

The Art Of Beer Craft

By Sherrie Wilkolaski

Oktoberfest has been an annual tradition for over 200 years, give or take the few dozen years it was cancelled due to war, disease and other political complications. The first celebration commenced on October 12, 1810, with the wedding celebration of Crown Prince Ludwig to Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen in Munich. The official Oktoberfest is celebrated in Germany, and travelers from around the world make their pilgrimage to celebrate in the beer celebration capital of the world. If you cannot make the journey, there is sure to be a local gala happening in your hometown. To get the most out this year's Oktoberfest, you should consider stopping into a local craft brew house.

The art of beer craftsmanship is being studied and perfected in small breweries around the world. Professionals who work behind the scenes to develop the lagers, pilsners and ales we love to drink are true scientists. Blending hops, barley, grains with other unique ingredients is just as technologically challenging as crafting a wine, if not more so. Beer drinkers are looking for variety and no recipe is too outrageous.

In my quest to uncover the mysteries behind craft beer, I decided to pick up a few books and do my research. There are three titles books out on the market, each covering a different aspect of the craft beer business and collectively, they really cover all fundamentals.

The first book I referenced was *We Make Beer* by Sean Lewis. It talks about the history of beer making, giving the reader a nice foundation for understanding how the art developed. It was a great first choice in my craft beer education. I enjoyed his style of writing and the author talks to the reader in a casual voice so that his personality comes

through. It makes for a modern history book read, not too heavy but informative.

Then I moved on to *Beerology* by Mirella Amato, and as the tagline says, it is "Everything you need to know to enjoy beer...even more." It is beautifully laid out and it is easy to reference beer by individual type. It has wonderful charts and graphs that explain the science behind style comparisons, color, bitterness and alcohol content. It includes a Beerology Beer Tasting Evaluation Sheet and Beer Tasting Tool Kit. There are incredible photographs and a few beer cocktail recipes that use different types of brews from ales to stouts. This book is comprehensive, with a simple presentation that makes it easy for the reader to enjoy its content in small or large doses.

The book that rounded out my beer journey was *The Foodie's Beer Book: The Art of Pairing and Cooking with Beer for Any Occasion* by Brooke Fedora and Luther Fedora. This book retails for \$24.95 and as a hardcover, you do get your money's worth. The book is broken down by season and includes recipes with beer pairings. There is enough variety in menus to satisfy just about any palate. My only criticism of this book is that photographs are dark and appear to have been taken by the authors. Since this book is traditionally published by Skyhorse Publishing, it took me by surprise that they did not use a professional photographer for images. If you can look past its dimly lit photos and focus on recipes, you're sure to find a food and beer pairing that is to your liking.

As you make your way through your own craft beer journey, you're sure to discover more than just a new favorite beer on tap. Look deeper and find out the history behind the beer sitting in front of you on the bar. Cheers!



tsmanship



10 Things You Probably Didn't Know About Beer

1. The best beer is not made by hand. After years of domination by big beer brand, beer drinkers sought out smaller batch breweries that eschewed the factory model of the Big 3 (Budweiser, Miller and Coors.) But, like their larger competitors, most of the top craft breweries use highly automated processes to brew their beer as efficiently and consistently as possible.

2. The best beer is not made on automated systems either. This may contradict the first fact on the list, but that's kind of the point. Good beer means different things to different people, and sometimes it's the tiny imperfections and inconsistencies from batch to batch that provide the drinker the satisfaction of tasting a true craftsman's handiwork.

3. Brewing is hard, wet and dirty work. Not only does most brewing involve cleaning tanks, washing kegs and lifting heavy bags of grain, but there's also a lot of mechanical knowhow required to operate a brewery.

4. Not all brewers have beards. There's a common conception of the modern craft brewer as a white man with a big, bushy beard. Brewers like that certainly exist, but there are also breweries like Jackalope Brewing Company in Nashville, which was founded by two women - Robyn Virball and Bailey Spaulding. There are certainly brewers of color as well, as brewing is an international profession practiced all over the world.

5. Brewery owners are not rich. Beer is big business, but not everyone in the industry is making big money. In fact, the opposite is often true for small breweries. At Blue Hills Brewing Company co-founded by Andris Veidis didn't take home a paycheck for several years. Most brewery owners, at least the good ones, start their companies to make good beer - the money is just a perk.

6. It's not just about the beer. Brewers are fond of saying that their only concern is making good beer, but the truth is that such a claim is mostly just good marketing. Every successful brewer understands that the most important thing is to make a quality product, but that the next most important thing to have success, is to be able to market that product.

7. Traditional methods are not necessarily the best methods. There is a romantic attachment to traditional methods, but that doesn't mean that those methods work better than newer ones. As important as tradition is to brewing, so too is science and adapting to modern science. Newer techniques and methods have allowed contemporary brewers to get the most out of their ingredients and beers.

8. Beer is a community. Even in small markets, perhaps especially in small markets, most brewers would rather collaborate with their fellow brewers than compete with them. The idea that one brewery's success means the failure of another is beginning to fade in popularity, and the beer wars between breweries - even the big ones - are increasingly rare.

9. Craft beer drinkers are not snobs. The term "beer snob" was bandied about in the early days of craft beer to denote anybody who preferred to drink flavorful ales rather than mass-produced industrial light lagers. In reality, most beer drinkers these days are much more likely to be highly passionate individuals willing to accept their friends' and neighbors' opinions on beer as part of a wide spectrum of beer-drinking community.

10. The best brewing is always done at a brewery. It's true that most consistent brewing is often done at a professional brewery where brewers are able to use scientific equipment to monitor pH levels, water temperatures and other measurements, but good beer can be made just as easily at home. Great beer can be made in the smallest of apartments with little more than a large pot, a plastic bucket, a thermometer and a good deal of patience.

Beerology: Everything You Need to Know to Enjoy Beer...Even More

by Mirella Amato

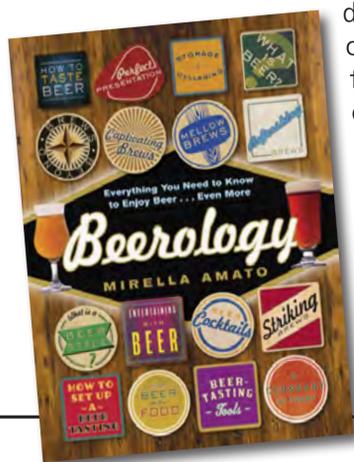
(MAY 2014)

If you've ever experienced the pleasure of a pint, Beerology is the ultimate guide to exploring, understanding and enjoying the world of beer.

THERE IS a beer for every mood, food and occasion. And, with the growing number of beer festivals popping up worldwide, beer is finally getting the attention and appreciation it deserves. For the average beer lover, the overwhelming choices, brewing styles and traditions can be confusing to say the least. Enter beer specialist Mirella Amato - one of only seven Certified Master Cicerones (beer sommeliers) in the world. With an advanced brewing certificate behind her, readers will be in expert hands as they navigate the multifaceted world of beer, guided

by Amato's refreshingly accessible style.

Broken down into fun, easy-to-read chapters, Beerology starts with an introduction to beer and tips on storage and cellaring, then leads into a guide on tasting. Amato presents beer styles in four groups—Refreshing, Mellow, Striking, and Captivating—covering everything from the history and origins of specific brews, to brands that exemplify each type. She then gives tips on hosting beer-tasting parties at home, complete with beer games, and includes a chapter dedicated to beer cocktails (who's in for a delicious cucumber Pils?). Her original take on pairing beer with food—including chocolate and cheese—is perfect for anyone with an inquisitive mind and an epicurean streak.



The Foodie's Beer Book: The Art of Pairing and Cooking with Beer for Any Occasion

by Brooke Fedora and Luther Fedora

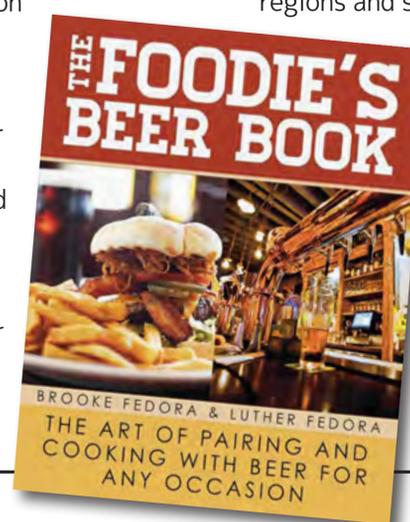
(HARDCOVER - AUGUST 2014)

Epic Beer Dinners is the ultimate celebration of beer and food pairings. A glass of beer alone can be a splendid thing, but when incorporated into your cooking and served alongside the dish, it can be a symphony of flavor. Chefs Brooke and Luther Fedora explain the many ways beer can enrich and enhance a dish or an entire meal by providing a wealth of recipes and suggested pairings. Begin by exploring beer varieties and their characteristics; helping you to learn the various flavor notes that are the foundation for cooking and pairings.

A hoppy beer, for example, can add bite to a dish and is best for batters and light dishes, but is inappropriate for long simmering dishes where it instead

strengthens the inherent bitterness of the dish. Malt, on the other hand, can add a mellow sweetness that is pleasing in stewed dishes and marinades. Have fun with dinner again, as you explore the wide variety of flavor profiles made possible through the addition of beer—from a traditional cassoulet laced with a malty dark ale to the lemony snap of a light Berliner Weisse paired with a lemon sorbet.

Recipes are broken down by various regions and seasons. Making it possible to drink your way through the calendar year with recipes and tips for various events and holidays, including: St. Patrick's Day, New Year's Eve, Mardi Gras, Christmas, and Oktoberfest. So grab yourself a pint and dig in!



WE MAKE BEER: Inside the Spirit and Artistry of America's Craft Brewers

by Sean Lewis

(SEPTEMBER 2014)

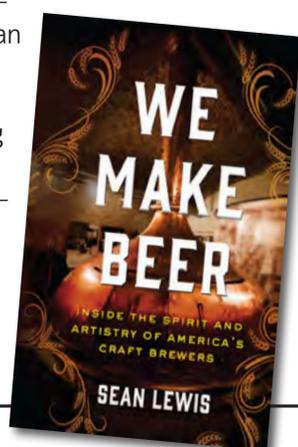
An eye-opening journey into craft beer-making in America, and what you can find in the quest to brew the perfect pint.

Sean Lewis was living in Boston when he first set foot inside the Blue Hills Brewery. He was writing for BeerAdvocate magazine about America's craft brewers, and the then-fledgling Blue Hills was his first assignment. Lewis was immediately struck by the spirit of the brewers he met there. That visit would lead him first to an intensive study of beer-brewing, and later to a nation-spanning journey into the heart—and the art—of American beer making.

What Lewis found along the way was a group of like-minded craftsmen—creators who weren't afraid to speak their minds, who saw their competitors as cherished friends.

A group who takes sheer joy in their work, and who seeks the same kind of balance in their lives as they do in the barrels they brew. He shared pints with pioneering upstarts like Paul and Kim Kavulak of Nebraska Brewing Company, and talked shop with craft beer stalwarts like Ken Grossman of Sierra Nevada and bombastic innovators like Greg Koch (the "Arrogant Bastard" behind Stone Brewing Co.). He found, in them and others, a community that put its soul into its work, who sees beer-making as an extension of themselves.

We Make Beer is not just a celebration of American brewing, but of the spirit that binds brewers together. It's about what you can discover in yourself when you put your hands and your heart into crafting the perfect pint.



Cocktail Recipe

Cucumber Pils

The summery cocktail brings together the fresh flavours of cucumber and lime with herbal notes from both gin and pilsner. The resulting combination of flavours takes the refreshing nature of the pilsner to a whole new level!

1½" (4cm) thick slices of cucumber (peeled)
1 tsp (5ml) granulated sugar
½tsp (2ml) lime juice (juice of half a lime)
½oz (15ml) gin
1½oz (75ml) pilsner*
cucumber wheel for garnish

Cut the cucumber slices into thin strips. Muddle the cucumber, sugar and lime juice at the bottom of an 8oz (240ml) rocks glass. Add gin and stir. Half-fill the glass with ice. Gently pour in the pilsner and garnish with a cucumber wheel

*CAN ALSO BE MADE WITH COMMON LAGER

RECIPE COURTESY OF BEEROLOGY BY MIRELLA AMATO