

Got Beer? Suds Tsunami: Are we approaching peak beer?

Last week, the Brewers Association (BA), the trade organization that represents small and independent American craft brewers, posted its national midyear stats for 2019. Production volume increased 4%, which has been the pace for the past few years. Bart Watson, the BA's chief economist, noted that "the majority of growth continues to come from microbreweries, taprooms and brewpubs, whereas the distribution landscape remains more challenging for regional craft brewers."

Here are some crunchable numbers (as of June 30): There are 7,480 craft breweries, an increase of 1,016 from last year's midpoint - and there are still 2,500 to 3,000 more beer destinations in the planning stages (peak beer is on the horizon). In the last few issues, we've been yammering about the sales limits, which are hindering the growth of RI beermakers (we won't trot out the data again; hit the archive for the details). If you want to learn more about what you can do to help beat the drum for a better beer culture 'round here, chat up your friendly brewer, join the various RI craft pages on Facebook and other socials, and gear up for petition-signing and legislator-contacting and responsible rabble-rousing when the General Assembly convenes at the start of 2020, which is sure to be a momentous (and terrifying) year.

But hey, let's stay positive, as the Hold Steady encourage us to be, and roll out some beer news from a few of our stellar neighborhood beer merchants:

The crew at **Providence Brewing Company** will unveil the winners in their #ShowUsYourInk contest, which was inspired by their new release Brut Kettle Sour. Efrén Hidalgo reports, "We had over 1,000 contestants worldwide submit their incredible body art, but had to limit it to local RI, CT and MA residents. We let our followers and their friends and families decide on the top four contestants. We just had a photoshoot with renowned photojournalist Stew Milne; each one of the winners will be showcased on a can with their personal story. We'll be releasing them in 4-packs in the coming weeks."

The Craft: Rhode Island, a documentary about the 401 beer scene, debuted at the Rhode Island International Film Festival last week; more screenings are likely to take place at some of the larger taprooms in the state. You can watch the trailer and get schedule updates at eleven-ri.com/craft

Apponaug Brewing Company has been hopping! Beermaster Justin Tisdale has been spending lots of brewing time getting ready for fall. So far he has an unnamed Wee Heavy Strong that has been spending the summer months enjoying some barrel-aging. Fest or Famine, a seasonal Festbier, will be making its way to a fermentation tank over the next few weeks. Shhh, a new barrel-aged beer will debut at the 5th Annual Ocean State Beer Fest, which is happening at Grey Sail in Westerly on September 8 (tickets were *still* available at presstime!). The kitchen has also been very busy, welcoming a new head chef, Leanne Ucci, and sous chef, Tom Oulette; look for some exciting changes to the ABC fall menu. And head to their suburban oasis on the banks of the Pawtuxet River on Sunday, August 18, at 11am for Yoga + Beer (pre-registration required; do it at facebook.com/ApponaugBrewingCo).

And Josh and Chip at **Shaidzon Beer Company** are bringing back For No One, a double IPA, any day now, and a new to-be-named Belgian Pale Ale on August 23. And the live music series will move to the new patio, with sets by Third Signal on the 23rd and Rival Roots on the 24th; check their socials for the

Labor Day weekend lineup.

For more beer news, check Lou's blog, bottlescansclaphands.wordpress.com, or follow @BottlesCansRI on the Twitter machine.