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Brewers quench Asheville's thirst

Local microbreweries draw in natives and tourists with unique beers

By Daniel Hartis
STAFF WRITER

Asheville's newest tourist attraction isn't a landmark or even a natural wonder. Instead, visitors and locals alike come to the city for its wide range of locally brewed beer.

"We're a small town with five local breweries supporting it," said Bobby Krusen, vice president and brew master at French Broad Brewery. "You go out to lunch and see a large amount of people drinking beer at lunch. It's almost like Europe. It's a different kind of culture than most cities."

Asheville lays claim to five local microbreweries: Asheville Pizza and Brewing Company, French Broad Brewing Company, Green Man Brewing, Highland Brewing Company and Pisgah Brewing Company, which is located in nearby Black Mountain. Each brewery uses the same four essential ingredients—water, yeast, hops and malted barley—to brew very different beers.

Microbreweries are smaller than macrobreweries, such as Anheuser-Busch. Most microbreweries lack the funds for mass advertising and, instead produce unique beers consumers enjoy for the taste, according to Krusen.

"These microbreweries are small," Krusen said. "They don't spend millions on advertising."

Because they rely almost entirely on how well consumers enjoy their beers' taste, microbreweries must work harder to deliver a good product, according to Tres Howell, a brewer at Asheville Pizza and Brewing Company. "It's probably a little harder for the microbreweries," Howell said. "If you don't come with a quality product, you're going to get left behind."

Asheville's microbreweries encouraged Mark Lyons to open Asheville Brews Cruise last May. Lyons pilots a van full of passengers to each brewery, where they sample four or five of each brewery's most popular beers while

learning about them from those who brew them.

The Brews Cruise tours Asheville Pizza and Brewing Company, French Broad Brewing and Highland Brewing, said Lyons, who owns and operates the tour.

"They actually started the brewing process in Asheville," Lyons said of Highland Brewing. "They really put it in motion. Highland's also the only one who has a true bottling line."

The brewery recently upgraded this bottling line with newer, less labor-intensive packaging machinery to fill more orders, according to Don Wallace, distribution manager for the brewery.

"Our goal is to be the No. 1 craft brewery in the southeast," Wallace said.

As of now, Highland's beer sells in North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia. Many Asheville locals favor Highland's Gaelic Ale,

which accounts for 60 to 70 percent of the company's sales, according to Wallace.

After visiting Highland's brewery, the Brews Cruise heads over to French Broad Brewing. French Broad specializes in lagers, a style many breweries avoid because of the storage demands it requires, according to Krusen.

"Lager's the German word for store, and that's exactly what you have to do," said Krusen, a brewer of 14 years. "Not a lot of breweries take the time to make lagers." Judges at the 2002 World Beer Championships awarded both French Broad's popular Goldenrod Pilsner and Marzen Amber lagers with bronze medals.

Beer drinkers visit French Broad not just for its lagers, but for its music, according to Krusen.

"One thing about Asheville is the uniqueness and quality of music, and it's free here," he said. "We're the best brewery in town. I've never seen another like it."



CLIFF LATHINGHOUSE - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Oscar Wong, owner and president of Highland Brewing Company, pours Adam Kelly, junior literature student, a sample of the company's beer during a tour of one of Asheville's local microbreweries.

Like French Broad, Asheville Pizza and Brewing – the last stop on the Brews Cruise – adds entertainment to their selection of microbrews, according to Howell. "This place has the advantage of also being a restaurant and \$2 movie theater," Howell said.

Microbreweries often use different brewing techniques than larger macrobreweries, according to Howell.

"There are a lot of differences in how they're made," Howell said. "We don't use any kind of a filler. Some macrobreweries use rice as a filler. They'll also filter their beer. We don't filter anything."

In addition to experimenting with technique, microbreweries often experiment with ingredients, Krusen said. "One thing that's nice about being

a small brewery is we can change things," he said. "I've been able to use a lot of different malts here that in 12 or 14 years brewing I haven't been able to do. A lot of the larger breweries don't do that."

Even with this freedom, French Broad uses time-honored techniques with a few exceptions, according to Krusen.

"We pretty much keep it traditional," Krusen said. "We tend to go a little higher with things like alcohol and color, just to make it stand out."

Asheville's microbreweries make up an important part of the city, one the Brews Cruise helps showcase, according to Howell. "There are definitely a lot of people that come in on the Brews Cruise from other places," Howell said. "It helps business for all the microbreweries."



CLIFF LATHINGHOUSE - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Vats of beer brew at Highland Brewing Company's microbrewery, home of their most popular brew, Highland Gaelic Ale.

Asheville Pizza and Brewing helps other microbreweries, and they, in turn, do the same, Howell said.

"It's a friendly competition in town," Howell said. "When someone is out of something, we'll loan it."

Though Asheville contains a large number of breweries for its size, the city could support more

microbreweries, according to Krusen.

"There's probably room for one or two more breweries until it gets really competitive," Krusen said.

The Brews Cruise heads to Raleigh at the end of April for the World Beer Festival, and offers packages including roundtrip transportation, lodging and gifts.

Students prefer e-mails to office hours

By Annabelle Hardy
STAFF WRITER

A brief, mid-day tour of professors' offices proves not many UNC Asheville students attend regular office hours with their instructors.

"I don't really stop by office hours much. I don't often have questions outside of class," said Yvonne Engler, senior Spanish student, who sat outside of her advisor's office to ask a quick question regarding advising.

Across the board, both students and professors maintain that e-mail is the quickest and most efficient way to communicate outside of class. Students can get quick questions and simple clarifications virtually anytime over e-mail, as opposed to waiting until their professor's office hours to get answers to their questions and proceed with assignments, according to Elizabeth Snyder, German professor in the foreign language department.

"I haven't used office hours very much, maybe once or twice this semester. E-mail is so much easi-

er," said Brittany Derlath, sophomore psychology student.

The timing of office hours can be difficult for both students and professors, according to Snyder and Lindsay Carver, sophomore creative writing student.

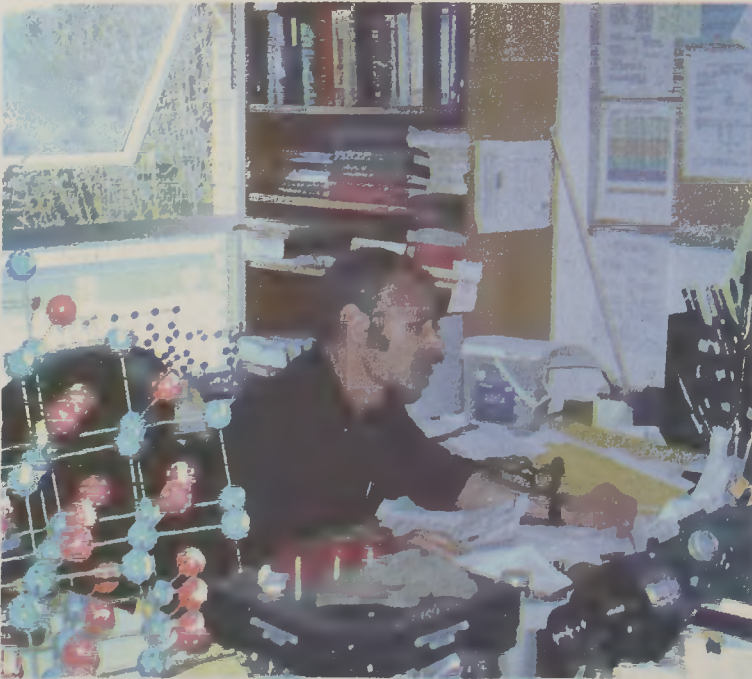
Often students' class schedules conflict with their professors' office hours, Snyder said.

"The office hours are always random, or only at a time when you have another class," Carver said.

Students generally agreed that professors are usually able and willing to make appointments to meet with students outside of regular class hours.

"I get a lot of students contacting me, but often I find that we make appointments outside of regular office hours," said John Wood, sociology professor.

Despite the many advising appointment sign-up sheets currently on professors' doors, students said when they do meet with



JESSICA BLYTHE - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Senior Lecturer Yusef Fahmy, director of NC State Engineering Programs at UNC Asheville works in his office Robinson Hall during his office hours. Many students complain that professors' office hours are inconvenient and e-mailing back and forth is just easier.

Recent drug busts raise questions about campus security

By Aaron Dahlstrom
STAFF WRITER

Police arrested UNC Asheville student Samuel Beckett March 22 on charges of possession of schedule one mushrooms, marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

Police responding to a fire alarm in Mills Hall 110, seized less than a half-ounce of mushrooms con-

taining the hallucinogen psilocybin, which is a felony charge, and less than a half-ounce of marijuana, a misdemeanor, according to Chief Steve Lewis, director of campus police at UNC Asheville.

"People inside smoking cigars

are what activated the fire alarm, and that is what actually caused attention," he said. "If the fire alarm is going off and we can't get anyone to come to the door,

we will enter into the room. At this particular one, the residents came to the door. Once officers were inside they noticed drug paraphernalia in plain view. The paraphernalia in

plain view gave them cause to search further, and then the mushrooms were found after that."

Officers questioned Beckett, 22, about a substantial amount of

ERIC SALTZ
Resident Assistant

You have to define what is a problem. A problem to me is going to be different than an average person's look at it.

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