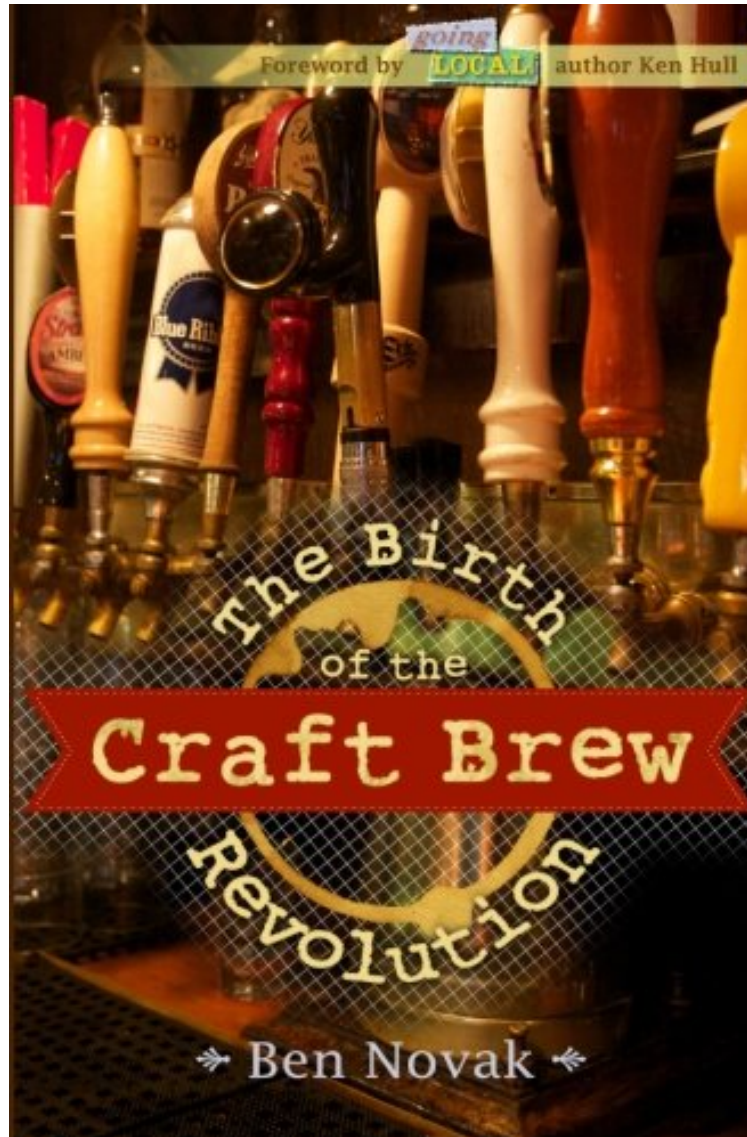


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The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution

Ben Novak

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#4054780 in Books Ben Novak 2013-04-09 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .81 x 5.251, .81 #File Name: 1484076265322 pages The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution | File size: 75.Mb

Ben Novak : The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great Read By Philip Schwarz As a young homebrewer, I've grown up in a Renaissance of beer. Regional breweries are everywhere. Craft brew gets shipped all over the country. I've been to roll outs of some beers where the only keg the bar had was kicked in minutes, and there was a limit of one glass per person. For me to imagine a time when this wasn't true is mind boggling. But reading Ben Novak's book

gives me a sense of appreciation for what he and other beer drinkers did for me. Without columns like Ben's, and the choice to drink craft brews, I wouldn't have the selection available to me now. Call this a diary of the battle of the big boys versus the innovators, and getting to read it in real time was fascinating. Especially reading columns about small craft beers that have taken off since Ben wrote the original column. A must read for craft beer drinkers and home brewers.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. On the Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution By Andy N

Imagine getting a fresh account from the ground floor of something new, as it was happening. Imagine someone revealing, in layman's terms the significance of what Steve Wozniak was tinkering in his basement - the first Apple computer later sold out of Steve Jobs' garage. Or someone capturing the energy of the Beatles while playing clubs in Liverpool, conveying it to those on the outside looking in as it was all beginning. One Central Pennsylvania attorney, Dr. Ben Novak, did just that in a series of local newspaper columns, exploring and revealing a new burgeoning craft beer revolution much in its inception, unfamiliar to many throughout the country but taken for granted today. This book is a compilation of those biweekly columns published from 1984-87 in the Centre Daily Times. In a pre internet age, few publications showcased the radical changes brewing in the beer industry. Macro breweries virtually monopolized most advertising, bar taps, and retail shelves (where applicable). Most Americans had no appreciable exposure to rare, up--coming craft beers. Even many micro brewers were pioneers experimenting in developing new recipes and formulas. Trade journals targeted brewers and industry fellow travelers; and the consumers of their efforts were almost as scarce as the producers. But there lacked a presentation targeting the uninitiated "yellow fizzy" swiller, yet to be introduced to the variety of extravagantly robust flavor and nuance there could even be in beer. The average American was primarily accustomed to a watered-down, one-dimensional narrow range of pilsner-lager style beer, mass-produced for the masses. So it was a challenge to even break through generations of cultural conditioning limiting people's understanding of beer and what to look for; and how to even size up the varied styles, settings and complementation in which to best enjoy them. Some may be too young to recall this period to appreciate the 'newness' of such writings. And with so much exposure, distribution, and reference info available on so many new craft beers today, much of the book may not seem as relevant or useful now. So why read this assemblage of old newspaper columns? They give historical context and background to how we arrived with the many styles, brewers, flavors and brands, and the evolving Pennsylvania and national laws that affected them. If you didn't know the difference between porters and stouts, or pale ales and pilsners, these columns laid it out. Targeting the layman consumer, they served as a guide, or blueprint for many discovering craft beer for the first time, when there was scant information available on the subject. That made this series of columns rather unique. When asked his sources for writing the columns Ben noted: "I subscribed to everything I could find on the beer writing market. Many were mimeographed copies of newsletters, others were the official publications of the Homebrewers and micro brewers. Every year I went to the Great American Beer festival and picked up everything I could find, including copies of speeches given, advertising brochures, and technical beer books. I also bought every book on beer and brewing history I heard about. I had one heck of a file cabinet full of beer info. As I was preparing for and planning future columns, I also called and talked to a lot of new brewers and did interviews by telephone. Golly, it was fun collecting everything back then--I even had quite a collection of beer labels, cans and bottles." They also sought to familiarize and educate about the differences and similarities in beer vs. wine tasting. In contrast to prevailing wine columns of the day, the approach was not to appeal to stuffy judgmental elites. Rather Novak targets the common beer-drinking Joe, not connoisseurs or aficionados. In his tone he never talks over their heads or down to them with snobbish condescension. He wrote with an excitement of discovery eagerly shared with the reader of a new world of splendid variety of nuanced craftsmanship to be enjoyed by everyone. Though humorous and light-hearted at times, he gives the topic a rich depth luring the reader on an exciting journey invaluable even for today's novice, while still enlightening for today's enthusiast. In a world of mass-produced, mass-marketed uniformity, he explored and celebrated artful craftsmanship and excellence in beer, as they were captured and reflected in it. Like a fine cask-conditioned ale, these columns have aged well. Written in a simple but colorful way, he conjured imagery of history, art, stories, legends and lore that stimulated one's curiosity as much as his palate, poetically stirring the imagination and the soul. He invoked magic and sentimentality from history and human feelings of times and places, rituals and customs. He revealed how people historically enjoyed beer and interacted over it, and invited us all to relive that memory, to that given time and place. He harkened back to early America when the seeds of revolution fomented (and fermented) in colonial taverns and pubs (serving as early town halls) where the ales were as richly varied as in the English countryside. He told exceptional histories such as the Yankee clipper fast enough to bring over lager yeast, enabling pilsners to be brewed in America by the Iron City Brewery. He intimated the warm and festive feelings rekindled in seasonal brews of Summer, Autumn and Christmas styles, and how the flavors and aromas of beer and food embellished the spirit of the times as much as sights and sounds. To raise the tone of the palate to the artful symphony of robust flavors was to enhance the appreciation by the drinker and his awareness of the brew, and thereby elevate his senses and broaden his imagination. "For me, a beer is not just a beer anymore then art is just art. One looks for character. What remains is not what is consumed, but what is savored." In describing one particular brand, Catamount, he wrote: "people have discovered that they can sit down with a beer and not drink a whole six-pack. Palates have discovered that there is a whole lot of taste in beer. It awakens

their senses. Catamount ales are ales to savor. Gentile says, "You pour a Catamount, go out and chop wood, come back and finish your glass. It's still good. It keeps its character. You can't do that with a regular American beer." Beyond flavor, enjoying higher character in a beer meant letting it compliment the finest company with whom you shared it. "How does a brewery change the world? It doesn't. It opens up people to the experience of time well spent. Some beers are not for drinking quickly to slake a thirst. Some beers just encourage people to sit back, slowly slip, and open up to the pleasurable experience of a good conversation. Only when one is willing to take the time is it possible to enjoy true taste and good fellowship." Hence all the beer columns ended with *Ein Prosit der Gemuuntlichkeit!* Meaning a toast to coziness, good cheer, or friendliness, he translated as "a toast to good fellowship!" A concept still ahead of its time today, was to not judge a taste merely against one's own preferences, but instead to find the brewer's intent. "What you taste in a beer is the taste a brewer intended to put there. So the object of a beer tasting is not so much to judge a taste, but to learn to appreciate another man's taste, namely the brewer." "To appreciate any beer, one has to know something about the brewer and his or her goals in producing that particular brew....to appreciate a beer is to taste the story in it." Whether it's gourmet food, fine wine, beautiful art or music, anyone has personal tastes. But who stops to wonder what the creator intended and was feeling or thinking in what they produced? We may with art and music, but far less so with food. But how many craft beer lovers, other than perhaps homebrewers, ever do with beer? (Here again note the difference with wine, Novak joked how wine was what the sun and rain did one year to a grape, but beer was the masterful recipe the artisan brewer intended.) The idea that as there's worthwhile experience in sharing good beer with good people, there's a story in its creation worth discovering just from its taste remains ahead of its time even now. That's what it meant to appreciate the craft. "These were, above all, the columns that fixed in readers' minds the idea that the true enjoyment of beer lay in tasting the art, craft, and the story of the brewer in one's stein." He quoted local homebrewer Cliff Newman: "We are craftsman in a hobby whose canvas is the beer mug". He briefly foreshadowed another concept ahead of its time: "Perhaps the day will come when the perfect accompaniment of a home-cooked meal will be a home-brewed beer." Today food/beer pairings are ever common, given the wide array of high-quality beers. Even today's seasoned craft beer enthusiast will discover something he didn't know. Novak profiled famous large and many small brewers throughout the U.S. and Pennsylvania that staked their fortunes and livelihoods on crafting quality beer with passion, bucking the financial and marketing strength of established giants. From the history of beer laws, malt grains, milling and bottling, beer festivals, famous pubs like McSorely's, to homebrewing, "beer-clean" glasses, and how to pour the correct head--no matter how much you think you know, you'll learn more. Locally, Zeno's evolved into a real craft brew pub in State College PA where he'd sit regularly, occasionally annoying patrons with his rigorous intellectual discourse, sampling new imports and micros they carried only in bottles which he'd then write about. After his column on porters took off among local readers in 1984, and on the Yuengling brewery in '86, Zeno's enjoyed packed crowds for pitchers of Yuengling Porter on draught. (Perhaps because they were on special for \$2 / pitcher.) Bar manager Dave Staab working there since '84, lent his thoughts: "Ben and I had many, many.....shall we say, 'spirited' discussions over the years. Some were even about beer. It's great to see these articles all in one place. It is a fascinating barometer of those early, heady years of craft beer.....cheers, Ben. (He would say *Prosit!*)" Ben Novak wrote these columns to serve the community, not for self promotion. Unpaid, he was comped a subscription to the local paper at a time when it still featured the unique writers of its quaint, picturesque town. One could write a more critical appraisal of the finer points, but it wouldn't detract from the overall theme: one should indulge in the finest spirit of fellowship and good cheer to compliment the true enjoyment of the finest beers. Rediscovering an old idea that seemed lost, Ben made new, now available for the world to enjoy, not just Pennsylvanians. Go back and discover the craft brew revolution as it was happening! Learn from where and whence it came. May you too enjoy something both historical and timeless. *Ein Prosit der Gemuuntlichkeit!*

It's 1984, and in America's "Happy Valley" one local attorney is confronting an Orwellian dystopia in beer. Only five years have passed since the lifting of the prohibition against home brewing, and America's palate atrophies from commercial sameness. In "The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution" Dr. Ben Novak presents his complete collection of 71 columns first published in the Centre Daily Times on the joys of beer. As fresh and accessible now as then, this collection will especially delight those reflexively anti-drink, the student who loves its effects but is dumb to its essence, historians and lovers of Central Pennsylvania's Nittany Valley, and all those who think of beer as little more than another amusement on the adventure of life.