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CONTENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLISHER

MIKE FRYER

WELCOME BACK TO OUR JULY 2019 ISSUE of The SoCal Food & Beverage Professional where we welcome in the hot summer season. For the next few months we will experience our hunger requirements at a slower or lighter pace, due to the heat. But never fear, with a lighter appetite we can spend our time testing the never-ending array of delicious beverages!

ON A VERY HAPPY NOTE...As you may already know, I was diagnosed with cancer of the kidney earlier this year, and after what seemed a nightmare of tests, biopsy, procedures and blood sample testing, I was able to schedule the surgery to remove my entire kidney along with the cancer, on June 13. I’m still here, less one kidney, and feeling better daily. I just wanted to say Thank You, to all my Friends, Family and Associates who stepped up and offered their help. And a special “Thank You” to my Publication Team who didn’t miss a beat when I was down and out...and stepped right in to get things done: Thanks, Juanita & Bob...and I can now actually say that I am a cancer survivor!

6 PAGE 6...What’s Brewing by our beer specialist David Mulvihill highlights one of the pioneers of craft brewing in Southern California: Pizza Port. In David’s report he delves into the history of this highly respected and award-winning brewing company and spotlights the San Clemente Pizza Port location and its newest head brewer, Jon Eckelberger.

11 PAGE 11...In Spirits Confidential Max Solano brings us part 1 of his commentary titled “Around the World with Gin,” in which he shares some of the history of this fascinating spirit, as well as some outstanding examples worth checking out from England, Scotland, Ireland, Peru, Japan and New Zealand.

18 PAGE 18...In his Chef Talk column this month, Chef Allen Asch educates us on what we can and need to do to “Save the Fish,” as he explains what factors have led to the endangerment of some fish species and how we can help by choosing to eat only sustainable seafood.

CHEERS! MIKE FRYER
SR EDITOR/PUBLISHER

www.socalfnbpro.com
Restaurant Editor Ben Brown visited North Italia, a fast-growing full-service Italian chain that’s making its mark on some of SoCal’s trendiest markets. Find out more in Ben’s column, Foodie Biz, on page 12.
In a recent performance, a comedian referred to phones as something along the lines of “the app that I can’t delete and hate when people use it on me.” And while many of us prefer texts to voicemails, and speaking to a fellow human being is just downright scary for an overwhelming percentage of the population, a phone number is nevertheless a critical driver of business.

And you wouldn’t believe the number of restaurants that are foregoing phone numbers.

Yes, a growing number of restaurants are doing without phone numbers, or at least ones that allow customers to connect with a member of the staff. Sure, not every restaurant wants to accept reservations over the phone; it interferes with their OpenTable or other reservation software. Answering general questions can be cumbersome, especially for a short-staffed spot struggling to meet minimum wage requirements. But to eliminate the option of an incoming call entirely? That’s a whole different story.

I was asked to interview management at a list of restaurants as part of a consulting project recently, and little did I know that the biggest challenge would be hearing their voices on the phone. A disproportionate number of calls landed me at an automated response tree like the one outlined above. In one case, I reached an option where I could leave a voicemail for management [there was no option whatsoever to speak with a live person]. After leaving a message for an interview request, I got a voicemail of my own from the manager, who said her restaurant didn’t have an incoming call phone number and she had no way of speaking with me on a business line. Interesting would be a polite way to put it.

How Would You Feel as the Customer?

Put yourself in the position of the customer. Take it a step further and say you’re not a prospective restaurant customer, but rather you have a question for your cable provider. The dreaded call where a robot answers and gives you nine options to choose from. You proceed to be served nine more sub-categories for your problem, and the process continues until you receive an automated response saying your provider can’t accommodate your request at this time. You hang up in fury and project lucid statements that shouldn’t enter the public sphere.

Now imagine that reaction from potential customers to your restaurant. Imagine what they will tell their friends who ask about your restaurant after that kind of experience. It gets ugly, fast.

Many Phone Calls Are Positive

Some of the common gripes that restaurants—or any business, for that matter—may have against phone calls are the time and resources they require, the fact that many inquiries can in fact be answered by a machine or on the website, and the inevitable spammers and salespeople. These concerns are well-founded, but are they enough to negate the risks of not having a phone number?

The example above, noting high potential to turn off potential customers, is one case. Even if their question could be answered online, sometimes it’s a human touch that makes all the difference. But what about calls from potential suppliers and partners? Some may email you, but others may be working the phones. You never know…you could be passing up a deal that will go straight to your bottom line.

Then, of course, there’s the idea of a journalist calling you for free press, or even a TV producer looking to scout your restaurant for their show. Again, some will email you, but others who have the phone in their hands will keep that phone in their hands, and just move onto the next place if you don’t give them the option to communicate on their terms.

Would You Go Without a Personal Phone Number?

Would not having a personal phone number be liberating or nerve-racking? Surely the former at times, but the latter in the long term. Yes, you would be able to get by if you inform your peers on social media, email and other channels that you’re inaccessible via phone, but there’s not much you can do for the unknown [legitimate] individuals who want to contact you for good reason.

Now apply this mindset to your business. Not having a phone number may sound blasphemous to many of us, but for the few looking to buck the trend, consider the larger implications before making that plunge.
Most seasoned Southern California craft brewing fans are familiar with Pizza Port, one of the early pioneers that began in San Diego County’s Solana Beach. The pizza place taken over by Gina and Vince Marsaglia in 1987 added Vince’s onsite crafted beer to its menu in 1992 and their brewpub was born. Lots of history and story could be added at this point: about how Tomme Arthur took over for Vince as head brewer in 1997; about the growing recognition and numerous awards; and Pizza Port’s expansion to five locations, first to Carlsbad in 1997, then to San Clemente in 2003. There are numerous accounts about each Pizza Port brewpub and the spinoff breweries and labels (Port Brewing, The Lost Abbey, The Hop Concept, and Pizza Port’s Bressi Ranch production facility). In addition to Tomme Arthur, Pizza Port’s award-winning brewers have included additional San Diego pioneers of craft brewing Jeff Bagby (Bagby Beer Co), Tom Nickel (Nickel Beer) and Kirk McHale (Melvin Brewing), and the many since-decorated well-trained and vocationally-driven to the craft disciples that followed.

Today’s focus is on Pizza Port San Clemente, primarily as an introduction to its newest head brewer, Jon Eckelberger. But we can’t venture there without first speaking a bit about the brewing lineage of Port SC.

Pizza Port San Clemente was Pizza Port’s first and only to-date venture outside of San Diego County. Upon opening, Kirk McHale split brewing duties between his Carlsbad home-base and the new South OC brewery for a few years. Port SC garnered three Great American Beer Festival (GABF) and one World Beer Cup (WBC) medals during that time. Noah Regnery (Artisanal Brewers Collective) followed as head brewer, with four GABF (2009, 2010 and 2011) and one WBC (2010) honors. He also received the coveted Small Brewpub Brewer/Brewery of the Year award in 2010. Upon Noah’s exit, the brewhouse mash paddle was handed to Ryan Fields (Wild Fields Brewhouse). Ryan was honored with two GABF and three WBC awards in 2012. With Ryan’s move to Beachwood Blendingry, Siebel & Doemens-trained Trevor Walls (Brewery X) took his turn. His GABF medal would come in 2016, prior to his leaving Pizza Port, for Anaheim’s new Brewery X. Kane Christensen, who had previously turned in his pizza slinging apron to become Ryan Fields’ assistant and had also become Trevor’s assistant for a time prior to furthering his training at Pizza Port Bressi Ranch’s production facility, assumed the head brewer role. Christensen has since left to join brewery-in-planning Station Craft. This finally brings us to the current Eckelberger reign.

Jon’s Pizza Port SC connection actually began during Ryan Fields’ tenure. As an avid homebrewer of almost 20 years and fan of Pizza Port, Jon and Ryan would talk beer and brewing, and share some homebrew. English nitro beer was a favorite style Jon liked brewing at home. After enjoying one at the Eckelberger residence, Ryan invited him to come brew one with him at Pizza Port. Additional brewing sessions followed.

Although an interest in brewing professionally existed, Jon was hesitant to step from his outside career to become an assistant brewer for just any brewery, unless that brewery was Pizza Port. An opportunity presented itself when Kane Christensen transferred to Bressi Ranch. Jon proceeded to season his craft professionally, first with Walls, then with Christensen.

This reporter ventured south to San Clemente in late May to visit with Eckelberger, try some of his latest beer and converse about his new role as head brewer. He was busy brewing. His plan in preparing for some anticipated time off was to brew a few successive batches of lager (German-style lager, a pilsner and Claudie’s Lager, an India pale lager...
[IPL]), which could condition while he was away. Jon’s wife and fellow Pizza Port team member Shannon Murphy-Eckelberger was expecting their second child in June.

Beers I tried during my visit included Duffield’s ESB, The Phelper and Dank Bank IPA. Duffield’s is a 5.5% ABV nitro-infused ESB: easy drinking, with a delicious British-style profile. The Phelper, a Cascade dry-hopped lager, was brewed to honor Jake Phelps, the editor in chief of Thrasher magazine (skateboarding). Jon and his friend Jordan crafted the beer a couple of days before Phelps’ recent passing. The lightness of the lager coupled with the dry-hopping made for a refreshing citrus-floral experience. Dank Bank, as well as the others, were verifying examples of Jon’s emphasis on assuring beers are properly attenuated and finished before being tapped.

Jon shared that his primary focus upon taking over as head brewer has been to produce the best beer possible, beer that will garner full acceptance, remarkability and support by new and long term patrons, fellow brewers and others in the industry. He really cares about assuring that folks continue to have a reason to keep coming in. Jon’s two assistants, Haven Lerman and Jared Terry, are helping him with this effort.

Working with a great team of people at Pizza Port, coupled with the tremendous sense of accomplishment that comes with each successive batch brewed, continues to stimulate his drive for making better beer.

Jon and Pizza Port San Clemente will be participating in brewing this year’s Brew Ha Ha Craft Beer Festival collaboration beer, along with Docent Brewing’s Bryan Giesen and Riip Beer Co.’s Ian McCall. It will likely be brewed at Docent and see distribution around Brew Ha Ha time (early Sept.) in cans and on draft.
Novo Fogo Sparkling Caipirinha
These days we can find nearly every drink packaged in a can, and the convenience and accessibility are proving to be a good thing for consumers. The award-winning Brazilian cachaça producer Novo Fogo has expanded its line of sparkling caipirinhas into canned versions, offering three flavors highlighting its Silver Cachaça: passion fruit-lime, mango-lime and original lime. Besides being extremely refreshing and tasting great, other pluses are its relatively low calories, carbs and alcohol (128-135 calories, 10-11 carbs and 8-8.5% ABV), the use of USDA-certified 100% organic sugarcane, all natural ingredients and that the distillery is a zero-waste facility.

www.novofogo.com/sparkling-caipirinha

Firestone Walker Napa Parabola
Firestone Walker is known for ageing its iconic Parabola Russian imperial stout in bourbon barrels, but in this latest version it added a twist by ageing it in French oak wine barrels that previously contained Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot from some of Napa Valley’s finest wineries. The result is a marriage of Parabola’s signature notes of dark fruit, tobacco and chewy roasted malts with the oak barrels’ contribution of a satiny texture with notes of spice and toasted coconut, and residual wine character layers in flavors of cedar, clove, mocha, ripe berry and dried chili pepper. This is a very limited release, so if you find this gem, I suggest you grab it before it’s gone.

www.firestonebeer.com/beers/products/parabola

Organika Vodka
Newly expanded to the US market, this premium vodka hails from the shores of Lake Baikal, Siberia, the oldest and deepest freshwater lake in the world. The vodka is made from purified mineral water from Lake Baikal, fresh apples, Siberian larch (a coniferous tree) extract, is filtered through charcoal and is a 100% grain spirit distilled from wheat. Like red wine, the larch contains high quantities of naturally occurring antioxidants, and similar to grapevines, the tree absorbs the minerals and qualities in the water, climate and soil in which it grows. The taste is creamy in texture with subtle hints of spice and very little burn on the palate. A portion of sales go towards supporting sanctuaries for the Amur Tiger, which is beautifully depicted on the label.

organika.vodka/en

Templeton Barrel Strength Rye Whiskey
Recently released is the 2019 limited edition of Templeton’s Barrel Strength Straight Rye Whiskey. First introduced in 2018, its inaugural edition received a 90-point rating from Whisky Advocate. This year’s special release is sourced from Indiana (Midwest Grain Processors) with a mash bill of 95% rye and 5% malted barley and bottled at the Templeton distillery in Iowa. The rye is influenced by flame-charred American oak barrels and at 57.9% ABV, is a smidge higher percentage than the 2018 edition. The result is a whiskey with rich, floral notes with the classic rye pepper that deepens into a long, spicy finish.

www.templetonrye.com

Angel's Envy Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished in Port Wine Barrels
This expression from the Louisville, Kentucky-based Angel’s Envy distillery is blended in small batches of 8-12 barrels at a time. Once it’s deemed ready it’s finished in 60-gallon ruby port barrels made from French oak and imported from Portugal, a process that lasts between three to six months. The finished product brings a nose of subtle vanilla, raisins, maple syrup and toasted nuts; and on the palate vanilla, ripe fruit, bitter chocolate and a hint of Madeira.

www.angelsenvy.com/whiskey/port-finish
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Let me start off by saying that, yes, I am typically known as the Brown Spirits guy! But, that does not mean that I do not appreciate well-made un-aged distilled beverages. Quite the contrary. Secretly, I have a very fond admiration, borderline love affair, with gin. You heard me, right, ladies and gentlemen…. GIN!! Now that we have just officially crossed over into summer, this is typically when I indulge in this very enjoyable and vast spirit category. In this first part we will travel across the globe and explore some of my favorite gins from the different geographical regions.

So, what is gin, you ask? Gin is a distilled beverage typically produced from a base of grain spirits (but, not limited to) and always flavored with juniper berries and other botanicals. Surely, gin has a very deep and rich history starting with the Dutch in the 16th century, most likely, earlier. The Dutch were distilling their local style of spirit called Genever which had already been used for medicinal purposes for years. The saying “Dutch Courage” derived from when the Dutch would take swigs of this beverage to give them strength whilst on the battlefield.

After the Dutch introduced gin to the United Kingdom, it was England that embraced this spirit, and in turn, greatly impacted the English culture for the next three centuries, and, eventually, the rest of the world.

**TANQUERAY No. 10 (47.3% ABV)- England/Scotland**

I could never discuss gin, especially this London dry style, without including Tanqueray No. 10 in the conversation. With as many delicious and long-tenured brands produced in the United Kingdom, this particular expression is my go-to! After all, there’s a reason why we retired this gin from the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, because it’s that good! Introduced in 2000, Tanqueray No. 10 is named after the “Tiny 10” pot still from which it is produced and undergoes a quadruple distillation process and made in small batches compared to the mainstream Tanqueray and its other expressions. Whole citrus fruit (lime, orange and grapefruit), not just the typical peels, are used, along with juniper, chamomile, coriander, licorice and angelica root. I recommend serving in a dry martini, Tom Collins or Gin Rickey.

**THE BOTANIST (46% ABV)- Scotland**

We know that whisky is king in Scotland, but feel consumers are not aware how popular gin is in this country, and that many different gins are produced here. The Botanist is the only gin produced on the Isle of Islay—you know the capital of heavily smoked whiskies! Or, as I call it “Peat Central.” This gin is produced using pot stills at the Bruichladdich distillery on the western bank of Loch Indaal. Although the botanicals are a closely guarded secret, we know that the Botanist uses a whopping 31 botanicals, 22 of which are locally foraged on the Isle of Islay. I enjoy this finesse style gin in a White Lady.

**DRUMSHANBO GUNPOWDER IRISH (43% ABV)- Ireland**

As a direct result from Ireland’s craft whisky distillery boom, we are seeing many other spirits from these same producers, including gin. One of the most intriguing to me is Drumshanbo Gunpowder tea gin. Gunpowder tea is so called because each tea leaf has been rolled into a small ball, reminiscent of gunpowder. It’s usually made with green tea.
Fans of happy hours can let out a sigh of relief as Original Cocktail Club has set out to extend the promotion at restaurants and bars. With a family full of foodies and cocktail lovers and always wanting to be a business owner, Jess Horan set out to help fill empty tables at restaurants. And, of course, make it happy hour all the time.

“We love to go out to eat,” Horan said. “And I figured there has to be a way to help out the restaurants I love to go to.” Naturally, she launched the company.

As part of the Original Cocktail Club, members can receive discounts at more than 35 restaurants in the Las Vegas area, including Andiron, Honey Salt, Ferraro’s, Firefly and Tacos & Beer. The club also added Evel Pie and Bajamar in May.

The Original Cocktail Club helps connect restaurants with customers seeking out a deal, and participating restaurants offer half-off alcohol during the selected periods of participation, generally slotted in early bird, all day or dinner. All day means members can use the happy hour deals all day, including lunch. Dinner means they participate during regular dinner hours and early bird reservations must be seated prior to 6:30 p.m.

Partner restaurants are able to select the day and time their deals run so the happy hour program can better fill out slow nights. On the customer side, sign-up is through the app and show the server. To receive the half-off drinks, a meal must be purchased.

“One of the things we pride ourselves on is helping get new people into restaurants,” Horan said. “It’s good for the restaurants, and it’s essentially incremental revenue. So it gets people in the door, filling empty tables with customers, generally slotted in early bird, all day or dinner. All day means members can use the happy hour deals all day, including various gins and other spirits in Holland since 1872. Jan Rutte is the sixth generation distiller following in her family’s footsteps. This beautifully delicate and slightly citrus gin is made with juniper, coriander seed, orange peel, cinnamon, fresh orange peel and fennel. One of their secrets is that they claim to peel the fresh oranges all by hand which helps give this gin a very unique floral and citrus character. I simply enjoy this gin over ice with a slice of orange or in a Negroni for its dry citrus character.

SUNTORY ROKU (47% ABV)- Japan

Japanese gin may be new to our market, but it’s definitely not a new fad. They have been distilling gin since shortly after World War II ended, but incorporating a refreshing and unique profile than traditional London dry style. I call this the flavored vodka drinker’s gin. The first gin released by Sunory, the name “Roku” is Japanese for “Six” which refers to the six Japanese botanicals used. Sakura flower (cherry leaf), sakura blossom (sakura flower), sakura blossom (sakura flower), sansho pepper and yuzu are utilized along with eight other traditional gin botanicals. The gin is distilled using a selection of different pot stills.

This gin is fun to sip on over ice with a splash of soda and a slice of Meyer lemon or, dare I say, in a Cosmopolitan in lieu of citrus vodka.

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One of the more interesting gins is this gem from Peru. In this land where Pisco originated and is king (along with wines), it’s not common to see many other spirits categories. The Ron Cartavio distillery located in Cartavio, Peru produces some amazingly very well-valued rum orchestrated by Master Distiller, Federico Schulz, who studied under Don Pancho Fernandez, himself. One of Federico’s dreams was to create his own gin, so Antagonic was born. Distilled from 100% sugar cane molasses, over 50 proprietary botanicals are used in making this complexed and delicate spirit, most of which are sourced from the Brazilian rainforest. This gin works well in many cocktails, but just love it in a G&T, preferably Fever Tree elderflower tonic.

ANTAGONIC (40% ABV)- Peru

One of the more interesting gins is this gem from Peru. In this land where Pisco originated and is king (along with wines), it’s not common to see many other spirits categories. The Ron Cartavio distillery located in Cartavio, Peru produces some amazingly very well-valued rum orchestrated by Master Distiller, Federico Schulz, who studied under Don Pancho Fernandez, himself. One of Federico’s dreams was to create his own gin, so Antagonic was born. Distilled from 100% sugar cane molasses, over 50 proprietary botanicals are used in making this complexed and delicate spirit, most of which are sourced from the Brazilian rainforest. This gin works well in many cocktails, but just love it in a G&T, preferably Fever Tree elderflower tonic.

RUTTE (43% ABV)- Holland

The Rutte family has been making genever,
sixth + mill: Joining the Italian Restaurant Mafia in DTLA’s Industrial District

sixth + mill [yes, all lower case] is the latest addition to Factory Place Hospitality Group’s growing restaurant collection. Seeking to be the ‘casual’ alternative to neighboring eateries Factory Kitchen and BRERA Ristorante, sixth + mill unquestionably upholds the group’s home-cooked Italian nature with a ‘very LA’ vibe. And of course, with a location on 6th Street, the place continues the group’s minimalist naming scheme.

Culinary Director Angelo Auriana, whose pastas are some of the best in the city, continues to showcase his prowess with a limited but well-executed menu. Red and white pizzas, a sprinkling of entrees, salads, small plates and—of course—pastas stay true to Italian nature with simple, rich, high-quality ingredients. Case in point with the coppia, a heavenly compilation of buttery ricotta, bold fennel sausage and arugula that melds together amidst a beautiful crown [read: perfectly-baked crust]. Or the fettuccine al funghi, where homemade pasta with simply perfect texture meets fresh mushrooms and a light cream sauce for lavish decadence.

Portions aren’t overwhelming like you’d find in a true Italian trattoria, but enough to get by. All the better to have room for some tiramisu or indulgent zeppoline. And of course you can pair anything with a selection from the Italian wine list, as well as a handful of beers and a few craft cocktails.

sixth + mill’s claim as a casual spot may seem a bit farfetched to some, with a price tag that’s digestible but by no means economical. A loud, but not unbearable, dining room brings out the casual element with large groups of 20-, 30- and 40-somethings on a festive night out. And veterans of Factory Kitchen and BRERA Ristorante may either rejoice in ironic nostalgia or reactivate some PTSD with the thought of going back to this particular pocket of the industrial district, where glass shards line the streets from the seemingly endless auto break-ins. Probably a good idea to spring for the valet this time around. For more information, call (213) 629-3000 or visit sixthandmill.com.

Irvine’s Ramen Mecca, Matcha Coffee Shop and Chocolate Waffles Like You Wouldn’t Believe

Irvine’s TRADE Food Hall houses some of the OC’s most intriguing under-the-radar casual eateries, with concoctions like rainbow burgers blowing up Instagram on the reg. TRADE’s offerings are not limited to just the stalls that surround the venue’s central dining area, however. The entire complex sports a broad spectrum of new-age hotspots, with cuisines that span the globe. You’re not going to find too many places that cover this much ground with such modest price points, and the joy of TRADE is the ability to try a bit of everything across one sitting.

You’ll unquestionably be drawn to Hiro Nori, if for nothing else than the perpetual line out the door. Among Orange County’s premier ramen destinations, Hiro Nori serves up something ridiculous in its tonkotsu ramen. That rich, creamy broth is like no other, with tender pork that melts off your chopsticks and thick, hearty noodles that pick up all the flavor. Don’t pass on that black garlic sauce, which gives everything a pristine smoky quality. Their shoyu ramen is another masterpiece, and Hiro Nori rounds it out with a selection of bowls and Japanese fusion small plates. Is it worth the hour wait? The answer is with the beholder, and there’s only one way to find out. HiroNoriCraftRamen.com.

Around 100 paces down the lot is KRISP, a modern café that serves up premium coffee, gourmet juices and a variety of healthful entrees. KRISP’s menu epitomizes the millennials palate, with avocado toast galore amidst a slew of matcha-based drinks…and foods [matcha brownies anyone?!]. They also spice things up, literally, with worldly goodies such as masala chai. You’ll inevitably find 20-somethings making the place their home for the day, working on their startup or the next great screenplay. KrispFreshLiving.com.

If dessert is what you’re looking for, look no further than Sweet Combforts, back in TRADE Food Hall’s central hub. True to its name, Sweet Combforts specializes in chocolate-dipped Belgium Liege waffles, pressed with the honeycomb pattern that waffles had back when they were first created. They use pearl sugar to give their waffles an unreal texture, not to mention some crazy topping combinations. The churro crunch, complete with cinnamon toast crunch and a cream cheese drizzle, and the cookies and dreams, with Oreo cookie butter, Oreo crumbles and white chocolate, will put a sweet cap on just about anything. SweetCombforts.com.
North Italia: Rustic Italian with Big City Flair

The chaos of clustered tables and tasteful music seamlessly comes together with the sight of servers weaving their way through the crowds, in and out of the fishbowl kitchen, where tomato cans, citrus baskets and sugar boxes decorate an even more fast-paced scene. It’s classic L.A., and as always you can’t believe the place is this packed on a Tuesday night [does anyone have a family in this town?].

North Italia, which is rapidly expanding with locations across the US, prides itself in cooking from scratch. Everything down to the pizza dough and pasta is done in-house, a tall order considering that the menu is substantially broader than what you’ll find in your typical trattoria. From there, North Italia brings in a touch of American influence to make things interesting, adding a few extra ingredients here and there for a progressive approach to classic Italian.

Take their garlic bread, which reinvents the timeless dish by piling two-bite bread cubes into a cast-iron, dousing it in butter, olive and truffle oil, then baking it with mozzarella and ricotta. The result is a small mountain of decadence, perfectly textured. Then there’s the roasted mushroom tortelloni, impossibly meaty in a rich cream sauce, complemented with hazelnut and caramelized sweet potato. And the diver scallops, cooked perfectly with butternut squash, luscious Parmesan risotto and a sprinkling of pancetta. Pair it with something from the Italian wine list, or a cocktail that’s crafted as creatively as it’s named.

There are some growing pains as well that North Italia will inevitably get through. Not all the inventive ingredient compilations came together, namely in a short rib radiatori with an overpowering touch of horseradish [that short rib was excellent though!], and a branzino that was cooked well but lacked a necessary touch of garlic, richness or really anything else to give it flavor. Then there’s the matter of service, where staff are incredibly friendly and well-intentioned, but may all the same make you wait for a full hour between courses.

You’ll finish on a good note though. That salted caramel budino and hazelnut torta are primed for indulgence. NorthItaliaRestaurant.com.

Caló Kitchen + Tequila: Upscale South of the Border in the South Bay

Caló Kitchen + Tequila hosts a distinctive ambience where the intimacy of a small space meets the energy of modern L.A. dining. A one-lane walkway separates booths and a packed bar, with servers quite used to backing up or leaning in for patrons to pass in the same way a flight attendant would aboard an aircraft. Upstairs is slightly quieter, with the same artistic lighting calming the air and allowing you to take a breath, even if it’s to just enjoy the view of the shopping mall across the street.

Caló (Spanish for ‘slang’) puts an interesting accent on American Mexican favorites. The menu isn’t miles long like you’ll find in some full-service Mexican establishments, in the same way that the interior isn’t decked out with bright colors or filled with Mariachi music. Instead, Caló integrates a level of elegance in its ingredients to match its ambiance, while remaining both fun and indulgent.

Case in point with the shrimp and bacon tacos, profound in rich flavor and texture made all the better with a valentina cream sauce. Caló’s prime skirt steak nails it as well, bursting with a critical mass of umami that lusciously spills into a homemade tortilla. The carnitas, made with prime kurobuta pork and Mexican coca cola, can be cut with a spoon. And in traditional American Mexican fashion, Caló offers a few combination options that allow patrons to try a bit of everything—the seafood trio and Caló platter, to name a few.

Then, of course, comes the tequila part of the equation. Unsurprisingly, Caló offers a few combination options that allow patrons to try a bit of everything—the seafood trio and Caló platter, to name a few.

Churros are undoubtedly the dessert of choice, filled with a traditional burnt caramel custard and served with chocolate sauce, thick house-made whipped cream and—for a touch of novelty—peanut butter for dipping.

Caló Kitchen + Tequila is located at 2191 Rosecrans Ave, El Segundo, CA 90245. Open 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sun. through Thu., 11 a.m-10 p.m. Fri. & Sat. Average out-the-door price for split appetizer, entrée, split dessert and 1-2 drinks is $85/person. For more information call (424) 269-2322 or visit CaloKitchen.com.
Renowned actress, director, producer, author and singer Diane Keaton says it like it is. Her slogan is a perfect fit for her personal wine label, ‘The Keaton.’ It’s hard to imagine a wine label embodying the persona of its founder, but The Keaton does just that. There’s an attitude that speaks to all that’s fun-loving and easy-going, being yourself and rising above anything that others may think. It’s a warm, welcoming voice glowing of energy with a heartfelt undertone. It’s a presence that welcomes all, inviting you to kick off your shoes and just relax, because in Keaton’s realm, everyone is on an equal playing field.

The Keaton may be a celebrity wine label, but it’s a far from the posh, showy brands one might associate with such a big name. The Keaton, like its namesake, is all-encompassing.

First debuting in 2015, The Keaton is available as a red and a white, both blends. A number of factors back up the brand’s accessibility and carefree nature, but two truly rise to the top. First, both wines retail for around $15 and can be found across a number of major retailers.

Second, Diane encourages consumers to drink her wine the way that she would: over ice.

Wine, over ice? Such a statement would typically cause sommeliers across the globe to sound the alarms, and restaurant beverage directors to simply silence themselves and shake their heads in disbelief. But this is not your typical wine, conceptualized by not your typical wine aficionado.

“Drink it the way YOU like it!” exclaimed Diane Keaton. “Who cares what anyone else thinks!”

She’s become quite accustomed to defending her preference for wine over ice. The habit originated in the 1970s, when Keaton was living in New York. Her apartment didn’t have air conditioning, so she would retreat to her balcony to cool off. One day she simply thought about trying a glass of wine on ice to help with the process, and the practice stuck.

Drinking wine on ice indirectly fueled the naming of the wine label as well. As Keaton explains, ‘The Keaton’ isn’t entirely focused on the wine itself, but rather the style in which it’s consumed.

“It all started on The Ellen Show,” Keaton said. “[Ellen] likes to tease me about drinking my wine on ice. She always [brought] me a chilled glass of wine with lots of ice and one time she surprised me with an engraved glass with ‘The Keaton’ on it. Then I heard that people would go into bars and order a ‘Keaton’ and it was known to bartenders that that meant wine on ice. I’m grateful to Ellen and the rest is history.”

Keaton is also quick to note another one of her wine’s favorite features: the twist-off cap.

“Easy access!” Keaton exclaimed, and went on to discuss how she aims for her wine to be geared toward the fun of life. “Who doesn’t love the social element around enjoying a great bottle of wine, whether with friends, co-workers or even after a long day of work alone!”

And while Keaton didn’t exactly grow up in the wine business, she was fortunate to meet with a number of seasoned professionals who helped her realize her vision, such as Bruce Hunter, Managing Director of Shaw-Ross International Importers.

“We were fortunate to meet Bruce and he understood how I felt about wine, and creating a wine that would taste great on ice or without ice,” Keaton said. “To be honest, I enjoyed the creating of the label the most, since I’m a visual person.”

To create the perfect blend, Keaton made her way to Northern California, where she worked with winemaker Bob Pepi, owner and winemaker at Robert Pepi Winery in Napa Valley. With more than 40 harvests of experience, numerous 90+ point ratings, two Wine Spectator “top 100 wines of the year” recognitions and a “Cellar Selection” designation, Pepi’s expertise helped bring The Keaton to life, with plenty of entertainment along the way.

“He knew I wanted wine that was more on the “sweeter” side, but apparently that is an incorrect
way of saying what I truly wanted,” Keaton said. “We had fun taste testing until we finally had the perfect blend for me…or for us!”

The Keaton Red combines Zinfandel, Syrah and Petite Sirah, all sourced from North Coast California. Tasting notes consist of strawberries, raspberries, plum and baking spices. Tanins are rich but restrained, with a lingering finish.

The Keaton White blends Verdelho (Paso Robles), Pinot Grigio (Sonoma Valley) and Riesling (Mendocino). The nose is largely floral with a touch of spice, while the palate is full-bodied, slightly off dry, and contains a good balance of acidity.

To manage the day-to-day for the wine’s production and marketing, Keaton works with a small team. She describes them as “Passionate about wine, which makes for great collaborating.”

But of course, Keaton does a great job of marketing her wine herself. Among many PR splashes, Keaton made a big one when she whipped out a bottle of The Keaton Red on Jimmy Kimmel Live and took a swig straight from the nozzle.

Revisiting her tagline, Keaton was adamant about The Keaton being an everyday brand that was within reach for a broad range of people. “I wanted [my wine] to be accessible with no frills,” Keaton said. “And we successfully accomplished that. Both of the wines have a big taste without a big budget. Now that is what I find attractive!”

She took the same stance in discussing her target customer, which doesn’t come with many limitations, as it would with most other brands. “You, me, everyone!” she said. “I get lots of requests on my Instagram from people in Brazil and London. I guess it’s not that easy to get wine over the state lines. I wish it was easier!”

She’s also adamant about her use of all-caps in her branding—She claims that she’s not looking to emphasize tone or emotion, but rather she just prefers the way that capital letters look.

Another critical driver of The Keaton is its charitable component. A portion of the proceeds from The Keaton go toward the Alzheimer’s study at Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health.

“My mother suffered with Alzheimer and my father had an inoperable brain tumor,” Keaton said. “Obviously both were huge losses for me, and both are indirectly brain related. I support all doctors that are trying to get rid of these horrible brain diseases and hopefully one day we will find a cure.”

Of course, wine isn’t the only thing that’s on Keaton’s plate [or rather, in her glass]. At 73, she holds an active lifestyle that includes no shortage of commitments, with a mindset constantly looking toward creating something new and different. The Keaton, however, remains a priority and she strives to promote her wine brand whenever possible.

“I would drive my car all over this country if I could to promote the wine,” she said. “But it isn’t that easy. Honestly I would love to see it expand into more markets.”

International expansion is certainly a hurdle to cross, and whether The Keaton will end up on shelves in London, Brazil or any other markets that have expressed demand is up in the air. Regardless, when it comes to the future of her wine label, Keaton wants it to be as universal as the customer it’s intended for, with the potential for additions to the line.

“[I want The Keaton to be] Everywhere possible!” she said. “Grocery stores, poured at your local bar, more restaurants, you name it. And maybe even some newer wines under my label. What do you think about La De Da Rose next? On ice, of course!”

The Keaton remains an intriguing case study in wine and marketing, and at four years strong, a proven example of how reaching the masses with an everyday product can bear as much fruit [and often more] than the elite lines with price tags to match. Keaton could have easily gone the other way, and that wouldn’t have been a bad thing. It just wouldn’t necessarily have been ‘her.’ Because some people aren’t afraid to crack open a wine with a twist off cap and pour it over ice.

“It’s up to you! Don’t listen to anyone. Enjoy it the way you like it…PERIOD,” Keaton said.

There’s the all-caps again. Thanks to Keaton, far more people are willing to take the plunge and try the unconventional practice themselves, Keaton’s instructions being the perfect excuse to fall back on. And as the peak of summer approaches, a number of patrons are undoubtedly enjoying The Keaton, over ice, as they escape their air conditioning-deprived apartments and overlook the sweltering city from their balconies.
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In recent years, there has been an increasing demand for wine in the United States. With that, the competition also increased with the growing number of wines in the market. So how does a wine stand out in the crowd of many? In terms of “first impressions” in a situation where a consumer cannot taste the wine itself, such as a retail shop or online store, the eyes typically are the first factor in purchasing decisions. Interesting enough, there has been research in many areas of the psychology of wine marketing and its ties to consumer preferences. There have been studies that showed that people equate quality with various wine factors: label, appellation, organic/biodynamic designations, and of course, price. I’ve heard many observations based on visuals cues, like “Oh, this wine must be really good since it’s $100,” “This wine can’t be that good if it’s that cheap,” or even, “This wine looks like it’ll be good!”

In 2013, David Schuemann (CF Brand Design) published the book *99 Bottles of Wine*, which shares on 99 of their company’s most successful packaging designs and the inspiration and stories behind them. The wine consumer market has evolved over the years, and Schuemann shares on some of the strategies for success with these changing times.

The first sentence of the CF Brand Design philosophy states: “One of the keys to building and launching a successful brand is the ability to break through the ever-growing crowd of competitors.”

Producers have continued to seek innovative ways to attract consumers to their wines, and with technological advances, the efforts are getting more and more creative. In June of 2018, I wrote an article about mixed reality technology and how Treasury Wine Estates has embraced that technology to help set their wines apart. Wine packaging should be able to bridge the emotion and cognitive connections with people, and that can be done with specialized marketing strategies, such as storytelling and unique designs.

Simple enhancements to a wine label can make a wine look more expensive than it actually is. Think about your entry level wines that have gold features or embossing. Typically, higher end wines tend to become more simple, neutral and straightforward… no fancy designs. Interesting, Schuemann explains that the more complex, “louder” labels work for your entry level wines (<$10 range).

Every single portion of a wine’s packaging is well thought out and considered. From the label, to the description, the bottle choice, even the wine capsule/foil, it all makes a difference.

This isn’t even taking into account once a wine hits the retail shelves, where location, location, location becomes key.

To learn more about the “behind the scenes” of wine brand design and marketing, check out the 2013 NPR special that covered the release of Schuemann’s book: https://npr/2pmZC1O.

Fun fact: Schuemann shares that more seasoned wine consumers find that wine labels with critters on them find those wines to look “cheap.”
I recently watched a documentary on the destruction of the coral reefs around the world. This has led to governments—local, state and national—to change regulations to protect the reefs all around the world. The three most accepted causes are all controllable items that humankind can easily reverse. Most scientists agree that the top three reasons the reefs are dying are: climate change, pollution and overfishing.

Reefs are made of tiny coral polyps which are a translucent animal related to the jellyfish. They have exoskeletons that are very hard because they are made of limestone. The skeletons attract other species that give the reefs their rich color. The reefs grow by dividing in half and then growing again, repeating the cycle often. As they are growing, they connect to other polyps, which creates colonies. Over thousands of years some of the colonies merge and this creates reefs. Some of the world’s reefs are more than 50 million years old. Okay, why am I writing this?

Plants on the reef are food for the little fish, which are food for the larger fish and for many birds. The birds deposit food on land and this feeds land animals such as lizards and crabs, which then become food for larger land animals. Another example of the ocean’s destruction is that dolphins need bluefin tuna to help get their food. If the tuna gets rare this will hurt the diet of the dolphin. Additionally, without large bottom swimming fish it would hurt the seabirds by not scaring the little fish to the surface. All living things rely on something or someone else so the effects would likely have a trickle-down scenario. Everything could die (except squid).

Orange Roughy was not able to be caught in any numbers worth fishing for until the 1970s. This is due to where they habituated. This fishing “ban” allowed them to grow in large numbers and for long periods of time. Orange Roughy can live for 150 years or longer and larger/older fish produce more offspring. Orange Roughy does not produce eggs until it is at least 20 years old so after the 1990s when it was so cheap and popular, the population went down to 10% of what it was 10 years earlier. One study showed that an average size fish can produce over 9 million eggs but only between 1 and 6 survive, on average.

There are two types of extinction that scientists observe: biological extinction and commercial extinction. Commercial extinction occurs when there is not enough fish to sustain a viable reason to catch them. Biological extinction occurs when there is not a single fish of a species left out there. There are millions of species of all animals named, and at least 20,000 are fish and seafood. Scientists feel there are at least 800,000 more to be discovered. Unfortunately, the world gains and loses species every day. By the year 2100 scientists expect to lose 14 percent of the bird species, 25 percent of the mammals and 42 of the turtle and tortoise species. There are some solutions for this problem. One method is fish farming, but there are detractors to farmed fish. One of the problems is since the environment is changed, much of the fish will be different than wild fish. Examples include farm-raised salmon that has to be dyed to make the flesh pink or orange. Also, mussels do not grow the same since the fish is not swimming in ocean waters. Another negative is that fish are fed pellets that are made from wild fish. These trawlers scoop up everything and grind it and make pellets without knowing what they have scooped.

Another method is to create quotas, but enforcement is tough and fishermen do not like it since they probably could have caught more fish. This hasn’t worked around the world and over time. Another method is to limit the length of time fishing boats can stay out but this has the same problems as above. One last conservation tool is to rotate allowable locations for fishing. The problem is figuring out how long it will take to replenish the site. It may be possible to use a combination of all four methods and get good results.

Sustainable seafood is another great option. Sustainability means that product can be maintained at certain levels. The Monterey Bay Aquarium is a leader in evaluating which species should and shouldn’t be eaten. You can go to their website for more information or go to seafoodwatch.org and download a consumer guide.

For more information about this topic read Charles Darwin’s On The Origin Of Species.
Change–is it a good thing? If that is so, then why do so many of us get so anxious and worried by changes in the way things are or have been done? I think it is mostly a fear of the unknown. One thing I know for sure, we are creatures of habit and when things change we get scared. We become weary or fearful when things change from what our normal procedures or expectations are. If only we could embrace change for what it is—a new beginning, another way of looking at things, and a new opportunity and perspective.

Let’s take a minute to look at the many definitions of change. Merriam-Webster defines it as…

**Change**

**verb** \chānj\ - changed; changing  
transitive verb  
a : to make different in some particular way : alter never bothered to change the will  
b : to make radically different : transform can’t change human nature  
c : to give a different position, course, or direction to : changed his residence  
intransitive verb  
1 : to become different: some things never change  
2 : to undergo transformation, transition, or substitution : winter changed to spring

It is the nature of things in our world to change, evolve, and grow, so that means that we must be willing to do the same from time to time. We must endeavor to understand and embrace change and see it for what it is: transition from what was to what is.

As it relates to the business world today, there is a lot of change going on. We need to change our perspective, adjust social norms to fit society today and be willing to adjust how we see things and hence how we do those things going forward as well.

Here are a few areas in employment law where change is occurring in our workplaces right now…

- Wage equity—many states have laws about the right to request wage history, etc.
- Legalizing marijuana for recreational use—how it impacts pass/fail for employment purposes.
- Immigration expectations and new rules—around the rights of prospective employees.
- Increase in the minimum wage—how will an increase impact businesses?

While I believe in the purpose and value of change, I also support the premise of never forgetting our roots or our foundations. We must, in my opinion, remember and respect the value of our history, remember to cherish family and friends and remember and embrace the impact of our past decisions for the consequences of future ones. We must also remember the importance of human kindness, decency and compassion. For without those key foundational beliefs, we will be hard-pressed to implement change in a new, exciting and meaningful way that benefits our society—all of humanity and mankind across the globe. Change—thoughtful change that is—is the way of the future that respects the decisions of the past.
ENTERTAINMENT

London’s West End’s “Potted Potter: The Unauthorized Harry Experience-A Parody by Dan and Jeff” opened in Bally’s Windows Showroom. The slapstick comedy combines all seven Harry Potter books into 70 minutes with favorite characters, props and a live Quidditch match.

“ Weird Al” Yankovic on his 2019 “Strings Attached” tour will visit The Smith Center Wednesday, Aug. 7 and feature a symphony orchestra.

The Boxmasters with Billy Bob Thornton will return to Las Vegas for a special performance at Rocks Lounge inside Red Rock Resort Saturday, Aug. 10.

“America’s Got Talent” finalist Samuel J. Comroe will start a stand-up comedy residency Monday–Wednesday at the L.A. Comedy Club in the Dragon Room at The STRAT on Monday, July 8.

Tokyo trio, BABYMETAL, who’ve opened for Lady Gaga on her U.S. tour, will appear at House of Blues inside Mandalay Bay Monday, Sept. 30.

Wayne Newton celebrated his 60-year milestone performing in Las Vegas at Cleopatra’s Barge in Caesars Palace where he headlines Monday–Wednesday.

DINING

Frites Las Vegas opened at Excalibur’s Castle Walk Food Court with an Instagram-able food truck façade and serving French fries as creative meals.

Downtown Los Angeles’ sixth+mill ristorante, pizzeria and bar will debut its first Las Vegas location in September at The Venetian in the Grand Canal Shoppes.

Real Awesome Food Truck’s Paul Samano and Fergusons Downtown launched the new food truck park at the Llama Lot on 9th and Fremont every Friday–Saturday from 4 to 10 p.m.

True Food Kitchen from Phoenix, Ariz., will open next spring on the street level of The Forum Shops near the spiral escalator with an adjacent “True Bar.”

Chef, restaurateur, TV personality and author Guy Fieri received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame joining Wolfgang Puck and Bobby Flay.

Hong Kong’s Mott 32 on The Palazzo casino floor has introduced Dim Sum & Drink Sun featuring a fixed selection of dim sum, cocktails and wine 5–7 and 9–11 p.m. daily inside the bar and lounge.

Hard Rock International debuted more than 20 new menu offerings globally including Hard Rock Cafe Las Vegas Strip spotlighting steak burgers headlined by the first edible 24-Karat Gold Leaf Steak Burger.

Mexican-inspired casual restaurant Leticia’s Cocina & Cantina is open at Santa Fe Station with flavorful farm-to-table dishes.

Executive chef–owner Dan Krohmer of Other Mama Hospitality opened his newest restaurant concept, Hatsumi, in the Fremont East District offering Japanese style hospitality and cuisine.

Roy Choi launched limitless Korean BBQ with All-You-Can-Eat Mondays at his Best Friend restaurant inside Park MGM.

ABOUT TOWN

The Chainsmokers in May and Steve Aoki in June each premiered their new six-minute musical Viva Vision light and sound shows at the Fremont Street Experience, which run daily with existing shows while work in sections is being done on the $32 million renovation to the canopy screen.

New at the MGM Grand, The Hunger Games: The Exhibition was awarded a Guinness World Records title for having the Largest Interactive Touchscreen Display. The 60-foot wide display acts as an archer training experience providing guests with skills to “join the rebellion.”

Hyde nightclub inside Bellagio is closing on July 6.

The all-new integrated and immersive underwater-themed RE-MATCH bar and The LINQ Hotel + Experience are open. The LINQ’s transformation now has hologram gaming, six virtual reality bays, high-tech casino games, esports, live interactive, multi-stage entertainment and the world’s largest digital art installation.

The Plaza downtown continues upgrades with a $15 million transforming renovation of more than 100 hotel rooms and suites on the North Tower’s top floors.

Aurie Symphony Park, the first residential development at Symphony Park downtown, broke ground for a luxury, mid-rise apartment community with ground-level retail and restaurants.

The Neon Museum acquired Reed Whipple Cultural Center directly across the highway from the Neon Boneyard and will turn it into the centerpiece for an expansion development called Neon2020 and building named Ne10. First phase completion is slated for the first quarter of 2020.

Discovery Children’s Museum opened its new summer traveling exhibit–Top Secret: License to Spy focusing on the science and technology of spying and espionage.

Answering the call for a homey family-pet friendly longer stay property with a fully equipped kitchen, fitness center and laundry room is the brand-new 115-room Residence Inn by Marriott at The Place at Seven Hills in Henderson.

The Downtown, which opened in 1963 near the El Cortez, revealed its $2 million remodel with 88 renovated rooms, six-hole professional courtyard putting course and added full-service 24-hour bar, which doubles as a front desk checking in guests.

Derek Stevens debuted his first Circa Sports location at the Golden Gate by launching the season-long Circa Sports Million Pro Football Contest offering $1.5 million in prizes.

The new Galaxy Theatres Boulevard at the Boulevard Mall with Nevada’s first all-laser projection theatre and world’s first Sony Digital Cinema offers promotions all summer including Kid’s Summerfest through Aug. 26.

The Basement is a live escape room experience at 3440 Polaris Ave., offering two experiences, “The Basement” and “The Study.”

Mixed reality company, Nomadic, will join anchor tenant, Meow Wolf when the AREA15 experiential retail and entertainment complex center opens Oct. 15.

The 33rd Annual Black & White Party benefiting Aid for AIDS of Nevada is set for Saturday, Aug. 10 at the Hard Rock resort 7 p.m.–1 a.m.
Beer has been brewed in Nevada since before it was a state and now the beverage’s history in the Silver State has been consolidated into one book, Nevada Beer by The Las Vegas Food & Beverage Professional’s own Pat Evans. It’s the second book released by Evans, who released a book about the history of beer in his hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 2015. Nevada Beer is available on Amazon and at local retailers. Evans will host a signing on February 9 from 1-3 p.m. at Barnes & Noble in Summerlin, 8915 W. Charleston Blvd.

Why write this book?
I took it as a little bit of a challenge, but also a way to jump into the Nevada beer industry. Back in Michigan, I was deeply involved as a reporter in a city known nationally for beer. When I found out I was moving to Las Vegas in September 2017, I decided to let my publisher know and they wanted a Nevada beer book. Prior to my move, I had heard and read a lot about how lousy the Nevada beer scene is, and I didn’t feel like it was possible if it was true. So it was sort of a challenge to prove people outside of Nevada wrong and show there is good beer in the state. Plus, what better way to jump into the industry and get to know people. It’s full of a lot of great people.

Was there history to dig deep into?
Surprisingly more than I thought there would be. Knowing from previous research that beer was widely made across the country pre-Prohibition, I expected a good amount. It was all concentrated north of Las Vegas of course. Even aside from Carson City and Reno, which had significant operations, there were dozens of breweries in the mining towns. I loved how in-depth some of the newspapers used to go detailing the brewing process, and I got more out of those than I did with old West Michigan papers. It’s fun getting a look into the similarities and differences of how beer was made then versus now. I do wish I was able to find more information before I sent off to the publisher, but so it goes with writing about history, especially on a short and tight timeline.

What was surprising about the history?
Coming from the Midwest, I’ve long been enthralled with the old west, but who isn’t? You romanticize it, and as with most historical things, people generally take pop culture as gospel. Diving into the old west, you discover it wasn’t that rowdy and there were a lot of cosmopolitan aspects about life. These were great urban centers and exciting places to be, not because of train robberies, but because they brought in things from all over the world. In many ways, I felt early 1800s West Michigan was more old west than late 1800s Nevada.

What stands out to you in the modern Nevada beer industry?
Coming here and tasting some of the great beer made by longtime industry players like Big Dog’s and Great Basin made me smile. It was like, there’s great beer here. Sure, they’re not necessarily the flashiest breweries, but they’ve been around a long time and for me, I love consistency and don’t jump on trends quickly. If you’re making a good solid beer, you’re good with me. And I’d say a larger percentage of breweries in Nevada are just brewing good beer than some more well-known brewing states. It’s a lot like the state in general; people don’t seem to think much of Nevada outside the state, at least besides a crazy place to come for vacation. But you get here and you explore, it’s a beautiful state full of great aspects.

What do you view as the future of beer in Nevada?
I think there are a lot of positives. As I mentioned just having some major stalwarts like Great Basin, whose Tom Young (wrote the Nevada Beer foreword) is one of the industry’s great pioneers. His true passion and dedication to the beer industry is fantastic. But then you have new entries into the state making more trendy beers, like Revision and IMBIB and you have players standing out and making a name for Nevada’s beer industry. So as long as they’re starting to say, “Hey look at us,” and Great Basin and brewers like Dave Pascual at Big Dog’s keep showing well at national awards, people might take notice. I’ll also try to do my part writing nationally about the beer industry and continuing to tell the modern history through NevadaBrew.com.
EVENTS

Check out some highlighted food, beverage and industry events happening in July:

7/18: Taste of the Pacific Islands. This 17th annual event features tastings from restaurants serving cuisine from the Pacific Islands. Bali Hai Restaurant, San Diego. Pifasandiego.com/taste_of_pifa.htm

7/21: Los Angeles Westside Food & Wine. This 4th annual event will bring together more than 25 food and drink purveyors. Proceeds benefit the Westside Food Bank. Courtyard by Marriott LA Westside, Culver City. Eventbrite.com/e/los-angeles-westside-foodwine-fest-benefits-westside-foodbank-tickets-45113363284

7/26: AltaMed’s East LA Meets Napa Food & Wine Festival. This 14th annual event celebrates the richness of Latin food in Los Angeles and the success of Latino-owned vineyards in California. Bottomless tastings from more than 70 restaurants and wineries. Proceeds benefit AltaMed’s 50 accredited health centers and service facilities in Southern California. LA Live, Downtown Los Angeles. AltamedFoodWine.org/elamn/

7/26–28: Long Beach Crawfish Fest. This New Orleans-style event serves up heaps of its namesake dish in the world’s largest crawfish pots. Rainbow Lagoon Park, Long Beach. LongBeachCrawfishFestival.com

8/17: Latin Food Fest. Now in its 7th year, ‘California’s #1 Hispanic culinary celebration’ includes a kickoff party, chef’s dinner and a ‘Gran Tasting’ that features bottomless Latin American food and drink. Embarcadero, San Diego. LatinFoodFest.com

AD INDEX

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