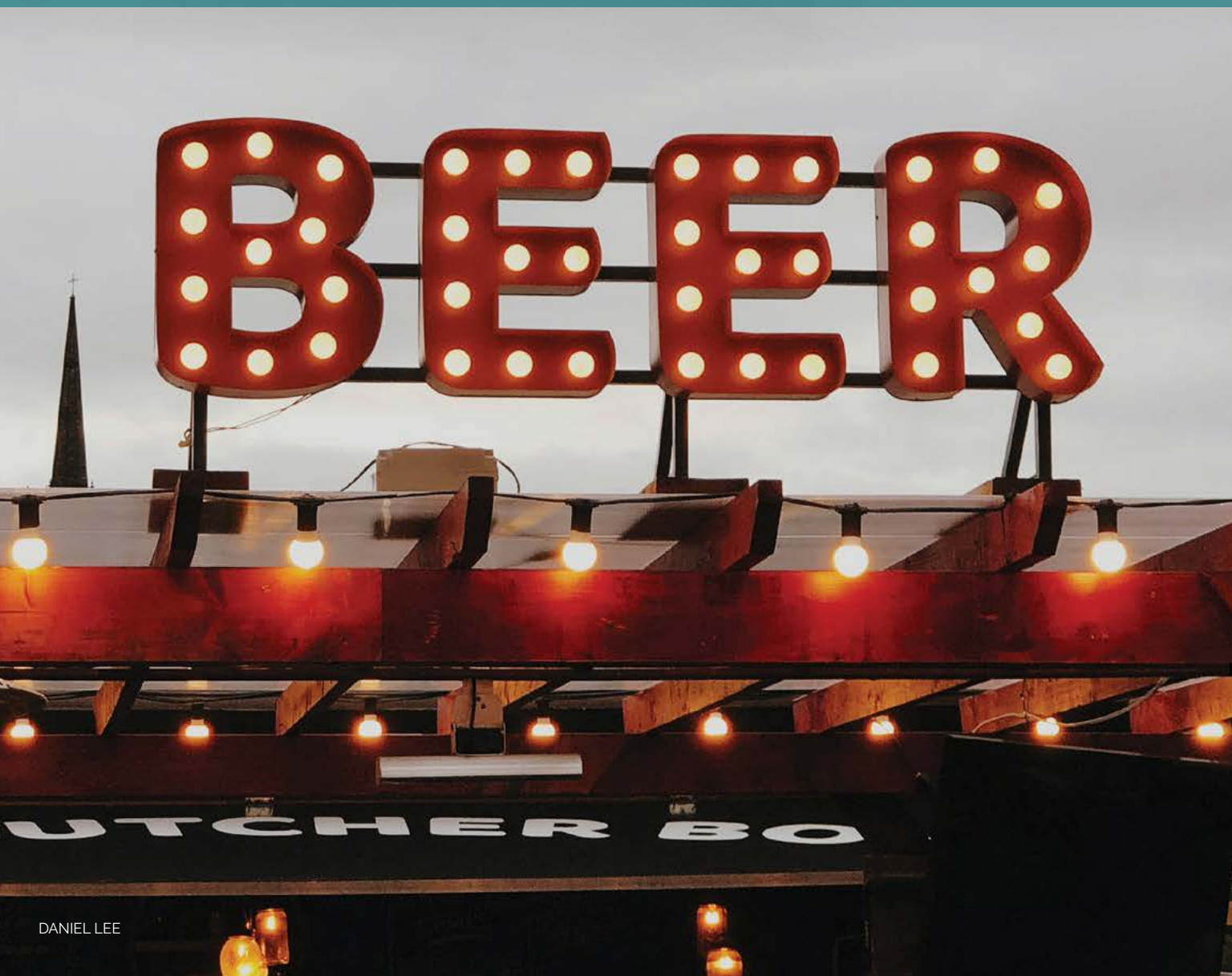


JON TYSON



DANIEL LEE

All Hail the Ale.
And Lager.
And Porter.
And Dunkel.

Fall is the season for beer, worts and all.

By Julie Fanning

Beer. It's pretty amazing there can be such a huge variety of tastes and smells produced with essentially water, grains and yeast. And I'm talking so completely different and richer than my dad's staple when I was growing up: PBR.

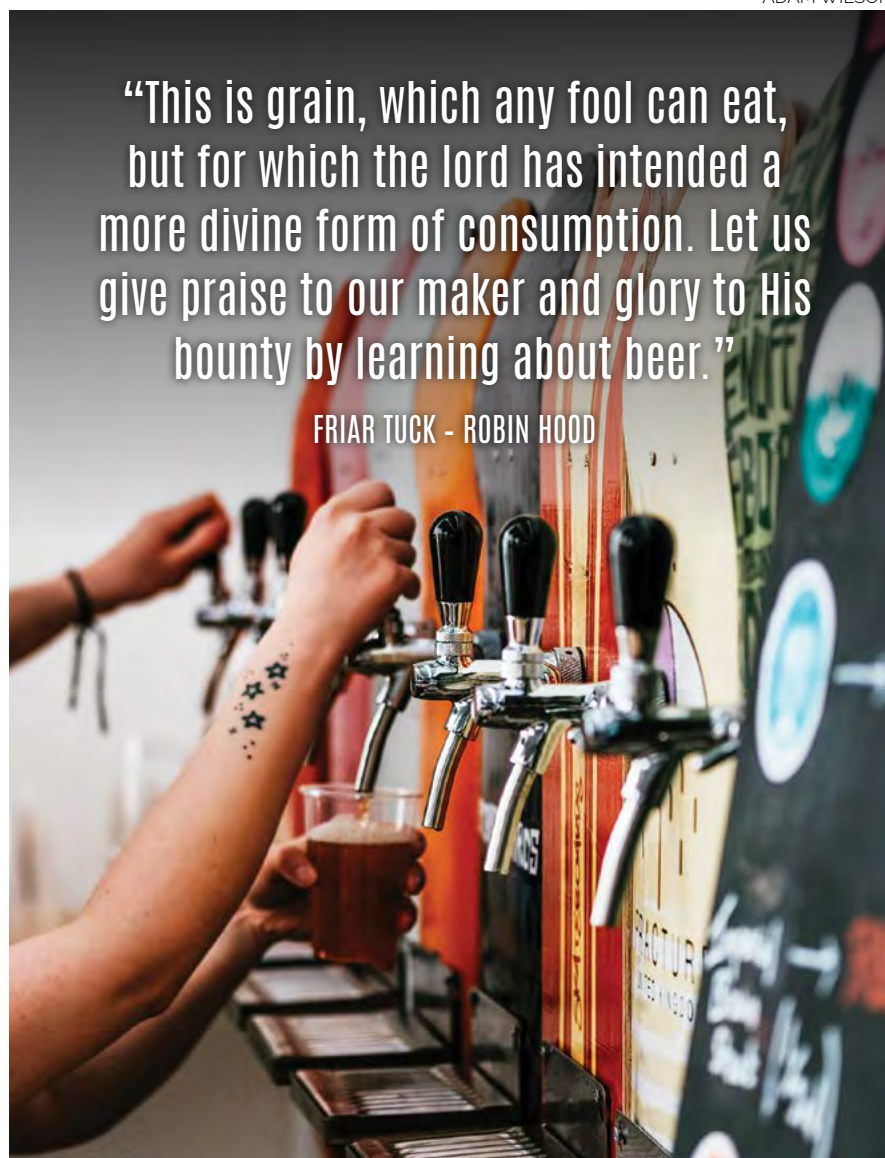
Yes, I am a beer snob. I know what I like and I know what I should... pass on to someone else. But the creativity of artisan brewers is remarkable and the sheer number of high-caliber breweries in Tidewater is respectable.

Fall tends to be the time of year that folks start to pivot from the refreshing summer Hefeweizens, pils and witbiers consumed to quench their thirst at the beach or backyard barbecue. We are rolling into the time of year for rich brown ales and stouts and those pack-a-punch IPAs. And of course we can't forget the horde of pumpkin ale options.

The season brings with it football tailgating and, of course, Oktoberfest (more on that later)—which are all celebrated with pints of beer. So why not have a pint of something special.

Artisan Beer Hub

The Virginia craft beer scene has been exploding. Since the passing of Senate Bill 604 (SB 604) in 2012—which allowed breweries to sell beer by the glass directly to customers at their production facilities and established the taprooms that we know today—the number of breweries has grown 500%. In fact, according to the Governor's office, "Virginia's craft beer industry ranks #1 in the South for breweries per capita and ranks #17 in the United States." The Commonwealth has more than 250 breweries as of today. In early August of this year, Governor Glenn Youngkin formally recognized August as Virginia Craft Beer Month. Before the passage of SB 604, there were only four craft breweries in Hampton Roads. By the summer of 2022



the number of craft breweries has jumped to approximately 33. But the density of the region's population—coupled with the number of tourists and military coming in—means each brewery should be able to find their ideal demographic and experiment with other things to bring in customers: seltzers and ciders, contests, games and live music.

It hasn't all been happy bubbles and brews, though. Many people I spoke with as well as news outlets have cited an oversaturation of the beer market as the sheer

number of taprooms that opened may have caused a few to suffer. And the lockdowns of COVID were tough on everyone in hospitality. But quick-thinking brewery owners and entrepreneurs persevered with standout concoctions to woo new consumers, outdoor/tented tasting rooms—even during the colder months—and promoted growler and crowler fills for take-home consumption as the thing to do while we were still social distancing. Creative marketing is the key.

But the industry still grows here.

BRITTANI BURNS

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black tank top, a green cardigan, and blue denim shorts, holds a glass of beer with a thick head of foam towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with warm, bokeh lights.

Life is too short for bad beer.



Oktoberfest is celebrated worldwide. Sure, by beer enthusiasts with no German DNA in their veins, as well as those having German ancestry. But eating Bavarian food, playing games, dancing and consuming massive amounts of beer while dressed in lederhosen has become a fall tradition. It all began in Munich, Germany; the event was held October 12, 1810, as the marriage celebration of Prince Ludwig (of Bavaria, who would become King Louis I) to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. The festival lasted five days. The following year the event was incorporated into the state fair and by the late 20th century it had grown into a huge celebration in beer halls with live music and food.

In contemporary times it is celebrated at the end of September and ends on the first Sunday of October (this year it begins in Munich on September 17 and ends October 3). In America there are usually celebrations in cities with large populations of German immigrants

* CHEERS!

and descendents. But like St. Patrick's Day and Cinco de Mayo: Everyone likes a celebration no matter their heritage, and the gesture is in the spirit of Bavarian *gemütlichkeit* (or cordiality).

Local Oktoberfest Celebrations

The earliest celebration in our region happens at **Busch Gardens Bier Fest**, while technically not Oktoberfest (this runs every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from August 12–September 5), there is a variety of food options as well as 125 craft brews from 69 breweries—33 of which are Virginia-made. buschgardens.com/williamsburg/events/beer-festival

Wasserhund Oktoberfest, hosted by Wasserhund Brewing Company at Summit Pointe in Chesapeake, is slated for September 17. This is the 5th Annual Hampton Roads Oktoberfest, with beers available from up to 20 local breweries, food trucks, vendors and live music. wasserhundbrewing.com/events

Oktoberfest at Elation Brewing, in Norfolk, is set from September 17 through October 1. Touted as the biggest Oktoberfest in NoCo, multiple German-style beers will be released, there will be an authentic Bavarian food menu, live music and games. elation.beer/events/elations-4th-annual-oktoberfest

The Bier Garden, located in Olde Towne Portsmouth, will host its Oktoberfest 2022 on October 8. The celebration is promoted as a "volksfest" like no other, with traditional Bavarian food, beers and live German music. The event covers an entire city block and includes a children's play area and covered festhaus. www.virginia.org/event/oktoberfest-2022/2585/

Cause for Celebration

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the 757 Battle of the Beers, a full day beer festival with more than 40 regional brewers vying for attendees' votes in three different categories. This is pretty exciting, considering the caliber of beer being produced across the region. How so?

On August 8, the Virginia Craft Brewers Guild (VCBG) announced the 2022 Virginia Craft Beer Cup Winners. According to the VCBG press release, head judge Charlie Harr stated, "Wow,

what a great competition! It was clearly evident in the tight race that every brewery is extremely dedicated to the craft and their dedication is inspiring. This year's competition proves Virginia has some of the best craft brewers in the nation."

The full list of winners is posted on the Virginia Craft Brewers Guild website (www.virginiacraftbrewers.org/vcbg-cup-awards-press-release/), but there are so many local breweries who placed in the top three in many categories of this competition. A few include

Tradition Brewing Company, located in Newport News, who earned first place in the Brown Ale category with their "Honey Brown." Three Notch'd Brewing Company, in Virginia Beach, won the Hazy IPA category with their "King of Clouds Juicy IPA." Two Williamsburg breweries brought home first place awards: Alewerks Brewing Company's "Chesapeake Pale Ale" won the Pale Ale category and Precarious Beer Project's "Chug Rug" garnered the winning West Coast style IPA.

The 757 Battle of the Beers

festival is September 24 in Virginia Beach (757battleofthebeers.com). Get your tickets, have some fun, drink some [really good] beer and help raise funds for charity.

Julie Fanning, Boulevard's chief creative officer, is a professional designer by trade, writer by occasion and a fan of handcrafted beers—especially the bold and hearty ones.

Boulevard photographer David Polston was out and about in the area recently and visited a few of the local breweries. Some highlights (nowhere near the comprehensive list of excellent options available) are described here in no particular order.

PHOTOS BY DAVID POLSTON

Back Bay Brewing Co.'s Farmhouse [1] is located in a renovated farmhouse in Virginia Beach originally built in 1912. Opened in 2018, they are dedicated to using the highest quality ingredients to produce the freshest beers and ciders. The original Back Bay Brewing Co. was founded in 2011 and also is located in Virginia Beach.

farmhousebrewingva.com

Smartmouth Brewing Company [2] was founded in 2012 in Norfolk (one of the pioneers in the Hampton Roads craft beer scene) and by 2018 opened a second location in Virginia Beach. They pride themselves on unique styles, quality ingredients and overall well-crafted beers.

smartmouthbrewing.com

Makers Craft Brewery [3] offers a spacious taproom located in the Historic Norfolk & Western Railroad District housed in an old burlap bag manufacturing plant. The brewery was open for business in 2018, is dog friendly and offers a rotating calendar of food trucks, event space rental, a cigar bar and brewery tours.

www.makers.beer

O'Connor Brewing Co. [4] is serious about having fun, building a strong community, and handcrafting unique,



innovative beers. O'Connor Brewing Co. brewed its first batch on St. Patrick's Day 2010, becoming one of Coastal Virginia's very first craft breweries. They are award-winning, offering dozens of styles to a growing fanbase who appreciate their quality and consistency. oconnorbrewing.com

Bold Mariner Brewing Company [5] originally opened in the Lambert's Point section of Norfolk in 2015. They quickly produced award-winning beers and gained in popularity with local residents, active duty military and veterans. And then a former Bank of the Commonwealth building just steps away from the Ocean View Beach became available; they bought it and moved once renovations were complete. It's a large two-story beach house with wrap-around porches where you can take in the scenery and enjoy one of their brews. You can also order a smoked barbecue sandwich and side from the onsite "Bar-Q" eatery.

theboldmariner.com

The Garage Brewery [6] is a 7-barrel, woman-owned microbrewery located in the heart of the Greenbriar area in Chesapeake. Sixteen taps rotate a variety of "well built beers." The industrial theme of the taproom is inviting,



comfortable and spacious—and dog-friendly. It was designed and built with reclaimed and repurposed materials. The outdoor patio extends past the overhead door and the bar features blueprints of the building and brewing equipment. www.garage-brewery.com



“Fermentation
may have
been a greater
discovery
than fire.”

DAVID RAINS WALLACE