beer project, but if not, the basic premise is that I commission brewers to brew a beer that they can envision drinking one of every day for the rest of their life. I have a feeling this would choke you, but I'm curious — can you impulsively describe your reaction to that question?

SR: That would suck. It is interesting to think about though. It would have to be complex, dry and at least a little tart with a nice hop character. That's vague, but I want to cover the bases.

What's your conception of how your beers will be sold in the market? Do you plan to self-distribute indefinitely? Are you okay with your customers being highly selective between brands, or do you want to influence their choices?

SR: We will self distribute as long as it's feasible. I want our beers to be in great beer bars and great restaurants so we do our best to make the best beers we can so that door will be open to us. Ultimately, I don't want to influence beer drinkers in any way other than through our beer. It's up to people to choose what they like, and the more informed they become the better choices they can make. However, you should always try to drink local IPA's because hop character definitely suffers from age.

by JUSTIN PHILIPS



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DRINKING CULTURE

As Justin and I flew into Vienna this past January, I didn't know quite what to expect. We were visiting breweries in five countries over the course of eight days, and I had prepared myself for a lot of drive time by loading up my iTunes. My bag was packed with notes on all of the breweries and beer halls we'd be visiting. Alongside those notes were flash cards of basic phrases in both German and Czech. I was as prepared as I thought I could be. But as it turned out, the one thing I hadn't accounted for was the striking differences in drinking cultures. The way I pictured it, we would go to vast beer halls where there would be beer soaked floors, people shouting to be heard and stumbling individuals with half-finished liter steins. What we found instead were community epicenters that served as public meetinghouses, which were full of people with a great appreciation for good, honest beer. Needless to say, it was an extremely pleasant surprise.

This trend in drinking culture was apparent right from the beginning. We hit Munich on a Wednesday at mid-afternoon. Immediately, we set about the visiting some of the city's famous beer halls. We happened upon one of the several Augustiner houses first and headed inside for a quick drink. We quickly realized a few things: no music was playing, the age range was vast, and everyone seemed to be involved in conversation. The focus seemed to be set entirely on inspiring communal interaction. And the best part was that this was all taking place over well-crafted German lagers. I had the thought that perhaps this was an anomaly, an effect of us visiting on a weeknight. Surely everywhere else we planned to visit would be much closer to what I imagined. But without fail, the same scene unfolded at each place we visited. The next day as we had lunch at Schneider's Weisses Brauhaus, I noticed a table of older ladies. Each was dining on something light but all had a half pour of wheat beer to go alongside their lunch. I couldn't make sense of what they were talking about but I didn't need to — it was the classic "ladies lunch." But here, the ladies lunch included a half pour of arguably the best hefeweizen in the world. Awesome! It was all starting to make sense to me. Yes, these places were centered on great beer. But more importantly they were places for the community to interact. The beer was expected to be fantastic and thus it wasn't the ONLY focus. What a novel idea...



By the time we made it Prague at the beginning of the next week I had come to expect the setting with which I have described — packed halls full of respectful folks in a scene more reminiscent of a reception at a VFW hall than the "bier gardens" we have here in the city. So imagine my surprise when we entered u Zlateho tygra (The Golden Tiger), a beer den that looked to be straight out of the 1950s which was filled with cigarette smoke and occupied almost entirely by men. It was most certainly different than anything we had experienced in Germany. However, as we made ourselves comfortable in the corner we began to scan the room. Our beers arrived and almost immediately I felt like an insider, like I was one of the gang. Yes, it was loud and boisterous and a bit of a shock to the system after our journeys through Germany. But all the tables were positioned so that you were nearly forced to sit down and have a conversation with your neighbor. No one stood and no one wandered. It was a completely controlled environment that again focused on community and discourse. I will admit that here, unlike Germany, there were no signs of grannies or toddlers. But at the end of the day, no was dancing on a bar nor were they grilling me about how many badges I had unlocked on Untapped. Instead they talked about their days, jostled over politics, played a game of cards or just enjoyed a snack with a friend.

As we drove back to Vienna on our final day I thought about all of the places we had stopped. All offered great examples of classic styles — some were better than others but all were enjoyable. But what stuck with me the most were the mental images of huge halls of people just enjoying good company with a good beer. We saw neighbors, friends, families, and strangers — all enjoying delicious beer together.

Arriving back in New York, I was struck by the longing I felt to return immediately to these places; for the beer yes, but more so for the entire experience. For days I was sure American drinking culture would never reach this elevated level of community focused drinking. Yet the more I thought about it, I realized that is exactly what you, our customer, does every time you take one of our beers onto the train. Whether you are splitting a growler with friends or you strike up a conversation with a seat-mate about your Beer Table koozie, you are partaking in one of the best aspects of beer community in New York. And most impressively, you are doing so in an environment more known for headphones and avoiding eye contact. So now I hope two things for you, dear reader. I really do hope that you will someday drink a beer in one of these fabled beer halls in Germany or the Czech Republic. But more importantly, I hope that you will carry the spirit of community which is so important to the craft beer movement to even more unusual and unexpected places — you'd be surprised at how easy it is to make great friends with great beer.

SECRET DIARY OF A CHEESE JUDGE

In addition to my day job at Beer Table, I also know a bit about cheese. I was asked recently if I would like to judge at an international cheese competition, which left me flattered, excited and nervous. Despite my passion for beer (and wine and all things fermented), I have spent a majority of the past 20 years working in the artisanal cheese industry, and during that time have judged at a number of competitions. Most people are under the impression that tasting cheese and getting paid must be 100%, all-round fabulous, so much so that almost everyone I discuss it with states enviously, "That's the best job in the world!" Well, perhaps. I am fully aware that I could have been a miner, trawler man or lumberjack, so nibbling on some goat's cheese and writing a few notes must look like hitting the employment jackpot.

But what people don't always appreciate is the difference between doing something professionally versus doing it purely for pleasure.

When you purchase food you buy what you like (unless you're insane, or a martyr, or a combination) so it's pretty much guaranteed that what you snack on in the comfort of your own home is going to be stuff you like, and if it isn't then you simply don't buy it again. Judging isn't like that. Not at all. Not even a little bit. Most large competitions have thousands of entries, and those entries are necessarily rationalized into various categories, sub-categories and sub-sub-categories. Judges, ultimately, do not get to pick and choose what they judge, instead they have to play the hand they're dealt. And that can sometimes be tough. As an example, I was required to judge a category of seventy five 'flavour added' goat's cheeses. I think it's fair to say that the phrase 'flavour added' strikes fear into the hearts of cheese judges the world over, and that if I wanted cinnamon and cranberries added to my goat's cheese, I'd rather be allowed to add them myself. Which I wouldn't.

There are other factors which can make judging harder than it might appear. When you are a professional judge you are judging other professionals, i.e. cheese makers. Some will be running a mechanized production line — very modern, efficient,

cheap for you the customer — whereas others might be milking their animals on a small holding or farm, and making and maturing all their cheeses by hand, investing their waking hours and years of love, passion and hard work to deliver the fruits of their labour. Yet both products may end up in the same category. How exactly is one to judge which is better? Are they even the same product? Are the criteria even the same for these two producers? And let's not forget all of the cheese makers that fall somewhere in between these two extremes.

It might seem that a handmade cheese from a small farm must, must be the superior of the two, and therefore be judged higher; the price tag alone suggests that. But it's not that straightforward because a handmade, possibly raw milk cheese, has so much more going on, that there is so much more to *actually judge* which can make the job difficult. It's not easy to form an opinion, good, bad or otherwise, about a plain, inoffensive cheese which sits quietly in the corner, but one that has something to say, puts itself out there and is bold, that is one you can make a decision on quickly. They are rarely all things to all people, so a complex, raw milk cheese may have more going on but that doesn't always mean that it's delicious or to everyone's taste. Think about a Bud Lite next to a double IPA. Both are beers and have their place (I believe that) but those places are very far apart — we're talking light-years here. One is an almost flavourless (by design), cold, refreshing (?) alcohol delivery system whereas the other is constructed to challenge your senses. It is *also* designed to deliver alcohol but so much more, whether you like it or not. Which is better? Well, that depends on your point of view but, at the end of the day, they are both beers.

And this is what I found the most difficult. Our only criteria for judging cheeses we had in front of us were purely technical. That is, we have scoring sheets on which we could only deduct points for technical flaws. If something is designed to be bland and easy to ignore and fulfils its brief to *the letter*, then technically it is perfect. But that doesn't mean it's any good to eat. Food that challenges our senses, be it a great beer, cheese, anything, is always going to be more challenging for some rather than others, it will split opinion. Unfortunately, that means it will often lose out to the lowest common denominator: often the blander option. There is more to food than purely technical parameters and, as a measure of quality when applied in isolation, these kind of standards fall well short of the task of judging.

I actually enjoyed my latest foray into judging. Really, I did. I learned something, and it is healthy to move out of ones comfort zone from time to time. And at the end of the day most — not all, but most — of the winning cheeses deserved their medals, as did the hard working individuals that produced them. But next time you think a cheese (or beer) judge has the best job in the world, bear in mind that the reality may not be as glamorous as it seems (but it's still pretty cool).

MRS. SAXELBY'S BEER LAB

We've all been there after a few too many drinks — red-faced, a little sweaty and a tad off-balance. But for a certain segment of the population, this can happen after only one or even fewer drinks. And, no, it's not because they're wimps! They actually have an enzyme deficiency which prevents them from properly metabolizing alcohol.

After ingesting alcohol, most of it is passed through the stomach and is absorbed from the small intestine into the bloodstream. Once this alcohol-rich blood enters the liver, the alcohol is converted into acetaldehyde by the enzyme alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH). Acetaldehyde is then converted into acetate by aldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH). The body then uses the acetate to add to glycol and fat stores or it is simply excreted from the body entirely.

Now there are two main steps in this pathway which can be the source of the problem for our poor, red-faced friends. Each leads to an overabundance of acetaldehyde, which is fairly toxic at raised levels. Certain segments of the population have genes that code for a type of ADH which is hyper-efficient. The ADH enzyme in these peoples'

bodies processes the alcohol into acetaldehyde too quickly for ALDH to keep up, creating a build-up of acetaldehyde. This leaves people red and blotchy or in more extreme cases, physically ill. In fact, a build up of acetaldehyde is the cause of most hangover symptoms — but most of the population can't blame their hangovers on their genes.

To add insult to injury, some people also have genes that code for a type of ALDH that functions at an extremely reduced rate. In these cases an even greater level of acetaldehyde builds up leaving the person in even worse shape.

So the next time you're enjoying a few pints with friends and one of your buddies looks like he's spent a bit too much time in the sun, don't be so quick to call him a lightweight. Who knows, it might just be that his genes are a little bit different than yours...

by MEGAN SAXELBY



HOT TICKET BEERS — IS THE GRASS ALWAYS GREENER?

The Cronut. The Chef's Table at Brooklyn Fare. Box Seats to Derek Jeter's final game. The 1pm train on the New Haven line the day before Thanksgiving. A 4-pack of Heady Topper. Hot ticket items by all accounts. But is a warm Tres Leches at Donut Plant basically the cronut? Would you forfeit the chef's table in Brooklyn for a few more bites of your grandmother's eggplant parm? Jeets will probably come back again next year, right? You get the point. It's time to get serious though, and that means beer. But what makes a hot ticket beer? What are the factors that make us covet the sought-after brews that we rarely get to enjoy? Are there comparable alternatives that will quench and satisfy us just like The Alchemist?

Let's first surf over to the premiere hop-head hangout, BeerAdvocate, to see where hot ticket beers are discussed, rated, and their legends are made. The site boasts 110,000 different beers that have been rated over 4 million times. Its scope and reach is tremendous, and it certainly helps to categorize and focus the conversation in a world where so many great beers exist. When ratings for the Top 250 beers are combined, they represent 11% of all ratings on the site; or put another way, less than .2% of the beers on the site make up 1/10th of all rankings. Why so much focus on such few beers? There are many variables at play here: geographic location of the beers and the breweries that craft them, a brewery's distribution and size, and lets add in alcohol content for good fun.

Chances are, if you live on the east coast, you have a difficult time grabbing a beer from a micro-brewery on the left coast and vice-versa. It also might be obvious to assume that breweries in or near major cities might be easier to come by and therefore ranked more highly by Beer Advocate. However, if the Top 50 beers on BA are any indication of big-city favoritism, it is not reflected by the statistics, and perhaps the opposite is true. With the exception of a well-known brewery in the midwest, only 5 breweries with Top-50 beers are within 60 minutes of a major city. Can you find Decorah, Iowa on a map? Munster, Indiana? Brooklyn Center, Minnesota? If you live in New York, wax your skis and head up to Vermont for the weekend to catch top-ranked suds; On the west coast, ride down the 101 with stops in Paso Robles, Santa Rosa, and San Marcos to find out what the hype is about.

Size and distribution are factors every brewery has to come to terms with. What is the focus of your brewery? To satisfy your customers in the Hudson Valley? Become the beer of choice in the midwest? Or do you want to be on the shelves of ParkNShop in Asia?

Most beers in the BA Top 50 (and carried at Beer Table) are produced by regional breweries (production between 15K and 6MM barrels per year). This number keeps them out of the dreaded "large brewer" territory, but also hopefully gives some leverage with focused, sustained growth. From a distribution standpoint, SeekABrew.com sheds a spotlight on the best beers and their brewers' current capabilities. Using the Top-50 ranked beers as a starting point, 17 of those beers are made by breweries who distribute to 3 states or less; 5 beers on the list distribute in 5 states or less; and all but 10 have small distribution across the country. So, if only 217 people have ranked a beer that is distributed in 3 states, does this deserve a spot in the Top 50? Or is this, by definition, the ultimate hot-ticket beer?

Drumroll please — alcohol content. Perhaps you have read to this point and thought to your self, "Man, that beardy guy in the shop is telling me stuff I already know." Okay smarty pants, but let's delve into our favorite Top-50 to take a look at our old friend, ABV, and its effect on hot ticket brews. Would you believe that only 11 are under 8%? Look, I like a double IPA or Imperial Stout after a long day at the desk as much as the next guy, but is bigger always better? Not one lager even cracks the list — no saisons (beautifully paired with food) or hefeweizens (made for a boozy brunch) or pilsners. It seems as though much of the beer spectrum has been neglected.

Okay, so more often than not, in order to claim the hottest of hot-ticket beers, your brewery needs to be off the beaten path, your distribution needs to be within a few states of your own and you have the recipe for a high-octane ale. But what about alternatives? — especially for our lovely customers that frequent Beer Table on a regular basis.

1. Torpedo is an awesome IPA — but we carry some other spot-on IPAs as well! If you are a hops guy, try something next Friday night in addition to your big green can.
2. Take a trip up the Hudson to a local brewery. You can feel exclusive as many of these establishments make great beer that cannot be purchased in a bottle or can.
3. To the left, to the left — check out the left part of our the shelf: Pilsners, bocks and schwarzbiers, oh my!
4. Make beer part of your memories — cheesy but true! No matter what beer style you enjoy, focus on the joy that beer brings you and those in your company. Pair it with food for an especially memorable meal.

by COLEMAN FEENEY

STYLE FOCUS: SAISON

I'LL HAVE THE SAISON

You may have seen one on the draft list at your favorite beer bar or on the shelves of your local shop, but what exactly is a saison? That is a difficult question to answer due to the nature in which the style developed. No exact date or brewer can be pinned to its creation, but there is a region in Belgium where this rustic and delicious farmhouse ale came to be.

FARM FUEL

Beer was the fuel that ran the agricultural industry in the southern region of Wallonia, Belgium. Historically, this region was characterized by rich soil fit for cultivating grains such as barley, wheat, spelt, and oats, which inevitably found their way into the beers of the area. Farmers brewed beer for their own consumption but also for their seasonal workers during harvest. It provided the farm with potable water, essential nutrients and supplemental calories, as well as a form of recreation and distraction from the monotony of their backbreaking work.

Before the days of refrigeration, summer was too hot to make or store beer, so farmers brewed during cooler months for consumption throughout the working seasons. This practice provided work for the farm during otherwise quiet months. To create beers that were hearty enough to survive throughout the warm months without spoiling, a healthy addition of hops were added for their preservative properties. The typical saison of this period was around 3-5% ABV in order to be refreshing enough to maintain the productivity of the farm.

THE MODERN SAISON

As Belgium's agricultural industry modernized, many of the farmhouses converted into breweries. This turned saisons into more of a regional specialty than a necessity. Slowly, the beers became stronger in alcohol and the flavors were intensified as the style was no longer being produced for the unique needs of the farm and its workers. Saisons nearly went extinct post-WWII with only a few artisanal producers holding onto tradition. In the past decade, however, saisons have been resurrected thanks to many brewers who have embraced the generous parameters of the style.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Just like the saisons of the past, modern examples are influenced by their ingredients. They are extremely complex due to the variety and character of the ingredients. Pilsner malts are typically used, which gives the beers their golden color and lightly sweet finish. They are low to moderately hopped, featuring earthy and spicy tones to balance the sweet malt notes. The yeast is of particular importance as it determines a number of unique characteristics to the style. It is highly productive in the conversion of sugars from the malt into alcohol and CO₂ giving the beer a dry finish and lively effervescence. Citrusy and spicy aromas are produced by the yeast, and more times than not, these are amplified by the addition of spices.

THE STARTING LINEUP

We are huge fans of saisons at the shop and we always have some in stock. Some of my favorites that you can find are:

- **Saison Dupont:** known as the "classic" modern saison that has become the most popular version of the style in the US. The beer pours a beautiful light orange with a billowing white head. At first sniff, resinous hops, citrus, and spices jump out. The body is full with a light malt sweetness. A champagne-like effervescence finishes dry and is highlighted by spices and citrus. 6.5% ABV
- **De Glazen Toren Saison D'erpe Mere:** the super elegant and refreshing product of a group of home-brewer buddies who decided to make their hobby a small business. On the nose, you will find a light citrus fruit note and spicy earthiness from the hops. The palate is bittersweet with hints of citrus fruit a faint touch of white pepper on the very dry finish. 7.5% ABV
- **Brooklyn Sorachi Ace:** a classic saison with a unique twist. The addition of Sorachi Ace hops invokes notes of lemon. It has hoppy, lemony, and light spice notes on the nose, supported by a medium body with a subdued breadly malt flavor popping with citrus, crisp bitterness, and earthy yeast tones. A dry and bitter finish will bring you home. 7.6% ABV

by BRENDAN CARROLL

THE TRANSMISSION OF TABLE BEER

When I first started working at Beer Table To-Go, “table Beer” (tafelbier, bière de table) was as foreign a concept to me. When Justin Philips first explained the idea to me before the release of the Westbrook Beer Table Beer, I was intrigued, and after reading about the style's history in Belgium, I felt an innate connection to it. The most succinct definition of Table Beer is a beer that one would want to always have on ones table; or a beer that can, and does, go with everything. From here what they choose is largely left up to the individual, family or bar. Historically, in Belgium, it was a beer with low alcohol content so that the whole family could enjoy it throughout the day. Meant as an accompaniment to the meal, it was usually light, refreshing and on the tart side which paired well with the traditional cuisine.

When Justin explained his idea of Table Beer to me, I thought it was a great way of learning what brewers were actually drinking. When asking a brewer to make a Beer Table Table Beer, the only instruction or guideline he gives is that they make a beer that they would want to drink everyday for the rest of their life. Everything else is subjective, which allows for a glimpse behind the scenes into the daily life of some of the best brewers in the world. Occasionally, learning about beer can seem like a competition to find the strangest or most intense beers, rarely consumed and highly sought after. I enjoy that aspect of the beer world and think it allows for experimentation both in new techniques and the resurrection and preservation of old techniques, but it was hard for me to relate to on a personal level. I found myself still looking for what beer I wanted to have after every shift and curious about what my colleagues were drinking with the most regularity. Table Beer came to signify this to me and was a way of finding out what everyone else was actually drinking.

I also related to this idea because of its connection with food. I come from a background of cooking and enjoy the relationship beer and food have — the way they both can accentuate and make the other better. Working in kitchens has many parallels to working with beer. It is important to try new things, discovering new ingredients, going to new restaurants, seeing how they might be using the same product and ingredients as you, but in a different way. It can also be about the strange; pushing boundaries to expand peoples' conception of what something should taste like. This is a necessary part and oftentimes the most exciting aspect of restaurants; but I always found myself interested in what people in the kitchen were making for themselves. “Family meal” can be the most revealing thing about a restaurant. What do cooks make themselves to enjoy mid-shift, after a long day, a late night snack or before brunch? It is usually not the most exciting or adventurous thing, but it provides an interesting glimpse into what people in restaurants actually eat. A meal one can have everyday, like a beer, must be simple enough to not overstimulate the palate, but also nuanced enough to not become boring and repetitive. It must be refreshing; something one looks forward to in any situation, but also not so heavy or complicated that it defines one's day.

My initial affinity for the concept of table beer led me to look more closely at the last edition of Beer Table Table Beer from Westbrook Brewing, a dry hopped Czech Pilsner. I was naturally drawn to this beer because I had spent a semester in college in Prague, and, like most young Americans abroad for the first time, I was intrigued by the beer. Flying into Frankfurt, we drove to Prague and the first thing I consumed was a pilsner, in Plzen at the Pilsner Urquell brewery, an iconic start to my semester. The Czech Republic and Plzen, more specifically, is home to the Pilsner: a style of lager produced by a cold fermenting yeast with a light golden hue and clarity that was unheard of. Previously, beers had been fermented with ale yeast, which ferments at warmer temperatures and usually had a deeper, fuller body. There

are many reasons why beer would have developed in this way and while I won't go into them all, the advent coincides with a change in the way people were drinking beer. Ale yeasts, or warm fermenting yeasts, were more commonly used because of the scarcity of ice, while lagers require a longer fermentation in a temperature-controlled environment. The beers we associate with lagers now are generally light and meant as an accompaniment to a meal, not the sustenance itself. This makes the advent of Pilsners conveniently timed to become a perfect table beer. While many different forms of the classic pilsner were developed in the Czech Republic, the surrounding countries created their own in imitations and reactions to it.

By the time that I arrived in Prague, it was still the beer of choice at almost every bar and I tried them all. Without having the right vocabulary I noticed that Pilsners had become my table beer. It could accompany the heavier meals of goulash found at the hospoda, or pub, a block from my dorm, but nuanced enough that it could go with something as delicate as garlic soup. My fondest memories of drinking pilsner were in the beer gardens with grilled sausage, maybe a side of sauerkraut or caramelized onion. Pilsners have the added benefit of a low ABV allowing one to be able to drink multiples as the day progressed and the sun set. While the food and the location could change the beer never needed to.

When I first opened the Westbrook Table Beer I wasn't sure what to expect. It had been a while since I'd had a Pilsner. The blame can fall both on my memory for elevating the beer to strange heights, along with the rest of my experiences there, and to the quality of the ones I was getting in the US. Pilsner is not a style of beer that's meant to be aged, and many imported ones still travel to the US in green bottles, allowing light to get in and affect the taste. Pilsners are delicate and there is not a lot one can hide behind, which is why I was taken aback on my first sip of Westbrook's version. It reminded me of Prague, but felt and tasted differently than the Pilsners of my memory, and it made me want to revisit the whole style category.

I decided a taste test would be the best way to go about it, so I gathered some of the pilsners from Europe that I had been so fond of and compared them to some of the pilsners being brewed in America. I compared a Pilsner Urquell, Bitburger Premium Pils, Brooklyn Brewery's Pilsner, Victory's Prima Pils, Firestone Walker Brewing Company's Pivo Pils, and of course, the Westbrook Beer Table Table Beer.

I tried the Pilsner Urquell first, and even though it was purchased in a cardboard 12-pack box, it had definitely been light-struck, and the flavors weren't true. However, it still maintained its body. It was as light as straw, effervescent and finished sharp. These were the qualities I remembered and what makes pilsners in general such a refreshing summer drink and a great complement to food. Next I tried the German example from Bitburger. It made sense to have a German example in the mix because they quickly developed their own pilsners, often respectively calling

them 'pils'. This was by far the darkest one, more golden like the color of a popcorn kernel. It was also markedly sweeter, owing to the German malts. It had a rounder feel and was definitely more biscuity sweet than bitter, with almost no hop profile.

When I was looking into American examples, it was evident that they were all re-imaginings of a different style of pilsner. This marked the first key difference between the old and new versions. Pilsner Urquell and Bitburger were making the same beer they had for centuries and were tied to tradition and traditional ingredients. On the other hand, the American interpretations were allowed to experiment. Victory's Prima Pils is a German pilsner that poured as light as Pilsner Urquell and developed a little more head. They use all German malts and a combination of German and Czech hops. It smelled mildly floral from the German hops, but tasted more like a Czech pils having a mild sweet note. It was sharper and slightly bitter. Brooklyn Brewery's Pilsner was based on pilsners consumed in the United States before prohibition. Harkening back to when Brooklyn was a crowded brewery scene and when beers were still being made with all European ingredients, it uses German malts and German hops. It poured and looked very similar to the Prima, but was noticeably sweeter. It was malty, still slightly bitter, but closely favored the German Bitburger more than the versions I had in Prague. Firestone Walker's Pivo Pils took a completely different approach by dry-hopping the beer with German Saphir hops, which gave it a more floral taste and smell to compliment the citrus hop profile on the palate. The carbonation and bitter hops were present on the initial taste and then it had a strong citrus, spicy finish from the Saphir hops. It definitely benefited from the addition of dry hopping, and had a more developed flavor than all the rest.

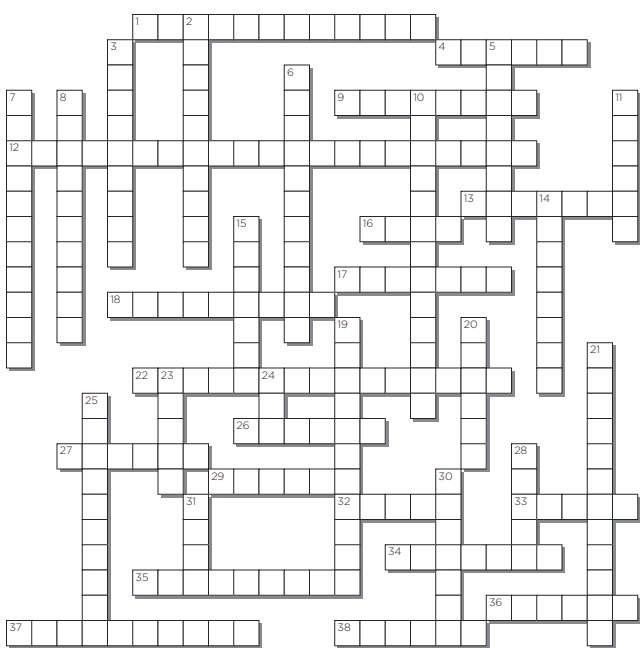
The Westbrook Beer Table Table Beer was both familiar and different. It reminded me of the pleasure of drinking in Prague, but tasted nothing like the pilsner I found there. It is distinctly a Czech style pilsner: the hop profile is strong, almost biting and being dry-hopped, it smells of spice and pine. It develops a thick white head and is slightly hazy, clearly unfiltered. It was also the only pilsner I tasted where I noticed any yeast flavor. It was young enough that the citrus and spice of the hops came through on the first taste, clearly a benefit of being produced nearby and meant for immediate consumption. It was nuanced enough that one can be satisfied drinking it on its own, but I can imagine it pairing with any meal effortlessly.

What I noticed after tasting all the different interpretations and considering how they related to each other in distinct ways was the strong correlation beer has with time and memory. Each pilsner or pils was either an original, using the same recipe from centuries past, or a new interpretation tied to a certain place and time. The development of pilsners along with cold fermentation did not occur at a random moment, but matched the technology and development of society at that time, undoubtedly contributing to its success and longevity as a style. The same influence of time and locality on taste is what is enticing about the concept of a table beer. What beer you want everyday is determined by where you are, the weather, the food and the culture, and is individuated to personal tastes as well. Pilsners are a great example of that. The Westbrook Beer Table Table Beer is clearly well crafted, but I think it also benefited from being ‘of the moment’. It was fresh, and I knew when it was made and where it had come from. While tying itself to a Czech style in general, it clearly benefited from the advances in ingredients and methods, allowing it to succeed not in imitation, but in creating something new in and of itself. It did not make me want a pilsner from Prague, but it made me want to have this one again.

by DYLAN CROUSE



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1/ Also called parapraxis
- 4/ This American brewery bottled a porter in 1974 — a time when there was not even an English brewery producing this style!
- 9/ A Belgian beer that is made with mustard seeds, or one of the names given to one of the Magi from the Gospel of Matthew
- 12/ People who are deficient in or lack this enzyme often become red-faced after drinking
- 13/ The ancient Sumerian goddess of harvest, fertility and brewing
- 16/ A Scandinavian noble ranking immediately below the king
- 17/ Sorachi Ace hops were originally grown at the behest of this Japanese brewery
- 18/ The final book of Willa Cather's “Prairie Trilogy”
- 22/ Bell's Two Hearted is named for this body of water
- 26/ Literal meaning of saison
- 27/ This werewolf-like creature is part of the folklore of the Shetland Islands in Scotland
- 29/ Valley in Washington that is a well known area of hop production
- 32/ The acronym for the organization credited with saving the tradition of English cask ales
- 33/ This term is sometimes used to describe brewers such as Mikceller, Stillwater and Evil Twin
- 34/ Pierre Celis revived this nearly defunct style in the mid-1960s
- 35/ The type of system whereby alcohol is distributed from producer to consumer in the United States
- 36/ Bavarian city that hosts Oktoberfest
- 37/ George Washington declared this man's porter to be the best in Philadelphia
- 38/ These types of kegs were first used by Anheuser-Busch in 1978

DOWN

- 2/ Amendment which put Prohibition into effect
- 3/ Schlenkerla dried their malts over this kind of wood
- 5/ A wide, open, and flat vessel traditionally used to cool wort
- 6/ The site of the last battle between Constantine I and Licinius
- 7/ 17th century term used to describe a strong ale reserved for royalty
- 8/ Tool used to measure the specific gravity of wort and beer
- 10/ This country drank the most beer per capita in 2013
- 11/ This type of sugar is derived from beets
- 14/ The former capital city of New York
- 15/ Kolsch is a style specific to this city
- 19/ Converts alcohol to acetic acid during the production of vinegar
- 20/ The standard American pint is sixteen US fluid ounces whereas the English Imperial pint is _____ Imperial ounces
- 21/ An old term for a hint of sulfur on a freshly poured beer
- 23/ The head brewers/founders of 't Gaverhopke, Stoudt's and New Belgium all share this quality
- 24/ This type of yeast ferments at a warmer temperature and is top-fermenting
- 25/ Number of breweries that existed in Brooklyn at the turn of the 20th century
- 28/ This brewery in Oregon grows lots of their own ingredients including hops, malts and even peppers
- 30/ A type of sugar which is added to milk stouts
- 31/ This suffix is typically affixed to the names of doppelbocks

SIGMUND'S PRETZELS: DON'T BELIEVE THE LYE(S)

“Are those pretzels fresh?”
“How much for the pretzel?”
“Are these the soft kind?”
“Do you all make the pretzels in the back?”
“Do you all sell wine?”

Yes, \$4, yes, no, and two doors down! These are many of the questions you might hear if you spend time at Beer Table To-Go. The pretzels on display catch the eye of many people, even if they are in a rush. They look enticing and they don't disappoint, but where do they come from? Sure, the label says Sigmund's Pretzels, and that's the answer you will hear if you ask a Beer Table employee. However, you will probably hear silence if you want any specific details. Who are these Sigmund people and how are their pretzels so delicious? Some questions are worth taking the time to answer.

I decided to do some recon. I had heard of a Sigmund's pub in Alphabet City, so I headed there on a Saturday for brunch. Like everything in Letter Land and the Lower East Side, it was hard to get to by train. Sigmund's Bar is a cozy spot on Avenue B between 2nd and 3rd streets with a handful of tables in an L-shape on the left and a bar on the right. They have seven taps on hand, including Singlecut and Founders beers, and about 12 or so different bottles, from breweries like Ithaca, Avery, and Schlafly. As their website puts it, “Gastropub? Beerhaus? Your call,” and I think that is a spot on description.

Due to the rain I was one of the few patrons there, so I was able to sit down in front of the taps (where anyone from Beer Table is most comfortable). One thing to remember is that although they incorporate pretzels into their dishes, by no means are pretzels the only thing they do well. Do you like short ribs eggs benedict with arugula on pretzel rolls? It was delicious. The Founder's Breakfast Stout was great, even if it kind of overpowered the meal, but I can't think of a better start to the day. So I had my beer, brunch, and was jamming to some Ray Charles when I tried to get some information out of the bartender. As soon as I mentioned pretzels he brought some over; turns out every brunch item comes with pretzels as well as jams and sauces. All of them were great — salted, seeded, feta and olive, cinnamon raisin, truffle cheddar, and garlic parsley — even before I tried the dipping choices — honey mustard, whole grain mustard, Nutella, raspberry jam, and beet horseradish — which just brought the pretzels to a whole other level (and yes, beet horseradish; just give it a whirl).

So now I had my fill of pretzels and I had gotten the vibe of Sigmund's Bar. I asked the bartender how such a small kitchen is able to produce all the pretzels that Sigmund's delivers around NYC. They have a super double secret wholesale

bakery tucked away in Greenpoint. As the ancient Chinese proverb goes, “To get through the hardest journey we need take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping,” and I knew I must carry on to find resolution in my life.

I went straight to the man that sits at the head of our Beer Table, Justin, and he set up a meeting for us with the head chef for Sigmund's. We met at the bakery on a Friday evening, and even though we weren't sure we were in the exact spot, by the smell of things, we were close. We knocked on the door, and as it opened, the aroma of doughy, yeasty, baking pretzels hit us. Once inside, we met the accommodating head chef Eugene, who became our professor of pretzel-making 101. Eugene was very serious about pretzels, and eventually let us on to the secret to making the best pretzels: lye.

The whole process takes about twenty-four hours, with the majority of it spent in the fridge. The dough is laid out to sit in the cold and allow the yeast (Beer Table's favorite microorganism) to do its work. The dough is then cut into strips, about twelve inches long and an inch and a half across. Then each strip is hand rolled to more than twice its original length and twisted in the air to form the classic knot. When done correctly, the hand-rolling-knot-tying routine takes about thirty seconds per pretzel. Then they go back in the fridge for a short time while awaiting their lye bath.

Most people have the wrong opinion of lye. Sure, it can be highly corrosive, is used in cleaning, soap making, and burns the back of Edward Norton's hand; however, lye is used in cooking all the time at a low concentration. When the pretzels are dipped in the lye bath, it reacts with the outer edges of the dough, giving it a yellow tinge that becomes the brown crust of the pretzel when it is baked. After the lye-dipping, they are placed in a heat locker and then thrown in the oven. The bake time is very short and are basically flash baked in comparison to many breads. The lye is neutralized in the baking process and leaves the inside of the pretzel soft, chewy, and delicious.

Sigmund's delivers their pretzels to around thirty-five different locations, all of which are listed on their website, and Beer Table To-Go gets them every morning (except Sundays!). The bakery in Greenpoint shares the building with the Brooklyn Night Bazaar, and they sell their pretzels right out of the back of the bakery to the hipster flea market. So if you desire the freshest pretzels in the city, head to the corner of Norman and Banker after seven on Friday and Saturday nights. However, if you want the best beer and pretzel combo for the train home, you know where to go. And *voilà*, the mystery of Sigmund's Pretzels is vanquished.

by MICHAEL GALLAGHER

SPRING: A CHEF'S PERSPECTIVE

In the modern world we now live in and especially in New York City, almost everything is available at any time. It's 2am and you can't find your phone charger? Want a ham sandwich or a six-pack and a sleeve of Oreos? No problem; your deli across the street has all of that. You can also walk into almost any grocery store or that same deli in December and buy a bunch of asparagus, a pint of strawberries, tomatoes on the vine and an ear of corn. They will all be inexpensive, mostly ripe and appear to be fresh. They will come from Mexico, Peru, Holland or some other distant land boasting a favorable climate and abundant farmland. But inevitably they will all taste like cardboard and be nutrient deficient. Seasonality and proximity to your ingredients is immensely important to the health of our food systems, your personal health and most importantly flavor. And I say most importantly because I am a chef, and for me, spring is my salvation.

Ah, spring. In my small apartment in Astoria the first signs of spring arrive long before winter's end. Scraps of paper litter my desk with frantic almost illegible scribbling; asparagus with spicy sea urchin sauce, oysters with green strawberry and rhubarb, grilled lamb with green garlic and fermented tofu. As early as mid March I'm stalking the markets obsessively, pacing and performing a thorough reconnaissance for the first signs of spring; the first signs being radishes followed quickly by English peas. I also can't walk two steps without bumping into other

chefs. For us, the market is like the water cooler or copy machines of the nine to five world. We have all grown tired of cellored root vegetables, potatoes and dark beer. It's time for pea shoots, lettuces, maibocks and IPAs.

When the first harvest hits, it hits fast, and the pace in Union Square is electric. Chefs arrive early to snack on snap peas sampling from each farm to see whose are sweetest, with the most tender pods. I saddle up to Franca from Berried Treasures to see if she's willing to harvest some green strawberries for me (it's always a 50/50 chance). "Green" or unripe strawberries are wonderful pickled or used raw as a sour offset to richer textures and flavors like oysters or foie gras. Like all "green" fruits or vegetables they have a firmer texture than when ripe and harbor high levels of acidity and starches waiting to be converted to sugars. For me this describes the very essence of spring; life and sweetness buried in tiny green treasures. This is the only short period of time to work with these unripe fruits like the green strawberry, green garlic or young rhubarb, so I always buy in bulk pickling and preserving what I can't use up.

It's difficult to overstate the importance of the shift from winter to spring in the restaurant business. Every call to my purveyors takes 10 minutes longer. Produce lists from my farmers grow to multiple pages. Everyday my pre shift meetings with

the staff grow longer as does the specials menu. Fiddlehead ferns are discussed to exhausting detail; the extreme hype over ramps is diffused (after all its just an onion, albeit a very delicious one). Like the prized ramp, everything in spring is short lived. Summer is abundant and lengthy but spring is quick and frugal and therefore more special. We don't have a long time to revel in perfect fava beans, tender asparagus, limited shad roe and sweetly-mild green garlic.

The flavors that abound in spring that I try to focus on are green, vegetal, mildly sweet and grassy. I celebrate these flavors wholeheartedly whether in my cooking or libations. A helles bock that's crisp, bitter with a sweet grain finish served simply with slowly roasted spring lamb saddle, fresh peas, mint and fermented tofu. Floral, citrusy IPA with a bowl of fresh cheese, fava beans, honey, beef jerky and fennel pollen. Yes please!

To kick off the season here is a recipe for roasted lamb ribs glazed in honey and spices. I've also included a side of charred snap peas with preserved lemon dressing and tarragon. Either of these dishes could stand alone but also complements each other quite well. Crack open your favorite spring release, soak up the sun and watch the snow melt while you lick lamb fat from your fingers. Cheers!

by CORWIN KAVE

LAMB RIBS

I love lamb. Lamb may very well be my favorite meat to eat and one of the tastiest and consistently underutilized cuts are the ribs. Lamb ribs have historically only made appearances on a lamb chop; all cleaned up. The bones are "frenched" which is kitchen lingo for the chef ate the best piece and gave you the loin. Nowadays with the rise of pork belly and the publics embrace of the fatter cuts, lamb ribs, aka lamb breast, aka lamb belly are having their moment. And you know what? Lamb fat and IPA may be the best thing that's happened to your tongue since pop rocks.

The following recipe calls for making a brine which, if you don't have the time, is not completely necessary but will get seasoning deep into the ribs. Feel free to eat these on their own or serve them with the accompanying recipe for Charred Snap Pea Salad. Either way you'll be a happy camper but you may want a little vegetable relief from the abundance of funky lamb fat.

LAMB RIB BRINE

yield: 2 qts

1 whole rack (approx. 2 ½ lbs of lamb ribs, aka lamb breast)

1 qt water

½ cup kosher salt

2T sugar

1T black peppercorn (lightly toasted)

1T coriander seed (lightly toasted)

½ onion (cut in quarters)

2 cloves garlic (crushed)

In a dry pan over medium heat, lightly toast the spices until fragrant and then remove from pan and set aside.

Peel 2 cloves of garlic and crush with the back of a knife.

Peel an onion and cut half of it in half again.

Combine all ingredients in a pot and bring to a simmer.

Once simmered, remove from heat and add ice cubes til the volume of the liquid doubles, yielding 2 quarts total.

Cut lamb rack in half to allow it to fit easier in a large Tupperware container.

Submerge lamb ribs in liquid and refrigerate for 24 hours.

After 24 hours, remove lamb from the brine and pat dry before proceeding with the next recipe.

Discard brine after use.

PRESERVED LEMON VINAIGRETTE

yield: ½ cup

1 oz. preserved lemon skin (approx. 1 lemon, removed with a knife, no pith)

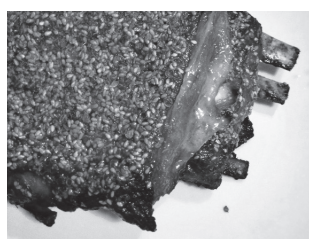
1 small green thai chili (no seeds)

½ clove garlic

1 cup Gegenbauer beer vinegar (don't substitute cheap malt vinegar — sub with real apple cider vinegar if you can't find Gegenbauer. Hint, hint, we sell it!)

1T fish sauce

Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until completely smooth and emulsified. This vinaigrette will have a relatively long shelf life in the fridge.



LAMB RIBS

serves: 4 people

1 whole brined rack (approx. 2 ½ lbs of lamb ribs, aka lamb breast)

1 cup honey

Kosher Salt

¾ t fennel seed (toasted & coarsely ground)

2t coriander seed (toasted & coarsely ground)

1T sesame seed (toasted)

½ t chili powder or cayenne

¾ t turmeric powder

In a dry pan over medium heat toast the spices and sesame seeds individually and set each aside.

In a mortar and pestle, grind the fennel seed and coriander seed individually but take care that they are not ground too finely so they retain a pleasant texture.

Combine spices with toasted sesame seed, chili powder and turmeric powder and set aside.

Preheat your oven to 350° F.

Place the lamb ribs on a rack bone side down, on a baking tray lined with parchment paper or aluminum foil (honey and lamb fat will drip while cooking so its best to line your tray to prevent a mess).

Season the ribs lightly with kosher salt and roast in the oven for 90 minutes.

After 90 minutes have elapsed turn up the oven to 450° F.

Remove the lamb from the oven and brush liberally with honey.

Return the lamb to the oven for an additional 5 minutes.

Remove lamb and brush with the remaining honey and coat completely with the spice mixture.

Roast for an additional 15 minutes.

Remove from oven and rest for 10-20 minutes before serving.

CHARRED SNAP PEA SALAD

serves: 4 people

12 oz. snap peas (approx. 4 cups, trimmed)

2T canola oil or other high heat oil

2T kosher salt

1 small handful tarragon leaves (whole)

Several leaves of mint (torn finely at the last minute)

Preserved lemon vinaigrette (to taste)

Hold a paring knife in one hand and a sugar snap in the other, with the inside curve of the pod facing you. With your paring knife, cut the top tip of the pea without completely severing it and gently pull off the tough string that runs the length of the inner pod and discard. Repeat this process until all peas have been trimmed.

Place a large sauté pan on high heat for several minutes; you should see a light smoke rise from the pan. The pan at this point should be alarmingly hot. Add 1 T of oil to the pan and immediately follow with half of the snap peas. It is important that all the peas have contact with the bottom of the pan so do not add too many peas at one time. Allow the snap peas to char on one side without stirring or moving; this should take approx. 2 minutes.

While the peas are charring, make yourself an ice bath using a large bowl or similar vessel with an abundance of ice cubes and enough cold water to just cover the ice. Add the kosher salt and stir until dissolved. At this point your 2 minutes have passed and you can now dump the peas from the pan into your ice bath. The peas should be pretty well charred on the one side; continue to cook if they are not and adjust your technique for round 2.

Put the pan back on the heat and then take a moment to gently stir the ice bath to ensure the peas cool down quickly. Repeat the processes with the second round of peas.

Remove the snap peas from the ice bath and drain well on paper towels.

In a large bowl, mix peas with a liberal amount of preserved lemon vinaigrette, tarragon leaves and torn mint leaves. Serve immediately.

BREAD & BUTTER PICKLES & BURGER

Everyone who eats meat loves a great burger. Heck most of us even love a mediocre burger as long as its dressed up saucy and dripping with cheese. I'm not going to pretend to have the most perfect blend of beef with the optimal fat ratio all figured out. I'm not going to tell you what bun you should use or whether or not ketchup is the Devil (I love ketchup). What I will do is tell you how I like my burger and you should feel free to take what you want and leave the rest.

As a kid, I was a purist when it came to a burger; cheese, ketchup, done. Now I'm a fancy pants chef so I require a bit more to satisfy my craving but it's still pretty minimal.

- Really good beef, from a butcher I trust
- Aioli (fancy pants chef lingo for mayonnaise with garlic)
- Pickles (Bread & Butter, no other)

- Cheese (not Kraft singles)
- Mustard (the spicy kind)
- A bun (I like brioche)

Most of us in NYC don't have the luxury of an outdoor grill so I recommend cooking this patty in a cast iron pan; just open the windows first.

CORWIN'S BREAD & BUTTER PICKLES

yield: 1 ½ qts

1 ½ lbs cucumber (approx. 2 cucumbers, sliced ¼" thick)

1 medium white onion (peeled & sliced into rounds ¼" thick)

2T kosher salt

1 ½ cup apple cider vinegar

½ cup sugar

¾ t celery seed (toasted & coarsely ground)

1T coriander seed (toasted & coarsely ground)

1t turmeric powder

Mix first set of ingredients in a mixing bowl and let stand for one hour. After one hour, rinse the cucumbers and onion in cold water and let drain in a perforated tray or bowl.

Combine second set of ingredients in a stainless steel pot and bring to a simmer. Once simmered, remove from heat and leave uncovered for 15 minutes. Pour the liquid onto cucumbers and onion, cover and refrigerate for at least 24 hours before use.

A REALLY GREAT BURGER

6 oz. ground beef

3 slices gruyere cheese

2T mayonnaise

1T mustard

1 soft brioche roll

bread & butter pickles

kosher salt

Form beef into a ball and flatten until ½" thick. Season liberally with salt.

Confirm your roll is fresh and cut in half; toast it if you feel the need.

Mix together the mayo and mustard.

Slice the cheese. Set aside the pickles.

Heat the cast iron pan over high heat 'til its pretty much scorching.

Place patty in the pan and cook approx. 2 ½ minutes per side. If your pan is hot enough this should impart a salty crust with medium rare-medium inside.

I like to add the cheese right before the burger is done to get a little melt going.

Dress up your bun, pile on the beef and stack the B&B pickles high.

JEAN'S BREAD & BUTTER PICKLES

Just for fun, we're including this recipe that Justin's family dug up from the archives from his great aunt Jean. Jean was a great cook and definitely an entertainer. We thought it was interesting how similar her recipe is to Corwin's. As with so many recipes, it's encouraging to know that they can easily be accomplished at home and many of them really do stand the test of time. Thanks Jean!

1 gallon cucumbers

6 large onions

Slice and soak in salt water for 1 hour, then drain.

Prepare mixture:

2 cups sugar

3 cups vinegar

1 t celery seed

1 t turmeric

Bring ingredients to boil — can hot.

A TESTIMONIAL

My boyfriend and I had moved to the neighborhood a few months before we spotted Beer Table. Other beer-lovers had apparently spotted it before us, and the first few times we walked by, it was so packed we didn't even try to get a seat. We were drawn to the warm lighting against the long brick wall, and we noticed how wonderful it smelled — like cheddar toast, or bacon. When we saw the spicy pickled vegetable plate on the menu, we were hooked and knew we'd be coming back.

We finally found a quiet night at Beer Table on a humid Sunday in late summer. We were expecting to see some unfamiliar labels, but instead we saw a long list of beers and breweries we had never heard of and several Belgian names I didn't know how to pronounce (my favorite word on the menu was 't Smisje). We loved the descriptions for each beer, which were, like the beers themselves, chosen carefully. They were not sommeliers' vocabulary words, just strings of adjectives like "burnt sugar" or "grassy" or "pepper". Sometimes more poetic words like "delicious dishwater." Our server was happy to answer questions, make pairing recommendations, and share some of the brewery backstories (again, my favorite was 't Smisje).

When the pickle plate came out, my boyfriend and I picked up sections of corn on the cob. The pickles tasted perfect to us... but after a few minutes of trying to eat them, we realized our lips were covered in fiery habañero pepper brine. We looked at each other, a bit panicked, but also buzzed on the hot pepper and the beer. We ate the corn a little more carefully and drank our beers a little more quickly. Days later, we could not stop thinking about the spicy pickles. We referred to them, fondly, as "upsetting." We needed to order them again before the batch ran out. And we needed to try the butterscotch pudding.

One of the best things about Beer Table was the constant feeling of experimentation, a sense of winging it — that habañero pickled corn being a great example. The chef took customer feedback and started tinkering with the spicy corn recipe to make it less upsetting (though we hoped for batches as spicy as the first). The food options were always changing, always thoughtful, and paired brilliantly with the beer list. Just to name a few favorites: chicken salad sandwich with pineapple; thick-cut bacon; waffles; black pepper gelato; sides of a Brooklyn-made condiment called Tickle Sauce. I'm still amazed at how this restaurant could present so many delicious beers, yet pull off the feeling that you were with a friend who was just happy to share some of his favorite bottles out of a personal stash in the basement.

It's a tough balancing act, for sure: an enormous inventory of beers sourced from around the world but delivered without any fuss or pretension. Getting to know Justin, the owner and menu mastermind, I understood how it was possible. He would answer any questions we had about the new beer list, and he would say nonchalantly, with a shrug, "I've been drinking that one, I like it a lot," or "Give it a try," or sometimes for a cask, "It's not as good as it was two days ago, do you want to taste it?"

We spent 2 or 3 years with Beer Table as our favorite spot for birthdays. It gave us something to fantasize about at the end of a hard week of work. If my boyfriend or I worked until 10:30 at night, Beer Table was still open and we could have an impromptu date. If it was 12 degrees out and we were feeling homebound, we would occasionally bundle up, sprint several blocks along 7th avenue, and land at Beer Table. We developed a reputation for ordering house pickles before anything else.

Now, the bottle selection is available at Beer Table To-Go in Grand Central. I love seeing the beers I've met already at Beer Table, and knowing there's a lot more to try. I love running into the Beer Table family, some of whom have been there since the beginning. My boyfriend and I miss the restaurant, and we can't wait to see what they do next.

by JENI MORRISON

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

1/ FREUDIANS LIP
4/ ANCHOR
9/ MELCHIOR
12/ ALDEHYDEDEHYDROGENASE
13/ NINKASI
16/ JARL
17/ SAPPORO
18/ MYANTONIA
22/ TWOHEARTEDRIVER
26/ SEASON

27/ WULVER
29/ YAKIMA
32/ CAMRA
33/ GYPSY
34/ WITBIER
35/ THREETIER
36/ MUNICH
37/ ROBERTHARE
38/ SANKEY

DOWN

2/ EIGHTEENTH
3/ BEECHWOOD
5/ COOLSHIP
6/ CHRYSOPODIS
7/ DRAGONSMILK
8/ HYDROMETER
10/ CZECHREPUBLIC
11/ CANDII
14/ KINGSTON
15/ COLOGNE
19/ ACETOBACTER
20/ TWENTY
21/ BURTONSNATCH
23/ WOMEN
24/ ALE
25/ FORTYFIVE
28/ ROGUE
30/ LACTOSE
31/ ATOR