

Michael Jackson: Father of the craft brewing renaissance in America

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Michael Jackson, international authority on beer and whiskey, might well be called the Father of the Craft Brewing Renaissance in America, the key figure, the catalyst who revitalized American beer and bequeathed his knowledge for the benefit of future generations. Through his writings, appearances, and media presence, both in the United States and on the international stage, Jackson empowered American brewers with the language of beer and educated consumers to make informed choices regarding distinctive beers, many of which had been on the verge of extinction. Had he been from a life of privilege, Lambic may have disappeared from the Zenne Valley, Gose from the houses of Leipzig, and Steam Beer from the San Francisco Bay. The hand of fate took the life of his twin in 1946. He became a 'treasure' by default¹ and, as such, a self-fulfilling prophecy left its own mark, propelling him toward larger-than-life ambitions.

If one is to examine Jackson's influence on craft brewing in the United States, one must understand the history behind American brewing and the international attitudes toward US beer at the time when Jackson, a British journalist,

emerged as a prominent authority in the beer world. One must also understand the ways in which 'American craft brewing' differs from mass market beer, the extent to which this artisanal American *métier* has developed, and how Jackson impacted American attitudes about beer.

In comparing the history of beer in America with that of Europe and the Fertile Crescent, one discovers that American beer has barely entered puberty, having archival records that cover little more than 500 years. Within that short lifespan, beer in American society has lived a tumultuous existence. It gave sustenance to early adventurers and energy to a Revolution. Beer inflamed temperance leagues and triggered civil disobedience in swanky Cotton Club-style speakeasies. In wartime, rationing of raw materials curtailed its production. A paradigm shift in modern thought created a simplified version of American pilsner. It scarcely resembled beer, but huge advertising budgets raised these corporate brands to global prominence.

A handful of believers - including Fritz Maytag of Anchor Brewing in San

Francisco, Jack McAuliffe of New Albion Brewing in Sonoma, California, and Charlie Papazian, a homebrewing enthusiast at the Free School in Denver, Colorado - were part of a grass-roots movement that sustained traditions worthy of preservation. That grass-roots movement only existed in small pockets throughout the country, fragmented by distance and diversity of thought. Michael Jackson was the synergist who connected them and brought them to international recognition.

Forces that shaped the American beer landscape

Beer origins from the ancient city of Ur to the temples of Egypt and throughout the kingdoms of Europe have left a footprint stretching back ten thousand years; but in America, beer has a much younger history. Norsemen were undoubtedly the first outsiders to land in the New World circa 1000 AD. Runic Records, however, leave no hard evidence of beer chronicles in the lands they touched. By 1492, word-of-mouth accounts by Christopher Columbus indicate Indians, despite being unexposed to European traditions, were, in fact, brewing with indigenous materials and fermenting their brew in jugs fashioned of clay.²

The first archives of brewing in America were formally recorded in 1587, by English explorer Richard Hakluyt and his colleague Thomas Heriot of Sir Walter

Raleigh's colony in Virginia. Their account explained,

We made of the same in the country some mault, whereof was brewed as good ale as was to be desired. So likewise by the help of hops thereof may be made as good beer.³

Early writings, attributed to William Bradford and Edward Winslow in 1620-21, indicate that beer was a food staple on the Mayflower voyage. The colonizers voiced great concern as they observed supplies running low:

Againe, we had yet some Beere, Butter, Flesh, and other such victuals left, which would quickly be all gone, and then we should have nothing to comfort us in the great labour and toyle we were like to under-goe ...⁴

Fear of aggression by 'Indians' forced the seafaring consort to continue along the coast for another fortnight, seeking a more hospitable landing place for permanent settlement. In Provincetown Harbor, the urgent situation of a depleting beer supply prompted their decision to land. Winslow writes,

... in the morning, after we had called on God for direction, we came to this resolution, to goe presently ashore againe, and to take a better view of two places, which wee thought most fitting for us, for we could not now take time for further search or consideration, our victuals being much spent, especially, our Beere ...⁵

The merchandizing of English ale and porter, brewed in the American colonies, began with Block & Christiansen's Brewhouse in New Amsterdam, creating a measure of independence from Britain; then, expanded to Market Field on Manhattan Island, Frampton's Brewery on the Dock Street Creek in Philadelphia, and by 1738, into the deep South with Horton's Brewery on Jekyll Island in Georgia.⁶

In his first book, *The English Pub: A Unique Social Phenomenon*, published in 1976, Michael Jackson writes,

the Britons were 'accustomed to gathering in their ale-houses to govern and adjudicate' as long ago as the first century A.D., according to a Greek commentator of the period, Dioscorides.⁷

It was, therefore, in the spirit of tradition that City Tavern in Philadelphia should become the center of the First Continental Congress, where delegates John Adams, Peyton Randolph, John Hancock and 53 others would organize plans for secession from England.

George Washington, commander of the Continental Army from 1775 to 1783, commended legislation that included daily rations of beer for the militia. Joseph Trumbull, Commissary General of Stores Provisions, oversaw the allotment of one quart of spruce beer per day for each member of the Continental Army. Washington, who later served as first President of the United States, had a

propensity for porter brewed by Robert Hare of the burgeoning Philadelphia beer community. Clement Biddle, a well-known beverage agent, filled Washington's regularly scheduled orders for 'a gross of Mr. Hare's best bottled porter.'⁸ By the early 1800s, Philadelphia's famed Brewerytown encompassed a nine-block area so thick with breweries that one newspaper account claimed, 'The air here is like vaporized bread.'⁹

During the 19th century, production of beer in the United States topped nine million barrels per year.¹⁰ Brew-wars surged in corporate America. Traditional German brewers, including Adolphus Busch, Henry Uihlein, and Frederick Pabst, had become so successful that their palatial mansions drew both awe and criticism in the press. By 1873, a record 4,131 breweries operated from coast to coast.¹¹ Philadelphia, alone, registered 94 of these establishments in 1879, more breweries than any other city in the United States. Beer was regarded as the beverage of temperance. In 1880, the slogan, 'Beer against whiskey,' condoned beer within groups that otherwise condemned the social damage of disreputable saloons.

That record number of breweries would soon be ravaged by improved methods of production, taxation, syndication and the collapse of the American Stock Market in 1893. Prohibitionists, pushing for total abstinence, refused to retreat. America's fertile brewing atmosphere lost ground with the founding of Howard Hyde

Russell's Ohio Anti-Saloon League, and by 1910, the number of breweries had declined to 1,568. With the outbreak of World War I, anti-German sentiment further abraded the market.

Prohibition went into effect on 16 January 1920 with the Volstead Act. To survive, some breweries diversified to the production of ginger ale, root beer, baking yeast, malt syrup, and near beer. Although the output of near beer hit 300 million gallons in the first two years after Prohibition's inception, it was so poorly made that, by some accounts, it hardly resembled beer. By 1932, sales diminished to 86 million gallons.¹²

But a significant segment of American society, particularly those in the cities, rejected a life of teetotalism. Speakeasies and bootleggers were big business for organized-crime syndicates which brought more than a million gallons of alcohol into the country by the late 1920s. Cold-blooded escapades orchestrated by Al Capone, Bugsy Siegel, 'Sammy the Bull' Gravano and other mob bosses dominated headlines in every major newspaper. When 'JURY CONVICTS CAPONE' splashed the front page of the Chicago Sunday Tribune on 18 October 1931, it created such fervor that the death of Thomas Edison, conceivably America's most prolific inventor, took an anemic second.¹³

The 21st Amendment repealed the Volstead Act on 5 December 1933. Earlier in the year, however, Congress

reinterpreted the Volstead Act's definition of 'intoxicating liquor' with the Cullen-Harrison Act, signed into law by Franklin Roosevelt on the seventh of April, which legalized the sale of light wines and beer with 3.2% alcohol by weight (4.0% by volume). By 1933, Prohibition had lost support across all Federal lines.

Many breweries could not overcome the severe bruise left by Prohibition. Coupled with the Stock Market crash in 1929, the United States had plunged head first into the Great Depression, which lasted until America entered World War II in 1941. In 1934, only 756 breweries were in production. Rationing of raw materials, including grain and sugar, was in effect during the war and continued post-war to support food-shortages in war-torn Europe.

Brewers experimented with corn and rice, potatoes, rye and oats. A lean marketplace proved far too challenging to sustain most small brewing operations. The largest brewers took the helm and, as time passed, corporate buy-outs, consolidation and advertising expanded the beer landscape. Schlitz, Anheuser-Busch, Pabst and Miller commanded huge market share. By 1948, American consumption of beer hit 86.9 million barrels, with a per capita consumption of 18.5 gallons.¹⁴ And then it fell ... hard.

'Home-made' was suddenly unfashionable. Changing tastes among Americans favored convenience foods: instant pudding, evaporated milk, canned soups,

TV dinners, and a grocery-list of bland, flavorless products. Consumers acquired a taste for sweet, carbonated, soft drinks. This was the modern world. Beer companies lightened the 'old-man flavors' of beer with corn and rice, while they tempered the bitterness associated with traditional hops. Overly chilled beer, hinting vaguely at the style of pilsner, became the generic symbol of America.

The growth of the American franchise in the 1950s and '60s supplemented this trend toward modernization, with distribution that would reach a broad range of demographics. Food and drink was homogenized, consolidated, purified, and toned-down until there was little resemblance to the traditions that spawned them. This new paradigm devoured the melting-pot that had supported individuality and ethnic pride. America became Barbie and Ken.¹⁵ It also became weight conscious. Rheingold introduced the watery Gablinger brand to satisfy this trend, and Miller Lite trumped the market with attractive advertising campaigns touting beer as light as water.

By 1961, with per-capita beer consumption levels depleted to 15 gallons, the number of breweries in the United States dwindled to 230. Only 140 were independently run. The number of breweries was to deplete even further until 1983, when only 51 brewing establishments, operating 80 breweries, were registered in America.¹⁶

A modest grass-roots movement, with eyes turned toward a revitalization of

craft brewing, bubbled underground. Travel abroad exposed these enthusiasts to the cultures of Munich and London, Dublin and Prague. They had experienced better beer. They were the radicals, the homebrewers, the boutique brewers who refused to settle for the status quo, adrift in a macrocosm of beer giants.

At the time, home wine-making was legal, but homebrewing beer was not specifically included in the 21st Amendment, so it was technically an 'illegal activity.' In 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed legislation, introduced by Senator Alan Cranston of California, which legalized homebrewing on a federal level, providing a means for open dialogue between homebrewers and professionals.

Michael Jackson inspires an American renaissance

Traditional beer in America teetered between extinction and renewal when Michael Jackson came on the scene. Initially, he merely intended to record history before it was gone. The active role he took in marketing his work in the late 1970s and early '80s, however, exposed him to the heart of America's craft brewing movement. Fritz Maytag, Jack McAuliffe, Bert Grant, Charlie Papazian, and Charles Finkel - all preservationists with a vision to expand the hand-crafted beer market - suddenly had an expert among their ranks with personal exposure to the world's beers and knowledge of the cultures that fathered them.



Figure 1. Michael Jackson does a private beer tasting for Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery.

By some accounts, the Craft Brewing Renaissance began in 1976 with the founding of New Albion Brewing Company in Sonoma, California,¹⁷ but one could reasonably argue that Fritz Maytag was the true Renaissance man when he rescued steam beer from extinction in 1965. His purchase of Anchor Brewing in San Francisco seemed shallow - 'a dilettante gesture',¹⁸ - to incisive critics, but Jackson elevated Maytag to international notoriety in *The World Guide to Beer*, published in 1977.

Jackson was their line of support - an international authority who understood what they were trying to do. 'Yorkshire

stubbornness,' as Jackson described his own character, provided the momentum that had been lacking. His left-wing leanings sent him to the defense of small brewers who stood in the shadow of the corporate giants. With the monikers The Beer Hunter and The Whiskey Chaser, he imprinted the Maker's mark upon the drinks culture. His wanderlust worked in America's favor.

A Man of Substance: Michael Jackson (1958-1976)

When he entered the beer world as a knowledgeable expert, Michael Jackson's

journalistic experience spanned nearly two decades. In his early years as a novice reporter, he was self-guided by the Rosser Reeves theory of the unique selling point. At 16, underage and inexperienced, he pitched an editor at the *Batley & Morley Gazette* for a series called 'This is Your Pub.' His chutzpah won him favor, and became Jackson's coat-of-arms through the ranks of the weekly and daily papers, then onward toward Fleet Street. In February 1966, he was named Chief Features Sub-Editor of *The Daily Sketch* in London, a national tabloid with a populist element.

In 1969, Michael Jackson, competing against 90 applicants, won a position on the staff of a weekly UK trade publication, *World's Press News*, targeted at advertising and commercial media enterprise. Jackson was 27 years-old. In the cut-throat world of media tenacity, he quickly gained a promotion to Editor-in-chief, and became a key figure in its re-brand and re-launch as *Campaign* under the direction of Maurice Saatchi as publisher. Jackson's association with *Campaign* was short-lived. At the conclusion of a tumultuous year, he was fired. Ugly news, indeed. But Jackson was already a powerful name among broadcast professionals and was immediately plucked from the ranks of the unemployed by television personality David Frost, who made him Programme Editor. This would be good news for a life yet unwritten.

In the *Great Beers of Belgium*, published in 1991, Jackson detailed a colourful tale

that led his curiosity into the world of drink - a raucous Dutch carnival, the John Lennon mask, a chalice of dark beer, uninhibition. These impressions seeded the newsman's inquisitive nature and carried into the future, from the United States to South Africa; then, throughout Europe and into the Sub-continent. He began organizing beer by country, noting their profiles, comparing their differences. By the time *The World Guide to Beer* was published, his accrued knowledge gave him the ability to spot the unique, to reinforce traditions that were nearly passé, and to analyze emerging markets in Belgium and the United States, and eventually Japan, Poland, and Italy.

For a simple-minded person, it may have been tedious business, but Jackson thrived on such mental stimulation. He did this for beer, and eventually for whiskey. On rare occasions, his writings focused on cocktails and spirits. He enjoyed wine, but preferred to leave that topic in the hands of Hugh Johnson. His *modus operandi* was that of an 'inky-fingered newspaperman,' as he called himself - intensely focused on interviews, filled with face-to-face observation. He explained:

To paraphrase Malvolio: Some people are born wise; others read lots of books; what little I know I have learned from going there; being there, investigating, examining, nosing, tasting, eating.¹⁹

In *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Malcolm Gladwell theorizes that

the success of any kind of social epidemic is heavily dependent on the involvement of people with a particular and rare set of social gifts.²⁰

Jackson was one of those people with unique social skills - a classic connector. Beer-according-to-Michael-Jackson became a communal experience, *bon vivant*, a word-of-mouth epidemic. He was influential. Americans wanted the craft beer experience.

Jackson nurtures America's craft brewing renaissance

Eventually, Michael Jackson would gain status as America's rock-star of beer. So passionate were his followers that he was asked to sign books, beer mats, shirts, and even breasts. He traveled extensively, roving back-and-forth between the USA and international destinations - appearing on Late Night with Conan O'Brien in New York, commiserating with Pierre Celis in Brussels, signing books at the Smithsonian, the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Culinary Institute of America, and the Cambridge Union, or meeting up with the Prince of Wales at Salone del Gusto in Turin. His prolific writing filled the gaps between airports and obligations, while America embraced his vision.

Jackson's style of marketing was on a subtle level, backed by research, dedication and involvement. He wrote commercials for Blitz Weinhard Brewery in

Portland, along with radio spots focused on Henry Weinhard's Private Reserve in the late 1970s. Corporate branding and massive advertising budgets were disdainful to him, however, and he referred to that style of marketing as the 'black science.' Rob Imeson, former President of Beverage Bistro and the Michael Jackson Rare Beer Club, had numerous conversations with Jackson on the subject. Imeson recalled,

His perception was that marketing was what you did to sell a product if you didn't have substance. If you didn't have it, no matter how much you pretended, the consumer would eventually figure out you were a fraud. Michael was all about substance.

His hook of 'May I digress?' became a signature that followed him throughout the United States. Fritz Maytag and Anchor Brewing served as another hook, one he would continuously use to connect with Americans. This was Jackson's style - to create heroes in his stories - and he used the most passionate brewers he met as role models worth emulating. It was about

the quality of life that good beer makes possible: characters at a neighborhood pub, brewers passing their skills to their children. Very emotional but not sentimental

noted Julie Johnson, longtime Editor of *All About Beer* magazine. He drew attention to the heroics of Bert Grant, a Scotsman turned hop-head, and founder of Yakima Brewing Company in

Washington state; Brewpub owner Jack McAuliffe at New Albion, the first brewpub of its kind in the United States,²¹ and Ken Grossman, founder of Sierra Nevada Brewing Company in California. He described their beers, validated them, ushered them into the limelight. They were his focus, and he became their cheerleader. America responded in kind.

Soon after reading *The World Guide to Beer* in 1979, Charles Finkel and his wife Rose Ann contacted Michael Jackson through a London telephone exchange, determined to make his acquaintance and invite him to their home in Seattle, Washington. Finkel was a member of that early passionate group, dedicated to preserving the traditions of beer in America. Before he discovered Jackson's work, Finkel was already well-read on the topic of beer and brewing - based on what was available at the time.²² With Elizabeth Purser, Charles Finkel established Merchant du Vin in 1978. Inspired by Jackson and his writings on international beer styles in *The World Guide to Beer*, Finkel selected Imports of world-class quality that would expand the imagination of craft brewers. As an extension of Jackson's vision, Charles Finkel marketed beers that 'became the benchmarks for home brewers that ultimately became professionals.'²³

Charles Finkel describes Michael Jackson as 'a passionate scholar who did great research on his subject.' He continues, 'He was, I believe, the first professional beer writer in modern times

and probably the greatest beer writer that ever lived.'²⁴ Julie Johnson clarifies Finkel's observation:

I've always felt, predictably, that the people who conveyed the story of beer and brewers for the public had an essential and sometimes underappreciated role in craft beer's success. And, of course, all of us in that arena who think we've ever uncovered an original item to share with our readers then discover to our chagrin that Michael got there first.

Jackson, in collaboration with Charles Finkel, originated an American '-ator' appellation for a Doppelbock that Franz Inselkammer of Ayinger in Germany was to introduce into the United States through Merchant du Vin. They called it Celebrator. Charles Finkel explains,

We introduced the beer here with what Michael dubbed 'The holy goat', a small plastic goat hanging from the neck. Celebrator also became the name of one of the earliest and most successful US newspapers, Celebrator Beer News.²⁵

Jackson wrote for *Alephenalia Beer News*, a publication owned by the Finkels, and collaborated with Charles Finkel to write a video about Samuel Smith's Old Brewery in Tadcaster. The video was directed by Finkel and hosted by Jackson, himself. Jackson's presence in front of a camera worked well. His imagination was piqued and Jackson would market another idea - for a *Beer Hunter* series - to Channel 4 in the UK.

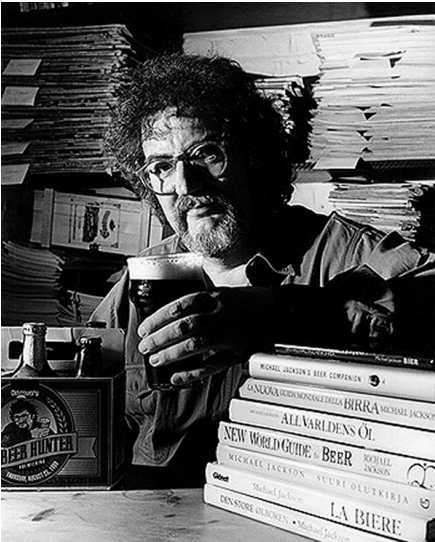


Figure 2. Publicity photograph for the Discovery Channel.

Produced in 1989, the series successfully rolled out to the European market and, by 1991, was distributed by the Discovery Channel in the USA, propelling Michael Jackson into stardom as America's leading authority on beer. Along with absorbing segments that featured European beer and cultural diversity, Jackson created a segment devoted to Anchor Brewing and the Napa Valley, entitled 'California Pilgrimage.' As part of this international series, this *Beer Hunter* segment gave American craft beer a visual power beyond its own borders.

In a 1996 interview, referenced by American writer Stan Hieronymus, Michael Jackson spoke of his early enthusiasm for beer writing. As a travel-

ing journalist who shaped international interviews for the David Frost Show and a film and documentary producer, he had witnessed near-extinct beer traditions in Belgium, Germany, England, and America and was moved to write about them.

I think the motivation was almost like the motivation of some of those musicologists like Alan Lomax who went down to the Mississippi Delta in the '50s and recorded old blues men before they died, [Jackson said.] I wanted to kind of record Belgian beer before those breweries didn't exist anymore. I certainly didn't see it as a career possibility, but I think all, or many, journalists have in them a sort of element of being an advocate.²⁶

He was an early advocate of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, founded in the UK by Mike Hardman, Graham Lees, Bill Mellor, and Jim Makin, but was not one of the founding members. References to writings that influenced CAMRA, however - Christopher Hutt's *Death of the English Pub*, Frank Baillie's *Beer Drinker's Companion*, and Roger Protz's *Good Beer Guide* - peppered the pages of Jackson's first book, *The English Pub: A Unique Social Phenomenon*, published in 1976.

In *The English Pub*, he barely mentioned the United States. It was a book, after all, about the 'English' pub. A few references to the temperance movement, Judy Garland, Nashville and New Orleans hardly caused a ripple. The following

year, however, his *World Guide to Beer* (1977) would introduce America as a brewing nation with potential.

It was a beginning. With a style that was to be perceived as distinctively Jackson, he eased into a subtle critique of American beer:

Coors is so clean tasting, so delicate, that one critic jokingly complains, 'it tastes more like Rocky Mountain Spring Water than beer.'

He expressed his opinion with a subtle reference to the incongruity between American arrogance and diffidence:

A people usually anxious to proclaim the virtues of things American are uncharacteristically self-deprecating about their nations' beers, despite a great brewing tradition.

If this was a dare to the American consumer to demand better beer, America recognized this challenge and responded.

By the time *The New World Guide to Beer* was released in 1988, Michael Jackson was reporting a revitalized beer landscape in the United States - a renaissance in its infancy:

There are fewer than 20 old-established regional and local independents, but at least 40 new microbreweries established themselves in the decade from the late 1970s ... from the low point of fewer than 40 brewing companies on the eve of the 1980s, the

number more than doubled, and promised to triple, in less than a decade ... the result is now a far greater choice for the consumer, if he or she can find it.²⁷

Jackson was not without applause for American beer. As previously noted, he had an eye for emerging markets with a USP. In *The World Guide to Beer* of 1977, he dedicated a full page sepia print to Anchor Steam Brewing Company of San Francisco, with additional graphics dotting the chapter on United States beer, including a photograph of owner Fritz Maytag. The Maven of Malt, as Jackson would be called, focused attention on the resurrection of a dying style, that of West Coast steam beer, and called Anchor Brewing Company, 'America's finest.'

'Maytag has saved one beer-style from extinction,' he wrote 'and offers the drinker further choices which are increasingly hard to find elsewhere.' He proposed the notion that Anchor Steam was 'the nation's sole indigenous beer style.'

'The smallest brewery in the United States has added a whole new dimension to American brewing,' he wrote.²⁸ Additional plaudits rolled freely, and would eventually seep into virtually every column in which Jackson praised American innovation.

For small brewers, Michael Jackson had just cleared a path for their passion. He essentially told them that the Goliaths would not overshadow them, even as he dedicated page after page to Anheuser-

Busch, Miller, Pabst, Schlitz, and Coors. Mergers are noted, but the smaller breweries - Stegmaier, DG Yuengling and Son, St Mary's, Iron City, West End Brewing Company, Genesee, Rheingold, Schaefer, Horlacher, Henry F Ortleib, C Schmidt & Son, Peter Hand Brewing, Wiedemann, Schoenling, Stroh's, Leinenkugel's, Heileman, Olympia, Rainier, Anchor, and Spoetzel - had suddenly been moved to the spotlight on an international stage.

Moving into the mainstream

Randy Mosher, author of *Radical Brewing* and *Tasting Beer*, analyzes Jackson's power as advocate of America's Craft Brewing Movement:

Michael was the first writer who had the audacity to take beer seriously. This was a novel concept back in the day, and that notion infected a lot of minds, including mine, and really gave people permission to go forward with their secret dreams. It felt good knowing he was out there, covering our backs.

By the early 1980s, the American mainstream was not yet aware of beer as a social lubricant in sophisticated circles, if one measures the lack of media attention it received. In 1983, Michael Jackson found himself rubbing elbows at an elite *soirée* with an American editor at Playboy magazine. The words, 'Beer is chic,' tumbled off Jackson's tongue, and his credibility as an author gained him the

pro prowess to close a deal for a 'Beer Chic' piece for the August 1983 issue. As an unknown, he did not even elicit mention on the Playbill page, but this became his first of many articles Playboy would request.

He presented beer as if it were the temptation of Eve, coaxing exploration with his daring script:

Like sex, good beer is a pleasure that can be better appreciated with experience, in which variety is both endless and mandatory. The pleasure lies, too, in gaining the experience: the encounters with the unexpected, the possibility of triumph or disaster, the pursuit of the elusive, the constant lessons, the bittersweet memories that linger.²⁹

His credits soon included pieces in other mainstream American periodicals, including *Esquire*, *GQ*, *The Washington Post*, *National Geographic*, *Traveler*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Wine Enthusiast*, *Wine & Spirits*, *Food & Wine*, *Wine Spectator*, *Slow Food*, and *Slow Wine* magazines. He expounded on the virtues of American beer in British media as well. His 2002 column in *The Independent*, 'Foreign Frontier Advances: Especially Russians and Americans,' focused a spotlight on the growing craft beer industry:

The real eyebrow-raisers are the Americans: The mass-market U.S. labels are the world's lightest-tasting lagers, but some of the new generation of micro brewers make beers of more intense hop bitterness than can be found in Britain, Belgium, or any other great

beer nation ... The gutsy-sounding Heavyweight Brewing Company, of Ocean Township, New Jersey has a smoky-tasting brew of eight or nine per cent alcohol, called Perkuno's Hammer. 'Perkuno' is the counterpart in Estonia to the Scandinavian thunder god Thor. This beer is described as a Baltic Porter, a categorisation that grew out of a series of articles I wrote in 1990, after a visit to Estonia.³⁰

More articles of similar style appeared in *The Observer* and *Class Magazine* and at *Beer Hunter Online*. With sensitivities piqued in a broader marketplace, US consumers sought out the beers he championed. By the time *Michael Jackson's Pocket Guide to Beer* was published in 1986, enthusiasts were planning beer hunts of their own, seeking out the beers recommended in Jackson's book.

Empowering a nation

Charlie Papazian, Co-Founder (with Charlie Matzen) of the American Homebrewers Association, President of the Brewers Association, and brain power behind the Great American Beer Festival, Savor, and the World Beer Cup, was one of the earliest homebrewing advocates in the United States. Jackson and Papazian had similar philosophies about beer culture. In friendship and on a professional level, they attended the 1981 Great British Beer Festival in London, discussed the possibility of a 'Great American Beer Festival,' and

toured breweries and pubs throughout America's East coast.

On one such tour in May 1987, Jackson scheduled a stop at Stoudt's Brewing Company in Adamstown, Pennsylvania. Carol Stoudt, Owner and Brewmaster of Stoudt's recalls:

At that time we had three southern German style beers - Helles, Viennese amber, and a dunkel. He [Jackson] was so pleased with our first beers but told me not to limit myself to these styles but expand to the wealth of other styles from Germany, Czech Republic, and other European nations. My husband and I traveled extensively in the years after that to research other beer styles. It stimulated us to make many other styles, both traditional and untraditional, over the years.

Stoudt's went on to expand their portfolio of beers to include Rauch beer, Pils, Kolsch, Hefeweisen, and several Bock styles, and progressed into award-winning status at both the Great American Beer Festival and the World Beer Cup.

Historian Maureen Ogle summarizes the role Michael Jackson played in the development of Papazian's vision in her book, *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer*, published in 2006:

In January 1978, he [Papazian] read Michael Jackson's *World Guide to Beer*, a glossy book on beer styles written by an English journalist. In the space of a few hours, Papazian's knowledge about brewing and beer and their possibilities 'expanded by

leaps and bounds.' But Jackson's work also empowered Papazian to perceive 'community' as a larger, more complex entity than he had found in his homebrewing classes at the Free School. Then there was Jackson himself: an otherwise ordinary guy making a living from beer.³¹

Empowerment. That was the key. In a recent interview,³² Papazian elaborated on this concept relative to the craft beer movement:

The key to continued excitement and growth, in what we presently call craft brewing, is 'empowerment.' Empowering others with knowledge and excitement to continue and expand upon what people like Ray Daniels, Randy Mosher, John Palmer, Fred Eckhardt, Michael, I and others have done and are still doing ... offering opportunities for everyone to join in the celebration of increased knowledge and excitement in all things beer.

Empowerment was what Michael Jackson did best. His reviews brought scores of brewing names onto the international stage. From its earliest beginnings as a loose band of artisanal brewers and homebrewers in the 1960s and 70s, Craft Brewing developed into a clearly defined segment of American beer culture, assisted, in large part, by the vision sculpted by Michael Jackson and Charlie Papazian. Through Papazian's dedication to the American Homebrewers Association and subsequently, the Brewers Association, and Jackson's tireless support in print media, American

craft brewers found definition as a specialized segment of beer culture. Their strength was anchored in a commitment to remain 'small, independent and traditional.'³³

Michael Jackson was not a brewer, but provided exceptional understanding of the brewing process. In his travels, he had toured hundreds of malt houses, brewing operations, hop fields, pubs, and distilleries. His knowledge encompassed history, custom, and political influence. Supplementing Jackson's work in this segment of craft beer was Fred Eckhardt, a Portland-based homebrewer who had published *A Treatise on Lager Beers* in 1969, and began advancing the ideas of all-malt brewing in the home. Where Jackson introduced the styles, Fred Eckhardt expanded on those styles for homebrewing enthusiasts. Maureen Ogle shared her perspective on this symbiotic relationship in *Ambitious Brew*:

... Eckhardt emerged as one of the most important voices for 'new' brewing. So, too, Jackson. The Englishman's 1978 *World Guide to Beer* had introduced Americans to the complexity and range of beer styles, but his columns in *Zymurgy* provided insight into and information about the craft-brewing revolution. Over the next thirty years, both men would broaden their reach, as each published hundreds of articles and columns in magazines and newspapers, Eckhardt offering cogent commentary on new brewing and Jackson providing beer drinkers and journalists alike with a vocabulary for thinking about and analyzing beer.³⁴



Figure 3. Michael Jackson with Brewmaster Garrett Oliver of Brooklyn Brewing.

Jackson's accolades of exceptional beers (and whiskies) filled the pages of 18 major titles in 21 languages, as well as in special commissioned editions. His final 'edited' book, *Eyewitness Companions Beer*, published by Dorling Kindersley, was released one year after his death in 2008.

Jackson's insight infused a new reality into the American culture of craft beer, among both professionals and home-brewing amateurs. He methodically carried on a dialogue with the rest of the world about the wealth of craft brewers in the United States. Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, Garrett

Oliver and Steve Hindy of Brooklyn Brewing Company, Phil Markowski of Southampton Brewing Company, and Fal Allen, recently returned from the Archipelago Brewing Company in Singapore, would all strike up a dialogue within the brewing community through books and articles of their own.

Jackson called attention to innovative American brewers: Chuck Skypeck, brewing steinbier using flaming stones; Geoff Larsen, smoking porter with local alder wood; Ron Barchet and Bill Covalleski, keeping German tradition alive through Reinheitsgebot; Jim Koch, resurrecting a beer recipe from 1860;

Don Feinberg and Wendy Littlefield, preserving Brett-infused Belgian-style beer for the American consumer; and Greg Koch, hopping beer so aggressively that he warned drinkers: 'You're not worthy.' Jackson brought recognition to smaller brewing operations, as well: Tomme Arthur of the Lost Abbey, Natalie and Vinnie Cirluzo at Russian River Brewing in California, Dave Hoffmann of Climax Brewing in New Jersey, Bill McGuire Martin of the tiny McGuire's Pub in Pensacola, Florida, Dan and Deborah Carey of New Glarus Brewing Company, and Rosemarie Certo and Jeffrey Ware of Dock Street Beer.

Rosemarie Certo and Jeffrey Ware met Jackson in the mid-to-late 1980s at the Great American Beer Festival. Dock Street Beers were regularly mentioned in Jackson's books, television and radio spots, both in America and abroad. He autographed Certo's copy of *The Great Beer Guide, 500 Classic Brews*, with the phrase 'Here's to Love and Passion'.³⁵ Certo commented,

This simple phrase embodies what Michael was about. He was also brilliant and humble. Michael was a true Renaissance man in a time when being a Renaissance man was not encouraged and rarely found.

There were others, too. He would enlist the help of American media publishers, brewers and homebrew enthusiasts to assist him on long pub crawls that touched America from the bustling cities to the most remote areas of the country.

Tom Dalldorf, publisher of *Celebrator Beer News*, recalls one such trek throughout California:

We had an amazing time touring California for two weeks tasting nearly every brewery in the state at the time. I dubbed it the Iron Liver Tour and people were amazed at our fortitude.

Jackson wrote for nearly every beer magazine and brewspaper in American culture, including *All About Beer*, *Zymurgy*, *The New Brewer*, *Malt Advocate*, *Celebrator*, and *Ale Street News*. Julie Johnson, Editor at *All About Beer* recalls,

He had a unique place at All About Beer, both because he wrote for us longer than for any other publication - 23 years - and because he was one of the only writers whose advice we sought on the vision and direction of the magazine. Most of those conversations had little to do with beer and much to do with the quality of writing, how to be informative but not preachy.

He contributed countless forewords to American beer writers as well, whether they were big names or novices. His last foreword in an American title was written for *Beer and Philosophy*, edited by Steven D Hales in 2007, published by Blackwell, as part of an 'Epicurean Trilogy.'

Charlie Papazian referred to Michael Jackson as an 'otherwise ordinary guy' in

his interview with Maureen Ogle. In a moment of reflection, he added,

Well, not quite an ordinary guy, in retrospect. He was hell bent on evangelizing on behalf of beer, brewers and his respect of beer culture. He was special and dedicated his life to the good things: travel, food and beverage, jazz, and making friends. Beer was a big part, but balanced with lots of other interests.

Rob Imeson emphasizes the point that Michael Jackson understood more about American history than most Americans.

When we would be in a small town and he [Michael Jackson] would start talking to the brewers about the town that they had lived in all their lives, he knew more about their own history-on a very micro level-than they did. You don't exactly get that from the history books-you get that from passionate and inquisitive living.

Jackson did this wherever he traveled, and was passionate about documenting his travels.

Personal appearances in beer-centric America

Perhaps the most important reason Michael Jackson was so influential in America came from his willingness to make personal appearances on a regular basis - to adhere to a grueling schedule, jetting from London to Europe or Japan or the States, hauling reams of paper and a typewriter with him in the 1980s and

replacing those items with a Mac as technology developed. By September of 2006, his struggle with Parkinson's Disease became visible to the public. Despite this, he continued making appearances in Europe and America, hustling a future book called, *I Am Not Drunk*, which would detail his physical struggles throughout ten years of 'drinks writing.'

In the mid-1980s, Michael Jackson presided over the first upscale beer-luncheon in America, held at the Pierre Hotel on Park Avenue in New York City. Belgian beer, rather than wine, was married to each of several courses. He would continue this tradition, hosting dinners or beer tastings from coast to coast, for publicans Tom Peters at Monk's Café in Philadelphia, Don Younger at the Brass Horse Pub in Portland, Bill Burdick at Sherlock's Home in Minnetonka, and other restaurateurs who dared to raise awareness in the name of good beer.

In 1991, Bruce Nichols, President of Museum Catering in Philadelphia, had met Michael Jackson through Rosemarie Certo of Dock Street Brewery. Jackson had already built an association with the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, consulting with Dr Patrick McGovern and Professor Solomon Katz about the origins of beer. When Nichols presented the idea of a Michael Jackson Beer Tasting at the museum, it was a natural fit. In conjunction with *The Book and the*

Cook, an annual Philadelphia event was launched, and Jackson would conduct dinners and tastings throughout the next 17 years, presiding over sell-out audiences totaling more than 3,000 fans each year.

The year after Jackson's death, Don Russell, with Tom Peters and Bruce Nichols, co-founded Philly Beer Week, a celebration of 'The Best Beer Drinking City in America.' In little more than three years, this ten-day festival encompasses over 1,000 beer-related events.

Michael's talks at the Penn Museum were directly responsible for bringing Philadelphia back from the dead as a beer capital, [notes Russell, Director of Philly Beer Week.] Though he was directly responsible for that resurgence, I doubt that, even in his most reflective moments, he took credit for it.

Sam Calagione, owner of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery in Delaware, drove Jackson from the DC events to Philadelphia events for about four years. In the late 90s, Jackson wrote an article about Dogfish Head in *All About Beer*, eliciting heightened interest for the exotic styles championed by Calagione since his brewery opened in 1995. Calagione provides some insight into Jackson's motives:

He was always very proud of being the first high profile international beer expert to champion the burgeoning American craft renaissance. And rightfully so. His books and tastings gave countless home brewers and

beer lovers the interest and background necessary to take steps toward turning their hobby into their livelihood. Whether they became craftbrewers or opened beer bars, Michael brought more people into our community than any other individual.

Dave Alexander of the Brickskeller and RFD in Washington DC arranged more than 30 beer tasting events for Jackson in conjunction with the Smithsonian Museum and the National Geographic Society. Jackson would attend countless festivals in the USA, including the Great Alaska Beer & Barley Wine Festival.

Michael Jackson received a wealth of awards on the international stage and America was no exception. He was the first recipient the Achievement Award of the Institute of Fermentation Studies in the United States. He received the Brewers Association Recognition Award in 1987, the Distinguished Service Award from the Brewers Association in 2004, and Columnist of the Year from the North American Guild of Beer Writers. In 2006, he won a James Beard Award in the Wine and Spirits Division for his book *Whiskey: The Definitive World Guide*. Although the James Beard Award was not beer focused, it illustrates his depth of achievement and his commitment to excellence.

The results of Jackson's 30 year career in the beer world are measured by the significant advances in the market since 1977 when *The World Guide to Beer* was released in the United States.



Figure 4. Michael Jackson in May 2006, recipient of the James Beard Award for his book *Whiskey: The Definitive World Guide*.

Despite a receding demand for print in the general publishing industry, the US has expanded its growth of beer magazines and brewspapers. There are currently over 20 major American beer-focused titles including: *Zymurgy*, *All About Beer*, *Beer Connoisseur*, *Draft*, *BeerAdvocate*, *Philly Beer Scene*, *Brew Your Own*, *Mutineer*, *Modern Brewery Age*, *Brewing Techniques*, *Celebrator*, *Ale Street News*, and over a half-dozen local brewspapers. The Brewers Association launched *Brewers Publications* in 1989 and maintains a wealth of books on the subject of beer and brewing, including titles by Ray Daniels, Stan

Hieronimus, John Palmer, Randy Mosher, and Lucy Saunders.³⁶

Mainstream publishers have also advocated a number of books since the success of Jackson's titles, the most well-recognized being Charlie Papazian's best selling title, *The Complete Joy of Home Brewing*, Garrett Oliver's *The Brewmaster's Table*, Sam Calagione's *Brewing Up a Business* and *Extreme Brewing*, Calagione and Marni Old's *He Said Beer She Said Wine*, Calagione and Tim Hampson's *The Beer Book*, Randy Mosher's *Tasting Beer*, Don Russell's *Christmas Beer* and Joe Sixpack's *Philly Beer Guide*, Patrick McGovern's *Uncorking the Past*, Christina Perozzi and Hallie Beaune's *The Naked Pint*, and Maureen Ogle's *Ambitious Brew*.

The Brewers Association, America's leading authority on craft brewing states,

The number of craft brewers has gone from 8 in 1980 to 537 in 1994 to 1,501 in 2008. Craft brewers operate in 344 congressional districts and the majority of Americans live within 10 miles of a brewery.³⁷

That number continues to grow. In 2009, there were 1,595 craft brewers in the United States, producing just under 9.1 million barrels of beer - the highest total since before Prohibition.³⁸

Through his tireless efforts of recording the past, recognizing the exceptional, and applauding innovation, Michael Jackson launched a new vision for

brewing in the United States. As the Father of the Craft Brewing Renaissance in America, he has planted the seeds for a new age of innovation and enabled

future generations to fully appreciate craft beer and expand upon the vision he championed.



Figure 5. Great American Beer Festival: Michael Jackson banner hangs overhead in the Great Hall of the Colorado Convention Center.

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11. *ibid.* p.4.

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15. Barbie is a fashion doll created by American businesswoman Ruth Handler and was introduced to the American toy market in 1959 by Mattel, Inc. The Ken doll, Barbie's boyfriend, came to market in 1961, and was the second release in a line of dolls and accessories that have endured for over 50 years.

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18. Jackson, M. (1977) op. cit. p.215..

19. Jackson, M. (2006) email to Carolyn Smagalski. 25 April.

20. Gladwell, M. (2000) *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. New York: Back Bay Books, p.33.

21. Van Wieren, D.P. (1995) op. cit. p.386.

22. Books on beer, available in the late 1970s:

Weiner, M.A. (1977) *A Taster's Guide to Beer: Brews and Breweries of the World*. New York: Collier - Weiner's knowledge of beer was limited, extending only as far as his personal circle of travel. He assessed beer based on region, and set no foundation in place regarding styles or profiles. Charles Finkel notes, 'In Weiner's book, Australia got 5 pages whereas Belgium was almost dismissed with less than two. At that, the news was that most of the breweries had closed. The only Belgian brewery profiled was Jupiler, a lager. He [Weiner] says, "As consolidations continue and fewer breweries remain, the Piedboeuf organization will be one of the few Belgian companies to survive this century."'

Abel, B. (1976) *The Book of Beer*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co - Abel's book displayed his experience as a professional writer, but was limited in its scope of research, perhaps "a response to a publisher that thought there might be an opportunity to sell a book about such a ubiquitous subject," as Charles Finkel observed.

Robertson, J.D. (1978) *The Great American Beer Book*. Ottawa, IL: Caroline House Publishers - Robertson wrote this book based on reviews passed on to him by servicemen he knew who traveled and considered themselves well-versed in beer. Bad reviews were given to Anchor Steam Beer, while New Albion was mentioned, but not reviewed. Schmidt's, Horlacher and Genessee were considered in the winner's circle. Robertson compared world-class Orval Trappist beer to his aunt's homemade root beer, while Bush was criticized as 'indescribably awful.'

Bickerdyke, J. (1889) *Curiosities of Ale and Beer*. London: Field and Tuer - Bickerdyke's book was more historical in nature. He amassed a collection of past information about ale and beer, rather than exhibiting any new ideas.

Marchant, W.T. (1988) *In Praise of Ale*. London: George Redway - Basically a work based on research gathered from past writings on ale.

Baillie, F. (1973) *Beer Drinker's Companion*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles - A professional title, albeit written in the style of academia, this travelogue exclusively focused on British breweries.

Black, W. (1840) *Treatise on Brewing based on chemical and economical principles*. London: Smith Elder & Company - a formal article on brewing, not beer.

Other books written at the time, but not referenced by Charles Finkel include:

Eckhardt, F. & McCallum, J. (1970) *A treatise on lager beers: an analogy of American and Canadian lager beer*. Portland, OR: Hobby Winemaker - A pamphlet limited to American and Canadian lagers.

Hutt, C. (1973) *Death of the English Pub*. London: Hutchinson - Dealt entirely with the English pub and the beers found in Britain.

Protz, R. (1974) *Good Beer Guide*. Waddington: CAMRA - In this first guide focused on English beer, Protz criticized Watney's, a beer stabilized by filtering and pasteurization, and the first keg beer with a wide distribution network. His comment 'avoid like the plague' prompted a recall of the first print run of books, and was rewritten as 'avoid at all costs.'

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24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*

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28. Jackson, M. (1977) *The World Guide to Beer*. Philadelphia, PA: Prentice Hall, Inc./Running Press, p.215.

29. Jackson, M. (1983) 'Beer Chic', *Playboy*. Aug. p.166.

30. Jackson, M. (2002) 'Foreign Frontier Advances: Especially Russians and Americans', *The Independent*. Aug 3 / Jackson, M. (2002) the Beer Hunter 7 Aug. web. 28 July 2010.

31. Ogle, M. (2006) *op. cit.* p.280-1.

32. Papazian, C. (2010) email to Carolyn Smagalski. 6 Aug.

33. Brewers Association, 'Craft Brewer Defined'. web. 25 July 2010.

Small craft brewers produce less than two million barrels of beer annually. Since the majority of craft breweries are owned or controlled by the craft brewers themselves, they brew with a greater sense of innovation, rather than by the dictates of non-brewer shareholders. They also follow the traditions of creating beer with malt and only use non-traditional ingredients or adjuncts to add interest or enhance flavor, rather than lighten it.

34. Ogle, M. (2006) *op. cit.* p.318.

35. Jackson, M. (2007) Jackson's phrase written to Rosemarie Certo in March in his (2000) *Great Beer Guide: 500 Classic Brews*. London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd. Jackson had featured 3 Dock Street Beers in his book: Dock Street Grand Cru, Dock Street Illuminator, and Dock Street Milk Stout.

36. Brewers Publications and mainstream American book publishers, stimulated by Michael Jackson's lead, followed with a wealth of titles that now supplement Jackson's abundant list of work.

Titles published since 1989 include a broad focus on homebrewing, professional brewing, tasting, and specific styles of beer. Notable authors of BP's earliest publications included Greg Noonan, Horst Dornbusch, George Fix, and Jeff Sparrow; then expanded to books by Ray Daniels, Randy Mosher, Stan Hieronymus, Virginia Thomas, Phil Markowski, Charles Bamforth, Chris Boulton and David Quain, Stephen Harrod Buhner, Lucy Saunders, and a constant stream of newly developing titles.

Titles stimulated by Jackson's lead and released between 1980 and 2010 include:

Papazian, C. (1984) *The Complete Joy of Homebrewing*. New York: Harper Collins - A

serious resource for the homebrewer, this title is viewed as the Bible for Homebrewers.

Eckhardt, F. & Takita, I. (1989) *Beer tasting and evaluation for the amateur: the art of beer tasting and comparative judging*.

Portland, OR: The Amateur Brewer - One edition published and limited in scope.

Additional beer authors published by mainstream publishers include Garrett Oliver, Don Russell, John Palmer, John Schlimm, Cheryl Chee Tsutsumi, Gregg Smith, Maureen Ogle, Sam Calagione and Marnie Old, Andy Crouch, Lew Bryson, Noel Barnhurst, Dale P. Van Wieren, Patrick E. McGovern, Steven D. Hales, Lee W. Janson, Christina Perozzi and Hallie Beaune, *et. al.*

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