

Pour Me

The Father of Craft Beer

By A.K. Carroll



Craft beers on tap.

Photos by A.K. Carroll

In this installment of Pour Me, we take a peek at the world of craft beer, a favorite of fathers and brainchild of brewmasters.

Once upon a time, long before the invention of the kegerator and the rise of hop-happy hipsters, homebrew and craft beer were the favored drinks of Americans everywhere, from the corn-based creations of native-born people to lagers and ales made in the traditional styles of immigrants from all parts of Europe. The country's first industry entrant, New World brewery, was founded in New Amsterdam (present-day Manhattan) in 1612, but it wasn't until the 19th century that craft beer really took off. Between 1810 and 1873 beer went gangbusters, and by the turn of the century the U.S. boasted over 4,100 breweries, a number which wasn't eclipsed until 2015.

The average American was consuming upwards of 20 gallons of beer a year by 1914, and then the industry came to a halting stop. Why the slow down? One word—Prohibition. Though the crackdown on spirits was defiantly met with gallons of homemade moonshine and dozens of the speakeasy cocktails that have been making a comeback in the past five years, beer took a hard hit from teetotalling. A few hundred of the thousands of pre-Prohibition breweries renewed their licenses after the 21st Amendment passed, but the first iteration of Big Beer put the squeeze on the little guys, and by the early 1980s only 50 independent beer companies were still in play. Americans had all but forgotten the craft brews of bygone days, having traded them in for cans of bland pale lager.

Lucky for us, Northern Californians were as innovative and adventurous then as they are today, and the same spirit that motivated plucky winemakers to start setting up shop all over Napa Valley and led to Alice Waters' famed contribution to California Cuisine, also inspired Fritz Maytag to make a risky investment in the purchase of Anchor Steam brewery in 1965. Though the company now produces over 164,000 barrels a year, they were arguably the brewery that launched the craft beer movement, which continues to this day and has led to the creation of over 5,000 breweries across the U.S.

What exactly is craft beer?

According to Brewer's Association, craft breweries must be small (they make less than six million barrels annually, which is also roughly three percent of U.S. annual beer sales), independent (they own and control over three-quarters of the brewery), and traditional (in one way or another). Traditional beers get their flavor from traditional or innovative ingredients and their fermentation. Many craft brewers interpret historic brewing styles, such as English porters, Belgian saisons or Irish stouts, with modern twists, while others develop original brewing techniques of their own.

Under the blanket of craft breweries you'll find microbreweries, which produce less than 15,000 barrels annually and sell majority (75 percent or more) of their beer offsite, brewpubs, which sell at least 25 percent of their beer on site and typically within the confines of a restaurant, regional breweries, regional craft breweries and contract brewing companies.

You don't need to be a beer geek to enjoy a quality brewsky, and there are plenty to pick from. According to California Craft Beer, there are over 700 craft breweries in the Golden State alone, more than any other state in the nation. Though none of them are located within the confines of the Lamorinda area (at least not yet), there are still plenty of places that pay tribute to the art of beer and carry local favorites on tap. So raise a pint to Fritz Maytag, the father of craft beer, or toast your own dad with a quality brew from one of these local watering holes.



Thoughtful Food

All hail Cilantro for that extra spice

By Susie Iventosch

It seems to be love or hate with cilantro, but I am a huge fan. Not only is it a key ingredient in many Mexican dishes and salsas, but freshly snipped leaves are so tasty in green salad. It's a perfect addition to curry sauce and the beautiful leaves make for a lovely garnish. Cilantro is the king of herbs in my book and for some reason, the smell of it just reminds me of summer.

When we made chimichurri grilled chicken the other night, we added cilantro to this typical Argentinian sauce, and it was a palate-pleaser. Since cilantro pairs so well with lime juice, we tossed in a touch of both lemon and lime, which made it extra zingy. Normally, chimichurri is made with parsley and oregano in addition to garlic, red pepper flakes, olive oil and red wine vinegar. The zesty lemon-lime potato salad fell into place and all together, this is a fun meal to serve for your summertime barbecues and picnics. The sauce holds well in the refrigerator, so if you make extra you can have it on hand as a dipping sauce for other meals, too.

Cooking Term of the Week

Grunt

This is a fun cooking term and one that might prove useful as we get into the beautiful summer fruit season. Grunt is a dessert typically seen in the eastern United States, and is a hybrid between a pie and a cobbler. The fruit (berries or stone fruits) is cooked under a crust of biscuit dough. The grunt is said to be named for the sounds coming from the bubbling fruit under the dough as it cooks. A grunt is usually cooked on the stove top, but can be baked. When baked, it is actually very much like a slump, but that's a term for another day!

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



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Green Chili Goat Cheese Dip

Photos Susie Iventosch

Grilled Chimichurri Chicken

(Serves 4-6)

1 whole roasting chicken
1 batch chimichurri sauce (recipe below)

DIRECTIONS

Rub skin of whole chicken with ½ cup of the chimichurri sauce, reserving the remaining sauce for serving. Place chicken in aluminum pan, or a baking pan that you don't mind putting on the barbecue or grill. Place the pan with the chicken over the center burner and cook indirect on gas grill with the two side burners on medium and the center burner turned off. Cook for approximately 1 hour, or until done and juices from legs and thighs run clear. This will vary depending upon the size of the chicken and the grill you are using. Carve chicken and drizzle chimichurri over when serving. Pass extra sauce for seconds!

Chimichurri Sauce



(Yields approximately 1½ cups)

INGREDIENTS

1 bunch fresh Italian parsley
½ bunch fresh cilantro
¼ cup fresh oregano leaves (no stems)
2 garlic cloves, peeled
1 tsp. dried red pepper flakes
½ tsp. powdered cumin
¼ tsp. salt
Juice of 1 lemon
Juice of 1 lime
½ tsp. lemon zest
¼ cup red wine vinegar
¾ cup olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Clean parsley and cilantro and cut off the bottom part of the stems. Place in food processor along with oregano leaves and garlic. Process until finely chopped. Add remaining ingredients and puree all together in the processor. Cover and let stand at room temperature for about 2 hours until ready to use. If you make it a day or two ahead, refrigerate and bring to room temperature before using.

Lemon-Lime Potato Salad



(Serves 4-6)

6 medium potatoes (3 new potatoes and 3 Yukon gold)

Dressing:

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 shallot, finely chopped
1-2 Tbsp. olive oil
½ bunch cilantro, stems removed and leaves chopped or julienned
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. lime juice
¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
2/3 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Clean potatoes and cut into evenly-sized halves or quarters. Place in a large pot of cold water and bring to a boil. Reduce to simmer and continue to cook the potatoes until they easily pierce with a knife, but are not mushy. This will take roughly 15 minutes or so. Check them often, because you don't want them to be either underdone or overdone. Drain potatoes and place in a bowl to cool.

Lemon-Lime Cilantro Dressing-directions

Heat 1-2 Tbsp. olive oil in small frying pan. Cook garlic and shallot until translucent. Remove from heat and cool. Meanwhile, place remaining ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Add cooled shallot and garlic and shake well. Adjust with extra olive oil as needed for your tastes. We tend to like a tangy dressing.

Gently toss cooled potatoes with dressing and stir every once in a while to make sure all of the potatoes are well-coated. Serve at room temperature. This salad is really nice served on a bed of lettuce with slices of avocado on the side.