

Southern California Homebrew Festival 2017

by George Eldridge
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Another Fest is in the books. It was the 26th nearly-annual Southern California Homebrew Festival held on May 6, 2017. The Fest was held at Vail Lake Resort near Temecula. There were approximately 1,300 members plus volunteers in attendance enjoying the more than 3,475 gallons of beer being served on 493 taps by 35 clubs and one homebrew supply vendor. That is more than two gallons of beer for every person there!

In past years I have documented the Fest and this year was no different. This year my Fest ticket was comped by the CHA because they like what I do and wanted to see me continue to do it. The only thing better than drinking beer and writing about it is to be paid to drink beer and write about it!

I started at the booth closest to the food vendors and I labeled this booth #1 (which may or may not agree with the "official" booth numbering). As I worked my way from booth to booth I collected information on the number of taps, the number of kegs that were brought and the most popular beers that were being served.

I arrived with my friend and coworker Terry Wells a few minutes after 11 am. My wife Lynn was once again our designated driver. She drops us off at the Fest, goes antiquing during the day, and then picks us up in the evening and drives us home. This works well since overnight camping is not an option as I usually have church duties on Sunday morning. It is always a gamble that she would find something very expensive but not today. After getting signed in and wrist-banded, we picked up our tasting glasses and headed into the Fest.

The first step to a successful Fest is to have some food in your stomach when you begin to sample beers. We headed to the food vendor area and selected our lunches. We were pleased to see six choices of vendors. With our bellies full we set out to tackle the Fest. My plan was to visit the booths in order documenting each one as I went. I printed my recap of the 2016 Fest and brought it with me to update. I also brought my camera. In the past I brought a tablet, but it is easier to bring paper because there is no problem if beer is spilled on paper or if it gets rained on.

This year we had to deal with the weather. It was chilly and threatening rain all day. The early afternoon was good, but at 3 pm the mist began to fall. Fortunately it remained a mist and only slightly dampened the festivities.

Maybe it was not a coincidence that the sky began to weep at the same time that people gathered at the tent for a toast to Mike Froehlich. Mike Sunny did a great job with the toast.

Having documented the Fest and sampled many fine beers, sours and meads, Terry and I left the Fest at 4 pm to head back to Long Beach.

It was another very enjoyable Fest!

The booths formed a large horseshoe on the Fest grounds. At one end of the horseshoe were the food vendors. At the other end was the Fest entrance. Here is the map of the Fest followed by a list of the clubs in alphabetic order.

| Booth Map | Taps | Kegs |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1: Beer, Beer and More Beer (vendor) | 10 | 12 |
| 2: Yeastside Brewers | 19 | 19 + bottles |
| 3: The F.E.R.M. - Fractured Experiments Requiring Malt | 11 | 21 |
| 4: Temecula Valley Homebrewers Association | 10 | 13 |
| 5: Coasters by Stella Divina (vendor) | | |
| 6: Societe du Lambic | 13 | 22 |
| 7: Society of Barley Engineers | 13 | 24 |
| 8: Strand Brewers Club | 15 | 20 |
| 9: Society of Barley Alchemists | 6 | 6 + bottles |
| 10: Riverside Home Brew Crew | 12 | 18 |
| 11: Ojai Beer Barons | 4 | 14 + bottles |
| 12: North County Homebrewers Association | 18 | 27 |
| 13: Mojave Desert Brewers Guild | 10 | 10 |
| 14: Meisters of the Brewniverse | 10 | 10 |
| 15: Mash Heads | 8 | 9 |
| 16: Inland Empire Brewers | 25 | 28 |
| 17: Hop-A-Holics | 10 | 12 |
| 18: High Desert Homebrewers Anonymous | 15 | 35 |
| 19: Lab Rat Home Brew Society | 11 | 22 |
| 20: Hydration Station (spigots connected to a hose bib) | | |
| 21: Thousand Oaked Homebrewers | 9 | 22 |
| 22: VIBE (Ventura Independent Beer Enthusiasts) | 22 | 31 + bottles |
| 23: Long Beach Homebrewers | 27 | 43 |
| 24: Long Beach Homebrewers Hydration Station (flavored water) | | |
| 25: Pacific Gravity | 22 | 24 |
| 26 & 27: Maltose Falcons | 38 | 40 |
| 28: Foam On The Brain | 12 | 19 |
| 29: Crude Brew Crew | 8 | 12 |
| 30: Crown of the Valley | 16 | 17 |
| 31: Coachella Valley Homebrew Club | 6 | 6 |
| 32: Brewluminati | 14 | 30 |
| 33: Brew Tech's | 9 | 9 + bottles |
| 34: BEAVR (Brewing Enthusiasts of the Antelope Valley Region) | 20 | 21 |
| 35: Barley Standing | 5 | 5 |
| 36: Barrelly Twisted | 14 | 20 |
| 37: Barley Literate | 11 | 11 |
| 38: Barley Bandits | 10 | 15 + bottles |
| 39: B. Ar. F. (Brewing Around Friends) | 8 | 22 |
| 40: BrewCommune | 22 | 26 |
| 41: Brewers Hardware (vendor) | | |
| Totals | Taps | Kegs |
| 35 clubs + 3 vendors | 493 | 695 + bottles |

Barley Bandits, Orange

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/barleybandits/>

Booth: 38, Taps: 10, Kegs: 15 plus Meads in bottles, Notable Offerings: Chocolate Raspberry Truffle Stout (9th year), Bailey's Irish Cream Stout (8th year)

Established in 1984, The Barley Bandits Homebrew Club, is Orange County's Oldest homebrew club. The club has many experienced members, some of which have been brewing since before the club's inception. This experience brings a unique level of insight and perspective, both on brewing and on local beer culture. The club of 16 to 20 members meets at Stereo Brewing in Placentia.

Their meads are also a big hit. I tried the watermelon and the green apple flavors. More like an adult Jolly Rancher candy than a mead.

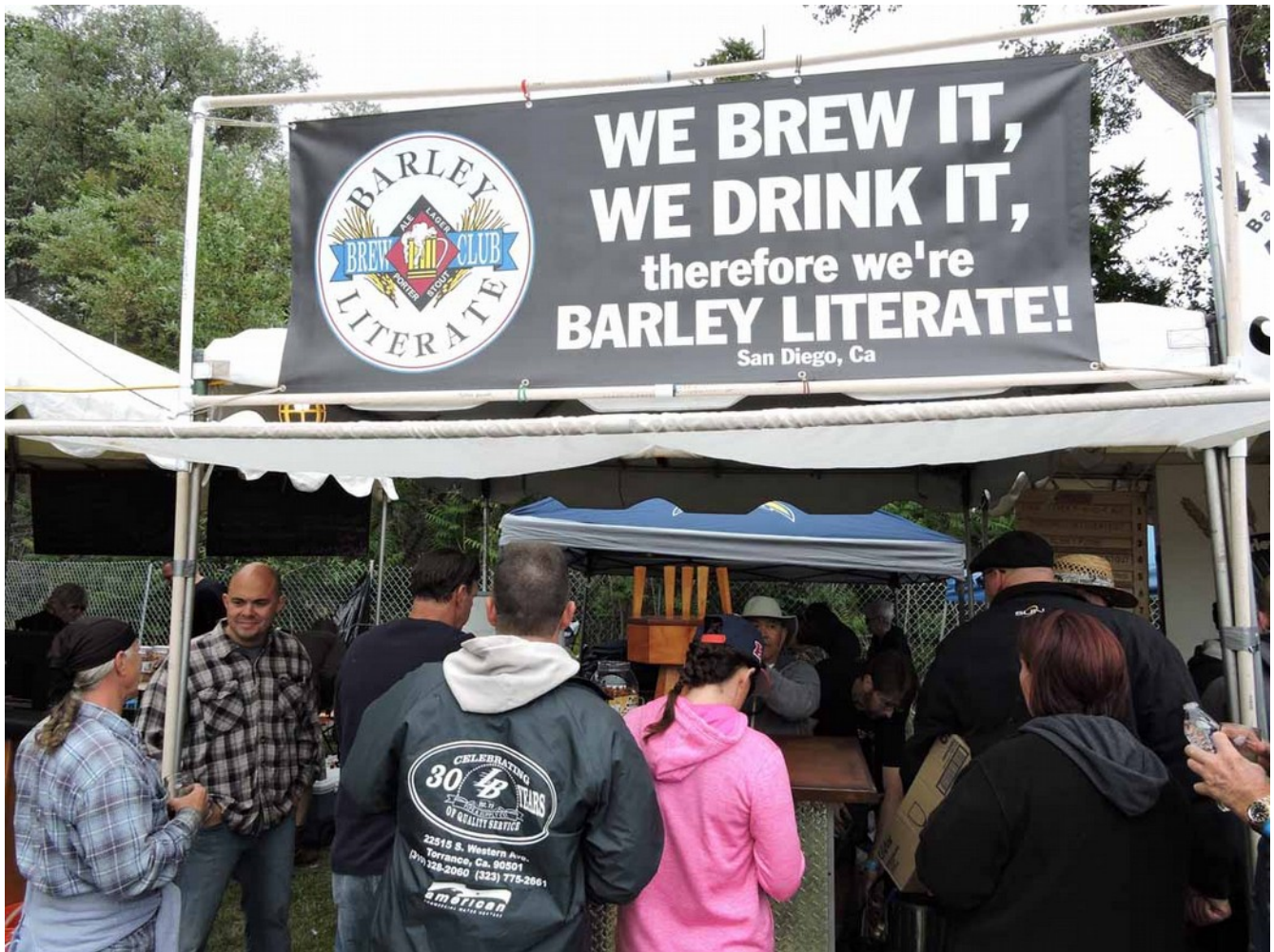


Barley Literate HB Club, San Marcos

<http://www.meetup.com/Barley-Literate-Home-Brewing-North-San-Diego-County/>

Booth: 37, Taps: 11, Kegs: 11, Notable Offerings: Barrel Aged Old Ale, Cherry Christmas Brown

This club is located in North San Diego County and hold their monthly meetings in Escondido at Mike's BBQ. Most of the 25 members are from Escondido, San Marcos, Rancho Bernardo, Vista, Oceanside and Carlsbad. I spoke with the club secretary Mike McCague.



Barley Standing, Southern California

<http://karstenleone.wix.com/barley-standing>

Booth: 35, Taps: 5, Kegs: 5, Notable Offerings: Pivo Lager

This is the second Fest for this club. This club has been around for 9 years. Their twelve members are from Central California to San Diego. The Fest is their annual get together. Five of the members made it to the Fest.



Barrelly Twisted, San Marcos

<http://www.barrellytwisted.com>

Booth: 36, Taps: 14, Kegs: 20, Notable Offerings: Coffee Porter, Kilted Czar Russian Imperial Stout

This is the second year at the Fest for this club. The club has about a dozen members. I spoke with the president, Thomas (who goes by TAB, Thomas A Brewer), and he explained that they meet at the Castle Creek Golf Course Sports Bar.



Beer, Beer, and More Beer, Internet

<http://morebeer.com/>

Booth: 1, Taps: 10, Kegs: 12, Notable Offerings: Chai Tea Cream Ale, Ron Mexico IPA

This is a vendor, but they also have homebrewers that brew and serve beer. The Chai Tea Cream Ale is always a favorite. A nice beer to start the day with and it goes well with lunch.



B. Ar. F. (Brewing Around Friends), Cerritos

<https://www.beersyndicate.com/app/HomebrewClub/Details/1415>

Booth: 39, Taps: 8, Kegs: 22 Notable Offerings: Helles Lager, Ginger Whit, Mamba Black IPA

This is a relatively new club with their third appearance at the Fest. The club started in 2011 and has 13 members. The club meets in members' homes. David Morgan is the president. Of course, they were offering Barf Bags free for the asking! Hopefully they were not necessary.



Brewing Enthusiasts of the Antelope Valley Region (BEAVR), Antelope Valley

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Brewing-Enthusiasts-of-the-Antelope-Valley-Region/108757585818977>

Booth: 34, Taps: 20, Kegs: 21, Notable Offerings: Madam President – Raspberry Pink Sour, The Passion of the Hop Jesus – Passionfruit IPA, Orange Man – Peach Cream Ale, It Burns When IPA – Habanero IPA

“Brewing Some Dam Good Beer!” (sic)

BEAVR is a small, informal group of drinkers with a brewing problem. Always seeking new members to join us in the pursuit of better beer and better brewing. The club was established in 2009 and they have about 40 members. They meet in members’ homes. They are known for their unique beer names.



Brewluminati, North Orange County / Anaheim

<http://www.brewluminati.org>

Booth: 32, Taps: 14, Kegs: 30, Notable Offerings: Apparition Dark Saison, Citrus IPA

This club formed in 2011 and their name is a play on the Bavarian Illuminati, an Enlightenment-era secret society. They have over 100 members and make no secret of the fact that they meet on the last Thursday of the month at Phantom Ales Insiders. They were selling Hop Candles.



Brew Tech's, San Diego

Booth: 33, Taps: 9, Kegs: 9 + bottles, Notable Offerings: Summer Picnic Cream Ale, Ginger Mead

They are homebrewers from the Northwest to the Southwest. They are another club that meets once a year at the Fest. They have about 45 members.



BrewCommune, Orange (online)

<http://www.brewcommune.com/>

Booth: 40, Taps: 22, Kegs: 26, Notable Offerings: Crazy Hazy IPA, Rye IPA, Espresso Porter

Brewcommune is an Internet based home beer brewing community. Most of the members are located in or around Orange County, CA.

Club members truly act communally in that guidance and recommendations are free for the asking. It is not uncommon to have multiple answers/recommendations to questions posted in the [forum](#) the same day. Club members are also seemingly always "on call" when a fellow club member needs a hand and frequently "come to the rescue" for each other with grain, yeast, hops, equipment, etc.



Brewers Hardware, Huntington Beach

<http://www.brewershardware.com>

Booth: 41, vendor

This vendor has been involved with the Fest for three years; supplying the raffle grand prize beer sculpture for this year and last. This is the first time they had a booth.



The beer sculpture system (model PS10) has a retail price of \$3,620.15.

They were not serving any beer.

Coachella Valley Homebrew Club, Coachella Valley

<http://coachellavalleyhomebrewers.org/>

Booth: 31, Taps: 6, Kegs: 6, Notable Offerings: Amber Alert Lager and Amber Alert Lager Lime Infused.

This club took a break from the music back at the polo grounds to come to the Fest. The 15 to 20 member club had some interesting beverages on tap. You could have a taste of the Amber Alert Lager and then have a taste of the Amber Alert Lager after it was infused with lime. The club meets at the Coachella Valley Brewery.



Crown of the Valley, Pasadena

<http://crownofthevalley.org/>

Booth: 30, Taps: 16, Kegs: 17, Notable Offerings: Helles Lager (2 versions), Club Project Barleywine

Crown of the Valley Brewing Society (COVBS) is an extremely dedicated homebrewing club hailing out of Pasadena, CA but has members stretching from Lancaster to the North, Trabuco Canyon, Corona and Lake Elsinore to the South and all points in between.

They served beer floats at 4 pm just like they did at last year's Fest.

I spoke with past president Brian. He explained the club project barleywine which was quite young at last year's Fest would be served at 2 pm.



Crude Brew Crew, South Bay – Torrance

<https://twitter.com/CrudeBrewCrew>

Booth: 29, Taps: 8, Kegs: 12, Notable Offerings: Snozberry Porter, Cookies 'n Cream Stout with ice cream

This is the fifth time for this club at the Fest. This 12 member club had 12 members at the Fest. They meet at a member's home in Redondo Beach on the first Sunday of the month and they brew at every meeting!

At 3 pm they served Cookies 'n Cream Stout with ice cream.



The F.E.R.M. HB Club, Downey

<http://www.facebook.com/ferm.homebrew>

Booth: 3, Taps: 11, Kegs: 21, Notable Offerings: Cookies 'n Cream Cream Ale with Oreos, Belgian Sour

"Fractured Experiments Requiring Malt"

I spoke with Jim who is the president of this small eight-member club (all of whom were at the Fest). The club meets at a member's house to brew. There was no game this year, but they were handing out yarn necklaces with pretzels on them.



Foam on the Brain, San Diego

Booth: 28, Taps: 12, Kegs: 19, Notable Offerings: New England IPA

This 35 member club meets at KnB Wine Cellar in San Diego.



High Desert Homebrewers Anonymous, Hesperia

<https://www.facebook.com/events/129172567224964/>

Booth: 18, Taps: 15, Kegs: 35, Notable Offerings: Barrel Aged Barleywine, Boysenberry Gose

This club added a back bar this year and increased their taps from 9 to 15! The club has about 40 members that meet at Pascos Pizza in Hesperia on the first Thursday from 5:30pm to 9pm.



Hop-A-Holics, San Diego & Riverside Counties

Booth: 17, Taps: 10, Kegs: 12, Notable Offerings: Galaxy-Nelson IPA

This is another relatively new club with their fourth visit to the Fest. They were founded in 2012 and have 15 members. Not surprising, all of their beers were hoppy including the Galaxy-Nelson IPA.



Inland Empire Brewers, Riverside

<http://www.inlandempirebrewers.com>

Booth: 16, Taps: 25, Kegs: 28, Notable Offerings: Jason's Lunar Travels Apricot Sour, Mango Sour

This club has been a regular at the Fest. The club has 50 members and they rotate meeting locations.



Lab Rat Home Brew Society, Ontario

Booth: 19, Taps: 11, Kegs: 22, Notable Offerings: Guardian of the Galaxy XPA

This 29 member club, started in 2004, had many members at the Fest! The president is Todd Chapman. The club meets in Riverside, Wrightwood and Barstow. They had the Guardian of the Galaxy XPA single hop Extra Pale Ale.



Long Beach Homebrewers, Long Beach

<http://www.longbeachhomebrewers.com>

Booth: 23-24 Taps: 27, Kegs: 43, Notable Offerings: Mike Froehlich's beer and wine

We are a club providing information exchange for both experienced and novice home brewers with a focus on the art and science of brewing in an atmosphere of fellowship.

The club meets at 7:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month at [Stein Fillers](#) in Long Beach, CA (562-425-0588). If you are 21 or older you are welcome. Bring a chair and join us.

There was always a big crowd in front of the LBHB booth. It was because of the wide selection of great beers and, of course, Big Dick's World Famous Pickled Eggs.



This club by far had the most camping sites; more than twice the number of sites compared to the next largest club.

Again Long Beach Homebrewers had a second booth with beers and a hydration station. Many clubs had water available and a few clubs had non-alcoholic sodas available. The Long Beach Homebrewers had number of different flavored waters available. There was citrus water with oranges and cucumber water to name two.

They also had the fixings for Shandy and Bloody beers as well as a Mead Sangria.



I think this is the only booth that had a pink server!

I must disclose that I am the secretary of the Long Beach Homebrewers and might be biased in my reporting of this fine club.

Maltose Falcons, Los Angeles

<http://www.maltosefalcons.com/>

Booth: 26-27, Taps: 38, Kegs: 40, Notable Offerings: Sweet Stout on a Bourbon Soaked Coffee Bean Rind.

The Maltose Falcons is one of the oldest clubs. The club was active in 1978 in efforts to legalize homebrewing in California. That bill was signed by Governor Brown on July 19, 1978. The current president of this 50 member club is Andy Ziskin.

They also had a double booth to support the 38 taps.





Mash Heads, San Diego

<http://www.mashheads.com>

Booth: 15, Taps: 8, Kegs: 9, Notable Offerings: Kentucky Mule (Ginger Bourbon Beer)

I spoke with the president Tricia Gallant about this club's fifth appearance at the Fest. The popular Kentucky Mule was a nice beer for those that enjoy a little ginger. The 30 member club likes being a small club. It is easy to get lost in the many San Diego mega-clubs. They meet at White Labs and enjoy quarterly field trips and an annual bash.



Meisters of the Brewniverse, Orange County

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Meisters-of-the-Brewniverse/181335391910791>

Booth: 14, Taps: 10, Kegs: 10, Notable Offerings: Berry'Liner Raspberry Berliner Weisse

This is the third Fest for the MOB (which is a great name). The club was founded in 2010 and has 25 members. They meet in members' homes. They had an interesting beer tap assembly as well as some interesting beers. The center of gravity for the club is Rancho Margarita.



Mojave Desert Brewers Guild, Joshua Tree (new)

<https://www.facebook.com/mojavedesertbrewersguild>

Booth: 13, Taps: 10, Kegs: 10, Notable Offerings: #2 Cherry Hydromel Mead

This is the third Fest for this club. They meet at James Joshua Tree Bicycle Shop on the second Wednesday of the month. The president is Nancy Roland.



North County Homebrewers Association, Oceanside

<http://www.meetup.com/northcountyhomebrewers>

Booth: 12, Taps: 18, Kegs: 27, Notable Offerings: 7 Meads

This club of 125 members meets in members' houses on the first Friday of the month which can be an issue for a club this size!



Ojai Beer Barons, Ojai

<http://ojaibeerbarons.com>

Booth: 11, Taps: 4, Kegs: 14 + Mead Bottles, Notable Offerings: Honey Orange, Kitchen Sink Red

Any well-versed Simpsons fan will recognize that the inspiration for our club name comes from the classic Simpsons episode "Homer versus the Eighteenth Amendment."

This is the fifth visit to the Fest for this club. Their 3 minute commute to the Fest is a thing of the past and yet they slogged through the traffic to make it again this year. They meet at the Ojai Beverage Company. Their bar top at the Fest was actually a discarded corner of the bar top at the Ojai Beverage Company that they fished out of the trash!



Pacific Gravity, Culver City

<https://www.facebook.com/PacificGravity>

Booth: 25, Taps: 22, Kegs: 24, Notable Offerings: Good Morning Porter with Hazelnut Espresso

Pacific Gravity is one of the three clubs that is a rotating sponsor of the Pacific Brewers Cup Homebrew Competition. They meet every third Thursday of the month at Culver City Homebrew Supply at 4358 Sepulveda Blvd. Michael Musgrove is the president. They have 110 members signed up with 35 to 40 attending the meetings. There were 21 club members at the Fest.



Riverside Home Brew Crew, Riverside

<https://untappd.com/w/riverside-home-brew-crew/29846>

Booth: 10, Taps: 12, Kegs: 18, Notable Offerings: Smoked Vanilla Porter

This club of 20 members meets in members' homes.



Societe du Lambic

<https://twitter.com/sdlclub>

Booth: 6, Taps: 13, Kegs: 22, Notable Offerings: Gueuze 2011-2016 Blend

Wow, how far have we come! A club at the Fest serving only sour beers. Like most sour beer makers they have a set of base beers that they blend for the final product. Some use just a Blond and a Dark. This club has six barrels. The members blend their own sour from the six base sours. This club has been around for 23 years, but this is their second year at the Fest. They meet at Booze Brothers Brewery in Vista. The club has 80 members and there were 24 at the Fest. This is a sub-club of the Society of Barley Engineers which became an independent club.



Society of Barley Alchemists, Menifee

<https://www.facebook.com/brewsoba/>

Booth: 9, Taps: 6, Kegs: 6 + bottles, Notable Offerings: Bullshit IPA, Geiger Mead

This is the second year at the Fest for this club of 35 members. They meet at Brewliterate Canyon Lake Homebrew Supply Store.



Society of Barley Engineers, San Marcos

<http://societyofbarleyengineers.org>

Booth: 7, Taps: 13, Kegs: 24, Notable Offerings: PB&J

The Society of Barley Engineers is club with 80 members; 20 of whom were at the Fest. I spoke with the founder Andy Gamelin who said that this is the 23rd year of the club. They are affiliated with the Lambic club.

One sip of the PB&J would make you swear that you ate a PB&J sandwich an hour earlier.



Strand Brewers Club, Redondo Beach

<http://strandbrewersclub.org>

Booth: 8, Taps: 15, Kegs: 20, Notable Offerings: Sours, Bourbon Barrel Aged Porter

"Brewing the Best Damn Beer!"

The objectives of the Strand Brewers Club are to Brew Beer; to disseminate among the members information pertaining to the brewing, consuming, presentation, judging and history of beer; to promote and encourage homebrewing competition; and to foster general goodwill throughout this great nation of ours through the making and consuming of this noble and most excellent beverage. Strand Brewers Club meets the second Wednesday of every month at South Bay Brewing Supply in Torrance.

Their barrel program has five 35 gallon barrels active.



Temecula Valley Homebrewers Association, Temecula

<http://www.temeculahomebrewers.com/>

Booth: 4, Taps: 10, Kegs: 13, Notable Offerings: Bacon ESB (smoked, maple, etc.), DoloresUmbridge

This is a 25 to 30 member club that meets in the Backyard Bottle Shop in Murietta. Eric Holden was not there this year to bring his wonderful meads. He is a member of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit and he heeds the call for rescue even on Fest weekend. I have to agree that saving a life is more important than the Fest.



Thousand Oaked Homebrewers, Thousand Oaks

<http://www.toaked.com/>

Booth: 21, Taps: 9, Kegs: 22, Notable Offerings: Bragging Rights Winning Schwarz beer, Mos-coe IPA

This is the club's fifth year at the Fest. The club has about 40 members. They meet at the Elks Lodge in Thousand Oaks on the second Sunday of the month.



Ventura Independent Beer Enthusiasts (VIBE), Ventura

<http://vibebeer.com>

Booth: 22, Taps: 22, Kegs: 31 + bottles, Notable Offerings: Barrel House Sour

In the afternoon they were able to call people to their booth in droves for their “Hour of Sours”. They did it by ringing a large gong. Reminds me of Pavlov’s dog because I salivated for their sours when I heard the gong.

This 40 member club is headed by president and CHA board member Andy Carter. They meet at the Surf Brewery in Ventura.



Yeastside Brewers, East Los Angeles

<http://yeastsidebrewers.org>

Booth: 2, Taps: 19, Kegs: 19 + bottles, Notable Offerings: SMASH (Mosaic + Otter), Session Red IPA

This is their fourth Fest. "We are a group of like-minded homebrewers who call Northeast Los Angeles home. Our primary concerns are the exploration and production of fantastic beers as well as involvement and sharing with the community in which we live." This club was founded in January of 2011 and has 55 members with about 20 at the meetings. They meet all over east L. A. including Eagle Rock Homebrew Supply.



The food service area had six vendors. Gazzolo's is a returning vendor. Returning from last year was the San Diego Taco Company. Also returning from last year was Kritter Kookers. I had the brisket sandwich which was very good.

New were the Food Dood, Gourment Grilled Cheese, and Southern Fried Vegan BBQ.



There were also two food trucks outside of the Fest area:



Registration was the first stop for all Fest participants.



And then you pick up your glassware



Of course people love to play games at the Fest:

Connect Four



Washer Toss



Corn Hole



Bolo Toss and just hanging out



Everyone at the Fest needs to visit here because you can't own beer you can only rent it



If you drink too much you might see a pink unicorn. Even if you don't drink that much you still might see a pink unicorn. And if you see a white unicorn as well then...



Stella Davina (www.StellaDivina.com) was back this year at booth 5. She was selling coasters with beer labels.



They listen to lectures...



This year we had to deal with the weather. Fortunately, it was only a light mist that started at 3pm. The actual rain held off until the Fest had concluded.



Mike Sunny gave an excellent toast to Mike Froehlich who left us this year way too early.

