

Respect Yr Elders! Don't forget the classics that paved the way for the craft beer revolution



In January, noted beer scribe Stephen Beaumont suggested that the craft beer world should celebrate venerable, and increasingly taken-for-granted, legacy beers. He tweeted: “Flagship beers are down in sales across the board because drinkers get bored. In the spirit of alliteration, how about we make next month Flagship February!?! The focus would be on drinking faves from the early years, not necessarily exclusively, but frequently. The brands would get a boost and drinkers would be reminded of what got them here.” Beaumont elaborated in an e-mail to *Forbes*: “A lot of beer drinkers have developed a sort of ADD with respect to the beers they drink, so going for a glass of beer at the bar or pub becomes less a pleasant distraction and more a relentless search for what’s new and exciting. In this mad rush toward the unusual and unknown, we tend to forget the great, familiar and still-wonderful beers that guided us all along the path to the craft beer renaissance.” He launched flagshipfebruary.com, which has posted daily essays extolling the virtues of long-running brews.

Beaumont’s campaign inspired us to ask our 401 brewers and beer pros about the standard-setting beers that inspired their labors of love.

Chip Samson at Shaidzon Beer Company said, “I was a Keystone Light slugger and then it hit me that beer could have something different going on. I was a Boulderite (CO) for a number of years and Avery Brewing was a regular Friday afternoon haunt for me. We’d bring the cribbage board and have a few tastings. I enjoyed their whole array of beers, but I would say the Avery IPA was a mid-2000s classic for

me that stuck. And I know that Allagash White is high on [brewer] Josh [Letourneau]'s list of favorites.”

BJ Mansuetti, the marketing guru at Narragansett Beer, said, “I do love me a Long Trail Ale. Balanced, flavorful and just enough crispness to be an all-night drinker. A classic for a reason.”

The dynamic duo at **Beer On Earth** weighed in. Paul DiBiase said, “Anchor Steam was most definitely my ‘gateway beer.’ I remember trying it for the first time at a friend’s house and thinking, ‘What is that flavor?’ It was a huge step up from the mass beers I was drinking at the time, and definitely started me down the road of exploring the world of beer.” Adam Henderson recalled, “I was a big fan of Magic Hat in my college days, especially #9. It was more flavorful than the light lagers I was drinking at the time, and I really appreciated the way that they branded and marketed their beers. They took a funky approach to artwork and design, and that definitely appealed to me as a novice consumer just starting to get into the craft beer movement.”

Beer On Earth is also the topic of this edition’s Big Beer News: “We are planning on moving into the Long Live Beerworks space at some point this spring, where we will have the capacity to brew more beer and package it in cans. We will continue operations at our North Kingstown location until the move happens, but we are excited to be moving to Providence in the near future!”

And speaking of Long Live, Armando DeDona has some welcome post-government open-up (y’know, the opposite of shutdown) news: “Now that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) is open, we have our Brewer’s Notice, and we’re just waiting on final inspections and the state license transfer. A few more weeks...” We’ll drink a flagship – say, a Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, or a North Coast Red Seal Ale, or a Dogfish Head 60 Minute IPA, or a Victory HopDevil IPA or an Oskar Blues Dale’s Pale Ale – to that!

For more beer news, check Lou’s blog, bottlescansclaphands.wordpress.com, or follow @BottlesCansRI.