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WINE ENTHUSIAST

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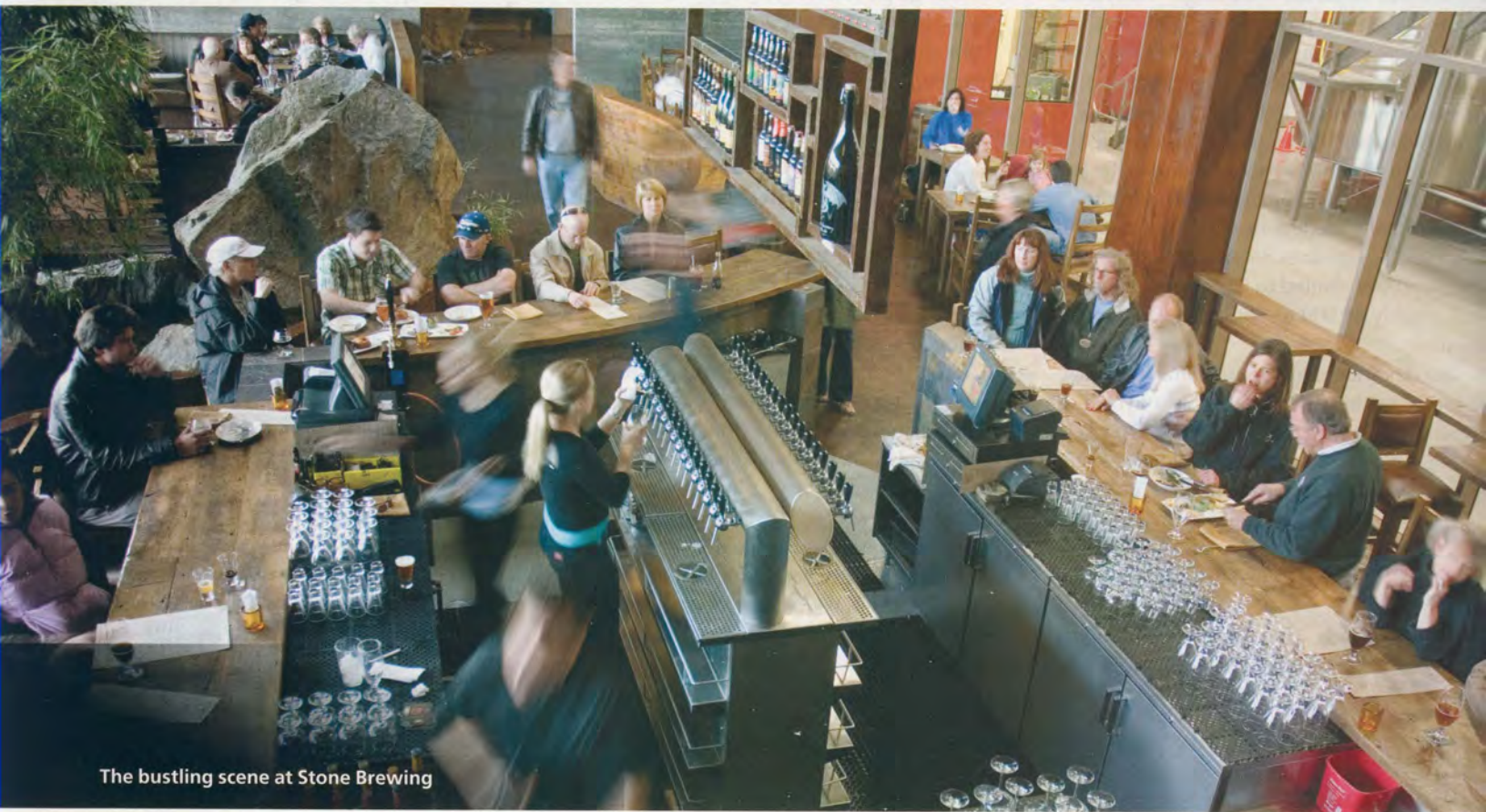
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American Beer Trails



The bustling scene at Stone Brewing

»» Sud-soaked adventures through California, Colorado and Oregon

BY VIRGINIE BOONE AND LAUREN BUZZEO

The last 30 years have seen a monumental evolution in the American beer scene. The thirst for craft beer, inspired by the likes of Anchor Brewing, Samuel Adams and Sierra Nevada, primed the tap for today's golden age of local brews.

This movement has led the Brewers Association to recognize more than 100 different beer styles. Craft brewers are trying new flavor combinations, and incorporating ingredients like cocoa nibs, cinnamon, figs, oak chips and even wine-grape juice, just to name a few.

There are dozens of variations in hops, malts, yeasts and water. There are also differences in how brewers use yeast, how they treat

it, how they pitch it and the temperature at which they ferment—a never-ending palette for experimentation.

For beer drinkers, this means no two IPAs are going to taste the same and that one brewer's stout is not another's, even if we don't know precisely why. As Anchor Brewing founder Fritz Maytag once said, "Beer does not make itself properly by itself. It takes an element of mystery and things no one can understand."

Thoughtfully considered beer is being made in small batches throughout the country, from Oakland and Orange County in California, to Bend, Oregon, and Boulder, Colorado. Here are some of our favorite sudsy spots from the Rockies to the Pacific.

California

Although California produces more wine than any other state in America, the state has long loved its beer. Fritz Maytag and his resuscitation of Anchor Steam beer played an integral role in the craft beer revival. Today, lines form outside Russian River Brewing Company in Santa Rosa for its seasonal beers, and visionary brewmaster Adam Lamoreaux of Linden Street Brewery is bringing the craft back to West Oakland. Restaurants from San Francisco to San Diego are emphasizing beer with food, elevating the whole affair into a celebration of keen, bold flavors. —V.B.



Where to Taste

Set in an Orange County industrial park, **The Bruery** made *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* number-one beer of 2012: Saison Rue, a farmhouse ale brewed with rye and Brettanomyces. The brewery's range of Belgian-style craft beers often feature unconventional ingredients like beets, Thai basil, truffle salt and lavender. Look for soon-to-be-released beers using Santa Rita Hills and Santa Ynez wine grapes.

Firestone Walker Brewing Company, specializing in pale ales, has taprooms in Paso Robles and Buellton, providing beer havens in busy wine regions. **Linden Street** is Oakland's first production brewery in 50 years, where Lamoreaux uses yeasts from Tartine's famous bread. In San Francisco, stop at **21st Amendment Brewery** for its Monk's Blood Belgian Dark Ale.

On the Web

21st Amendment Brewery: 21st-amendment.com
Anchor Brewing: anchorbrewing.com
Anchor Distilling Company: anchordistilling.com
Anderson Valley Brewing Company: avbc.com
California Beer Festival: californiabeerfestival.com
Firestone Walker Brewing Company: firestonebeer.com
Hopland Ale House: [on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hoplandalehouse)
Karl Strauss Brewing Company: karlstrauss.com
Lagunitas Brewing Company: lagunitas.com
Linden Street Brewery: lindenbeer.com



Copper brew kettles on the tour at Anchor Brewing

The **Lagunitas Brewing Company TapRoom and Beer Sanctuary** in Petaluma offers sandwiches, snacks, live music, weekday tasting tours and growlers to take home. Up Highway 101 in Santa Rosa is **Russian River Brewing**, a lively hangout for disciples of Pliny the Elder (a double IPA) and Damnation (a golden ale). Lines snake down the street every February upon Pliny the Younger's release.

Keep heading north to historic Hopland, where the state's first brewpub was opened in 1933. Enjoy **Piazza de Campovida's** brews and fresh gourmet food, and newly opened **Hopland Ale House**. Fort Bragg is home to **North Coast Brewing Co.**, maker of PranQster, Brother Thelonious and Old Rasputin, the brewery's imperial stout.

Where to Dine

Great beer is often being paired with great food, and there may be no better practitioner of the concept than San Francisco's **The Abbot's Cellar**. From the founders of nearby **The Monk's Kettle**, it's a Mission District eatery dedicated to California cuisine and craft beer.

At **Mill Valley Beerworks**, enjoy a meal with house-made brews like the Botanical No.

3, an ale flavored with juniper and bay. **Karl Strauss Brewing Company** has a brewery restaurant in downtown San Diego, plus six other locations. All offer cask-conditioned beer nights every Thursday. Head to **Stone Brewing World Bistro and Gardens** in Escondido for locally sourced small-farm food amidst a one-acre organic beer garden.

Other Activities

The **San Francisco International Beer Festival** in April, **California Beer Festival** in Santa Cruz in July and **West Coast Barrel Aged Beer Festival** in Hayward in November are all worthy events.

For the Budget Minded

Camping is part of the fun at **The Legendary Boonville Beer Festival**, hosted by **Anderson Valley Brewing Company** on May 4. For \$11/person, stay overnight onsite at the Mendocino County Fairgrounds.

Insider Tip

At **Anchor Brewing** in San Francisco, daily tours (by reservation, up to six months in advance) end with a flight of Anchor beers. Head up to the rooftop bar and outdoor beer garden, with outstanding views out to the San Francisco Bay. The complex also houses **Anchor Distilling Company** and its parade of fine spirits, from Junipero Gin to Luxardo Maraschino Liqueur and Japanese Nikka Whisky. In December 2012, Anchor debuted the hops-based HopHead Vodka, made in the distillery's alembic still.

Mill Valley Beerworks: millvalleybeerworks.com
North Coast Brewing Co.: northcoastbrewing.com
Piazza de Campovida: piazzadecampovida.com
Russian River Brewing Company: russianriverbrewing.com
San Francisco International Beer Festival: sfbest.com
Stone Brewing World Bistro and Gardens: stoneworldbistro.com
The Abbot's Cellar: abbotscellar.com
The Bruery: thebruery.com
The Monk's Kettle: monkskettle.com
West Coast Barrel Aged Festival: [on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/westcoastbarrelaged)