



The Barleycorn Press

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Antipodean Ale Adventures

By Andrew Tice

H

ello, Mashers! Some of you may remember me from meetings in 2006; I was the young guy with a beard. I haven't dropped off the face of the earth completely, but that's actually a pretty close description. I moved away from Vermont last fall and am spending all of 2007 traveling and working in New Zealand with my girlfriend, Becky, on a working holiday visa. New Zealand is just a gorgeous place to visit, with endless unspoiled beaches, mountain ranges, rivers, and green valleys dotted with hundreds of sheep. We've found the Kiwis themselves to be a friendly, active, and enthusiastic people, and while wine has become hugely popular in the past 20 years due to NZ's world-class Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir

growing regions, there's quite a bit of good beer to drink here as well.

Of course, like any other country New Zealand has its share of macro-lagers, of which there is an abundance. Lion Red, Tui, Speight's, and Steinlager, which you may recognize as it's available in the States, are all popular domestic lagers here. However, among most Kiwis we've met who fancy themselves to be 'good beer' drinkers, Heineken and Stella are usually their beers of choice. Most of the beers above wouldn't be in my list of favorites, but on the bright side, I haven't seen a single Budweiser in NZ so far!

There does seem to be a growing microbrew/brewpub culture growing here in NZ, just as in the States. As cultural trends here seem to be a few years behind the US and elsewhere, they're just in the beginning phase of craft beer appreciation, but it's definitely a growing phenomenon. Larger scale microbreweries like Monteith's and Mac's (on par with Magic Hat, I'd say) have been integrated into the two main NZ brewing monoliths, DB and Lion-Nathan, but there are quite a few independent microbreweries scattered through the country.

Strangely, much of the smaller scale activity occurs on the South Island, which has only about a quarter of the country's population of 4 million. Beer production is probably stronger on the SI because it's the country's breadbasket and because nearly all of the country's

hop production is around the Nelson area in the far north part of the South Island. NZ is churning out some fine hops, producing organic varieties, their own version of Cascade, as well as varieties not found in the US, like Pacific Jade and Nelson Sauvin, so named since it has a really unique winey/grape aroma. I'm not sure if this is true or not, but I've been told that the reason NZ has more success in producing organic hops is because they let sheep eat the leaves at the bottom of the plant, producing better cones on the plant. Being NZ, that seems fitting, but who knows?

One thing that is interesting here is that you can often buy homebrewing supplies at the grocery store. From this I gather that many people must be producing their own batches in their homes, which is pretty typical of the self-reliant and practical Kiwi attitude. Though you'd be hard-pressed to make a great batch of anything with these canned kits, they're

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available along with bottle caps, corn sugar, and yeast at most grocery stores throughout the country.

Through our travels, we've been stopping at as many microbreweries as possible, and I've met a lot of great Kiwi brewers. In the South Island wine capital of Blenheim, we stopped in at Renaissance Brewing, a young brewery helmed by San Diego transplants and brothers-in-law Andy and Brian, one a brewer and former winemaker, and the other a former BMW mechanic. After meeting the guys and having a few pints, they offered me a casual job selling their beer as I traveled, which I accepted. It's been a great way to make a few bucks and keep us in good beer as we travel the country. I may be biased, but they make a fine porter with hints of chocolate raisins, and a deliciously smoky scotch ale.

To help extend our traveling dollars Becky and I have also been WWOOFing (Willing Workers on Organic Farms), of which there are hundreds of opportunities throughout the country. In exchange for 3-5 hours of work/day, we receive food and sleeping accommodations. It's been a really great way to travel, meet interesting New Zealanders, and do some interesting jobs we'd never do otherwise. We've worked on a hippie lifestyle block, a garlic farm, a café owned by Germans, and a remote beach hostel, but our best experience by far was with a couple in which the husband owned a small brewery, the Brew Moon Brewery, producing a pale ale, an organic IPA, a brown ale, and a stout by hand in 600L batches. His wife was also a winemaker, and they had a farm with horses, cattle, and chickens. I helped in the brewery with brewing, cleaning, bottling, labeling, you name it, while Becky helped with the animals and gardening. We had a terrific time, made some life-long friends, and certainly drank well those weeks!

Well, we've had a blast so far, touring New Zealand and tasting as many local brews as possible. It certainly has been the trip of a lifetime, and the scenery is as spectacular and breathtaking as advertised. You might be unlikely to get to this side of the planet, but I'd feel remiss not recommending some of the great places to get a beer in this country. If you ever reach Aotearoa, be sure to stop by Shakespeare's Brewpub or Galbraith's in Auckland, and The Twisted Hop in Christchurch, the only place serving real ales in the South Island. If you want to see more of our adventures, check out our blog at <http://greenwithnz.blogspot.com>. Cheers!

Staff Box



The Barleycorn Press is a monthly publication of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club. The Barleycorn Press appears in the final week of each month. **Contributions are due by the 25th of the month of publication or two Thursdays prior to the next meeting (which ever comes first).** Please send contributions via e-mail (preferable) or send on a 3.5" IBM compatible diskette (hard copy as a last resort) to:

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Note: The yearly dues of \$20 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Anne Whyte at the following address:

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Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
9/1/2007	Masher Picnic, Theresa and Andy Hunt's, Greensboro	Theresa and Andy Hunt, 899-1817

Please contact Melissa at 482-7400 or melissa@vt.bitxbit.com to add items to the Masher Calendar

Masher Picnic on Caspian Lake

We have decided on Sept 1 as the date, marking our 30th Anniversary of POSLQ (Persons of Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters). If you want to spend the night there are many beds available and places to pitch a tent, but please bring sleeping bags and pillows. If you want a bed, please e-mail so that I can get an idea of how many and send out a note if we start to run out.

If you plan to attend I'd love it if you could send me a quick e-mail to aid in planning. I plan a few kegs on tap and some food, but won't be able to feed an Army should it show up. Please bring something to grill and maybe a dish to share and beer.

We have 400' of lake front, so bring Kayaks and Canoes (or speed boats) if the spirit moves you. The address is Rowdis Rd (last camp on right), Greensboro Vt, just plug that into Yahoo or Google maps. Our phone number at camp is (802) 533-2132.

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