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JANUARY 16th: 12:00 Noon to 10pm
 Belgian Style Strong Ale Festival.....All beers over 8%
 FEBRUARY 15th-20th Nightly @ 5pm
 Russian River Week.....Pliny the Younger Sat. @ 5pm
 March 16th-23rd Open to Close
 St. Paddy's Week Celebration..Irish Food, Beers, & Kilts
 April 17th: 10:00 am to 8pm
 3rd Annual Brewery & Pub Crawl.....2 Breweries & 2 Pubs
 MAY 15th: 12:00 Noon to 10pm
 3rd Annual Craft Brewery Festival...Because West is Best
 JUNE 19th: 12:00 pm-OverNight
 3rd Annual SoftShoe Picnic.....Softball & Horseshoes
 JULY 15th-8th: 5:00pm to Close
 Hefe Nights.....Hefe-Weizen, Wheats, & Wits
 August 16th- 21st: Nightly @ 5pm
 Stone Week.....14th Anniversary Ale Sat. @ 5pm
 SEPTEMBER 18th: 12:00 Noon to 10pm
 3rd Annual HopFest.....The Hoppiest Day of the Year
 OCTOBER: All Month-Open to Close
 Oktoberfest.....Food, Beers, & St Pauli Girl Costumes
 November 20th: 11:00am Start
 Run-To-Barley & Hops.....From Robert Renzoni Vineyards
 DECEMBER 18th: 6pm
 English-Style Christmas Beer Dinner...4 Courses & 4 Beers

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Visit Our Website For More Information About 3rd Saturday Events

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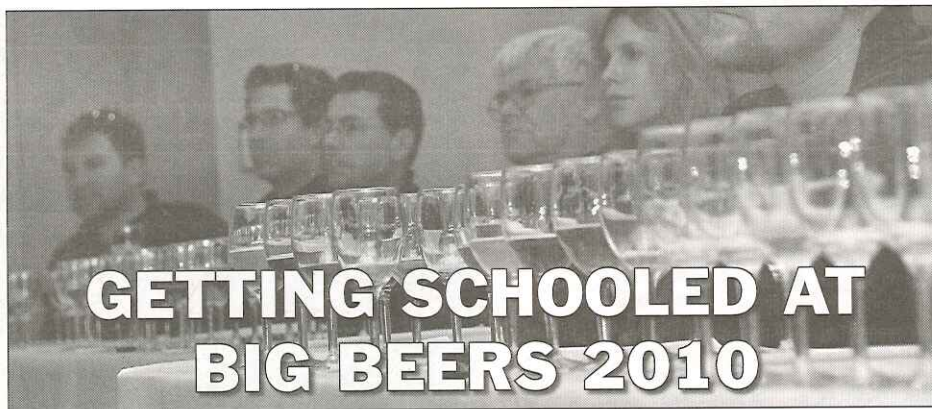
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GETTING SCHOOLED AT BIG BEERS 2010

By Dan Rabin

The 2010 Big Beers, Belgians & Barleywines Festival kicked off on the evening of a bluebird day in Vail, Colo. If you're unfamiliar with the term "bluebird day," in ski parlance it is a day of cloudless blue skies following an overnight snowfall. For skiers in the country's largest alpine resort, a bluebird day is as good as it gets. For beer enthusiasts thirsting for knowledge about their favorite beverage, Big Beers 2010 was a bluebird beer day.

Big Beers celebrated its 10th anniversary at the plush Vail Cascade Resort & Spa on a recent January weekend. Within the craft beer community, the festival has gained a reputation as a high-class act for its upscale resort setting, back-to-back beer dinners, popular homebrew competition and over-the-top tasting session. Another aspect of Big Beers that sets it apart from most other beer-themed gatherings is its diversity of educational seminars and workshops conducted by some of the most knowledgeable people in the beer business.

Following the opening event — Thursday's Calibration Dinner with Sam Calagione (Dogfish Head) and Adam Avery (Avery Brewing) — the festival's educational sessions began with a Friday morning Cicerone Program workshop presented by beer industry veteran Ray Daniels. Daniels is well-known in beer circles for his contributions as an author, educator, festival organizer and marketer, as well as numerous other accomplishments. As program director for the Cicerone Program, Daniels conducts rigorous examinations for beer experts seeking the title of Certified Cicerone™. The designation is similar in concept to sommelier certification in the wine world.

The three-and-a-half-hour workshop covered many topics of value to beer servers, such as draft system design and maintenance, detection of off-flavors, beer pouring techniques, glass cleaning, etc. Not surprisingly, many attendees were employed in the beer business in some capacity.

The remainder of the day included a welcome reception, homebrew competition judging and a high-spirited Brewmasters' Dinner with featured brewmasters Peter Bouckaert of New Belgium and Lodewijk Swinkels of Holland's La Trappe/Bierbrouwerij Koningshoeven.

Saturday began with a mid-morning panel discussion titled "Experimental

Brewing: Brewers Gone Wild!" A standing-room-only crowd packed the room to hear brewing stories and to sample experimental beers from John Mallett (Bell's), John McDonald (Boulevard), Steven Pauwels (Boulevard), Sam Calagione (Dogfish Head) and Kevin DeLange (Dry Dock).

The brewers spoke in chronological order based on the founding dates of their breweries, beginning with Bell's (1985) and ending with Dry Dock (2005). Moderator David Edgar of White Labs yeast company

(current promo: "If you love your beer, get it tested") added an interesting historical context by preceding each presentation with the top news stories from the year each brewery was founded.

It was a lighthearted gathering with a lot of laughs and a few revelations. Calagione confessed that at least part of his original motivation for incorporating unusual ingredients in his brews was this: "If we made beers with unusual ingredients and they sucked, no one could say they sucked, because there was nothing to compare them to."

The educational theme continued with back-to-back seminars by the two featured brewmasters. In his talk titled "Brewing with the Trappists," La Trappe brewer Swinkels spoke about the beer culture in the Netherlands and about brewing for one of the world's seven beer-producing Trappist monasteries. Swinkels related that the monks who oversee his brewing operation are generally receptive to new ideas. In an effort to attain carbon neutrality, the monastery grows its own hops and is experimenting with homegrown barley. One tradition the monks maintain diligently, however, is their daily ration of beer.

While Swinkels' talk targeted a broad range of beer enthusiasts, New Belgium's Bouckaert spoke to a more technically

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over 70 beers, all native boks aside from four German and four Belgian entries. Fortunately for attendees, the beers were all pretty distinctive from each other in flavor profile. Arcense Stoombierbrouwerij's Hertog Jan's Bokbier was dark and redolent of rich, dried fruit, almost like a Belgian dubbel, while Brouwerij Mommeriete's Rookbock (winner in the Best Specialty Bok category) was a golden orange and smoked. Lindeboom Bierbrouwerij's Pelgrim was sweet and fruity, whereas Brasserie d'Achouffe's Chouffe Bok was citrusy and included the typical Chouffe spices, led by coriander.

Curiously, despite the wide array of craft and small brewers, the other awards went to Dutch beer giants: Heineken Nederland's Amstel Bok, a dark, rich lager, won Best Bokbier as well as Best Dutch Bokbier. And Heineken-owned Brand Bierbrouwerij's Brand DubbelBock, in the German style, won in its namesake category.

The Bokbierfest also includes panel discussions, a bookshop, a snack bar and live music. It's a worthwhile fest for global beer fans. As it runs for three days, it allows one to attend the Borefts Beer Festival (assuming it returns) while still getting one's fill of all things bok.

The American Invasion

Having a hard time finding in California the craft beers from upstate New York's Southern Tier Brewing or Michigan's Founders or Indiana's Three Floyds? That's not a problem in Amsterdam. Last fall, Beer Temple, purportedly Europe's first American beer bar, opened and is serving those breweries' wares as well as those of many other U.S. craft brewers, on tap and in bottles.

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Beer Temple is the brainchild of Peter van der Arend, proprietor of one of the city's great biercafés, 't Arendsnest (which serves only Dutch beers), and a big fan of the American craft beer movement. After a beer trip to the U.S. a couple of years ago, where he started in Seattle and worked (and drank) his way down the West Coast to San Diego, van der Arend fell in love with the beers and the beer bars ("The Toronado was a favorite, both San Francisco's and San Diego's"). He decided to make those beers available in Amsterdam.

Indeed, his new establishment resembles an American beer bar, with 30 taps and a 70-plus bottle list posted on blackboard slats on the wall, not unlike the Toronado. Dutch, Belgian and other European beers are carried, but the emphasis is on American breweries like Anchor, Flying Dog, Left Hand,

Great Divide, Saranac, Port Brewing and others. "While the locals drink here, it's mostly the American expats who come in," explained van der Arend. "They're interested in trying what's coming out of the States now."

After a long day of judging beer at the Bokbierfestival, Jos Brouwer, vice chairman of the European Beer Consumers Union, was spotted at the Beer Temple enjoying a bottled IPA from Chicago's Goose Island Beer Company. **CBN**

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BeerTemple.nl

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oriented audience. His presentation, called "Souring Processes," covered the different procedures used to create sour beers of varying character. While the audience sipped samples of La Folie (New Belgium's sour brown ale) and Oscar (an in-house name for the beers blended to create La Folie), Bouckaert explained the different mashing, boiling, fermentation, aging and conditioning techniques used to create La Folie, Rodenbach, Oerbier, Berliner weisse and lambic.

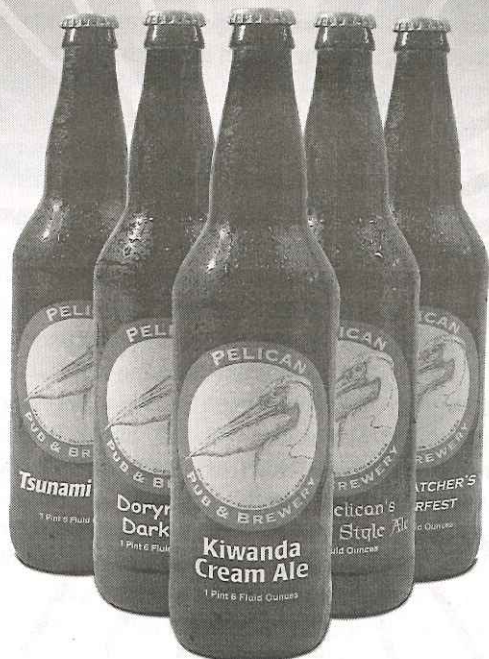
Bouckaert employed a unique visual aid for his presentation. Five coasters — one representing each beer — were scattered around the seminar room. As he explained the intricacies of producing the various beers, his two children, ages nine and 10, scampered from one coaster to another, clueing the audience as to which beer was currently being discussed.

The festival concluded, as it always does, with the extraordinary commercial tasting featuring bold and beautiful beers from both domestic and foreign producers. For students of beer and brewing, Big Beers 2010 was a top-shelf experience. Like skiing on a bluebird day. **CBN**

Dan Rabin is a beer and travel writer who homebrews and obsesses about all things beerish from his home in Boulder, Colo. He shares occasional random thoughts on Twitter (@D_Rabin), and you can e-mail him at BrewsTraveler@comcast.net.

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