

BEAT FROM THE STREET

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Many stories lurk throughout Asheville, whether they are behind the Vaudevillian jazz-folk played by buskers around Pritchard Park, the colorful businesses decorated with funky, hand-made crats or the laughter echoing from a patio as locals and tourists alike enjoy delicious beer.

"Beer Man", originally from Asheville

"I was born in 1996, back when Highland Brewery first opened its doors. That was back when the drinking age was embryo."

And you partook in that, clearly.
 "Yes, absolutely. That is why I've maintained my svelte figure to this day. It's a long time of drinking."

What do you do in terms of profession?

"Well, I travel throughout Asheville and prevent people from making bad beer decisions. I promote local, local only. I just caught a guy drinking a Miller Lite a minute ago and you know what I did? I drank that beer so he wouldn't have to. I didn't want to do it. It's not like he owed it to me."

How do you get away with openly

drinking on the street?

"Well, this is just a costume. I know the rules. I don't drink openly. I don't drink and tell, over-drink, binge drink, or in general, alcoholic behavior. I like to enjoy delicious beer that's

brewed locally here by the gods that are the brewmasters in Asheville, North Carolina."

What are three words to describe your style?

"Let's go Kanye West combined with Chris Farley combined with Cher. There you go, drop the mic."

Who inspires you?

"Good question. Who inspires Beer Man? Well, I guess Duff Man would inspire me, although he's a little more physically fit. He's kind of a show-off and I have a chair called the Beermobile 3000 that I use to accentuate my flat-out, dope style. I can do a full 360 and even moonwalk in it. Check it out, pretty impressive stuff."

When did you realize that you were Beer Man?

"Do you know pretty much when you wake up and ask 'do I want to eat

oatmeal today or something that's a lot better than oatmeal? Do I want to have a cup of coffee or perhaps some water to hydrate my unnourished body?' I wake up everyday thinking, 'I want to have another delicious beer. I'm just going to call myself Beer Man and dress like the part.' So, that's basically my daily do's and don'ts. Always be yourself. Stay in school."

Is that your personal motto?

"Always be yourself or stay in school? Because it wasn't stay in school. I mean, look at me. Come ON! Hahahaha. I definitely didn't stay in school. But, you know, sometimes our purpose in life is to serve as a warning to others. That's my motto. Print it."

What would you say are the best and worst beers in Asheville?

"Oooh, that's a tough question. Right now, my personal favourite is 'Perfect Day IPA' from Asheville Pizza & Brewing. My least favorite beer in Asheville is at this new place that just opened up called Suba Brew. It's just some guy in the back of his Subaru that brewed up something called 'Clingman Ave. Co-op' and it is terrible. I think he used sardine oil in it. I don't know."



Photos by Jimmy Raines - Contributor

#BFTS Olympia Garrett, left.
 #BFTS Beer Man, above.



Olympia Garrett, massage student, originally from Asheville

"I studied Mass Communication at UNC Asheville and we had to write two-to-five page papers every night. Our instructor was the guy that was the chief editor of the Asheville Citizen Times at that point. That was back in the '80s. Now, I'm taking massage therapy. I'm about to graduate and get my license. I'm doing free massages."

How would you describe your style?

"This all came from a second-hand shop. I just put it together. This was a pair of culottes and I made a scarf with it."

How would you describe it in three words?

"Southern Afro-chic"

Who would you say is an inspiration to you?

"Spiritually, I practice my reiki.

I'm a reiki practitioner as well. That's the biggest thing for me, because I want to educate my people on massage. There's a stigma that came about during the wars, you know, where the soldiers would go and travel and they would go to the massage parlors. I want to change that. That is still part of the stigma in our culture. Touch is not just erotic, it's also healthy. It's natural.

"It will definitely lower blood pressure. Our culture has high hypertension. It lowers blood pressure. It reduces stress. It relieves the tension in the muscles and it causes all types of healthy benefits. That's why I'm doing that."

If you had a personal philosophy, what would it be?

"All is well. No matter what, all is well. Even if it looks like it's ugly or it's not going to happen, it's still okay because everything happens in good time in its own time. All is well."

How are liking Goombay so far?

"I like it, except for the weather! It's getting chilly. We're tropical creatures!"

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