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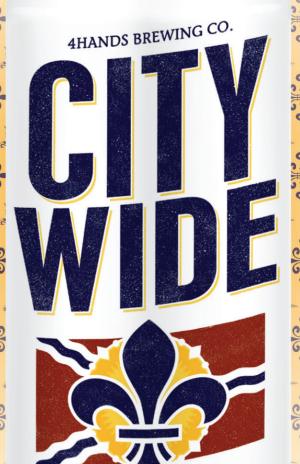
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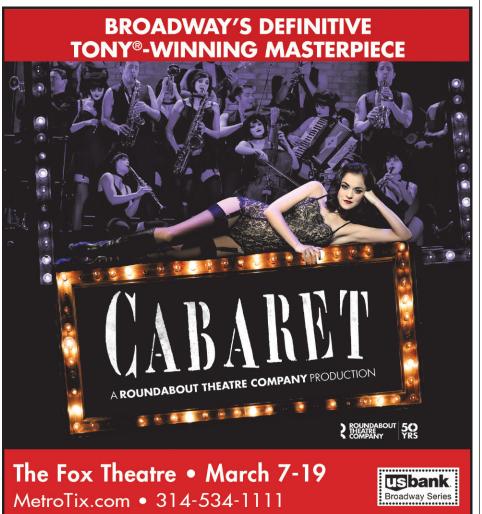














MARCH 2017 • VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3

What's the best named beer you've tried?

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To Øl Fuck Art - Let's Dance on Gooseberries. Best name, and one of the best beers I've tasted. Glenn Bardgett, Andrew Barrett, Matt Berkley, Katie Herrera,

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Figueroa Mountain Brewing Co. I Dunkeled in my Pants. It was a **Great American Beer** Festival winner!

2nd Shift

Chateau La Douchebag

LISTINGS EDITOR INTERNS

Elizabeth Bruchhauser, Sam Flaster, Brianna Velarde

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Turkey sandwich at Nathaniel Reid Bakery

by catherine klene

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NIGHTLIFE Pagan Wine Bar

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dine &

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CROISSANTS

Burnished, buttery croissant from Comet Coffee. Learn more about the pastry chef behind this flaky treat on p. 30.

PHOTO BY CARMEN TROESSER



at nixta,

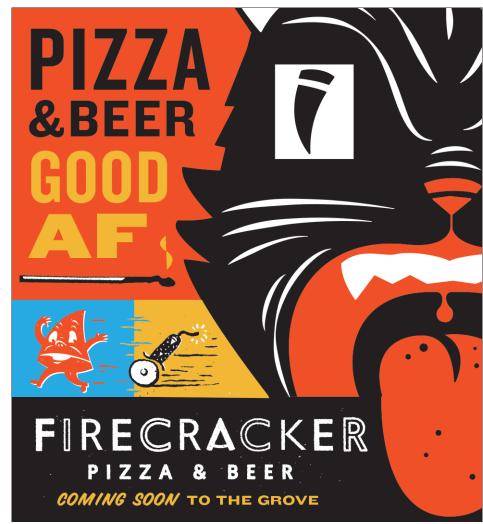
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FLIP THE MAGAZINE OVER TO SEE THE GUIDE TO BEER. Brewer-co-owner Jeff Hardesty of Narrow Gauge Brewing Co. has turned a quiet Florissant bar and grill into a destination for beer fans. See p. 14 to learn more about this Brewer in the Basement.

Cover photo by Ashley Gieseking

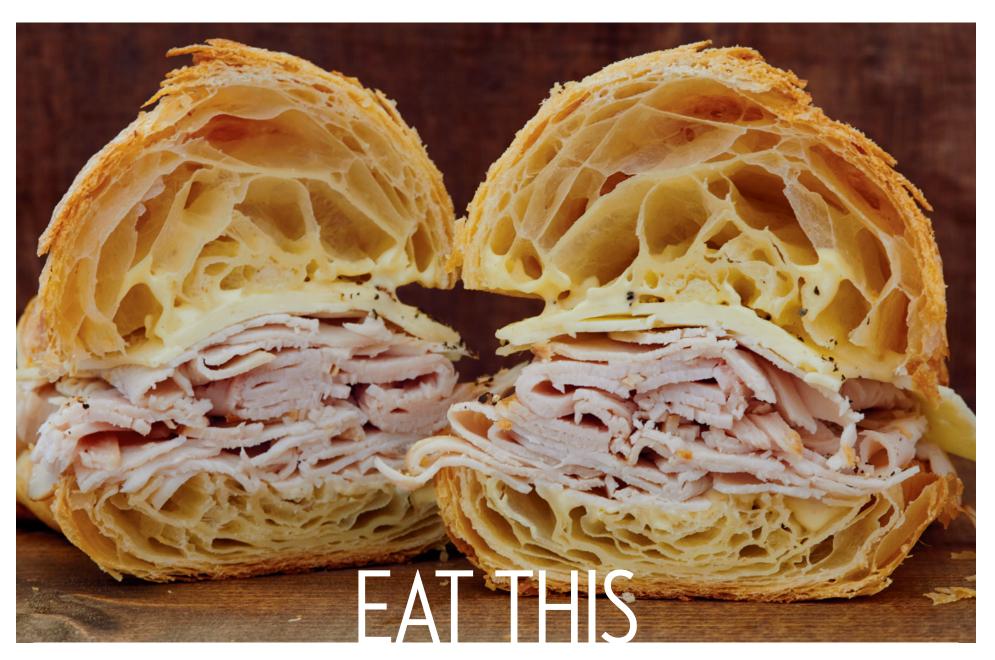








editors picks



Trust acclaimed pastry chef **NATHANIEL REID** to elevate the humble **TURKEY SANDWICH** far beyond a workaday lunch. His flaky, buttery croissant is sturdy enough to support slices of smoked turkey breast, a slice or two of havarti and a creamy swath of mayonnaise and mustard. We'll never brown-bag a sad turkey sammie again.

NATHANIEL REID BAKERY, 11243 MANCHESTER ROAD, KIRKWOOD, 314.858.1019, NRBAKERY.COM



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→ saucemagazine.com/readerschoice



BOARDWALK
WAFFLES & ICE CREAM

A hug can turn your day around, especially when it's a Belgian waffle wrapping itself around Serendipity ice cream. Head to Boardwalk Waffles & Ice Cream in Maplewood for the embrace you need. The sweet waffles are made to order, and their crisp edges and fluffy interior pair perfectly with classic Salty Caramel

Swirl. Go big with a full order (two whole waffles sandwiching four scoops) and share the love. Naked waffles and solo scoops are also available for those with waffle-ice cream relationship issues.

7326B Manchester Road, Maplewood, 314.449.1209, boardwalkwaffles.com





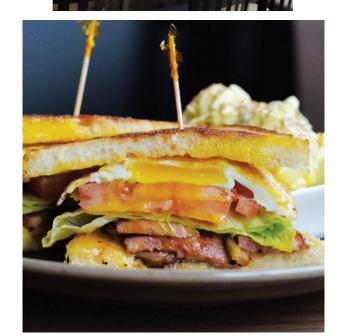
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STUND

BTES

Exploring What Makes STL Delicious.

On this month's Sound Bites, managing editor Catherine Klene joins Two Plumbers Brewery & Arcade co-owner Robert Schowengerdt and Third Wheel Brewing head brewer Abbey Spencer to discuss their upcoming openings in a burgeoning local beer scene. And tune in to St. Louis Public Radio KWMU 90.7 FM at the beginning of March for our monthly Hit List.



BALKAN TREAT BOX It's worth the effort to find Balkan Treat Box as it slowly rolls into the

St. Louis food scene. A wood-fired oven roars inside the bright red and aqua truck, which turns out classic dishes from the Balkan Peninsula. Try the rich, chargrilled beef sausage **cevapi** served in a fluffy pita pocket-like somun with kaymak (a rich dairy condiment similar to labneh) and ajvar (a slightly spicy roasted red peppereggplant sauce). And order more **pide** than you think you need. The Turkish wood-fired flatbreads are addictive, topped with thick, bubbly layer of cheese and optional sliced smoked beef sausage.

balkantreatbox.com, Twitter: @BalkanTreatBox from top: seared scallops, the bar and the DLT at the blue duck

THE BLUE DUCK

After making a splash in Washington, The Blue Duck has added a

second location in Maplewood. The menu ranges from soups, salads and hearty sandwiches like the DLT, made with smoked duck instead of the usual bacon on house-made sourdough bread, to classic supper plates like mac and cheese swimming with cheddar-fontina sauce livened up by a swirl of braised short rib marmalade and a crunchy herbed bread crumb topping. Order the savory seared scallops, which come doused in bloody mary sauce with braised bacon over a creamy celery root puree.

2661 Sutton Blvd., Maplewood, 314.769.9940, blueduckstl.com

STL FRENCH OUARTER STL French
Quarter food
truck has hit
the road just in
time for Mardi

Gras, offering a rotation of Cajun and Creole classics and New Orleansinspired dishes. Start with a bowl of dark gumbo thick with shredded pork and chicken. Or try the lighter, tomato-based jambalaya studded with red beans and andouille. Whichever you choose, you'll need a wedge of a savory jalapeno-cheddar cornbread waffle for dipping. And save room for The French Quarter Po'Boy. Thin slices of tender roast pork and salty Tasso ham are smothered in rich Cajun gravy accented with piquant Creole mustard aioli, held in a split hoagie to sop up the juices.

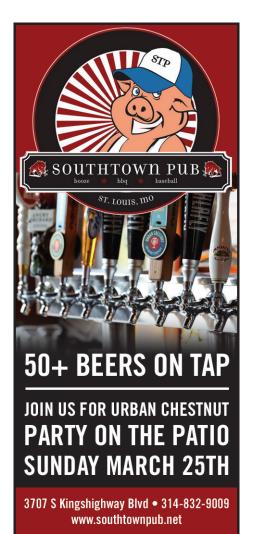
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chef tour

brian hardesty

Coming up the ranks through St. Louis restaurants like **Balaban's**, **Harvest, Monarch**, **Terrene** and his own **Guerrilla Street Food**, has given chef Brian Hardesty definite opinions while dining out on his own dime. "I just want it to be reliable," he said - and being easy on the wallet doesn't hurt, either. "Once I start going somewhere regularly, I start trying everything. If it keeps on being good each time, I just keep going back."

Taj Palace

Hardesty and business partner Joel Crespo stumbled upon this West County Indian eatery by accident. "It's in the middle of a huge strip mall with Target and Best Buy," he said. But despite its outward appearance, he said it has one of the best lunch buffets around for only \$11. "It's traditional – no riffs or takes on classics," Hardesty said,

adding that he doesn't have a favorite dish. "It's all good."
92 THF BLVD.,
CHESTERFIELD,
636.728.1000,
TAJPALACESTL.COM

The VineMediterranean Cafe

"Everything they serve is good, consistent and cheap," he said. Plus, this Lebanese eatery, market and hookah headquarters is

street from Guerrilla
Street Food, making
lunchtime forays a
regular occurrence.
Hardesty is particularly
partial to the beef
shawarma, served with
rice and pita, which
he said has just the
right amount of spice
without overpowering
the meat.
3171 S. GRAND BLVD.,
ST. LOUIS, 314.776.0991,
THEVINESTL.COM

located just down the

Truc Lam

"It's in my neighborhood, and it's one of my favorite Vietnamese restaurants," Hardesty said of this South City hidden gem. "We go there probably three to four times a month." One of his favorites is the rare beef pho, but he seldom orders the same thing twice. "I'll probably never make it though all of the dishes there." 373 GRAVOIS AVE., ST. LOUIS, 314.776.1299

Fork & Stix

"I like going someplace where I can be educated on what I'm eating," he said. "If I





from top: gulab jamun at taj palace, the buffet at taj palace

have a question, they answer it here with no pretentiousness." He appreciates Fork & Stix, which specializes in traditional northern Thai cuisine made with locally sourced ingredients, because the food is "authentic, consistent and technically wellexecuted." He tends toward the hoy jaw, deepfried dumplings with shrimp, crab and pork ensconced in a tofu skin. 549 ROSEDALE AVE., ST. LOUIS, 314.863.5572, FORKNSTIX.COM

White Knight Diner

"Cheeseburgers are my favorite food, and White Knight's is probably my favorite in St. Louis," Hardesty said. This downtown greasy spoon is, let's say, cozy, with just a handful of seats and unique hours of operation: 6 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. "It's so tiny and so old, and the burgers are cheap and so satisfying," Hardesty said. His go-to is the double cheeseburger with the classic accouterments of American cheese, lettuce, onions, tomato and pickles.

1801 OLIVE ST., ST. LOUIS, 314.621.5949, FACEBOOK: WHITE KNIGHT DINER

La Pizza

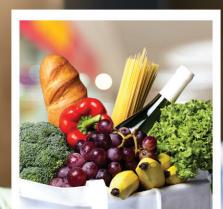
"These types of places kind of get forgotten about," Hardesty said. "And we're losing them." Hopefully this no-frills, diminutive pizzeria will remain an oasis for New York-style aficionados in the land of Provel for years to come. Hardesty likes his La Pizza slice with cheese and pepperoni. "It's simple and done right." 8137 DELMAR **BLVD., UNIVERSITY** CITY, 314,725,1230. LAPIZZAMENU.COM





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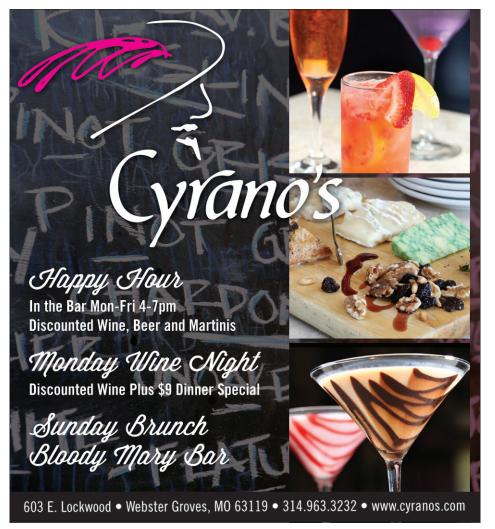




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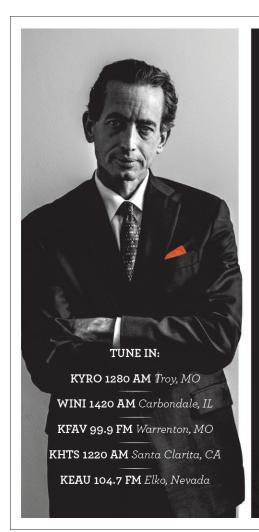
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ICHICANS

with scallop at nixta NEW AND NOTABLE BY MICHAEL RENNER | PHOTOS BY JONATHAN GAYMAN Presumably to avoid being associated with endless baskets of chips and enchilada plates smothered in Jack cheese, restaurateur Ben Poremba has shied away from calling his latest concept, Nixta, a Mexican restaurant. Instead, he describes the food as "contemporary chefdriven cuisine with nods to Mexico and the 'American Mediterranean.'"

new and notable NIXTA p. 15 / lunch rush LOCAL CHEF KITCHEN p. 18 / nightlife PAGAN WINE BAR p. 21











Poremba promised a fun and unexpected replacement for Old Standard, his previous fried chicken concept in Botanical Heights that closed last July. Three months later, he changed the set and followed through. Where Old Standard felt contrived with its countrified motif and menu descriptions, Nixta's decor doesn't try to be something it's not. Wooden banquettes, once unfinished and clearcoated, were painted deep blue, their discomfort softened by colorful throw pillows. With walls awash in mint, salmon and ultramarine, and the sound of snappy salsa music playing inside and out, the small space feels like that beachfront cantina you happened upon once in Puerto Vallarta.

The man completing this vision is executive chef Tello

Carreón, formerly chef de cuisine across the street at Bengelina Hospitality Group sister restaurant Elaia. Tapping Carreón only made sense; he's from Guanajuato in central Mexico, and uses many of his family's recipes as launching points for modern interpretation.

Take his grandmother's mole *negro*: Dense and complex, with emerging layers of gentle heat and subtle nuttiness, Carreón swapped out traditional chicken in favor of tender chunks of veal on my visit. (Other nights beef cheeks are used.) He further enhanced the dish with a sprinkling of chopped fresh herbs and *queso fresco* before finishing with a ring of chive oil. It was a

delicious example of building off tradition without losing one's place. Placement at the bottom of the menu, offset and outlined in red, emphasized its specialness – as did the \$29 price tag.

CHEF TELLO CARREÓN

at Nixta

With a single-page menu, dish explanations and the distinction between small, shareable plates and larger meals require some in-depth discussion

with very knowledgeable servers. Depending on your level of patience, it's a process that could either edify or annoy.

The taco *al pastor* (singular, as in not to be shared) brought new life to a familiar dish. Here, confit pork belly replaced pork shoulder, providing a fatty richness unlike other preparations – a bit too fatty, in fact. Bits of caramelized pineapple and thinly sliced jalapenos helped, but the best part of the dish was the smallest: two or three dabs of pineapple puree bursting with concentrated sweetness.

One of several street foodinfluenced dishes, the tlayuda ate like St. Louis-style pizza: A dinner plate-sized crisp, baked flour tortilla spread with a carrot-coriander salsa and topped with dollops of soft, creamy burrata, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, pepitas, and chopped fresh parsley, cilantro and mint. Carreón's use of herbs and seeds is an aspect of regional Mexican cooking I don't see much in St. Louis, but the addition of these simple ingredients brightens many of his creations.

More street food: quesadillas and flautas. The former was filled with thinly sliced zucchini for a uniquely delicious take on a typically dull appetizer. The latter consisted of four slim fried tortilla tubes with a delectably subtle oyster mushroom and cheese filling served on a mound of raw

spinach and mushrooms. Unfortunately, mine was missing the advertised *crema de hongos*.

Tostadas got the finedining treatment. Sushi-grade tuna glazed with a white soy and lime mixture provided the focal point for two delectable bite-sized snacks piled with slivers of sugar snap peas, chile mayonnaise, avocado and chopped cilantro, crowned with edible flowers. Serving them on crinkled wax paper brought such an elevated dish back down to street level.

Pollo empanado (fried chicken) served as a nod and a wink to Old Standard's memory. Nixta's version had a lighter breading and the benefit of pineapple marinade before being pressure-fried to fall-apart tenderness.

For dessert, order the *concha* – a pastry cream-filled sweet bread roll in a pool of caramel sauce, which was definitely sharable. The flan, with cheesecake-like texture and delicate sweetness, needs to be savored alone.

The bar said goodbye to bourbon, and hello to tequila. Six house cocktails – numbered *uno* to *seis* – and three levels of margaritas (\$10, \$12 and \$14) form the backbone of the drink menu, with a list of mezcal and tequila to rival Old Standard's massive whiskey selection. My basic margarita – with the bracing simplicity of fresh lime juice and zest mixed with simple syrup and punctuated by dry curacao – was easily the best I've had anywhere. But at \$10 for a short tumbler (slightly larger than the standard juice glass), there was more sipping than gulping.

After 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Nixta transforms into alter ego Bar Limon, a late-night spot complete with bar snacks and salsa dancing. Just another fun and unexpected example of how Poremba is a master of stagecraft.

AT A GLANCE

WHERE

1621 Tower Grove Ave., St. Louis, 314.899.9000, nixtastl.com DON'T MISS
DISHES

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LUNCH RUSH

local chef kitchen

BY ANDREW BARRETT | PHOTOS BY DAVE MOORE

What Local Chef Kitchen lacks in an interesting name, it makes up for in delicious dishes. Located in a storefront on Manchester Road in Ballwin, it brings seasonal, locally sourced meals and a curated market to an area that always needs original acts. Not many spots in the neighborhood offer treats like Companion kombucha on tap or dishes designed by a light-footed chef in response to local farmers' harvests. The set list changes every five days, so some of my favorites might not be available on your trip, but there are bound to be at least a few dishes singing your tune.





PASTRAMI SANDWICH

I'm pretty passionate about pastrami, and LCK's unstringy and soft meat easily outshone its timid backup singers of rye bread and grainy mustard. When I saw someone's half-eaten sandwich in the trash, I almost cried. Rock out with my now-favorite pastrami in St. Louis.

SMOKED PORK

A cut of tender, house-smoked ham was folded over a rich mix of kidney and navy beans and chopped pork shoulder in concert with apple au jus. Sometimes smoke can upstage a meat, but not in this case. The au jus added a sharpness wanted by such a savory dish – the acid cutting through the fat for a full, well-rounded flavor.



BEETS

People I respect have told me they don't like beets. They don't always believe me when I say they just haven't tried the right kind yet. These are the right kind of beets. Marinated in red wine vinegar, sugar and black pepper, the tender wedges of red root had the perfect amount of firmness to sink your teeth into. If you don't like these, then you will never like beets, and I can't trust your taste in food anymore.



RABBIT ANDOUILLE GUMBO

The rabbit andouille gumbo was the headliner. Savory and sweet, the whole dish was an umami concert over rice topped with a thick slab of tender roasted sweet potato,



pickled onions and roasted okra for cymbal crashes of brine and vegetal freshness. House-made bread made a great encore, dipped in the rich sauce.

BURGER

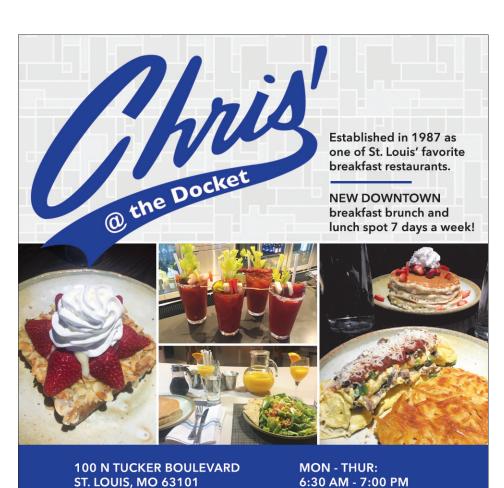
Folks have their preferences, but the Local Chef burger is easily in the running for St. Louis' best. Wait, wait, wait, Andrew, you may be thinking. That's a bold statement. Yes, it is. You need to try it. Served on a wheat bun, this burger

doesn't even need ketchup or the crisp lettuce, pickles and red onion served on the side – the two soft, perfectly cooked smashed patties are that good.

THE DOWNSIDE

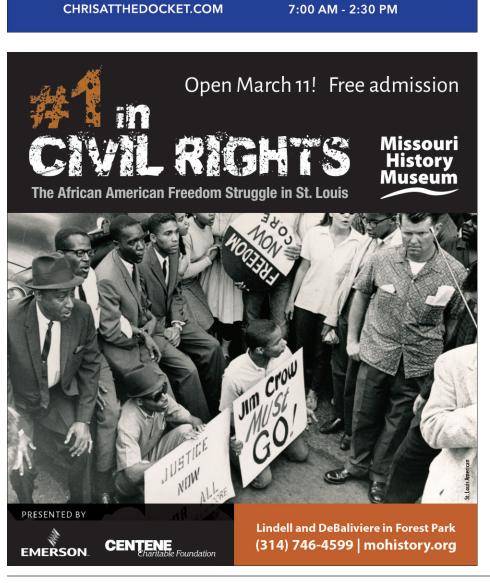
While the food is excellent. Local Chef's supermarket atmosphere is not. The compartmentalized plates served on cafeteria trays could be a hip throwback, but the design choices don't seem that intentional. Sitting next to market produce that you're also eating is simultaneously quaint and awkward. Ordering to-go is an option, but the food really is best eaten fresh. Either way, I wouldn't turn down an encore meal.

LOCAL CHEF KITCHEN 15270 Manchester Road, Ste. 130, Ballwin, 636.220.3212, Facebook: Local Chef STL



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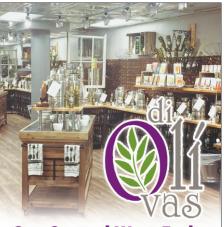
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pagan wine bar

BY MATT BERKLEY | PHOTOS BY DAVE MOORE





The walls are bedecked with white deer skulls, French cocktail prints and movie posters. Sinister knick-knacks and a few Egyptian cats perch around the bar. The light fixtures could have easily been ripped out of Count Dracula's castle. On a table beside the booze sits a well cared for old turntable that looks to get some use, but on my visit the speakers blared techno-chant-type tunes, which, after a few rounds of drinks, were actually pretty soothing.

The Euro vibe bleeds heavily into the drink menu, a crinkled printout of wines, cocktails and a nominal list of bottled beers in a funky font. The best of the classic cocktails was the **Vesper**, a smooth-sipping mix of gin, Lillet

Blanc, bitters and a lemon twist for a zesty kick. Another winner was the 1738 Lavender Sidecar, a sweeter and more colorful drink that merged fresh lemon juice, Cointreau, Remy

Martin 1738 cognac and heavy dose of rich lavender syrup. If these were the best, the worst was the **Pagan Martini**, a sad and frothy watered-down waste of good vodka. The wine list was more up my alley. It's obvious that owner Ed King – who is also is the barkeep, host, DJ, bouncer and badass master of ceremonies – is partial to red wines over white. Three-quarters of the dozen or so wines offered are big bold reds like the **Ben Marcos Velle Du Uco Malbec**, an Argentinian red that slammed into me like a fruity freight train.

There are better cocktails in town, but there are precious few bars this fun. This is King's joint. The intimate and informal atmosphere is a testament to his love for the place and his passion for the neighborhood, its inhabitants and every thirsty itinerant who passes through. It feels like a rascally pop-up designed to amuse the owner and serve as clubhouse for his friends. In other words, you're in for a hell of a good time. §

ORDER IT

pagan wine bar



Order the big, bold **Ben**Marcos Velle Du Uco

Malbec.



From left, the best of the classic cocktails were the **Vesper** and **1738 Lavender Sidecar.**

tepping into Pagan Wine Bar feels like stumbling into a madcap house party where you have no business being. You weren't invited. This isn't your normal scene. People are openly staring as you hover by the door. But awkwardness vanishes quickly at this unconventionally fun hole-in-the-wall, which, though small, has a spot for everyone.

Much like its predecessor – an independent bookstore that peddled crime and adventure novels – the Pagan Wine Bar is a quirky, offbeat wild card that can feel like it's operating on borrowed time. It's well situated at the nexus of the Central West End drinking and dining scene, just off the intersection of Maryland and Euclid avenues. On a typical Friday night, there are only about a half dozen guests

littering the bar, but no more than 30 bodies can probably fit in the place at one time. This is a cozy, word-of-mouth roost for every kind of person you can imagine: middle-aged winos, grad school nerds, yuppies, date-night couples and single people texting away or laughing with the bartender. You'd be just as comfortable wearing a tailored Armani suit as you would faded Wranglers and a T-shirt.

Despite the ominous-sounding name, the Pagan is entirely good-natured. The tight confines lend an authentic European feel. It's easy to imagine lounging away an entire evening sipping martinis on one of the deep leather couches, and the intimate seating provides great conversation spots. Blue lights illuminate the otherwise dark space that's dominated by a wood bar.



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A SEAT AT THE BAR / Four experts tell us what to sip, stir and shake



TED AND JAMIE
KILGORE

USBG, B.A.R. Ready, BarSmart and co-owners/bartenders at Planter's House Dutch genever was the precursor to gin. It combines gin's botanical notes with the malty flavors of whiskey. Look for the unaged **Bols Genever** with light citrusy notes, or the oak-aged version with bigger malt and a spicy robustness. Either is great for sipping or in a classic Dutch Old-Fashioned: In a highball glass filled with ice, gently stir together 2 ounces Bols Genever, ½ ounce simple

syrup, 2 dashes Angostura bitters, a lemon peel and an orange peel. \$40. Intoxicology, 4321 Manchester Ave., St. Louis, 314.833.3088, intoxicologystl.com



GLENN BARDGETT
Member of the Missouri Wine
and Grape Board and wine
director at Annie Gunn's

Sauvignon blanc typically has a grassy, herbal profile, but the **Chimney Rock Elevage Blanc** has a softer, rounder aspect thanks to its blend with the rare sauvignon gris. Older bottles of this elegant, surprisingly ageable Napa Valley white have a perfectly mature nose with

exotic, lush tropical aromas and a longlasting finish. It's stunning with salmon. \$37. Schnucks, 12332 Manchester Road, Des Peres, 314.965.3094, schnucks.com



KATIE HERRERA
Co-founder of Femme
Ferment and manager at
The Side Project Cellar

Cheers to the St.
Louis debut of the Old
World sour, Rodenbach
Grand Cru. This beauty
blends a young beer
with a two-year foedreaged sour red ale.
The older beer adds
depth and complexity,
while the younger
brings brightness and
tenacity. Look for a mild
acetic note paired with

flavors of wood, grain and cherry, rounded out with delicate berry sweetness. \$15. The Wine and Cheese Place, 7435 Forsyth Blvd., Clayton, 314.727.8788, wineandcheeseplace.com

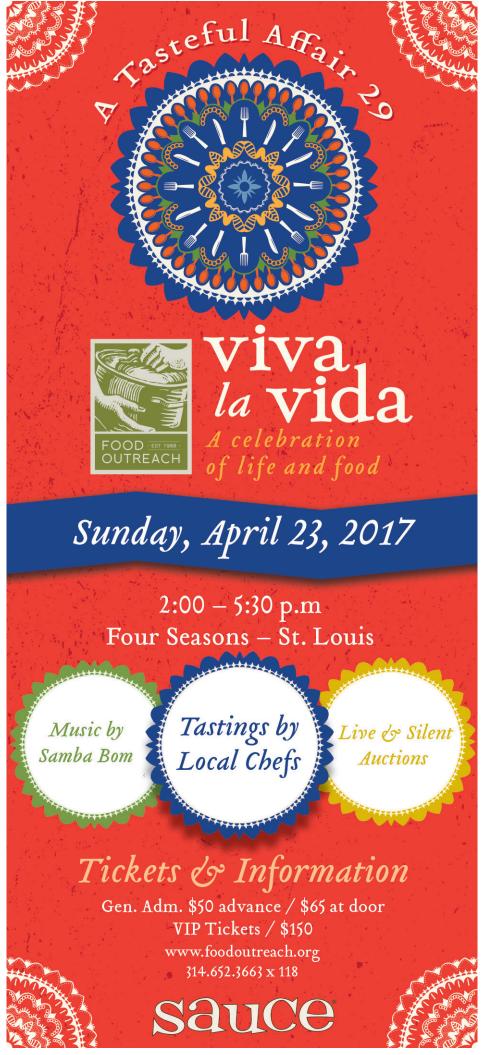












Southern Spirit

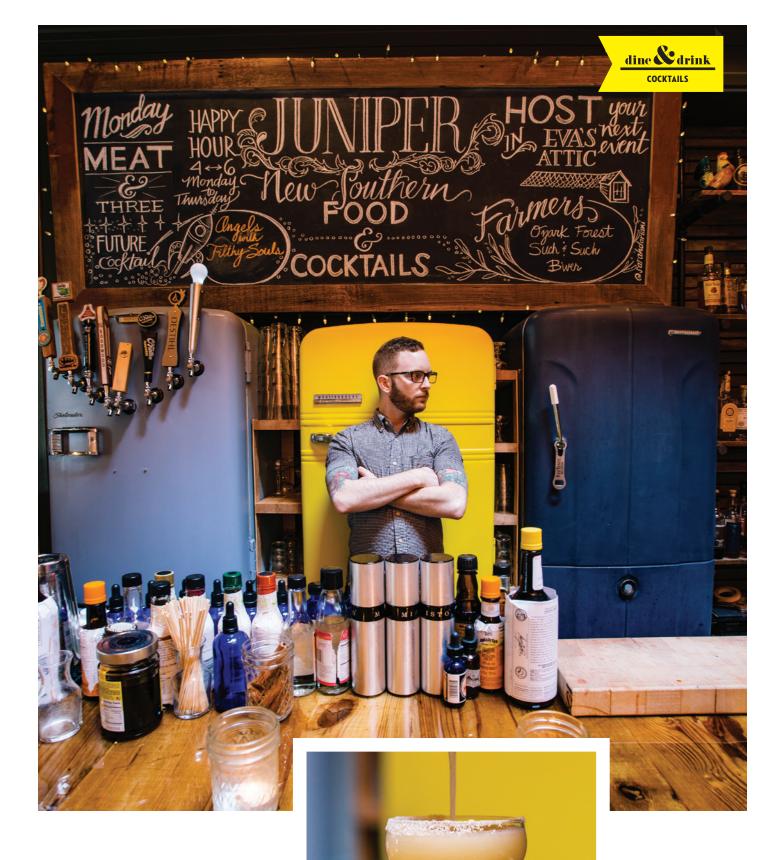
BY MATT SORRELL

"Think outside the box" is an encouragement to let creativity thrive unfettered by stale ideas. But sometimes limitations inspire imagination, rather than stifle it. Juniper bar manager Kevin Arndt understands this. His job is to create cocktails to pair with chefowner John Perkins' hearty, Southerninfluenced fare.

"It's actually tricky to stay in that box," said Arndt. There are classic Southern cocktails, of course, and Arndt's menu has some solid examples, like the Georgia Julep made with Old Grand-Dad, peach sweet tea simple syrup and mint.

It would be easy to replicate this tried and true template when creating any new drink - whiskey, rinse, repeat - call it Southern and move along. But Arndt takes a much subtler approach, going beyond the obvious tropes and using the food's flavors and less-is-more attitude to inform his drinks, instead of the region's cocktail stereotypes. Because really, what is Southern?

For example, The Cat's Pajamas is based on the classic Bee's Knees cocktail. Arndt's riff incorporates barrel-aged gin and the bitter French aperitif Suze, but it still tastes Southern. "It evokes that feel of being on a picnic, and it pairs well with a lot of our food," he said. That broad swath of the country can be tasted many ways in Arndt's creations - be it the watermelon shrub in the mezcal-based Hell Hath No Fury, the ginger in The Presbyterian, or his knack of combining just a few simple, quality ingredients to yield something far more delicious than the sum of its humble parts. The end results are drinks that, like the best Southern cooking, tell a story and make you feel at home. S



THE CAT'S PAJAMAS

1½ oz. barrel-aged gin
¾ oz. Big O Ginger Liqueur
½ oz. honey syrup (equal parts honey and water)
½ oz. lemon juice
1 barspoon Suze

 Combine all ingredients in an ice-filled shaker. Shake vigorously and strain into a cocktail glass.





a cut above

BY KELLIE HYNES // PHOTOS BY JONATHAN GAYMAN

Mise en place: a fabulous French phrase that describes washing/chopping/ measuring all your ingredients before you begin a recipe. Now, I know what you're thinking: Why should you prepare to cook when you can, you know, just start cooking? Solid prep work lets you settle into a well-timed rhythm, which is far more enjoyable than frantically hacking ingredients while the olive oil smokes in the skillet. In this Efficient Kitchen, we discuss how to prepare some of our most frequently used ingredients:

fresh herbs and onions. Once you master these knife skills, you'll be ahead of the game, instead of behind the unintended kitchen fire.

First, safety first. Never, ever (ahem, Husband Bob) hold your food in your hand while you slice it. Instead, use a clean, dry cutting board that won't slip on your work surface. Select a sharp knife for precise cutting. And, repeat "flat-side down" like it's a meditation chant. As in, cut your food in half and

place it flat-side down on the cutting board for stability. No 6 p.m. trips to the emergency room for you.

Fresh herbs make your food taste brighter and more flavorful. But if plucking the leaves from the stems seems like too much work, I have fantastic news. Chopped stems can be included in recipes that call for delicate herbs like cilantro, parsley and dill – simply remove and discard the tough ends without any leaves.



BUY IT "A knife is a tool.

And when you use the right tool, cooking is a way more fun." –

Nate Bonner, artisan knife maker Utility Petty Knife: \$240 and up.

NHB Knife Works, 7328 Manchester Road, Maplewood, 314.776.3800, nhbknifeworks.com



For flat herbs like mint or basil, make a chiffonade, which is another Frenchie phrase that describes cutting the herbs into long, thin ribbons. Stack your leaves into a flat pile and either roll the stack from top to bottom, or lengthwise from side to side (like a football). Starting from one open end, slice the roll into petite strips. I prefer the topto-bottom approach, which lets me isolate and discard the thicker middle vein in basil. Either way, your herbs will look as beautiful as they taste.

Stocking your refrigerator with pre-cut onion speeds up weeknight cooking. While you can buy diced onions in the produce section, it's cheaper and fresher to do it yourself. To dice an onion, trim the top (leaving the root intact), remove the peel and cut in half from root to tip. Place the onion halves flat-side down and make parallel cuts from root to tip, never slicing through the root. Rotate the onion 90 degrees and repeat, removing the root with the last cut.

To make onion slices, for, say, French onion soup, cut a peeled, trimmed onion in half from root to tip, remove the core and place flat-side down. With your knife at a 5-degree angle (the blade should be almost parallel to the cutting board), slice low on the side of the onion to the center. Increase the angle of your knife with every slice until it reaches 90 degrees and you're cutting down at the top of the onion. Then, so you don't chop your fingers, place the recently cut side on the board and repeat with the remaining quarter. The technical term for all of this geometry is "radial cuts," and it ensures that every slice is the same size.

If I'm being super efficient, I'll spend a Sunday afternoon chopping up enough herbs, onions and other ingredients to carry me through Thursday night dinner. Not only does dinner get on the table faster, I feel like a fantastic French chef, even when I'm making Italian.

FRENCH ONION SOUP Bring 6 cups beef or vegetable broth, 2 cups caramelized onions, ½ cup dry sherry and 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to low and simmer 30 minutes. Thicken with a slurry (2 tablespoons cold water and 1 tablespoon flour or cornstarch, stirred) if desired. Allow flavors to blend at least 1 hour or refrigerate overnight. Reheat and serve with Gruyere toast.

PASTA Bring 1 cup caramelized onions, ½ cup vegetable broth and 1/4 cup dry white wine to a boil over medium heat. Stir in 1 pound hot, cooked pasta. Sprinkle with ½ cup grated Parmesan and serve.

BRIE APPETIZER Preheat the oven 350 degrees. Remove the top rind from a wheel of brie. Top with 1/4 cup caramelized onions and bake until the cheese is gooey, about 30 minutes. Serve hot with apple and

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

1/4 tsp. kosher salt

2 CUPS

- 3 lbs. yellow onions, trimmed and peeled 3 Tbsp. olive oil 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- Cut 1 onion in half from root to tip. Remove the core. Place the flat side down on the cutting board, and make 1/4-inch radial cuts. Repeat with the remaining onions.
- In a large, heavy pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, warm the olive oil and butter.
- Add the onions, pepper and salt. Cook the onions, stirring every 10 to 15 minutes, until the onions are wilted and the liquid is reduced.
- Reduce the heat to low and stir frequently, scraping the bottom of the pan to ensure the onions don't







Skip the boring ketchup stuff and whip up this creamy, spicy-sweet sauce next time you're shrimp cocktailing.

In a large stockpot over high heat, bring 6 cups water, $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon, 2 bay leaves and 1 tablespoon kosher salt to a boil. Meanwhile, prepare an ice bath. Add 1 pound medium thawed or fresh shrimp to the boiling water and cook $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes, until pink and opaque. Transfer the shrimp to the ice bath and let cool 5 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream, 1 teaspoon honey, 1 teaspoon hot sauce,

1 teaspoon honey, I teaspoon not sauce, 1 teaspoon lime juice and ½ teaspoon cumin in a small bowl. Stir in 1 tablespoon minced green onions. Remove the shrimp from the water bath and serve with the dipping sauce. – Dee Ryan

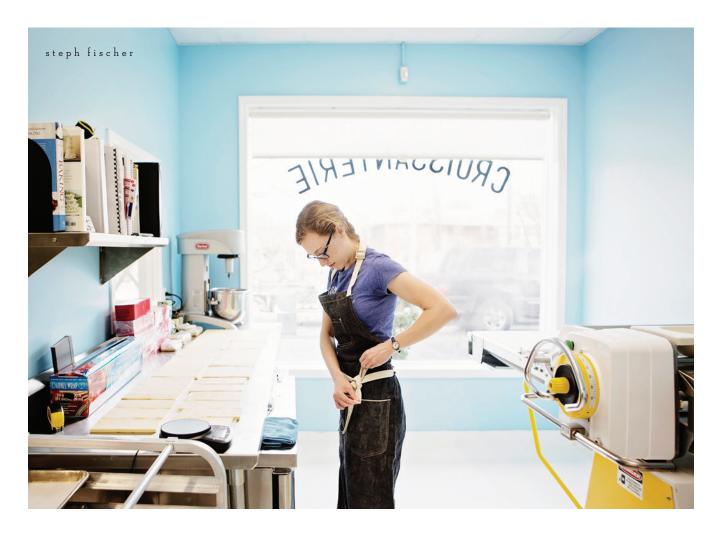








"Do you wanna shape one?" Steph Fischer asks me, pulling apart two triangles of pale, stretchy croissant dough and placing them on the stainlesssteel countertop at Comet Croissanterie & Creamery. "Croissants are my favorite to shape," she says, smiling.



look at the triangles with the clumsy nerves of a teenager. This dough has been places. It's seen two days of rolling, rising and rotating; two days of flouring, flattening and Fischer feeling its mood with her fingertips. It's been folded three times and weighed down to a hundredth of an ounce. It's rested for hours and taken four trips to the sheeter - a gargantuan machine that magically rolls the stuff so thin it yields endless teeny, tiny layers of butter and dough. It's been measured, trimmed and sliced - into strips, then rectangles and finally those near-perfectly congruous triangles. This croissant dough is the Mount Kilimanjaro of baking, and Fischer is going to let me help her to the top? I don't even own hiking shoes.

Fischer didn't set out to make the perfect croissant. In fact, when she and business partner Mark

Attwood decided to open Comet Coffee in Highlands Plaza back in 2012, her aspirations were much more pragmatic. "Mark was really into coffee, and we decided to open a coffee shop together," she says. "And what goes better with coffee in the morning than a croissant?"

Seems simple enough – just a nascent idea for a third-wave coffee shop and a single line in the business plan reading "croissants." But simple doesn't mean easy; it doesn't mean straightforward; it doesn't mean boring. For Fischer, simplicity denotes greatness. "If you do something simple really well, I admire that a lot," she says quietly. "I think that showcases skill even more than doing something really complicated. I am a bit of a perfectionist. I really like to do one thing and focus on that."

When Fischer was a kid, that thing was piano. She loved it –

the practicing, the repetition, the feel of the keys beneath her fingers. But when it became clear that building a life around music would most likely mean teaching, she chose baking over Beethoven and enrolled in the culinary program at St. Louis Community College – Forest Park. As a student, Fischer was drawn to the most daunting feat: laminated doughs. It was like croissants were in her genetic code. But culinary school didn't just make her a baker; it made her a teacher after all.

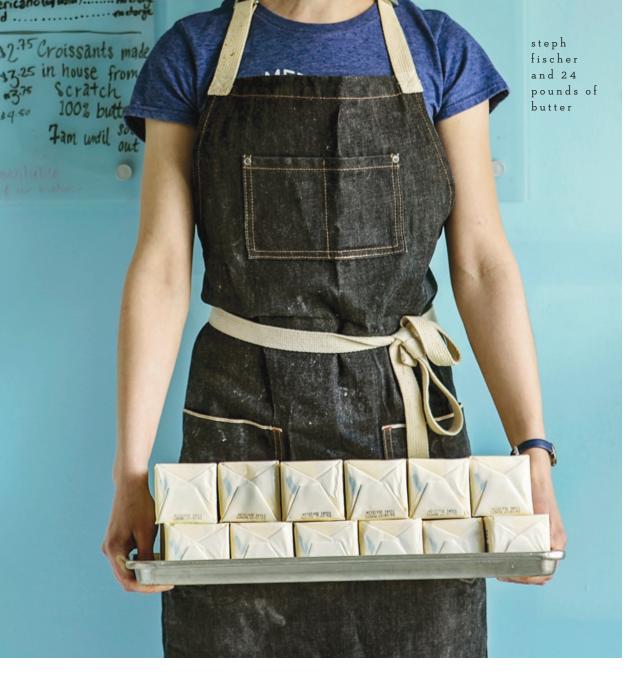
She's constantly pausing her process to tell me little facts. You have to let the dough rest in a cold environment, or the yeast will produce carbon dioxide and the dough will puff up too soon. Compared to all-purpose, bread flour has more proteins that make gluten, which is made of glutenin and gliadin. Her method blurs the line between art and science, teacher and pupil, revealing the swift

movements of a seasoned master and the perpetual curiosity of an eager student. One minute, she's explaining to me why the butter and dough must be the same temperature before they can harmonize, and the next she's hypothesizing with Union Loafers head baker and co-owner Ted Wilson about why winter water temperatures are wreaking havoc on their products.

he dough is warm now – soft, pliable and slick with an ungodly amount of butter. Fischer warns me: The more you touch it, the softer it will get, and the harder it will be to shape. (No pressure.) She instructs me to take the two corners at the bottom of the triangle where there is a small cut, overlap their inside ends, push out with my fingertips and roll. Overlap, push, roll. Overlap, push, roll. Ten seconds later, my croissant looks like a wobbly, misshapen clog. I look over, and she's rolling one flawless croissant after another with an ease that convinces me she could do this blindfolded. She barely touches the dough, giving it a tap, tap, tap with her floured fingertips, rolling the triangles into identical little crescent moons in half a second. "It will still taste good," she says kindly. I believe her.

Somewhere in the rhythm of the work, Fischer's tiny frame and timid nature give way to a powerful, confident master of this craft. Some people put a thumbprint on the dough after each step so they know where it is in the very long, very complicated lamination process, she explains. Fischer doesn't need to. She can feel it.

Bending the rolled dough so the ends meet like dolphin noses, she tells me that some people believe rounded croissants to be a sign they're made with shortening rather than butter. I know better.



hen James Beard Awardwinning baking goddess Nancy Silverton was asked what makes the perfect croissant, she answered simply, "Good butter - and lots of it." When I asked Fischer what sets her croissants apart, her answer was similar. "A lot of croissants aren't made with actual butter," she explains. "So that's definitely going to change the flavor and the mouth feel. Butter melts at body temperature and shortening doesn't, so if you eat something made with shortening, it leaves a waxy feel in your mouth."

Fischer uses an 84-percent butterfat, European-style butter.

That's about 4 percent higher than most American butters - the difference between skim and whole milk. "It definitely makes a difference," she says. "It's more pliable, so it makes it laminate into the dough better. You can feel it even if you take a little cube of butter that's 80 percent and you try to crush it in your fingers, it will kind of crumble. With a European-style butter, it will definitely feel a lot creamier – it won't crumble as much. And that makes a huge difference when you're trying to make little layers of butter and dough." I ask which butter is her secret weapon. She doesn't tell me. Respect.

After finding her butter, Fischer looked for a flour that was pure, simple and free of fuss - meaning bromation (a way to speed up the processing), DATEM (an additive) and dough conditioners (the thing that "makes a hot dog bun a hot bun"). She tested six different bread flours, each with different protein levels, before landing on her favorite. "I think it makes a difference in the flavor," she explains. "It's subtle, but I think it allows you to taste the ferment more; it definitely affects the texture."

The next secret to Fischer's croissants rising to the top of the ranks is the proofing. Fischer proofs her croissants at 68 to 70 degrees for three to four hours – a longer, slower rise than many recipes,

in order to develop as much flavor as possible. She tells me the story of a 3- or 4-year-old customer exclaiming, "'Oh, it's so good – it tastes like cheese!" after trying a croissant. "There's no cheese in it," Fischer says with a soft laugh. "It just has a lot more flavor when you ferment something a little bit longer."

As the first inch of the pan clears the oven, I spot one last trick. While most croissants finish baking boasting shiny, honey-colored tops, these babies are seriously browned. "Our croissants are baked more French-style," Fischer explains. "You see it with breads as well when you go to Europe – the breads have more of a crust; they're baked a lot darker. That's the Maillard reaction and the caramelization. I think it tastes better, and I almost think that it helps seal in moisture and kind of keeps it fresh and crisp and flaky. But it scares a lot of people."

Not me. The smell of dough baking is intoxicating. Fischer pops a croissant from the pan into a paper bag with one quick flick of her wrist and hands it to me. I break off a little piece and a tiny cloud of buttery steam rushes out from the inside. A bite, and I suddenly taste every painstaking step Fischer has taken to wiggle the most flavor out of these pastries as humanly possible: the extra fat in the butter; the flour free from complication; the four-hour proof; the long bake time; the layers - oh, the layers. You can see each one, tiny sheets of butter and dough stacked to create a flakiness that's next-level messy. The dark, crisp crust lends a deep flavor that goes past caramelization into steak-like territory. The center tastes of butter, cream and, yes, cheese - a tender

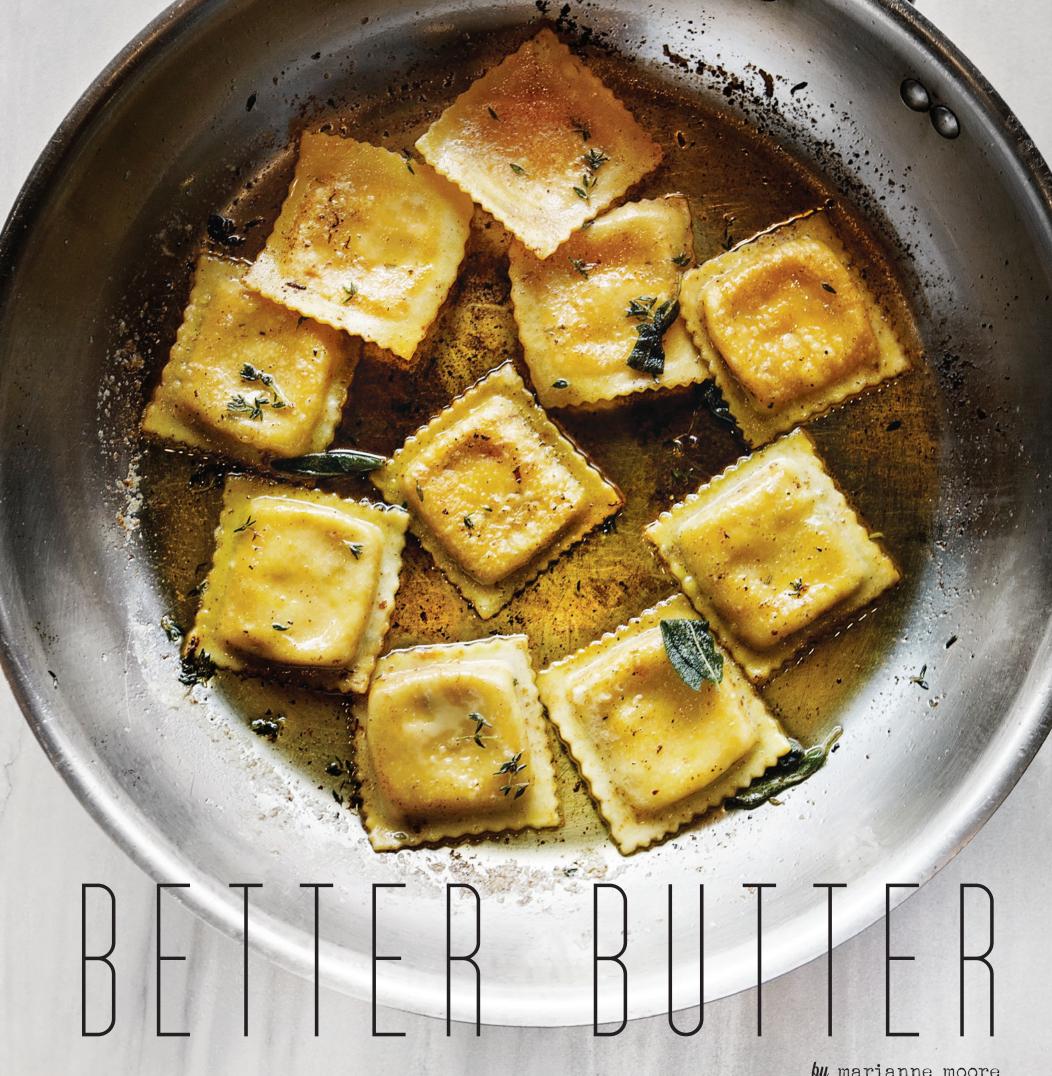
richness I'd never tasted before in a croissant. These are mind-blowingly good; baking goddess-level good; I-don't-care-if-my-pantsdon't-fit, I-don't-want-to-livein-a-world-without-thesecroissants good.

here's something romantic about taking on a task this big, diving headfirst into a craft and dedicating yourself to mastering it. But where so often the feeling of accomplishment languishes, the drive weakens and romance dies with time, Fischer is as enamored with making croissants as she was as a doeeyed culinary student. "There is something about working with your hands that allows you to feel where something's at," she says. "Oh, this bread needs a little bit more work. Or, oh this bread feels really tight, I should let it relax. ... It's alive. And you're working with yeast - it's really fun to just watch it proof. You shape them and then you come back a few hours later and they're twice as big. It's just - wow," she sighs, smiling. "It's amazing. There's something about folding in the butter it's meditative in a way."

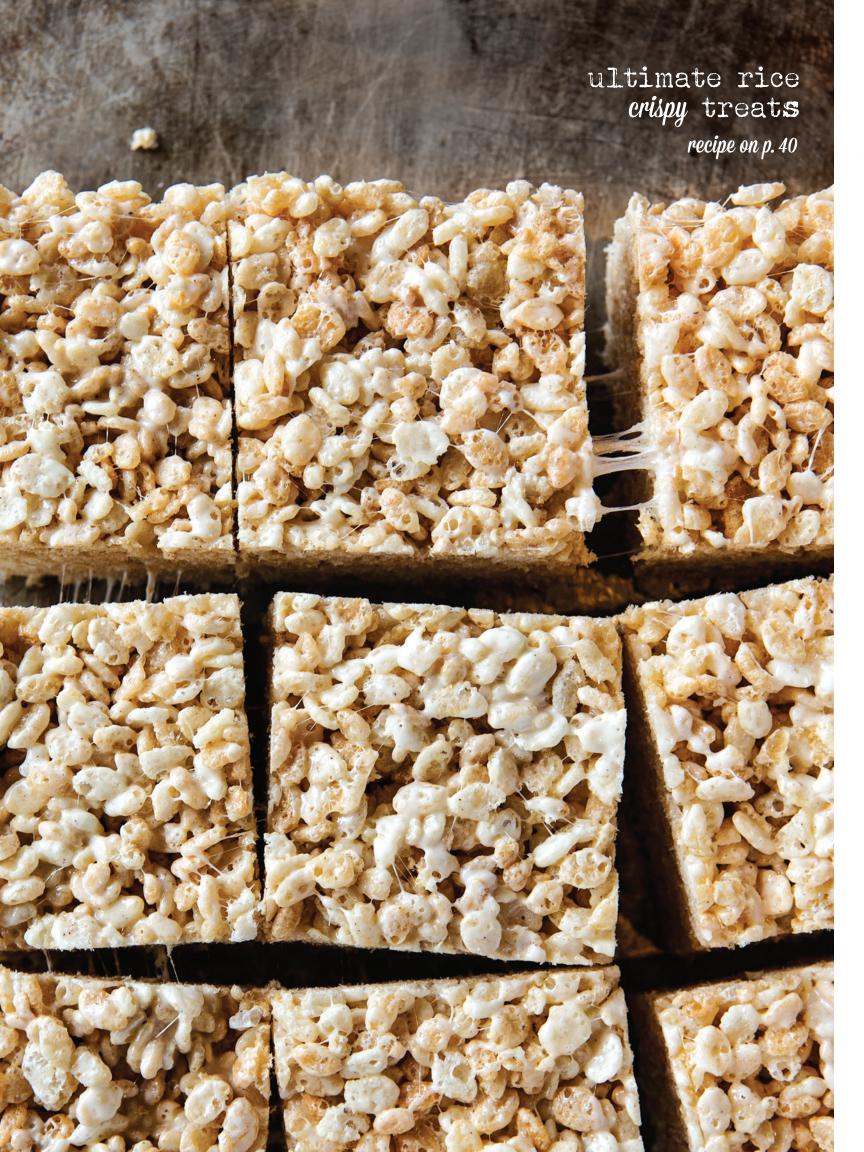
Fischer didn't set out to make the perfect croissant. And like any humble master of her trade, she'll argue that she still hasn't. She wants to continue the learning that keeps her madly in love with the process. But perfect or not, one thing is certain: These are croissants all croissants should taste like – and then bow down to.

Comet Croissanterie & Creamery, 640 W. Woodbine Ave., Kirkwood, 314.394.1033; Comet Coffee, 5708 Oakland Ave., St. Louis, 314.932.7770, cometcoffeestl.com





by marianne moore photos by carmen troesser



Deeper, richer and more intense than melted or clarified, brown butter is also known as **beurre** noisette ("hazelnut butter") because it tastes nutty and toasty, and has a similar color. Made by cooking unsalted butter long enough to brown the milk solids and cook out any water, do it right and your kitchen will smell like delicious, toasted hazelnuts. Do it wrong, and it will smell like burnt oil and defeat.

Traditionally served with fish, brown butter makes a delicious topping for vegetables and gives desserts a serious flavor boost, too, whether it's baked into cookies and cakes or whipped into frostings. The best thing about brown butter is its versatility. You can use it in liquid state, or cool it to solid. Sneak this stuff in anywhere you'd use regular butter for an extra layer of flavor.



BASIC BROWN BUTTER

34 CUP

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, sliced

• In a heavy, light-colored saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Cook, whisking frequently. The butter will foam, then subside. Watch carefully as brown specks begin to form at the bottom of the pan, so it doesn't burn. When the specks are amber brown and the butter has a nutty aroma, about 4 minutes, remove from heat and pour into a bowl to cool.

SOUTHERN BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

1 DOZEN

2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

Tbsp. aluminum-free baking powder

1 tsp. kosher salt 1/4 tsp. baking soda

6 Tbsp. very cold Basic Brown
Butter, cut into chunks (recipe
at left)

1 cup buttermilk

• Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

- Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda in a bowl or the bowl of a food processor.
- Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry blender, or pulse in the food processor, until it resembles coarse meal.
- Add the buttermilk and mix with a spoon until just combined. If it appears dry, add a bit more buttermilk. It should be very wet.
- Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface. Gently pat the dough out until ½-inch thick do not use a rolling pin. Knead the dough 5 times, then gently press into to a 1-inch-thick disc.
- Cut into 2-inch rounds. Knead the scraps together to cut a few more, but they will not

Brown butter reduces in volume as the water content cooks off: 1 cup butter yields 3/4 cup brown butter.

be as good as the first batch. Arrange the biscuits so they are touching on a sheet pan.

 Bake 10 to 12 minutes, until light golden brown on top and bottom. Serve warm or let cool on a wire rack.

CAULIFLOWER WITH MUSTARD RROWN RIITTER

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

1 head cauliflower

2/3 cup plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil, divided

1/2 cup drained large capers, divided

3¼ cup coarse breadcrumbs, preferably fresh

1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

10 Tbsp. butter
½ cup whole-grain mustard
6 cloves garlic, minced

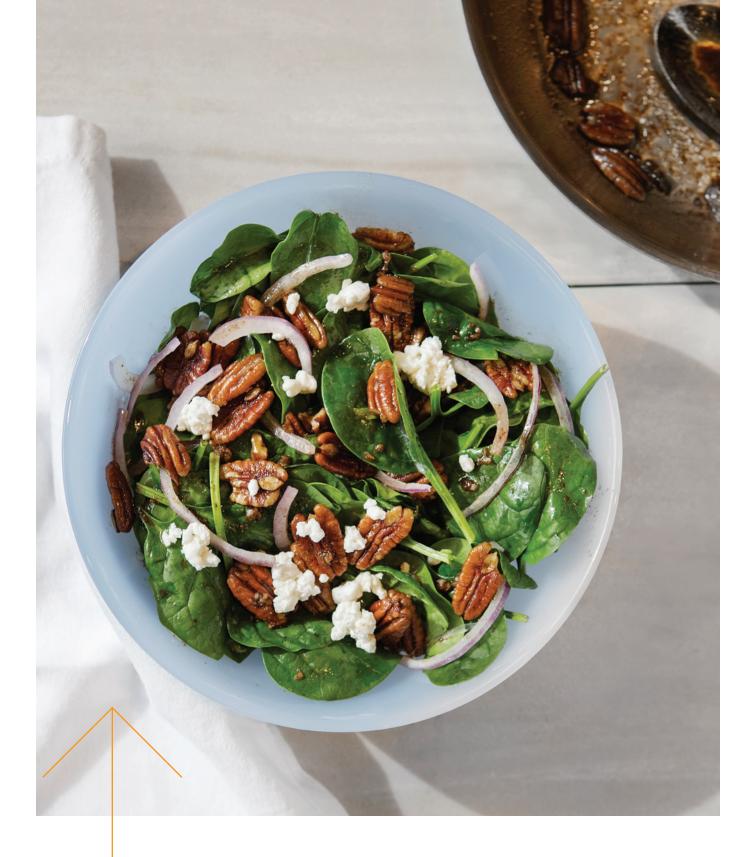
1/4 cup roughly chopped parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground

black pepper to taste

 Place the rack in the center of the oven and preheat the broiler

- Trim the cauliflower, cut into small florets and mince the stems.
- On a baking sheet, toss the cauliflower florets with 2 tablespoons oil and salt and pepper to taste. Broil until charred and tender, 8 to 10 minutes.
- In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat ½

- cup oil. Add ¼ cup capers and fry until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the capers to a paper towel-lined plate. Add the breadcrumbs and pepper flakes to the skillet and saute until crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
- Reduce the heat to medium, wipe the skillet clean and add the butter. Cook, whisking frequently. The butter will foam, then subside. Watch carefully as brown specks begin to form at the bottom of the pan, so it doesn't burn. When the specks are deep golden brown and the butter has a nutty aroma, about 4 minutes, stir in the mustard and salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a bowl.
- Increase the heat to medium-high and add the remaining ½ cup oil to the skillet. Add the cauliflower stems, garlic and salt and pepper to taste, and saute until golden, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the charred florets and mustard butter and toss to coat. Stir in the breadcrumbs. Transfer to a serving bowl and garnish with the remaining ½ cup capers and parsley.



SPINACH SALAD WITH BROWN BUTTER VINAIGRETTE

6 SERVINGS

1 5-oz. package baby spinach, rinsed and drained

1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion

⅓ cup butter

34 cup pecan halves

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

1 Tbsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. sugar

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

4 oz. crumbled goat cheese

• In a medium serving bowl, combine the

spinach and onion. Set aside.

- In a medium skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the pecans and cook, stirring occasionally until the butter is light brown and the pecans are toasted, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat.
- Whisk in the garlic, vinegar, lemon juice and sugar. Immediately drizzle over the spinach and toss until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper to taste, sprinkle with the cheese and serve immediately.

GO BROWN OR GO HOME

Warning: Once you've made brown butter, you may go on a binge. Here are helpful ways to bring your favorite recipes up a notch and turn store-bought items into something special with brown butter.

Granola

Butter helps toast the nuts and oats in granola, and brown butter takes that nutty flavor over the edge.

Chickpeas

Toss garbanzo beans with brown butter and a bit of seasoning and toast until crispy.

Grilled Cheese

The best grilled cheese sandwiches are the ones where the butter caramelizes and crisps the bread. Kind of like - you guessed it - brown butter. Just cook that grilled cheese in brown butter for guaranteed awesome flavor.

Soups

Stir a drizzle of brown butter into your favorite soup. Think potato leek, clam chowder or even a creamy tomato.

Pasta

Finish a store-bought tortellini or ravioli with brown butter. Toss in some herbs and lemon juice while pan-frying to pump up the flavor even more.

Veggies

Give instant flavor to vegetables by tossing them in brown butter instead of olive oil before roasting.

Potatoes.

Infuse brown butter with a bit of garlic and stir into mashed potatoes.

CORN AND ASPARAGUS PASTA WITH BROWN BUTTER BREADCRUMBS

4 SERVINGS

- 3 ears corn, shucked and kernels removed
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut in pieces
- 9 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 lb. pappardelle
- 1/2 large red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 green jalapeno, seeded and minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste 1 cup Brown Butter
- Breadcrumbs (recipe follows)
 2 oz. grated Grana Padano
 Fresh parsley, chopped, for
 agrnish
- In a cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, saute the corn and asparagus with 3 tablespoons oil until charred and soft, about 3 minutes.
 Transfer to a bowl and set aside.
- Cook the pasta according to package directions, drain, toss with 3 tablespoons oil and set aside.
- Meanwhile, return the skillet to medium heat and add the remaining 3 tablespoons oil, red onion and jalapeno.
 Saute 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to taste and cook 1 more minute. Add the reserved asparagus and corn.
 Season with additional salt and pepper to taste, increase the heat to medium-high and saute 3 to 4 minutes, until well mixed and browned.
- Reduce the heat to low, add the cooked pasta to the skillet and mix carefully. Transfer to a serving platter and top with the breadcrumbs, cheese and parsley. Serve immediately.

BROWN BUTTER BREADCRUMBS

1 CUP

5 Tbsp. butter 1 cup breadcrumbs, preferably fresh

- In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Cook, whisking frequently. The butter will foam, then subside. Watch carefully as brown specks begin to form at the bottom of the pan, so it doesn't burn. When the specks are amber brown and the butter has a nutty aroma, about 4 minutes, remove from heat and pour into a bowl to let cool.
- Add the breadcrumbs, stir to combine and return to the saucepan over medium-low heat. Stirring frequently to prevent burning, cook until the crumbs crisp and darken slightly. Remove from heat and let cool

BROWN BUTTER MACARONI AND CHEESE

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

12 oz. macaroni
9 Tbsp. butter, divided
2 Tbsp. flour
2/3 cup milk
3/4 cup grated white cheddar
1/4 cup shredded Parmesan
1/2 cup breadcrumbs,
preferably fresh

- Cook the pasta according to package directions, drain and set aside.
- Meanwhile, prepare the cheese sauce. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt 6 tablespoons butter, whisking frequently. The butter will foam, then

- subside. Watch carefully as brown specks begin to form at the bottom of the pan, so it doesn't burn. When the specks are light brown and the butter has a nutty aroma, about 4 minutes, immediately whisk in the flour until smooth, then add the milk and whisk until slightly thickened. Add the cheddar and Parmesan and continue to whisk over medium heat until smooth.
- Pour the cheese sauce over the cooked macaroni, then transfer to a large baking dish.
- Place the rack in the center of the oven and preheat the broiler.
- In a small bowl, microwave the remaining 3 tablespoons butter until melted, about 30 seconds. Stir in the breadcrumbs, then sprinkle over the macaroni and cheese
- Broil the macaroni and cheese until the top is slightly browned, 5 to 8 minutes.

ULTIMATE RICE CRISPY TREATS

8 TO 10 SERVINGS

1½ cups sugar
1 cup cold water, divided
½ cup light corn syrup
Pinch of kosher salt
2 tsp. unflavored gelatin
1 tsp. vanilla extract
3 Tbsp. butter
9 to 10 cups crispy rice cereal

Special equipment: candy thermometer

- Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.
- In a small saucepan over medium heat, whisk together the sugar, ½ cup cold water, corn syrup and salt. Once the sugar is dissolved, let sit undisturbed until the mixture reaches soft ball stage, 235 to 240 degrees, then remove from heat.

- Meanwhile, in a large, deep, heatproof bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over the remaining ½ cup cold water. Let stand until softened, about 1 minute, then beat 2 minutes at medium speed.
- Carefully pour the sugar mixture into the gelatin, avoiding the beaters and sides of the bowl. Beat on high speed until mixture increases in volume and turns into thick, white marshmallow, 5 to 8 minutes. Add the vanilla and beat for 1 minute.
- In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter, whisking frequently. The butter will foam, then subside. Watch carefully as browned specks begin to form at the bottom of the pan, so it doesn't burn. When the specks are amber brown and the butter has a nutty aroma, 3 to 4 minutes, add the marshmallow and mix together. Remove from heat and stir in the crispy rice cereal 1 cup at a time, mixing thoroughly to ensure even coating. Press evenly into the prepared dish and allow to cool.

BROWN BUTTER CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

3 DOZEN

cup (2 sticks) roomtemperature butter, divided
 cup packed light brown sugar
 tsp. vanilla extract
 Tbsp. bourbon (optional)

1/2 cup sugar 2 eggs

21/4 cups flour 1 tsp. kosher salt

1 tsp. baking soda1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips

½ cup chopped pecans Coarse sea salt, for sprinkling

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.
- In a medium skillet over medium heat, melt ½ cup butter, whisking frequently. The butter will foam, then subside. Watch carefully as brown specks begin to form at the bottom of the pan, so it doesn't burn. When the specks are amber brown and the butter has a nutty aroma, 2½ to 3 minutes, remove from heat and pour into a bowl to stop cooking. Allow to cool.
- Beat the remaining ½ cup butter and the brown sugar on medium-high speed until the mixture is very smooth, 3 to 5 minutes. Beat in the vanilla and bourbon. Add the cooled brown butter and sugar, and beat until smooth, about 2 minutes. The mixture will lighten in color and become fluffy. Add the eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition.
- Add the flour, baking soda and salt and mix until just incorporated. Fold in the chocolate chips and pecans. Cover and refrigerate 15 to 30 minutes.
- Drop the dough in 2-tablespoon scoops onto the baking sheets. Leave space between each, as the cookies will spread as they bake. Sprinkle with the sea salt
- Bake the cookies 12 to 15 minutes, until golden brown.
 Let rest on the baking sheet at least 5 minutes before removing. Serve warm or finish cooling on a wire rack.



stuff to do: MARCH

BY MATT SORRELL



Port Tasting and Dinner March 4 - 4 to 9 p.m., Mount Pleasant Estates, 5634 High St., Augusta, 636.482.9463, mountpleasant.com

Join winemaker Colin Pennington for a tasting of five vintages of Mount Pleasant port, along with samples of tawny port and white port. After your tasting, sit down to a dinner of salad, chicken cordon bleu and turtle cheesecake. Seating available for the tasting only, or for both events. Call for reservations.



Indie Wineries Dinner March 9 - 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Claverach Farm, 568 S. Lewis Road, Eureka. daverachfarm.com

Located in the farm's historic renovated barn, this event features spring dishes made with ingredients from the surrounding fields. Each dish is paired with Italian and Slovenian wines from importer Indie Wineries. Bottles include Iuli from Piedmont, Fattoria San Lorenzo from Le Marche, Pacina from Tuscany and Tenuta Ia Favola and Vino di Anna of Sicily, as well as Rojac from Slovenia. Tickets available online.



St. Pat's Bar Crawl March 11 - noon to 10 p.m., Great Grizzly Bear, 1027 Geyer Ave., St. Louis, Facebook: Bar Crawls STL

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Bar Crawls STL by roaming the pubs of Soulard.
Registration starts at the Great Grizzly
Bear, where participants receive wristbands providing access to six participating bars including Hammerstone's, Duke's and Carson's. There is also a prize for best leprechaun costume. A portion of the proceeds support St. Patrick Center; tickets available online.



Black & Blues March 12 - 1 to 5 p.m., The Old Bakery Beer Co., 400 Landmarks Blvd., Alton, 618.463.1470, oldbakerybeer.com

Celebrate The Old Bakery Beer Co.'s second anniversary with more than 20 area breweries pouring dark, bold beers. Old Bakery debuts its anniversary beer, an Imperial stout aged in Mount Pleasant Estates tawny port barrels. Fill up on barbecue specials and rock out to blues music. Tickets available online or at the brewery.



The Art of Fried Chicken

March 24 - 6:30 p.m.,
Companion West St. Louis
Campus, 2331 Schuetz Road,
Maryland Heights, 314.627.5257,
companionbaking.com

Join chef Cassy Vires for a hands-on class dedicated to this most comforting of comfort foods. Participants explore and taste different styles of fried chicken: cornmeal breaded, a spicy battered Memphis-style and Korean-style chicken wings. Tickets available online.



Ales For Tails Homebrew Festival

March 25 - noon to 5 p.m., American Czech Educational Center, 4690 Lansdowne Ave., St. Louis, 978.785.7486, stlpivo.com

You know your favorite breweries - now see what local homebrewers can do while also benefiting Tenth Life Cat Rescue and Needy Paws Dog Rescue. While you sip, dig into food from vendors like including STL BLT, Bombay Food Junkies, Wing Nutz and Steve's Hot Dogs. Tickets available online.



sponsored events

Cinema St. Louis Film Festivals

Weekends beginning March 10 - locations vary, 314.289.4152, cinemastlouis.org

Join Cinema St. Louis for two film festivals this March. The Robert Classic French Film Festival takes place at Webster University's Winifred Moore Auditorium weekends from March 10 to 26. The 10th annual QFest showcasing LGBTQ voices and culture takes place at .ZACK from March 29 to April 2. Full film schedules and tickets available online.

The Library Hour: MTV Spring Break Edition

March 23 - 7 and 9 p.m., Brennan's, 4659 Maryland Ave., St. Louis, 314.497.4449, cometobrennans.com

Forget slushie piña coladas and lemon drop shots - drink like an adult on spring break. The pros show you how at The Library Hour, a new cocktail education program at Brennan's. Sauce staff writer Matt Sorrell and STL Barkeep's Matt Longueville kick off this monthly series with MTV Spring Break Edition, where attendees make and taste these mature takes on college classics. Two seatings are available; tickets available online.

Wine & Dine with Sauce Magazine

March 31 - 6:30 to 9 p.m., Dierbergs, 1081 Lindemann Road, Des Peres, 314.238.0440, dierbergs.com/school

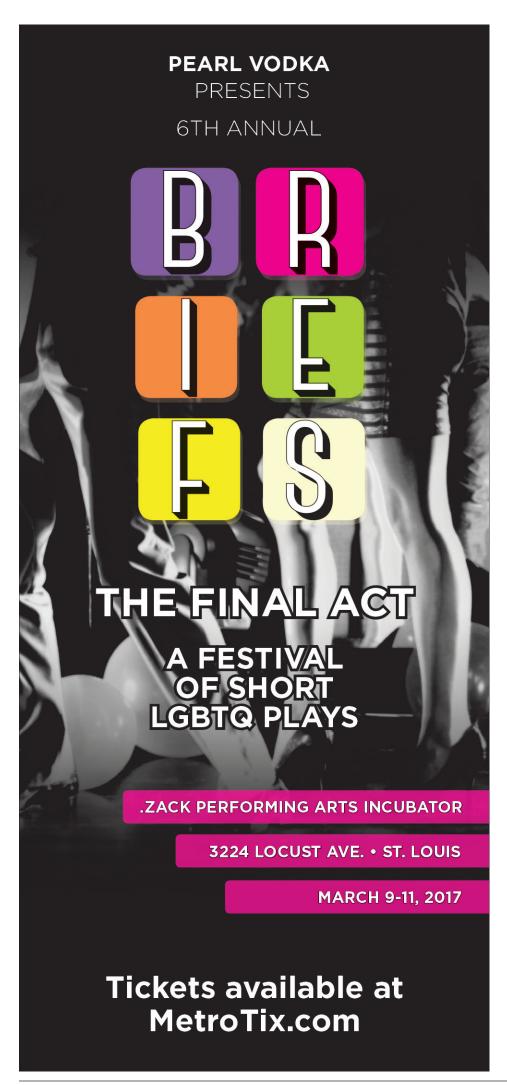
Learn new recipes and the latest culinary trends from the Sauce team at this multi-course dinner and cooking class.

Managing editor Heather Hughes and art director Meera Nagarajan team up with Dierbergs' Marianne Moore and Annie Gunn's wine director Glenn Bardgett to showcase recipes from the magazine paired with wines. Tickets available online.

Lupulin Carnival

April 1 - noon to 4 p.m., Midway at Union Station, 1820 Market St., St. Louis, 314.436.1559, lupulincarnival.com

The annual Lupulin Carnival has a new home. 4 Hands Brewing Co. has moved its annual festival of the hop to the Midway at Union Station. Attendees enjoy unlimited pours from more than 60 local, regional and national breweries, as well as the annual release of 4 Hands War Hammer, the brewery's Imperial IPA. Lupulin also features carnival performances, a Ferris wheel and a super slide. Tickets





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WHAT I DO

Justin Harris and Ryan Griffin

Brothers Justin Harris and Ryan Griffin want to talk to you about beer. They've set up their **Saint Louis Hop Shop** with that in mind: choosing the foot traffic-heavy Cherokee Street neighborhood, hosting beer events and offering a short menu of pours to enjoy while you peruse their shelves of carefully selected bottles. Here, the brothers of beer talk family, community and Cherokee Street.

– Heather Hughes

IN IT TOGETHER

"One benefit that comes [from working with family] is understanding – like understanding who they are as a person. I grew up with him; he grew up with me. I know who he is; he knows who I am." – R.G.

"We get along pretty well - we always have. I think it goes back to what Ryan was saying: We know what to expect from each other, both good and bad. I know I do things that drive him crazy, and he could say the same thing. But at the end of the day, there's comfort in knowing that you've got somebody who's family - that's my brother, you know." - J.H.

GATEWAY BEER

"It was Boulevard 80-Acre, if I'm not mistaken ... a hoppy wheat beer. It was so much different from [Natty Light] - it was no comparison. That's when I realized that it wasn't about drinking beer until you can't drink anymore. I could have one or two after class, and that would be it for the night." - J.H.

ST. LOUIS ON THE RISE

"Opening this store has opened my eyes to things outside of what I was familiar with: different people, different ideas, different backgrounds and how St. Louis is coming together, investing in small communities. ... People are accepting of new, fresh ideas and I feel like St. Louis is undergoing a renaissance." – R.G.

PRICE OF ENTRY

"The cool thing about the beer industry is that for the most part you're dealing with a lot of likeminded people. ... Events have been a key staple of who we are - the culture of the store - because you really get to engage with people past, like,

'That'll be \$9.99.' ... No beer unless you talk to us." - J.H.

CANDY CRUSH

"I'm into stouts, and I'd say brown beers, porters, brown ales. ... I'm like a candy fiend. I have a big sweet tooth. I'm really into chocolate, something that's more hearty ... those things that lather your tongue with sweetness." - R.G.

CHEROKEE STREET

"Cherokee Street is a very vibrant place, and people want to be down here. ... It's a great energy. And I feel like it's a huge support system, between us and other businesses. A lot of stuff in our store came from Antique Row. I go to Byrd & Barrel like every other day. We get coffee at Foam all the time. ... You just feel like you're a part of something when you walk up and down the street." - R.G.

READERS' CHOICE POLL 2017

SEE THE WINNERS IN THE JUNE ISSUE

Join us Sunday, June 4, 2017 for our annual SAUCY SOIRÉE from 5 to 10 p.m. Get a copy of the Readers' Choice issue and mingle with the winners. Order your tickets at saucysoiree.com.

We've had our say — now it's your turn! Vote for your favorite St. Louis-area restaurants, bars, shops and more in our annual Readers' Choice Poll. Write in your favorite in each category, then mail your ballot to the address below. We'll tally up the votes and the TOP 10 in each category will move on to online-only The Finalist Round.

Only locally owned, independent restaurants qualify to be in the poll. Any votes cast for non-St. Louis area-based chains or franchises will be disqualified. If you prefer voting online, visit the online poll at saucemagazine.com/readerschoice

DINE Please print	DRINK Please print			
Chef Of The Year	Bartender Of The Year			
New Restaurant	Favorite Happy Hour			
Favorite Restaurant	Favorite Cocktails			
Favorite Romantic Spot	Favorite Beer Bar			
Favorite Diner	Favorite Brewery			
Favorite Food Truck	Favorite Wine Bar			
Favorite Pub	Favorite Local Winery			
Favorite Patio	Favorite Sports Bar			
Favorite Fine Dining	01100			
Favorite Brunch	SHUP Please print			
Favorite Deli/Sandwich Shop	Favorite Butcher Shop			
Favorite Doughnut	Favorite Farmers Market			
Favorite Barbecue	Favorite Local Grocery			
Favorite Steakhouse	Favorite Specialty Food Store			
Favorite Pizza	Favorite Cakes/Pastries			
Favorite Italian	Favorite Chocolate Shop			
Favorite Fried Chicken	Favorite Coffee Shop			
Favorite Chicken Wings	Favorite Bottle Shop			
Favorite Burger	Favorite Bread			
Favorite Frozen Dessert				
Favorite Cajun/Creole	information must be completed entirely and accurately. Mailed ballots must be postmarked			
Favorite Indian	by Friday, March 25, 2017. There is no minimum number of completed categories required for a ballot to be valid. Restaurants distributing blank, completed or semi-completed			
Favorite Tacos	ballots and/or mailing ballots for customers will be disqualified from the poll. If you witness			
Favorite Mexican	this, please contact Sauce Magazine at 314.772.8004 x111; a sample will be required. Sauce Magazine reserves the right to reject ballots that appear to be submitted improperly.			
Favorite Mediterranean/Middle Eastern	VOUS MESS VITION			
Favorite Soul Food/Southern	YOUR INFORMATION All fields are required for the ballot to be valid			
Favorite Chinese	Full name:			
Favorite Korean	Address:			
Favorite Thai	City:			
Favorite Vietnamese				
Favorite Sushi	State: Zip:			
Favorite Ramen	Phone:			
Vegetarian/Vegan	Email address:			

MAIL your ballot to: Sauce Magazine's Readers' Choice Poll, 1820 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103 OR VOTE online: saucemagazine.com/readerschoice





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class of 2017

THE ST. LOUIS BEER SCENE IS ALWAYS EXPANDING, BUT WITH A DOZEN BREWERIES SLATED TO OPEN THIS YEAR, WE'RE ENTERING A NEW BEER BOOM. MEET THE ST. LOUIS BREWERS' CLASS OF 2017. - HEATHER HUGHES



TOP ROW from left: Greer Brewing (Facebook: Greer Brewing) brewer-co-owner Chris Greer and co-owner Becky Greer, Two Plumbers
Brewery & Arcade (twoplumbers.com) head brewer John Simon, Wellspent Brewing (wellspentbeer.com) brewer-co-owner Kyle Kohlmorgen,
Good News Brewing (goodnewsbrewing.com) brewer-co-owner Josh Miller, Steampunk Brew Works (steampunkbrewworks.com) brewer-owner
David Deaton /// MIDDLE ROW from left: Rockwell Beer (rockwellbeer.com) brewer-owner Andy Hille, Design2Brew (design2brew.com) head
brewer Donn Christian, Third Wheel Brewing (thirdwheelbrewing.com) head brewer Abbey Spencer, Missouri Beer Co. (mobeerco.com) brewerco-owner Dave Johnson, Good News Brewing brewer-co-owner Dan Tripp /// BOTTOM ROW from left: White Rooster Farmhouse Brewery
(whiteroosterfarmhousebrewery.com) brewer-co-owner Mike Deutschmann, Senn Bierwerks (senn.beer) brewer-co-owner Dustin Chalfant,
Center Ice Brewery (centericebrewery.com) brewer-owner Steve Albers, Senn Bierwerks brewer-co-owner James Hellmuth §



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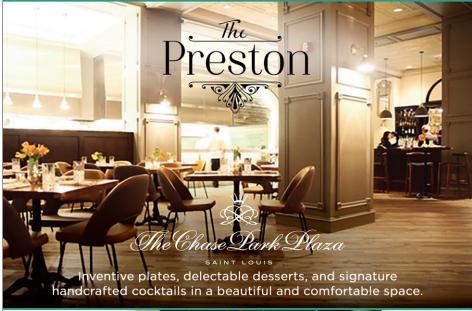
basso

7036 Clayton Avenue St. Louis, MO 314.932.7820 Basso-stl.com











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one glass to rule them all

BY MATT SORRELL

own styles of glassware for a reason, but few of us have enough space or money to buy a full portfolio of beer glasses.

Keep things simple by enjoying your next brew in a wine glass.

The standard shape – wider at the bottom and narrow at the top – helps focus aromatics, which will enhance your enjoyment of most styles, especially if you don't fill it as high as Tammy Taylor.

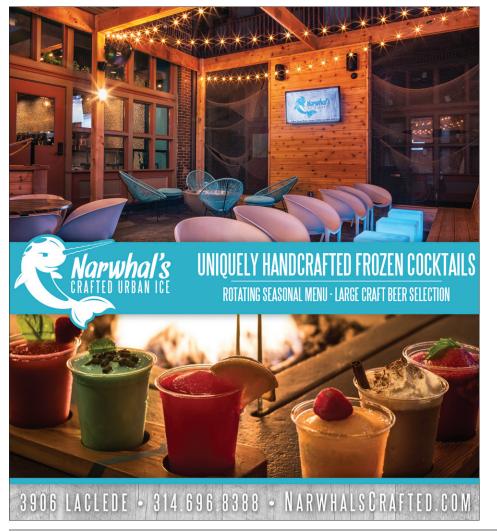
2nd Shift Brewing Co. co-owner Libby Crider especially likes to use wine glasses for barrel-aged beers, which tend to be more delicate. "They're great for beers you want to treat like wines," she said. "You can swirl, aerate and really get the whole experience."

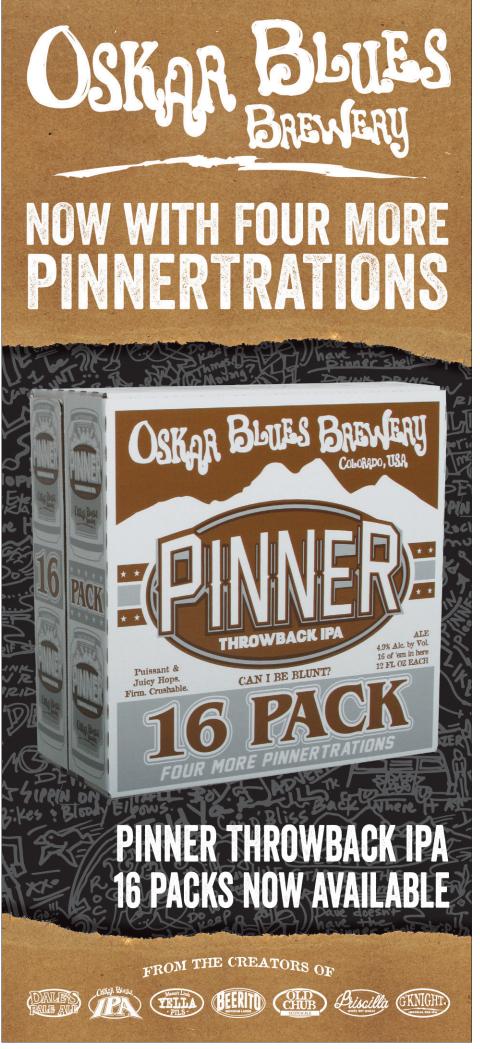
2nd Shift Brewing Co., 1601 Sublette Ave., St. Louis, 314.669.9013, 2ndshiftbrewing.com

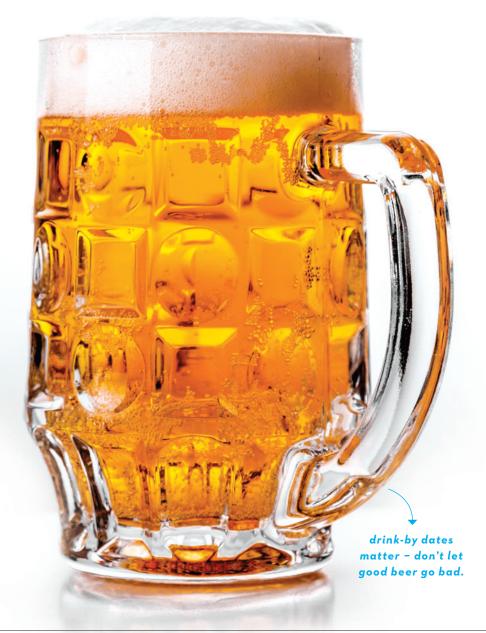












FRESH TO DEATH

by catherine klene

half-empty jug of milk sit past its bestby date. Way past its best-by date. You remove the cap, take a cautious sniff ... then retch and promptly chuck the whole thing in the trash.

While old beer doesn't produce quite the same visceral reaction, bottling or drink-by dates should be given the same consideration. If you've ever ordered a beer you thought you liked and found it unexpectedly flat or nasty, you're familiar with the concept. Discovering you're sipping a skunky lager or hop-less IPA is as disheartening to the brewer as it is to the consumer, according to 4 Hands brewery manager Martin Toft.

"After (the drink-by date), the beer isn't going to be bad for you or unsafe to drink, it's just not going to be the same beer that we want the consumers to drink." Toft said.

That IPA you saved for a special occasion? Celebrate soon. In general, hoppy beers like IPAs and American pale ales should be consumed as soon as possible and definitely within two to three months.

"Those really bright, vibrant hop aromas will fall off, and it can start to get cardboard-y, sometimes kind of cheesy is another descriptor for old hops – a lot of really unpleasant flavors and aromas," Toft said. "All those really pungent, citrusy, fruity, tropical flavors and aromas you find in IPAs, those are the ones that fall off the fastest."

Less hop-forward styles with lower ABVs like Pilsners and blond ales can hold out a little longer, Toft said, but no more than six months. Sours and robust, high-gravity stouts can cellar quite nicely for years in the right conditions, but be warned – you may lose delicate flavor notes like vanilla and coffee.

"There are a lot of beers that cellar well, which means that they aren't going to age as rapidly as other styles, but we put that beer in package because we wanted you to drink it right away," Toft said.

Bottom line: Drink up. "If it's in that bottle, it's in there for a reason."

4 Hands Brewing Co., 1220 S. Eighth St., St. Louis, 314.436.1559, 4handsbrewery.com

SPRING FORECAST / This spring, several of my favorite breweries are hitting St. Louis with fun releases - some brand new, others making a return appearance, all highly anticipated. - Katie Hererra

Left Hand Brewing Co.
Well Played Although
known for its nitro beers,
don't deny a try of this
carbed-up red IPA.
Expect a sweet, malty
front ridden out by a nice
clean, bitter finish, all
while boasting a bouquet
of experimental hops
from the Yakima Valley.



Logboat Brewing Co. Bennie Mocha Stout And another hit from the

another hit from the guys out of Columbia, Missouri. Massive coffee aroma is paired with cocoa nib sweetness up front, balanced by Fretboard coffee bitterness in this roasty, medium-bodied stout.



MARCH

Narrow Gauge Brewing Co. Peach OJ Run Imperial IPA and Pineapple Mordecai APA

STL's best hazy pale ales are seeing fruit for more dank and tropical juiciness in your glass. Look for these bad boys from Florissant this month. For more on Narrow Gauge Brewing Co., turn to p. 14.

early march

Oskar Blues Brewery Hotbox Coffee IPA If

combining two of my favorite things isn't heaven, I don't know what is. This Simcoe-hopped IPA meets its match with the fruity nature of Hotbox Roasters' Ethiopian coffee bean. Weird? Absolutely. Tasty? Most definitely.



Mark Twain Brewing Co. Abracapocus If you take

a well-done base saison and add 100 pounds of peaches, what do you get? A little grain; a grassy, peppery yeast expression; and a whole lot of juicy peach. Catch this small batch release at the brewery while you can.

Tea Blonde This annual release is brewed with cracked cardamom pods, black pepper and Lipton's black tea. It's refreshing enough to journey into spring, and

Earthbound Beer

Cardamom Pepper

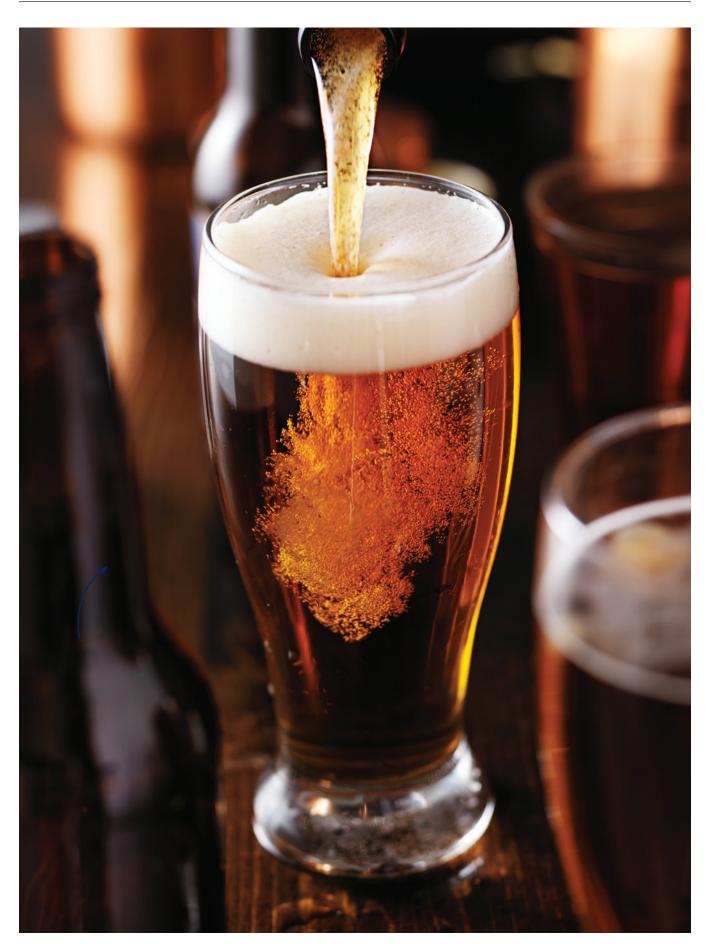
spicy enough to carry those last cool days of winter.



APRIL

WHERE BREWERS DRINK

Brewers can drink their own beer all day. Here's where they go when they're off duty. - Heather Hughes



WITH A BIG GROUP

"We like **Basso** or **Three Kings** in The Loop. We live in U. City, so Three Kings is usually where we'll go with friends." - Ryan Sherring, Six Mile Bridge brewmaster-co-owner

NEIGHBORHOOD SPOT

"Frailey's Southtown Grill in South County. I know the owners – it's more of a regular's place. ... For what you get, I think it's the best bang for buck in St. Louis. And everyone who works there is great. It has that family feel to it." – Brian Ilg, Kirkwood Station Brewing Co. brewmaster

"My favorite spot would be Main Street in Edwardsville - there's a couple good restaurants and bars. A go-to is **Recess Brewing** down there. It's nice to have places within walking distance." - Patrick Thirion, Peel Brewing Co. brewer-co-owner

SOMETHING OTHER THAN BEER

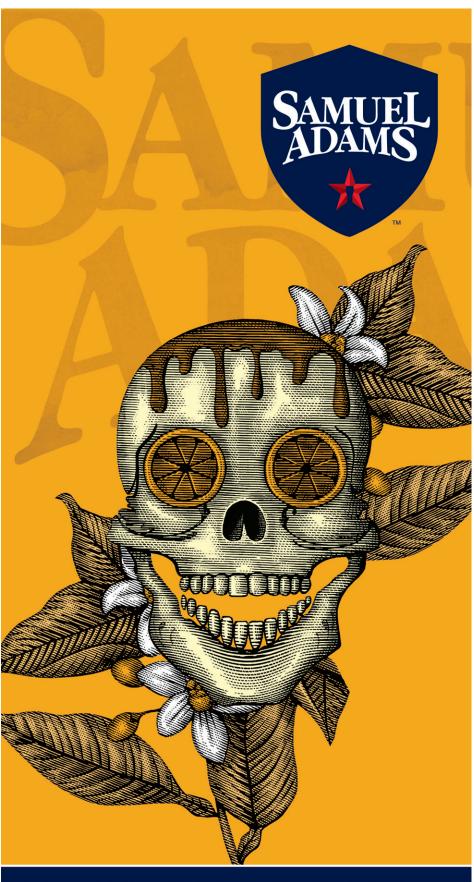
"This is probably going to be your weirdest answer, but my place is **Pho Grand** on South Grand to get their French iced coffee." - Thirion

"If I want to get a decent whiskey, there's a couple places I like to go: **Montrey's** in Ferguson. It's a cigar bar. It's right by the brewhouse, so that one's easy. And I enjoy **Eclipse**. You can get a decent drink, and it's a cool atmosphere. And you can't go wrong with **Shaved Duck**, or **BBQ Saloon** always has a good whiskey selection." - *Taylor Wright*, Ferguson Brewing Co. head brewer

DAY DRINKING

"For outside in summer, a great place is **21st Street Brewers Bar**. Or **Square One** - they do a mean grilled cheese." - *Sherring*

"Pretty much anywhere that has games
- anywhere I can play bubble hockey,
shuffleboard or darts. And **iTap** in Soulard is
always a good day drinking spot because it's
not going to be overly busy - you can have
good conversations." - Wright





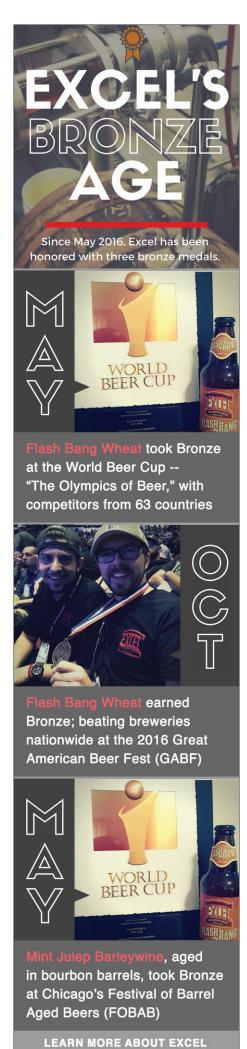
SAMUEL ADAMS
FRESH AS HELLES

HELLES LAGER WITH ORANGE BLOSSOM

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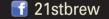












OPENING SPRING 2017/

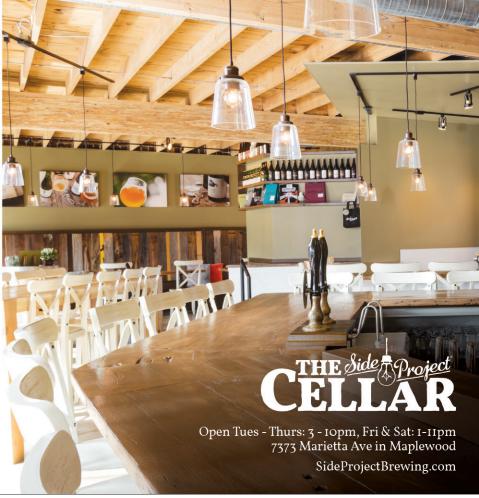


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WHALE HUNTING

Beer nerds spend hours at bottle shops and grocery stores searching for new and trendy bottles to add to their collections. But some beers are so special, so elusive, they can make even the most mildmannered beer enthusiast go Captain Ahab on local aisles. "The more rare or difficult it is to find, that's what people refer to as a whale," explained Ryan Nickelson, co-owner of Craft Beer Cellar. While Nickelson's Clayton shop is stocked with brews from around the world, he sometimes receives just one case of a rare bottle. Here, Nickelson shared four tips for intrepid drinkers hell-bent on finding their own white whales.

- Catherine Klene

1. Join the club. Many bottle shops have membership programs that reward participants with rare beers through raffles, special events and even allocations. Craft Beer Cellar also keeps some rare bottles on a cellar list for on-site consumption, so many can get a taste.

2. Follow the distributors, not just the beer.

Distributors like Shelton Brothers Missouri will sometimes drop hints of what's coming to the market. Nickelson also named beer blogs like The Beer Temple and Good Beer Hunting as prime resources.

3. Go to beer releases.

Here is where you'll find local whales highly coveted across the country, like Perennial Barrel-Aged Sump and Side Project Brewing bottles.

4. Shop frequently.

Nickelson said whales are sometimes announced with little fanfare. Successful hunters have sharp eyes.

If you stumble across these brews in stores, don't think - just buy:

4 Hands Madagascar

Goose Island Rare Bourbon County Brand Stout

Cantillion Brewery beers

Firestone Walker Brewing Co. Proprietor's Vintage Series

Avery Brewing Co. Barrel-Aged Series

Stone Brewing Small Batch Series

Craft Beer Cellar, 8113 Maryland Ave., Clayton, 314.222.2444, craftbeercellar.com





n the stretch of Lindbergh Boulevard that cuts through the heart of Florissant, nestled among oil change places, bigbox retailers and car lots, sits one of the region's most unexpected craft beer destinations: **Cugino's** family restaurant. Ringed by modest suburban neighborhoods and serving a mix of Italian-American favorites and classic bar food, it's not exactly where you'd expect to find exclusive taps of trendy Northeast-style pale ales from one of Missouri's top up-and-coming breweries. But there they are, and the beer nerds have followed.

This unlikely story began six years ago when Jeff Hardesty, the brewer and co-founder of **Narrow Gauge Brewing Co.**, started a homebrewing habit and, like so many others before him, got hooked.

"I just had a fascination with the whole fermentation process," Hardesty said. "As I read about it and was getting ready to actually brew my first batch, it became kind of an obsession, as far as the science behind it. It was really intriguing to me."

Hardesty was working as a mechanical engineer for Winchester Ammunition at the time. He began poring over beer books, delving into the Internet searching for any brewing knowledge he could glean, and opening his mind to the marvels of yeast, grain and hops in his free time. He dreamed of one day opening his own brewery – somewhere rural with just a steel-frame building for a brewhouse and maybe a small tasting room.

But then he kept running into Cugino's coowners, cousins **Ben Goldkamp** and **Dave Beckham**, at beer events around town. The trio
decided to partner up and try their hand at the
brewing game, renovating a languishing banquet
room in the restaurant's basement to house
the operation. Hardesty used his engineering
background to navigate the mire of designing a
brewing system in such an unlikely place. After
plenty of trial and error, Narrow Gauge celebrated
its first brew day on May 11, 2016, brewing
batches of Old Town Porter and Mordecai, an
American pale ale. Outside, the Cugino's marquee
now read "Home of Narrow Gauge Brewing Co."

Hardesty hopes his beer's popularity can do as much for his neighborhood as it has for the business. Hardesty has lived in Florissant since 2007, and named the brewery after the rail line that once connected the city to St. Louis to shine a light on the area. He's even using wild yeast cultivated in Florissant for a few projects he's working on.

"Florissant can get a bad rap sometimes, and I really don't know why," he said. "That's one of my favorite parts of doing this here. We bring people up here to Florissant, and they realize it's not what they think it is."

PREVIOUS PAGE
JEFF HARDESTY

OPPOSITE PAGE
NARROW
GAUGE IS
RATEBEER'S
2016 BEST NEW
BREWERY IN
MISSOURI.

A TRENDY NORTHEASTSTYLE PALE ALE: HAZY AND BURSTING WITH JUICY CITRUS AND TROPICAL FRUIT

Toiling below the restaurant floor, Hardesty is a one-man show, doing everything from schlepping grain to cleaning out the tanks to monitoring the progress of each beer as it makes its way through the brewing process. It makes for some long days, but the hard work has paid off. In less than a year, Narrow Gauge was awarded a slot in the Beer Advocate Class of 2016 and was named Best New Brewerv in Missouri for 2016 by RateBeer.

Hardesty's a pretty self-effacing guy, and these accolades, though much appreciated, don't seem to faze him. Not one for titles, he goes by "managing member" when pressed for an official moniker, because "it's what's on the paperwork." But with all that humility comes plenty of drive. For someone who's so laid-back and new to the world of commercial brewing, his vision of what he wants to achieve is crystal clear.

"My mentality is, I brew beer for the craft beer drinkers," he explained. "I'm not trying to draw somebody in just to make a sale. My principle has always been that I'm going to make a good product and what will make beer enthusiasts happy. I don't want to be stuck making something I don't want to make."

There are typically eight Narrow Gauge beers available exclusively at Cugino's, varying from a porter to those **Northeast-style IPAs** and **APAS** – varieties Hardesty is extremely fond of. This hazy style dials back the bitterness and showcases the juicy, aromatic aspects of the hops, with plenty of citrus and tropical fruit on the nose and just a bit of bitter bite on the back end.

Cory King, brewer and co-owner of Side Project Brewing, has known Hardesty since his days as a homebrewer and is impressed with where Hardesty is taking his beers. "Not only is he taking on a hot trend, he's making them his own," King said.

Hardesty is particular about how his creations should be imbibed. Narrow Gauge's beers can only be had by the glass or via 32-ounce growlers or crowlers (big aluminum cans filled to order) to go, depending on availability. Anything larger is a no-go.

"Not many people are going to drink a 64-ounce growler in one sitting," he noted. "The last thing I want as a new brewery is someone to get a growler, take it home, pour one glass and then take it to a party and 20 people try a flat, oxidized version of our beer."

For now, Hardesty is focused on maxing out his current brewing situation. He has an Imperial stout currently doing time in bourbon barrels and some wild ales – another one of his favorite styles – aging in wine barrels. He has six fermenters and believes another four can fit into the space, along with more bright tanks. Eventually, he'd like to upgrade to a six-barrel brewhouse. All of this would push production from the current 800 barrels a year to approximately 1,200 to 1,500 barrels annually. If Hardesty's beer keeps flowing in this direction, Narrow Gauge may not be in the basement for long.

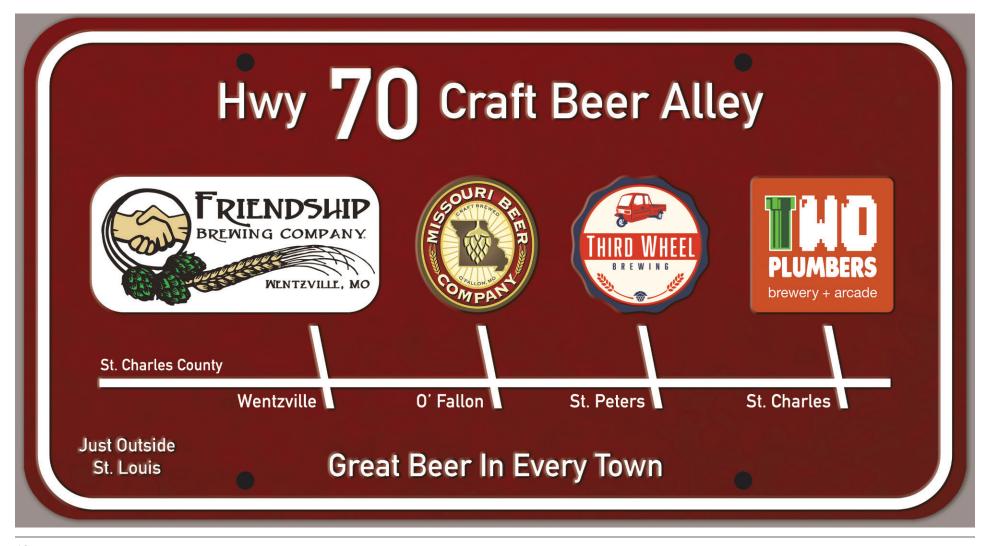
Narrow Gauge Brewing Co., 1595 N. US Highway 67, Florissant, 314.831.3222, narrowgaugestl.com













$B \ e \ e \ r \ do \ e \ s \ n \ 't$ $h \ a \ v \ e \ t \ o \ b \ e$ $c \ o \ m \ p \ l \ i \ c \ a \ t \ e \ d$ $t \ o \ b \ e \ g \ o \ o \ d \ -$

which is why, amid the current popularity of funky barrel-aged brews, American beer culture is also seeing resurgence in clean, approachable styles like lagers. With **Anheuser-Busch** in its backyard and the interest of some unexpected breweries, the St. Louis beer scene has a lot to be proud of when it comes to clean fermentation.

Urban Chestnut Brewing Co. has an experimental side, but its portfolio is vast with properly brewed clean beers including an array of lagers. "A lot of my brewing background is in Germany. I grew up there - it's definitely in my blood," said cofounder and brewmaster Florian Kuplent. "I do like all different kinds of beers, but when I drink lagers, I can actually enjoy a few of them without feeling bad the next morning. And I enjoy the subtleties. I enjoy classic European hops and the spicy notes they provide. Some modern hop varieties are a little too in-your-face."

With Urban Chestnut equally devoted to its Reverence and Revolution Series, Kuplent took issue with the term "clean" – more creative styles of beer aren't dirty, he noted. But clean here refers to those classic styles that rely exclusively on the four base ingredients of beer: malt, water, hops and yeast.

Rockwell Beer Co. and **Senn Bierwerks**, both slated to open in late 2017, likewise plan to tackle the spectrum by showcasing both classic and creative styles.

"Simple, clean beers remind us why beer has been popular for millennia," said Side Project Brewing brewerco-owner Cory King. Despite being internationally recognized for beers made with adjuncts like cocoa nibs, vanilla beans, fresh fruit and bacteria, aged in various wine and spirit barrels, King appreciates clean ferments so much he and the Side Project team have started another brewery called **Shared Brewing** to showcase some of the more timeless styles. "Think of all of the very traditional styles - Pilsners, hefeweizens, milds, saisons, Trappist ales," King said. "Their approachability, their easydrinking qualities and their nuances show that not every beer has to be overthe-top to be great."

The Civil Life Brewing Co. has established a reputation for creating near-perfect clean ferments, which prove just that. "They match the type of culture we are trying to foster in our pub," said head brewer Dylan Mosley. "It's really about keeping our patronage in a setting where beer remains in the conversation but isn't the only focus of the conversation."



clockwise from top, the civil life brewing co. brewer troy bedick, brewer david seymour, owner jake hafner and head brewer dylan mosley

There is something to be said for the beautiful simplicity of flavors and aromas produced by just water, malt, yeast and hops. Though these beers tend not to be the center of attention, making something so simple well isn't easy. Every decision – from base malts to smaller additions of wheat, rye or oats; the choice of hops and how they're introduced; the yeast and

method of fermentation – is crucial when there are only a handful of ingredients.

Malt (barley or other grains that have sprouted, then been dried or roasted) provides the backbone of a beer, and when handled properly will bring out the pure biscuit, caramel and cereal flavors and aromas of the grain.

firestone
walker
brewing
pivo hoppy
pils An Old
World-style lager

pito hoppy pils An Old World-style lager with a West Coast attitude, this perfectly balanced, dry-hopped Pilsner showcases soft floral notes paired with German hop spice and low grain presence.

the civil life black lager Roasted malts give

way to nuances of grain, coffee and chocolate notes, all while supporting a lightly toasted and herbaceous aroma from the Noble hops. Available later this spring at the brewery

logboat brewing cowboy me

This roasty,
German-style
Schwarzbier is
layered with notes
of chocolate and a
hint of smoke from
the toasted malt,
balanced out by a
lightly bitter finish.

the civil life vienna lager This Vienna-style

lager is rich with grain and biscuit aromatics, and properly develops over the palate with a light caramel sweetness up front and clean bitter finish. Available later this spring at the brewery

2nd shift brewing technical ecstasy

This classic Czechstyle Pilsner has an herbaceous, grassy and spicy aroma balanced by a bready, crisp, clean palate. Available later this spring at the brewery

urban chestnut zwickel

This Bavarianstyle lager is smooth, delicate and balanced while showcasing notes of grain, citrus, grass and finished out with a mild hop bitterness.

green bench brewing postcard pils

Brewing with flaked corn and Mt. Hood an hops provides this American lager with exquisite grainy sweetness and a floral, spicy aroma. Available on draft at Retreat Gastropub, retreatgastropub.com

<u>deschutes</u> <u>brewery</u> <u>pacific</u> wonderland

German hops and 100-percent Pilsner malt lead to a crisp, refreshing palate dominated by floral and citrus notes and an underlying graininess.

clean beers to try



Hops bitter the beer to balance the malt's sweetness, and also play a strong supporting role in aromatics and flavor. Like grapes, terroir gives each variety of hop unique expression. For instance, the Saaz hop popular in Czech Pilsners gets its spicy character from the orange soil native to Western Bohemia.

Even the water used provides beer with distinctive characteristics. "Every municipality has different water," Mosley said. "If you think about beer in terms of soup: Can you make a good soup with four ingredients? Of course you can! But you need the broth to be tasty or else the soup will suck. Not every broth will make every soup."

Brewers like Mosley are now able to alter the chemistry of water to improve their product. By changing levels of certain chemicals – sulfur, carbonate, sodium and chloride – they can affect the taste, aroma and body of their beer.

Running the gamut from light to dark and from low to high ABV, lagers offer perhaps the best example of the perfection that can result from using as few ingredients as possible, since their longer, colder fermentation creates a palate dominated by malt and hops. "These beers are more about subtitles," Kuplent said. "Having anything in the beer that would detract from those subtitles is going to be much more pronounced. To brew and ferment the

beer and get it to a delicate flavor is difficult – if there's a flaw, it's going to be impossible to hide."

Creating a good lager with a nice balance of malt and hop is a serious technical challenge – which is probably why brewers are so excited about them.

"Go to any beer festival nowadays, ask the brewers their favorite beer of the day, and you will find several pick out a nice little lager," King said. "That excitement amongst the brewers will see a rise in their demand amongst consumers."

Civil Life has dedicated a lot of tank space to lagering, and rising

to that kind of challenge has made it the unofficial St. Louis brewers' brewery. Drop by on a typical Sunday afternoon and you'll see beer connoisseurs and professionals from St. Louis breweries enjoying a pint with a bowl of soup or some tacos.

"Most of our staff goes there on Sundays," King said. "I love Civil Life beers. They don't always draw the attention of barrel-aged beers or sours or IPAs, because they make those traditional styles. But brewers these days are wanting easy-drinking, traditional beers that are very well made – and that's exactly what they make."

"The beers are spot-on examples of their respective styles," said former Schlafly brewer Chip Stone. Stone recently moved to Seattle to work at Elysian Brewing, but before that he attended Civil Life Sundays religiously. "There's nothing like a low-key Sunday bowl of soup with a few half-pints with Jake [Hafner, the owner] and the gang," he said.

Katie Herrera is manager of The Side Project Cellar.

Anheuser-Busch 1127 Pestalozzi St., St. Louis, 314.577.2626, anheuserbusch.com

The Civil Life Brewing Co. 3714 Holt Ave., St. Louis, the civillife.com
Rockwell Beer Co. rockwellbeer.com
Senn Bierwerks senn.beer
Side Project Brewing 7458 Manchester
Road, Maplewood, 314.224.5211,
sideprojectbrewing.com
Urban Chestnut Brewing Co.
3229 Washington Ave., St. Louis;
4465 Manchester Ave., St. Louis,
314.222.0143, urbanchestnut.com



the civil life bar



EARTH HADING BEE



Top photo by Ann K. Hubbard, Oh So Vivant

Ford Restaurant Supply's featured

Brewmaster of the month

Rebecca M. Schranz

Earthbound Beer

2710 Cherokee Street, St. Louis, MO 63118

Position: Co-Owner, Brewer

Married: Engaged

Kids: Earthbound Beer

Originally from: St. Louis, MO

Where did you go to school? Is this a high school question? Notre Dame. Then Webster University for two well-used social science undergrad degrees.

How did you get to where you are? Stuart Keating and Jeff Siddons, my business partners, asked if I wanted to help open a brewery, and I accepted.

New things going on in your Bar: Earthbound Beer is moving from 2710 Cherokee Street to 2724 Cherokee Street later this year. The brewery and tasting room will be located in the last remaining building from Cherokee Brewery company, a pre-prohibition brewery.

Favorite piece of equipment or Bar item: The tap board- if the beer is there we have done everything correctly. Enjoying the fruits of our labor is by far the most rewarding experience.

Three Fun Facts:

- Brewing is a collaborative effort, and without Jeff or Stuart and the rest of our team, our beer wouldn't be up to the standard which we seek to meet or nearly as creative in recipe development and execution.
- Earthbound Beer's new location goes in total 45 under ground. Our fermentation and cellar work occurs approximately 20 feet under ground in the first basement, and the subsequent basement is currently closed off due to the amount of rehab it requires.
- · I have an unhealthy admiration for Red Hot Riplets.











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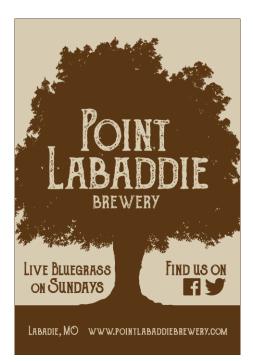
smallware

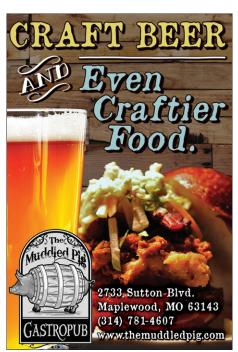
equipment

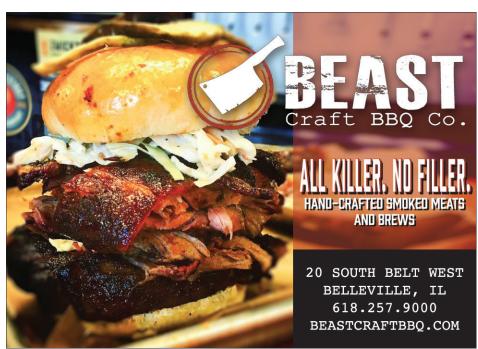
disposables

furniture /















get festive

Grab your calendar, prepare your liver and save the dates - St.
Louis is awash in beer festivals this year.

BY CATHERINE KLENE AND BRIANNA VELARDE

FestivAle

March 4, Delmar Hall, St. Louis, festivalestl.com More than 30 regional breweries descend on FestivAle from Point Labaddie Brewery to Charleville Brewery. Fill your glass, then grab bites from Wicked Greenz, Bogart's Smokehouse and more. Tickets available online.

Schlafly Stout and Oyster Festival

March 10 and 11, Schlafly Tap Room, schlafly.com/stoutandoyster Choose from 15 Schlafly stouts and a selection of smallbatch, experimental options, then enter the Shuckerdome and watch pros battle it out, shucking oysters at lightning speed. Free admission.

Ales for Tails Homebrew Festival

March 25, American Czech Educational Center, St. Louis, stlpivo.com Dozens of homebrewers share their concoctions to benefit local animal nonprofits alongside artisans selling handmade pet toys and cookies. Tickets available online.

Lupulin Carnival

April I, Midway at Union Station, St. Louis, lupulincarnival.com 4 Hands Brewing brings down the War Hammer, its annual Imperial IPA. Take a turn on the Ferris wheel and super slide, and sip beers from 65 local and national breweries, including heavy-hitters like Toppling Goliath. Tickets available online.

Mile Marker 68.3 Bier Fest

April 29, Missouri Riverfront, Washington, Facebook: Mile Marker 68.3 Bier Fest Friendship Brewing, Standard Brewing, Trailhead Brewing and more than 20 others come out to support Missouri River Relief. Not a beer fan? Sip samples from distilleries like Pinckney Bend and Wood Hat. Tickets available at John G's Bierdeck or online.

St. Louis Microfest

May 5 and 6, Forest Park, St. Louis, stlmicrofest.org
This two-day festival has three sessions to sample around 125 international and craft breweries like 4204 Main Street
Brewing. Tickets available online.

Indihop

May 20, The Grove and Cherokee Street, indihopstl.com Shuttle between two of St. Louis' more eclectic neighborhoods and taste up to 50 local beers at participating shops, bars and breweries. Tickets available online.

Heritage Festival

June 3, Gateway Arch, St. Louis, stlbeer.org
Sample more than 100 brews from members of the St. Louis Brewers
Guild and end your evening with fireworks above the Arch. Tickets will be available online.

St. Louis Craft Beer Week

July 28 to Aug. 5, St.
Louis, stlbeerweek.com
This ninth annual
festival spans the city and
county with more than

100 events including the Midwest Belgian Beer Fest, tap takeovers, classes and beer dinners. Schedule and tickets will be available online.

Schlafly Hop in the City

Sept. 16, Schlafly Tap Room, St. Louis, schlafly.com/hop Hop to Schlafly Tap Room to sample nearly all Schlafly's extensive portfolio, including special-release brews. Tickets will be available online.

Augusta Bottoms Beer Festival

Oct. 7, Augusta, augustabottomsbeerfest.com It's a party on the flood plains at Augusta Brewing Co.'s annual festival. Last year's event included nearly 40 breweries. Tickets available online.

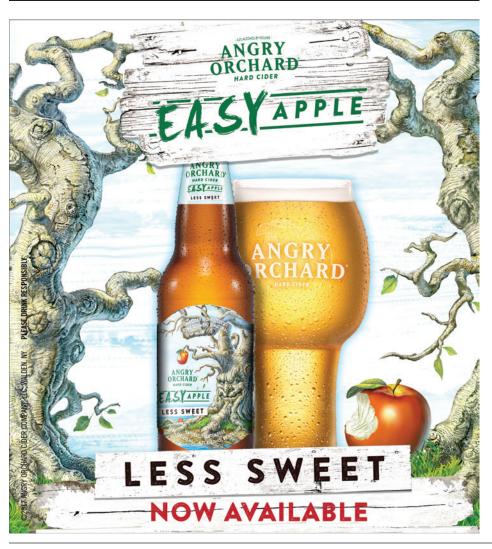
St. Louis Brewers Guild Halloween Party

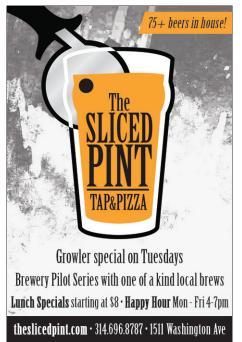
Oct. 28, Lafayette Park, St. Louis, stlbeer.org Don your favorite costume and trick or treat with St. Louis brewers. Previous years' festivities included a costume contest and a Hefe Ride (a hayride with a keg). Tickets will be available online.

The Great St. Louis Czech Beer Festival

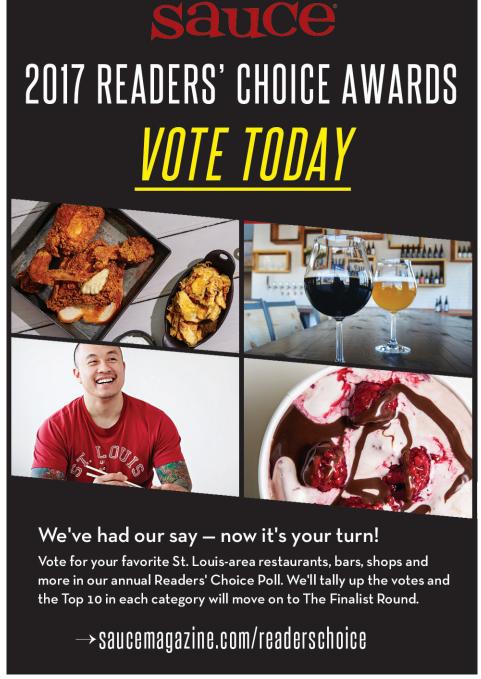
Dec. 9, American Czech Educational Center, St. Louis, stlpivo.com
Last year, nearly two dozen breweries offered their iterations of the Czech Pilsner at this celebration of the clean lager style. Tickets will be available online.













2ND SHIFT BREWING | 4 HANDS BREWING CO. | 5 RABBITS | 18TH STREET BREWERY ALE ASYLUM | AGAINST THE GRAIN | BALLAST POINT | BAND OF BOHEMIA | BELL'S BREWERY BLACKBERRY FARM BREWERY | BOULEVARD BREWING CO. | CENTRAL STATE BREWING CHARLEVILLE BREWING CO. | CIVIL LIFE | CRANE BREWING | DANGEROUS MAN BREWING CO. DAREDEVIL BREWING | DARK HORSE | DESCHUTES BREWERY | DESTIHL BREWERY DOGFISH HEAD | EARTHBOUND BEER | EVERYBODY'S BREWING | EXCEL BREWING CO. FIRESTONE WALKER | FORBIDDEN ROOT | FOUNDERS | GREAT DIVIDE | GREAT LAKES GREEN FLASH | HALF ACRE | THE HOPEWELL | LAGUNITAS | LEFT HAND BREWING CO. LOGBOAT BREWING CO. | MARTIN CITY BREWING CO. | MARZ | MIKERPHONE BREWING MILEWIDE BEER CO. | MODERN BREWERY | NARROW GAUGE | NEBRASKA BREWING CO. NEW HOLLAND BREWING | ODELL BREWING CO. | OFALLON BREWERY | OLD BAKERY BEER OSKAR BLUES BREWERY | PERENNIAL ARTISAN ALES | PIPEWORKS | REVOLUTION BREWING ROCKWELL BEER CO. | SCHLAFLY | SEATTLE CIDER CO. | SIDE PROJECT | SIERRA NEVADA SKA BREWING | SOLEMN OATH | STONE BREWING CO. | SUN KING BREWERY SWEET WATER BREWING CO. | TALL GRASS BREWING CO. | TOPPLING GOLIATH TRANSIENT ARTISAN ALES | URBAN CHESTNUT BREWING CO | WISE ACRE BREWING CO.

sauce

For more information & to purchase tickets: LUPULINCARNIVAL.COM

