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NEW COLUMN! TOMME ARTHUR'S IN THE BARREL



New Brewery Business Models

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In this day and age of social media, more breweries are turning to alternative ways to start up a business. Crowdfunding models like Kickstarter have helped several companies get up and running. What was once a world permeated by investment bankers and venture capitalists is now funded by neighbors, friends and other members of the community. Whit Richardson sorts out the details.



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Genesis of a Beer Dinner

While beer and food pairings have become far more commonplace in recent years, the production of a multiple-course beer dinner presents an entirely new set of challenges and opportunities. Todd Bemis, executive chef at Vail Cascade Resort in Colorado, and his team organized a gargantuan dinner at last year's Big Beers, Belgians & Barleywines Festival. Ken Weaver explores the world of how chefs create their beer dinners.



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China's Craft Beer Revolution

In Beijing, the capital of a very revolutionary country, a craft beer revolution is bubbling up. Correspondent Nick Yates explores the up and coming craft beer scene in China.



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Old Styles Revitalized

Kvass? Gose? Gruit? These beer styles were almost lost to ancient history. But we now are finding that brewers are turning to styles and recipes from the past. Ben Keene, Roger Protz and K. Florian Klemp uncover some long-lost styles of beer that are currently seeing resurgence in interest and production.



One "Ale" of a Good Friend: A case for ales as the beer of summer

by Thomas Sulinski

BUYER'S GUIDE FOR BEER LOVERS

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CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY GREAT LEAP BREWING; PHOTO COURTESY BLACK STAR BREWING; PHOTO BY MICHAEL RAWLINGS, COURTESY VAIL CASCADE; PHOTO BY STEVE MELLON © PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE; PHOTO BY KINSLEY DEV

COVER: Todd Bemis at Vail Cascade Resort & Spa. PHOTO BY MICHAEL RAWLINGS, COURTESY VAIL CASCADE.

Genesis of a *Beer Dinner*

IN EARLY FALL OF 2011, Laura Lodge approached Todd Bemis, Vail Cascade Resort & Spa's executive chef about an upcoming beer-and-food event. It would be Lodge's 12th year coordinating the popular Big Beers, Belgians and Barleywines Festival in Vail, CO, one crucial element of which are the two dinners held on consecutive nights. Each dinner features two breweries, and each course is paired with two different beers—an intriguing challenge even for seasoned beer chefs.

"She wanted to bring another chef in," recalls Bemis, "or wanted me to get ahold of another chef to come in and do one of the two brewers dinners, and then for me to do the other one, because they wanted them to be as different as possible. And I looked at her and told her, 'That's kind of like letting someone drive your Ferrari.'"

As it worked out, Bemis would instead split up his in-house team of chefs, with him and Executive Sous Chef Jay Spickelmier tackling the main Brewmasters' Dinner, and chefs du cuisine Stephen Belie and Maria Sacconi coordinating the Calibration Dinner the day before. While some of the chefs either had experience with the previous year's event



A chef with a mustache and goatee, wearing a white chef's coat, is seated at a dark, polished table. He is smiling and holding a tall glass of dark beer with a thick head of foam. On the table in front of him are several green bell peppers and a large knife with a black handle. To his left is a tall, slender, dark vase. The background shows a kitchen area with stacks of white plates and various kitchen equipment.

**One chef's
crash course
in pairing
beer and food**

By KEN WEAVER

PHOTO SHOT ON LOCATION AT VAIL CASCADE, COLORADO BY MICHAEL RAWLINGS



heavyweights: Breckenridge Brewery from Denver and Bell's Brewery from Kalamazoo, MI. The event also would be Bemis' first foray into craft beer.

Welcome to the Jungle

While beer-and-food pairings have become far more commonplace in recent years, crafting a multiple-course pairing menu can present all sorts of new considerations. Most educational resources (like books and websites) focus on one plate and one beer at a time. In planning for a full dinner, chefs are called upon to think on a considerably grander scale about everything from how the courses will work cohesively, to

or came in with some homebrewing knowledge, the event's concept and intricacies were new to Bemis.

Born in Edmond, OK, and raised in north Texas, Bemis started cooking professionally at age 16. He's managed hotels and overseen banquet operations. In his position at Vail Cascade, he and his team accommodate more than 1,000 daily visitors during peak holiday seasons. Logistics weren't the issue.

As Bemis explains, "I grew up in Texas, and my idea of beer was, you sit down on a log after you mow the lawn and have a beer." Bemis would be responsible for formulating a five-course pairing menu for the festival's main dinner, which would highlight two industry

managing portions, to managing people, to accounting for constraining menu themes.

Sean Z. Paxton of the TV show *The Homebrew Chef* is one of the country's renowned beer chefs and has been involved in elaborate menu planning. "Are you working with one brewery and their whole beer lineup?" Paxton asks rhetorically, reflecting on the themes that he's encountered. "Are you looking at something like a Belgian beer dinner, where you're celebrating Belgian beer and all the different complexities of all the different styles and flavors? I've done dinners where it's focused all on hops and IPA, and six courses of IPAs—would you hit a lupulin threshold?"



These Tuna "cone" appetizers were paired with Samuel Adams Infinium.

APPETIZER & BEER GLASS PHOTOS BY DAVID FOXHOVEN, COURTESY VAIL CASCADE

Beer Chef WAR STORIES

Even for seasoned veterans of beer-and-food pairing, orchestrating a multiple-course pairing menu presents its own unique and often unexpected challenges.



Garrett Oliver

Who: Garrett Oliver, brewmaster of The Brooklyn Brewery, author of *The Brewmaster's Table*, and editor-in-chief of *The Oxford Companion to Beer*

Event: Brooklyn Brewery Beer Dinner at Jose Garces' Chifa

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Nuts + Bolts: Six courses. 240 people. One iron chef.

The Challenge: Chocolate-themed dinner with Peruvian and Cantonese cuisine.

Constraint #1: Pairing Brooklyn's lineup to dishes featuring white and dark chocolate, chocolate BBQ sauce, chocolate-crusting venison, malted milk chocolate ice cream...what's missing?

Constraint #2: "Trying to speak to the entire restaurant at once when the shape of the restaurant is a very long rectangle."

The Effort: "Biggest single-seating restaurant dinner I've done."

The Payoff: "Dark Matter and Black Ops brought barrel-aged elements of vanilla and coconut. Local 2 used a highly caramelized, almost raisiny quality to connect with the chocolate. That buffalo tartare [with cocoa nibs, roasted baby beets and goat cheese, paired with the Brooklyn Local 2] was particularly memorable. It was quite an evening!"

Who: Bruce Paton, The Beer Chef
Event: Five Guys and a Barrel event at the Cathedral Hill Hotel
Location: San Francisco, CA
Nuts + Bolts: Four courses. 135 people. Five brewers.

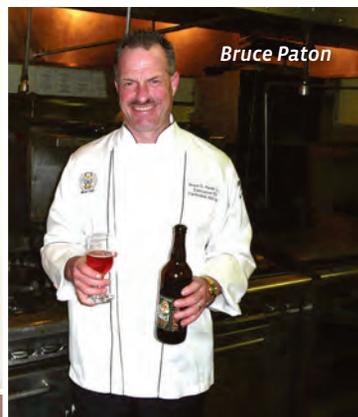
The Challenge: The event revolved around the collaborative sour beer Isabelle Proximus and the brewers who'd created it: Rod Tod (Allagash), Adam Avery (Avery), Sam Calagione (Dogfish Head), Tomme Arthur (Lost Abbey) and Vinnie Cilurzo (Russian River).

Constraint #1: "I had them each bring two beers, and so we had a reception with Allagash White and [Russian River] Blind Pig, and then two beers with each course. We had a four-course dinner, and then the Isabelle Proximus—we did a toast at the end."

Constraint #2: "I flew in from the Craft Brewers Conference [in San Diego] the morning of the event, and I'd been down there for three days." So had many of the brewers.

The Effort: Paton laughed and recalled, "Corralling them the night of the event and getting them up there to speak... It was just a circus."

The Payoff: "Even though there was some degree of difficulty in it, that makes the success all that much more rewarding." Also: the Study in Duck entrée course, served five ways.



Bruce Paton



Lucy Saunders

Who: Lucy Saunders, author of three beery cookbooks (most recently, *The Best of American Beer & Food*), editor of BeerCook.com, and instructor at the Siebel Institute of Technology

Event: Welsh-themed dinner at The White Horse pub

Location: London, UK

Nuts + Bolts: Six dishes. 75-100 people. Two-story pub.

The Challenge: "I was doing what's known as a 'stage,' or an apprenticeship in the kitchen at The White Horse pub on Parsons Green. We thought it would be fun to do a Welsh cask ale and Welsh food tasting, and I volunteered to cook the food for that event."

Constraint #1: "This was back in the early '90s. There was really no curriculum on cooking with beer available, and so the only way to learn was by doing."

Constraint #2: A last-minute change meant "carrying everything up and down two flights of stairs."

The Effort: "We had Welsh ale cheese that was stuffed in leeks and baked, and they were really good when they were completely hot—but as soon as they started to cool off, the leeks got really chewy."

The Payoff: "I think everybody had a good time, and I think that's the take-away message: that beer and food can be enormously fun and, when things go wrong, don't get flustered, just find a way to work around it and keep it going."

There's the goal of making each course part of a progression of flavors, as Paxton puts it, as well as showcasing each beer successfully. While there's no lack of resources on how to generally pair beer styles with different foods, the devil's often in the details.

"Name me three IPAs that taste the same," Paxton says as a way of making the point. Accounting for underlying nuances can be as important to the process as knowing classic pairings, particularly when working with craft beers far outside traditional style guidelines.

To better understand the beers they would be working with, the Vail Cascade group traveled to Denver's Breckenridge Brewery where brewmaster Todd Usry organized a tasting.

Usry describes the scene that developed: "I had myself, my quality-control brewer, our lab guy, another one of our brewers who's just got a real good palate, and my wife (who does public relations for the brewery), and then they brought down their contingent. You should have just seen the table we sat down at



with 24 beers on it." Bemis' first formal craft-beer tasting included Breckenridge's 72 Imperial Chocolate Cream Stout and whiskey-barrel-aged Vanilla Porter, as well as Bell's Two Hearted Ale and Hopslam Ale.

"He was very, let's say, introspective," says Usry.

"We'd throw out kind of our design on the beer, what we were trying to achieve in making the beer and the flavors we were looking for—and you'd see him smile to

himself. He's got this kind of a wry smile, and you could see him smile to himself and nod his head and know... that his brain was just churning away."

Having established common ground, the groups gradually tasted the full lineup of beers, exposing Bemis to the craft-beer lexicon while trying to formulate pairings. They eventually narrowed it down to seven pairs of beers, which helped shape the underlying structure of the final menu.

For the first time, Bemis came to terms with what was being asked of him in his inaugural beer dinner "What I find is most people don't really *think* about what they're tasting," Bemis says. "It's just good or it's

PREP CREW AND SALMON PHOTOS BY DAVID FOXHOVEN, COURTESY VAIL CASCADE

Beer Chef WAR STORIES

Who: Sean Z. Paxton, The Homebrew Chef

Event: 2010 Craft Brewers Conference awards dinner

Location: Chicago, IL

Nuts + Bolts: Five courses. 2,000 people. 600 hours of work. 250 growlers.

The Challenge: "What do you feed 2,000 brewers from 44 different countries?"

Constraint #1: "It's also a union hotel, so technically I can't pick up a knife except to show or demonstrate how

to do a technique to people."

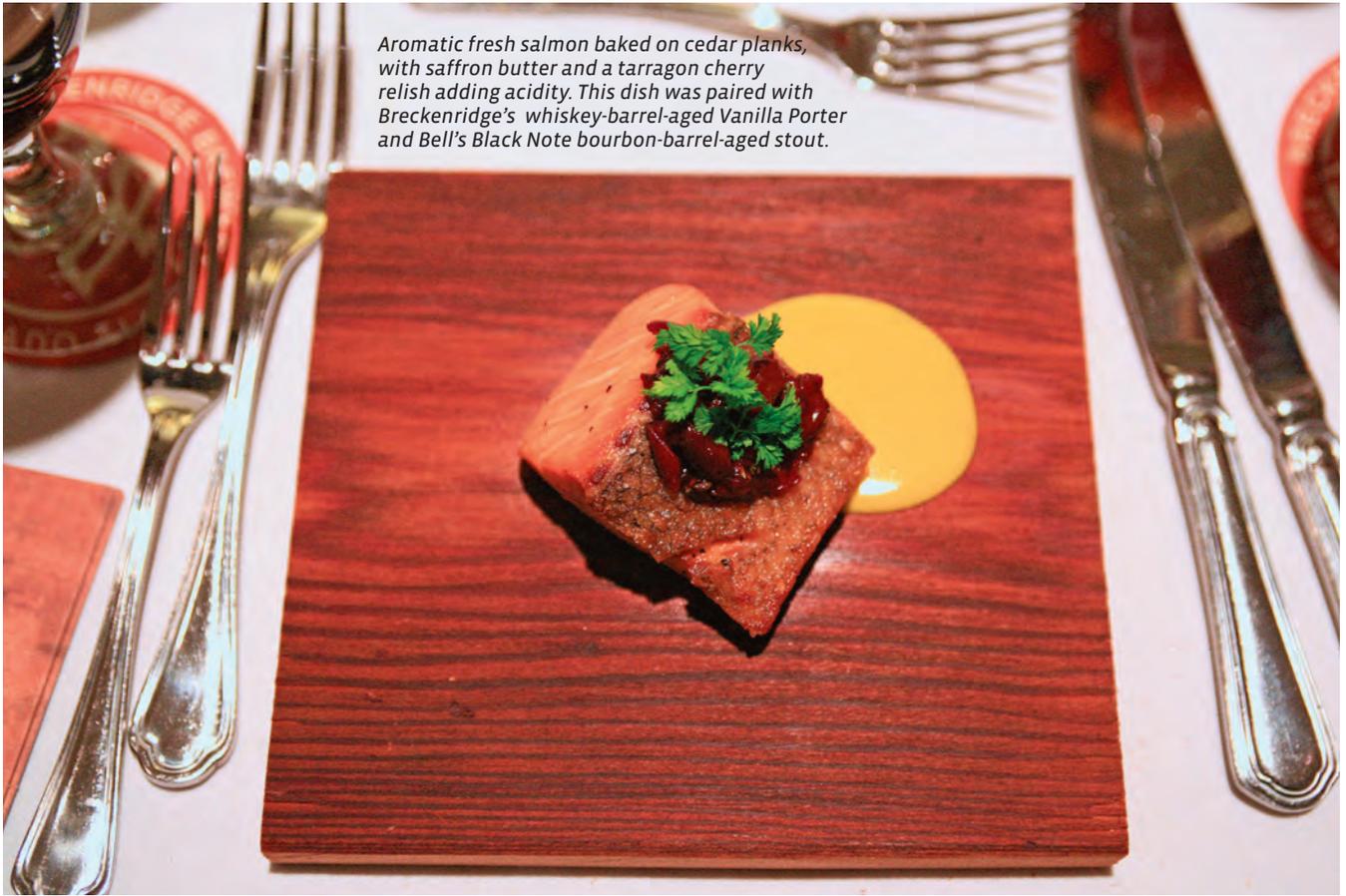
Constraint #2: "That particular dinner I cooked with 650 gallons of beer. ... How do you pour that much beer?"

The Effort: "It took two people nine hours each day just to slice all the meats that we served with just the first course. It's craziness. Even the cheese, it took three people two days to slice all the cheese and get it all ready."

The Payoff: "It was everybody and anybody I'd ever want to cook for in one room."



Sean Paxton



Aromatic fresh salmon baked on cedar planks, with saffron butter and a tarragon cherry relish adding acidity. This dish was paired with Breckenridge's whiskey-barrel-aged Vanilla Porter and Bell's Black Note bourbon-barrel-aged stout.

not, for the average guy or gal. But when I sat down and talked with the guys at Breck[enridge], what I began to realize is these guys really *think* about what they're tasting. And that's where I had to go." The beer pairings decided, the rest of the menu would be up to Bemis and his team.

"I left with a lot to think about," he says. "A whole lot to think about."

Rules of Three

At an earlier point in his career, Bemis worked a restaurant where one of his duties was to crumble up Stilton cheese for a French buffet. Not a fan of the cheese, he referred to it as stinky socks' Eventually the German chef he worked with took him aside and told him to get some Stilton. When Bemis refused to eat the sock-like cheese, the chef went to the restaurant bar and returned with an old bottle of port.

"He said, 'Eat the cheese,'" Bemis recalls. "And I'm like, really? And he goes, 'Shut up and eat the cheese.' OK. Yes, chef. And I ate the cheese, and then he gave me the port."

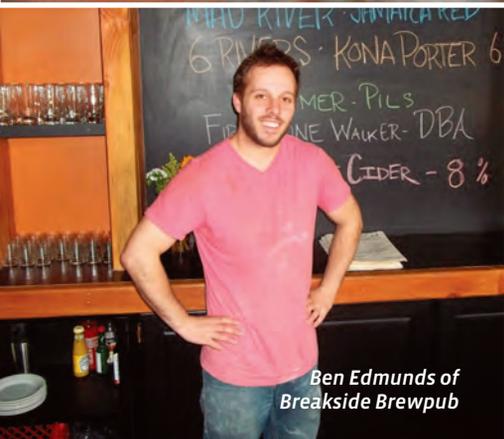
Bemis recounts the incident clearly, as something of a gastronomic signpost. The classic pairing of Stilton and port *worked*, and he remembers wondering, "How can two things that taste so different taste so good together?" He took the lesson to heart.

There's a notable shift in Bemis' intonation when he changes from talking beer to talking food. From the beginning, it was established that the chefs wouldn't be cooking with the beers. After doing a bit of basic research, he lost interest in cut-and-dried recommendations pretty quickly.

"The reality is, once I got to tasting the food with the beers and things like that, the nuances that made the beers go together, you just had to find that right note in-between to hit with the food. That's kind of what made it a challenge."

Some of the pairings fell into place more easily than others. Breckenridge ESB and Bell's Hopslam Ale were the welcome drinks, while Breckenridge's Regal Pilsner and Bell's Quinannan Falls Special Lager Beer (both crisp, hoppy lagers) were a natural fit for the lighter fare of artisan cheeses and winter fruits. The other pair of reception beers—Summer Cab Ride from Breckenridge (a lower-alcohol golden ale aged in Cabernet barrels) and Bell's Cherry Stout (reminiscent of a lightly tart chocolate-covered cherry)—were worlds apart and required a bit more effort. The common core notes between the two of them were fruitiness and acidity, which worked well with a range of charcuterie and foie gras pâté rolled into balls that were then dipped into a sweet-tart gelatin. The two reception courses brought together meat, cheese and fruit, with the

Restaurant COLLABORATION SERIES



Ben Edmunds of Breakside Brewpub

While the Breakside Brewpub in north Portland doesn't pretend to be The French Laundry with its custom-designed beers, brewmaster Ben Edmunds recently got to brew a dozen wildly different brews for 12 of Portland's most esteemed eateries. The restaurants included James Beard Foundation award nominees Nostrana and Beast, Willamette Week's restaurant of the year, Podnah's Pit BBQ, and a pizza joint called Apizza Scholls that has foodies lining up daily.

The brewery launched a year-long restaurant collaboration series unveiling an exclusive brew each month. Says Edmunds, "We created a list of twelve 'ideal' restaurants that we wanted to work with, and then we approached the chefs. Amazingly, everyone said yes—a testament to the way that Portland chefs value beer."

Unlike Spanish brewers Grupo Damm who collaborated with chef Ferran Adrià to create Estrella Damm Inedit—"the first beer specifically created to accompany food"—Breakside realized there's no catchall beer that should aim to please every diner at every meal.

The participating chefs pitched their ideas for beer that would pair with their respective styles of cooking and in return, Edmunds and his small crew used their expertise to design recipes that brought each chef's vision to life.

Andy Ricker at Pok Pok requested

something "simple and delicious" to pair with his authentic Thai food that he's called drinking food. The resulting dark lager quickly proved so popular, it is now brewed regularly instead of just a one-off.

Conversely, the Chestnut Honey Bock made for Nostrana's Italian menu proved too laborious to recreate, though everyone from the staff to the patrons would like to see more kegs roll in. The German-style bock called for 50 pounds of Oregon chestnuts, which were roasted in the restaurant's wood-fired oven—an experience Edmunds calls "pretty fun and slightly traumatizing." Picture nearly a dozen folks (a brewmaster, a sommelier, a sous chef, the farmer himself, and more) roasting and shelling nuts for four hours. As bar manager Doug Derrick puts it, "Thumbs were raw and attitudes were sour."

"But the beer balanced beautifully," says Edmunds, "between the smoke and meatiness of the nuts, the rich melanoidins from the malt and decoction mash," and then the beer was finished with local honey.

While some of the restaurateurs really know their beer (Spanish tapas restaurant Toro Bravo's John Gorham used to be a homebrewer), Edmunds says part of the fun was writing recipes "based on descriptions of flavor, finish, and bitterness...rather than having to develop recipes to a particular style."

In Toro Bravo's case, that meant creating an amber ale with a smoky, spicy profile. Picture an extra special bitter as the base with British hops, German rauchspace malt and Oregon Espelette pepper

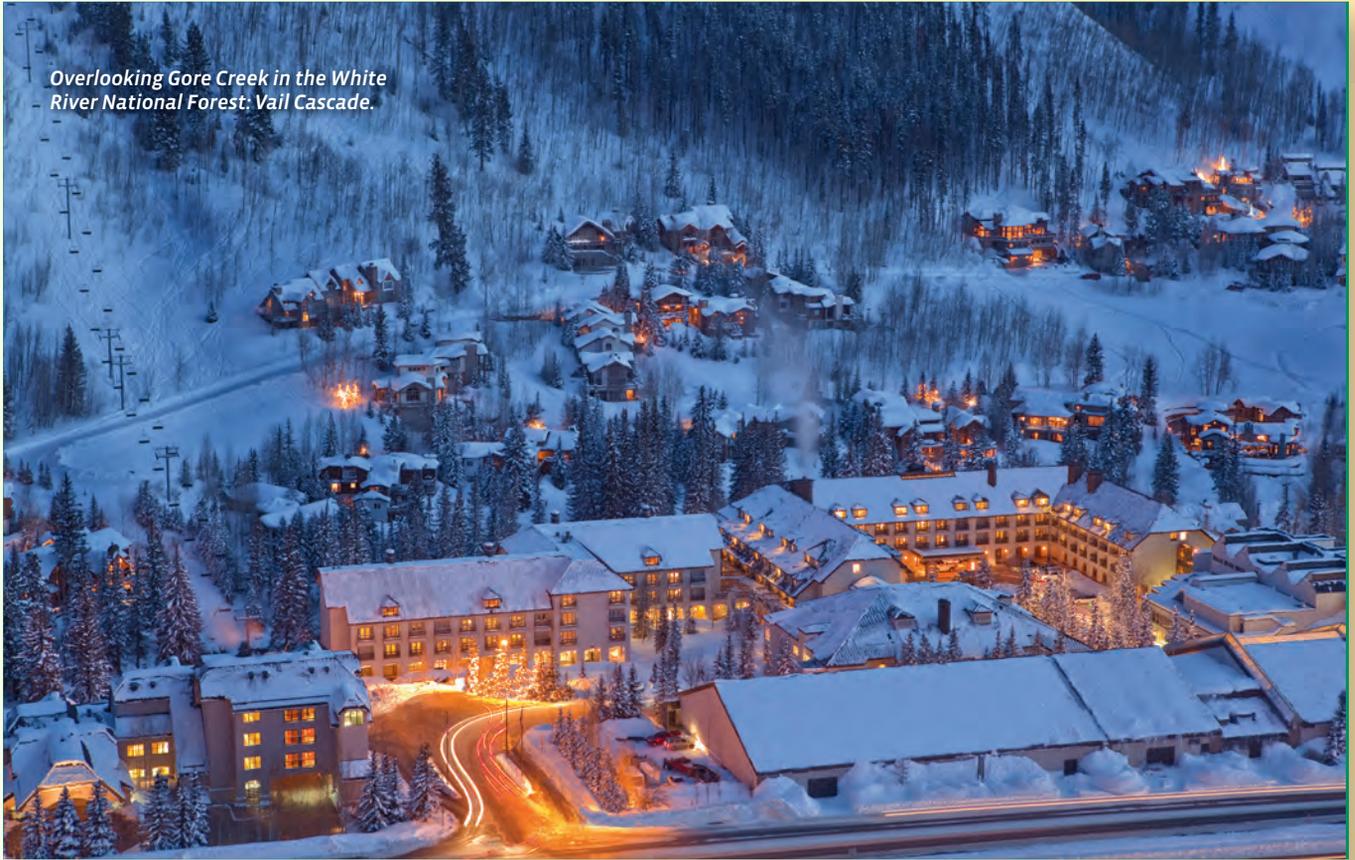
chiles. Across town at French-style bouchon St. Jack, also a James Beard nominee, the beer Edmunds delivered was a blended, golden farmhouse ale aged on tarragon, truly a French-style saison. Naturally, it pairs beautifully with the Lyonnaise onion tart, which consists of chevre, melted onion and leek, poached egg, and sautéed kale

But the once-in-a-lifetime project is not actually over yet. A second series will kick in with some of the original chefs already pitching new ideas. It's indicative of how prudent restaurateurs are emphasizing the beer section of their beverage menu. Derrick says that Nostrana Executive Chef Cathy Whims and he decided that "The business plan of reaching out to restaurants was genius."

Edmunds believes direct collaborations between brewers and chefs deserve to take off. "I love working with the chefs because the beers they ask us to brew are challenging. I hope that other breweries do it for the same reason—it just leads to better beer and an elevated perception of beer."



Overlooking Gore Creek in the White River National Forest: Vail Cascade.



part of fruity acidity supplied by the winter fruit in one pairing, and by the beers themselves in the other.

From his Texan roots and the experience at Breckenridge, Bemis knew he wanted to include a barbecued course. A smoked pheasant barbecue followed the reception courses, serving as a rich accompaniment to a winter salad, spicy vinaigrette and pickled red onions. Two malty beers, a whiskey-barrel-aged ESB from Breckenridge and Bell's Hell Hath No Fury (a Belgian-style dubbel), tempered the spice and hit a natural chord of whiskey, barbecue and beer.

"Because of the time of year, we preferred to use some greens that brought a little bit of bitterness. I believe we used frisée, maybe just a touch of radicchio and a few other greens in there," Bemis says.

Bemis had already decided that he would be serving ribeye as the entrée course. To break up the richness between that and the preceding smoked pheasant, he looked to classic menu design and inserted a fish course.

He chose an aromatic fresh salmon baked on cedar planks, with saffron butter and a tarragon cherry relish adding some acidity.

He included vanilla in the salmon preparation, and the sweetness was provided by the beers: Breckenridge's whiskey-barrel-aged Vanilla Porter and Bell's Black Note bourbon-barrel-aged stout. A light bitterness from both cut the fish's oiliness while fitting with the

floral tarragon and cedar.

The ribeye entrée incorporated curry-based dry rub and chili paste, the modest heat accentuated by two potent IPAs. The final course, a spiced almond mousse, included a slight addition of chili powder to add complexity and tie it into the previous course, while bringing together the disparate pairing of Breckenridge 72 Imperial and Bell's Sparkling Ale.

Lasting Impressions

The two successful pairing dinners—both the Bemis and Spickelmier dinner and the similarly challenging Calibration Dinner orchestrated by Belie and Sacconi—helped make the craft-beer pairings a mainstay at the resort.

The resort has launched a Craft Beer, Creative Cuisine series, an expanded craft-beer selection, educational seminars with visiting Colorado brewmasters, and learning packages hosted by Lodge, Bemis and Pastry Chef Kendra Hamilton.

"When we started talking about it and really getting involved in the planning stages of the beer festival, we made the decision to start down this road," Bemis says of their craft-beer initiatives. "It's become part of who we are." **B**

Ken Weaver is a freelance writer and editor based in Sonoma County, California. He's the author of *The Northern California Craft Beer Guide* with photographer Anneliese Schmidt.