

# Brewing in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest

Fred Eckhardt

## **Oregon craft brewing began in California and Washington**

Oregon/Washington's original and most successful brewer was Henry Weinhard, who founded one of the territory's first brewing establishments. In 1856, he carried his 300-gallon copper brew kettle across the country. He probably started by brewing steam beer. In 1928, deep in the Prohibition, his Fort Vancouver Brewing (WA) merged with Arnold Blitz's company (OR) to form Blitz-Weinhard Brewing in Portland. They were very successful in the post-prohibition era, until they finally found themselves making the same yellow industrial brew that the BudMillerCoors group excelled in. They were bought and sold several times, today owned by Miller, their beer is currently being produced under contract by Full Sail in Hood River. The beer is much better these days than it has been for several decades.

Bert Grant, the first successful non-Californian micro-brewer, took a different tack in 1981. Bert, was a quality control expert and Technical Director for SS Steiner Hops in Yakima, Washington. Grant was a recognized Master Brewer who had been trained at the University of

Toronto in Canada. He had started working in brewing in 1945 at the age of 15, because older men were all serving in the war and not available for such work.

Grant began to put his operation together in the fall of 1981. He wasn't worried about the reception of his product. He kept his job with SS Steiner, and simply brewed the beer he liked; offering it for sale. The beer he liked was Grant's Scottish Ale, and the brewery offered it for sale in their location at 25 North Front Street, in Yakima, on 14 July 1982. Grant's Original Scottish Ale, 1982, OE/OG 13.5P/1055, alcohol 5.7 (volume) and 43 IBU (international bittering units). The brewery building, the old Yakima Opera House, was one of the oldest in Yakima (1889) and had also been a brewery before prohibition. Yakima Brewing and Malting remained in operation there until 1990, when a new facility was constructed on Presson Place, with a brewing capacity of 15,000-barrels/465,000-gals/ 18,000,000hl per year and which was later enlarged. That brewery was, until recently, owned by Washington Winemaker Chateau Ste Michelle. Their product was not at all up to Grant's standards. Grant died in 2001; they closed the brewery in 2005.

Grant also opened a brew pub, in the train station and was the first brewer to serve cask conditioned ales in North America since well before prohibition. Grant, was famous for his assertive well hopped beers. Actually, he was such a hophead that he always carried a vial of hop extract with him to brighten up the prosaic brews he encountered at gatherings of the Master Brewers Association or the American Society of Brewing Chemists. He is reported to have added a few drops to a glass of Budweiser in the presence of Augie Busch IV, to that personage's great consternation. Grant was well known for his forceful opinions concerning his beer.

### **Cask conditioned 'real' ales reintroduced to North America**

A lovely painting, 'McSorley's Bar', by John Sloan in 1912 shows beer engines behind the bar at McSorley's old (1856 New York) saloon. This is proof enough of the existence of cask beer in the U.S. and of course logic would tell us that anyway. Whether or not any survived prohibition is hard to say. I wasn't looking for such things in my early drinking days, but judging from my friends' anecdotes of British wartime beer, it was 'Warm and pissy'. In those days, Americans were always decrying lack of cold beer anywhere in the world they visited (which was actually my own experience in our occupation of Japan; the beer was too warm for me in those days, too).

In 1983, Grant offered cask ale to his repertoire when he presented his Scottish Ale, in that style, at his Yakima Brew Pub that year. Today, there is an annual cask ale festival: Chicago Real Ale Festival, at Goose Island Brewery ([gooseisland.com](http://gooseisland.com)) in that city. Other areas (Seattle) are also following suit in that area.

### **Red Hook**

Meanwhile in Seattle, a group of 20 investors, including Starbuck's Coffee impresario Gordon Bowker put together a microbrewery in a renovated transmission shop in the Ballard district. The result was an odd tasting brew - that from the strange yeast strain that brewer Charles McElvey (a former mainline Seattle Rainer brewmaster) had imported from England. The new beer (OE/OG 13.5/1055, alcohol 5.8% (volume) and 18IBU (international bittering units), with it's strange taste profile, soon developed a love-hate relationship among Northwest beer lovers. Red Hook ([red-hook.com](http://red-hook.com)) was introduced in Seattle on 11 August 1982 at Jake O'Sheanessey's in the Queen Anne district. The Mayor of Seattle and Washington's governor were present to applaud the new beer. Brewery president Paul Shipman immediately took to the road publicizing his beer; with the result that Grant's Scottish and Red Hook were often at loggerheads for the few taps available in Seattle and Portland. Consumers, however, were quick to appreciate a choice in beer and

both brews were successful. Today the original, quite distinctive, Red Hook Ale has been superseded by a rather ordinary Red Hook ESB. Red Hook ranked twelfth in our nation's production in 2007 at their two locations of Woodinville (WA) (near Seattle), and Portsmouth (NH). The brewery is now owned (about 25%) by Anheuser-Busch (anheuser-busch.com), which facilitates marketing across the country. All in all, this represents quite a success story.

### **The paths of failure**

Oregon's first brewery was started, in 1980 by Californian Charles Coury, who had started Oregon's first vinifera winery and was bought out by his partners. Coury named the new brewery Cartwright Brewing after his wife Shirley's family. Coury's winemaking expertise was of little assistance as a brewer and he spent over two years producing and promoting a beer that had little going for it. His initial goal was to make a 'mild ale,' a beer with a low taste profile, which could compete with Portland's Blitz-Weinhard. His equipment was ancient and makeshift. The brew kettle was an old steam-jacketed dairy vessel as was the 'mash tun.' The mash tun had a makeshift wooden false-bottom strainer and (worse) the mash stood overnight before running off in the morning. The brew-size on this venture was 330-gals/1250hl, about 145 cases. The fermenters were retired stainless steel 50-gal/190litre Coca-Cola barrels,

each topped with winemaker's fermentation locks.

The ancient bottling line, out of the 1930's, was something to behold and never really worked properly. Coury's first bottling effort (17 March 1980) proved a wretched failure. The beer was only slightly carbonated as the refrigerating equipment had failed to chill the beer properly to retain the CO<sub>2</sub>. The filtration was through a far-too-small cartridge filter one might find in the kitchen sink. The beer itself reeked of di-methyl-sulfate (DMS) and worse. The \$1 price tag (high for its day) did not encourage anyone to try more than one bottle. At this point, a local law student and home brewer, Tom Burns, walked in the door seeking part time employment.

Tom Burns was able to persuade Coury to change two things: they went to producing bottle conditioned beers higher in alcohol content; and they increased the hop levels in the beer. Now the beer was at least carbonated and the heavy hop levels covered whatever deficiencies were to be found in the beer itself.

The original Cartwright Portland Beer had a gravity of 11.2% fermentables (11.2-Plato/1045 gravity - from 2- and 6-row barley malt and crystal malt), an alcohol content of 4.3% by volume and about 18 bitterness from Cluster and Cascade hops. The final brew was stronger, 12.3-Plato, 5.2% alcohol and about 40 bitterness. It was, in fact, quite acceptable if you got it fresh. However, the months of

marketing bad-tasting beer had taken its toll. When the new 'good' beer came out most people were afraid to try it.

To make matters worse, that summer was one of the hottest on record and by August the brewery's ambient temperature had climbed to almost 80F/27C; which proved to be disastrous for the beer's ferment. Worse, Coury released much of it to the public. Tart beer may be popular in some parts of the world, but sour beer in Oregon, at that time, was another matter. The brewery's fortunes went steadily downhill after that.

Near the end of 1981 Coury went to the local homebrew club, the Oregon Brew Crew, with an appeal for money and an offer to brew a special beer at \$20/case. Those beer enthusiasts cheerfully chipped in and Coury brewed his last brew. He was a born-again Christian and had even had the brewery blessed; so he named the new beer Deliverance Ale. The new beer had some fermentation problems, but that turned out to be a blessing. It had a flavor not unlike that of Belgian Orval and was actually quite delicious when allowed to age a bit.

Those of us who were lucky picked up our case in mid-December; but on 31 December 1981 our local Multnomah County Sheriff padlocked the door. The movable equipment and the balance of the beer was auctioned off (at \$1/case) to pay \$284 personal property taxes that Coury owed the county. The Feds and his landlord took the rest. Coury was finished

as a brewer. He had lost all the money from the sale of his share of the winery, notable for the fact that it was the *first* American winery utilizing European-style *Vinifera* grapes to start Oregon's flourishing wine industry. He and Shirley left Portland, older and poorer, but wiser. Coury's mistakes were many, but most important, he brewed the wrong beer, aimed sales at the wrong people and failed to maintain quality control in the crucial early stages of his operation. He may have also been too early on the market; but he had fatally failed to appreciate how much more difficult it is to brew beer than to make wine.

The lessons of Coury's failure were not lost on his successors.

### **The advent of multiple tap bars**

The success of these small 'micro' brewers depended on their availability in local pubs; since none of them produced bottled beer.

The growth and proliferation of multiple tap pubs was pioneered in Oregon and Washington. We drank most of our beer at the local tavern in that era. I remember, in the late 1960s and early 70s, searching for pubs with something besides Budweiser or Millers on tap. The light beer mania hadn't even hit the streets yet and there was seldom any other choice. I had become convinced that draft beer was immensely superior to the bottled stuff. I rejoiced even in finding Schlitz or

Pabst in the few establishments where alternatives flourished.

Getting one's beer into a pub was (and still is) a major accomplishment. The new micro-brewers, who were the most successful, were the ones who didn't have to go to the expense of bottling their beer; the ones who could stick to draft beer and make that work for them. In time Portland gradually became famous for such establishments. The Wurst Haus, Wanker's Corner, and the Horse Brass Pub were early successes in Portland, which city gradually became famous for such bars. Ten, twenty, then thirty, and even forty-tap bars became more and more common. A hundred seems to be a major limitation, if only because the bar's staff cannot keep track of that many taps regarding how long the beer has been on that tap. Draft beer is easily damaged by improper care and maintenance. A particular draft beer left on tap for more than a week begins to go off, developing odd-flavor characteristics. Managing the cellar of such an establishment is a real challenge. The storage area becomes like a spaghetti mix with clear and red plastic tubes in a spider-web-like maze. Changing kegs becomes a major chore.

In Washington, in 1983, Mike Hale started a small brewery in Colville (WA) and later he opened additional plants in Spokane, Kirkland and Seattle (Hales-brewery.com).

In September 1984, Tom Baune opened Hart Brewing, a small brewery in the little

town of Kalama, Washington; about 30 miles north of Portland (OR). Portland was his main market and his brewery had a strong effect on Oregon brewers; especially so, since his flagship Pyramid Pale Ale, a great English-style pale ale at 11P/1044g, 4,4%abv, 40ibu, and good rich color, became quite popular in such bars.

Hart eventually sold his tiny, but very successful, brewery to a Seattle group. Pyramid Brewing (pyramidbrew.com) is now brewed in Portland and also sold and brewed across the Pacific Northwest and northern California; although the beer is not up to Tom Baune's high standard (in my opinion).

Oregon finally got back into the act on 14 November 1984, when winemaker Dick Ponzi opened what became the BridgePort Brewing Co. (Bridgeport-brewing.com). Winemaker Ponzi had decided to brew beer, for a simple reason: 'It takes a lot of good beer to make good wine!' he declared. Ponzi promoted one of his winemakers, Karl Ockert, to brew beer in the new brewery. Ockert had graduated from the University of California-Davis' new brewing department with strong opinions about brewing English style ales and the new BridgePort Ale was popular right from the start. The Brewery, still at 1339 NW Marshall, was successful; but real success came with the opening of their now famous BridgePort Brew Pub in March of 1986. Oregon was definitely ready for good beer. In 1992 the brewing opera-

tions were moved from behind the pub to another area at the opposite end of the old building, where they installed a new brew house, with added production facilities, to increase capacity to 50,000-barrels.

In 1995 winemaker Ponzi sold the company to beer distributor Gambrinus of San Antonio, Texas. Despite feeling among Portlanders that 'no Texas company could do justice to Oregon beer' Gambrinus did just that. They have allowed Portland Brewing to proceed along its own trail rather than being overwhelmed by its parent company.

Ponzi planned initial production at about 620-gallons/2350hl a month. The beer was to be a beautiful deep copper ale, dark, but a little lighter than what was considered 'dark' beer at that time. This was to be a copper or 'red' ale, with a wonderful bouquet, a rich bitter-sweet palate, and an ambrosian taste. The original gravity was 13Plato/1050g, 4.4% alcohol (volume), and a modest 26 bitterness from Washington Cluster and Cascade hops, plus fine, aromatic Oregon Willamette hops. He would use the finest malt he could find at that time: two-row Klages barley malt from nearby Great Western Malting in Vancouver, Washington, plus an Eastern dark roasted caramel malt from Briess Malting in Chilton, Wisconsin; plus a good British top-fermenting yeast from the Cal-Davis yeast bank. The location was the old Portland Cordage building, at 1313 NW Marshall, a three story brick building with

18-inch thick walls, the oldest industrial building in Portland dating from 1876. At one time it had even been used as a branch of Blitz-Weinhard, Oregon's UR-mega-brewery.

When the brewery opened on 14 November 1984, there were only about twenty micro's in the U.S., six of them in Washington state. There were only six 'brew pubs' on the entire North American Continent, three in British Columbia, two in California, and Bert Grant's brewery pub in Yakima, Washington. Ponzi wanted a pub brewery where Karl Ockert could brew specialty beers for Portlanders, but Oregon law didn't allow such a business, you could brew beer and wholesale it or you could retail it, but not both.

JV Northwest Engineering (jvnw.com), a local firm, put the brewery (and many others in these parts) together, for something over \$40,000. Batch size was 10-barrel (about 310-gals/1173hl). Mashing was a two step process with Portland's very soft (25ppm hardness) water, a thick-mash protein rest (122-F/50C), which was then raised to conversion (starch conversion at 155-F/68C) temperature by underletting with hot water. The wort was transferred to the redwood covered brew kettle; where it was boiled for an hour-and-a-half. The hot wort was then whirlpooled in the kettle to separate hop residues and trub, after which it is pumped over to the fermenting vessel by way of a small hop back, where the beer was infused with aromatic whole

Willamette hops and cooled to 65F/18C in a shell-and-tube wort cooler. The ferment took 3-4- days, followed by conditioning (1-week), after which it was racked, filtered and kegged. About this time, the brewery changed its name from Columbia River Brewing to BridgePort Brewing Company, honoring Portland's nine bridges. On St. Patrick's day, 1985, they introduced a delicious stout that tasted like we all wished Guinness would (OG 13.5, 1055g, 55 bitterness, 5.7% alcohol). Fermenting took place in a small 310-gallon/1173liter open fermenter. That summer a pale beer was introduced, BridgePort Golden Ale, to reach out to a larger market.

Late in 1985, Oregon passed a new brewpub law with allowances for small brewers to retail their own beer. The new law was the most liberal in the U.S. and it was to make Oregon a glowing center of American brewing activity. On Saturday, 1 March 1986, the brewery opened their BridgePort Brew Pub; although not Oregon's first. It was located right next to the brewery with a direct entry from the street. The brewing equipment was separated by large glass windows, allowing the patrons to watch the brewing process.

The pub was 'rustic' in decor, but 'British' in operation and menu. Moreover, the dynamic duo Ponzi and Ockert introduced Cask Conditioned Ale for the first time in Oregon. Until then only Bert Grant had the chutzpah to try such a thing, up in his Yakima pub. Cask conditioned ale

was popular in England but Americans had always panned such an idea; calling English Cask beer warm and lifeless. The BridgePort people brewed that beer as usual, then just before ferment was complete they racked (transferred) the beer to casks, where fresh hops and a fining agent (to settle and clarify the beer) were added. The cask is celled for 7-10- days, during which the beer works fermenting slowly to bring about 'conditioning,' a modest infusion of carbon dioxide gas (a natural by-product of the ferment). The beer is drawn directly from the cask by a hand pump called a 'beer engine.' Such beer has a velvety mouth-feel and lacks the sometime annoying prickly mouth-feel of regular carbonated beer. This had the effect of making the BridgePort one of the most famous American pubs. London beer critic Michael Jackson (who died in 2007) said it all when he praised the BridgePort Brewery in the London *Independent* newspaper, 22 September 1990:

... BridgePort, offers in its taproom the best cask conditioned beer I have tasted in America.

One thing is certain, Jackson did take his cask beer seriously. The true delight of Bridgeport Cask is that it is served side-by-side with the standard brew of the same type. One of the very few such opportunities offered anywhere in the world.

For the first time in history one could try, side-by-side, a single beer served in both

traditions: chilled and carbonated, vs warmer (at cellar temperatures: 55F/13C) and non-carbonated! The result was a true revelation to the discerning beer enthusiast. Even a visiting German swim team's coaches found it enticing, when I took them there in 2004.

I, for one would have been willing to bet important parts of my anatomy that cask ales would never ever gain a foot-hold in North America, other than as an exceedingly rare sampling in obscure venues. I would have lost because I think cask ales are gaining ground here in the states even as they lose ground in their home turf.

The brewery's next expansion was to happen three years later, when they installed an Italian-made bottling line in the brewery's back room. A thousand-gallons of Blue Heron (450 cases) were bottled on 6 September 1989. This made it possible to expand production, moving BridgePort up to 14<sup>th</sup> in Oregon sales behind Widmer and Full Sail. Today it is ranked 44<sup>th</sup> nationally.

## **Widmer Brothers**

Brothers Kurt (a recovering IRS agent) and Rob Widmer were next to step into the fray, when they opened their Widmer Brothers ([widmer.com](http://widmer.com)) ale brewery at a cost of \$60,000 in April 1985, at 1405 NW Lovejoy; a block away from the BridgePort. The brewery introduced its Widmer Alt, a German style ale (Alt-bier, Old beer), i.e., a brown ale brewed at warm top ferment-

ing temperatures (above 58F/14C), but aged cold as lager beer under 35F/2C). The beer, Widmer Alt, OG 11.5P/1047g, 4.7% alcohol, 45ibu. The Alt, although quite delicious and an excellent example of the type, was not their most popular, despite good promotion under the slogan 'Alt or nothing'. It wasn't until that summer, when they brought out a seasonal wheat beer: Widmer Weizen (11P/1044g, 4.4%abv, 18ibu) that sales took off. The Weizen was light, delicious and served European style in a special glass, garnished with a slice of lemon and soon became the best selling micro-brew in Oregon; where it was superseded only by its cloudy and yeasty unfiltered alter-ego Widmer hefe-Weizen which remains quite popular here in Oregon to this day, a true cult beer, if there ever was one.

Oddly enough, the hefe- (from German 'with yeast') beer has been a key first step in customer acceptance of the fresh assertive beer styles being produced by the new craft brewers of Portland. This was an immense help to all of Portland's fledgling brewers who have benefited by having their beer accepted by local beer drinkers. Curiously, local drinkers never took to the Alt, even though many of Portland's beer enthusiasts will tell you it is the best beer made in Oregon.

In 1987, Widmer expanded by building a second brewery next to the then new BMoloch-Heathman Deli, complete with large glass windows to observe the brewing operations. By 1988 production was exceeding even that increased capacity.



New quarters for the main brewery had to be found; and in 1989 they started renovating an old building on the east side, across the Willamette River, near the Broadway Bridge, at 929 N Russell St., and even that was to prove inadequate in two years, so new tanks and vessels were added in that building, and later across the street, to further increase capacity.

Until 1994 they produced only keg or draft beer, yet holding their high sales ranking for much of those first ten years. In 1994, they added a bottling line in their operation. The expansion brought the opportunity to have the beer distributed nationally when they allowed themselves to be owned 20% by AB. I have observed no change in the brewery's operating or management styles from this. More recently they joined with Seattle's Red Hook also part-owned by AB in a new company (Craft Brewer's Alliance) which recently added Chicago Goose Island and Hawaii's Kona Brewing. Other than greatly improved distribution nationally, there seems to be no interference from the Anheuser-Busch management, although that company, too, has changed ownership.

Widmer ranks eleventh in national brewing (2007), topping all Oregon brewers.

### **Portland brewing**

Portland's third micro, Portland Brewing, took a long time hatching, but on 26

March 1986, Fred Bowman and Art Larrance finally opened their brewery and brew pub, offering Grant's Scottish Ale under contract from Bert Grant in Yakima. Grant had always had trouble getting his Eastern Washington brewed beer to Oregon's receptive market and he welcomed the opportunity to have his beer brewed there. Bowman and Larrance also began brewing Portland Ale, a delicious brew in its own right. Originally Portland Brewing, was at 1313 NW Flanders, just a few blocks from the original Widmer and BridgePort. Of course, the building was small and they soon ran out of space. They moved to new quarters almost a mile away in 1992 (2730 NW 31<sup>st</sup> Av.), with capacity at 26,000-barrels/30,498,000hl, upgraded to 40K/46.9M hl, in 1994. Sadly, they too joined the Pyramid Brew group, although still brewing in Portland.

### **Captain Neon and the McMenaminn empire**

Perhaps the most remarkable success story is that of the McMenaminn brothers Mike (Capt. Neon) and Brian, who opened Oregon's first brewpub on Halloween of 1985. The Hillsdale Brewery and Public House (1505 SW Sunset Bv. - just off the Beaverton - Hillsdale Hwy in Hillsdale) is noted for its wide ranging beer styles, which are offered alongside the products of other Oregon micros and in competition with Bud and Weinhard as well. Hillsdale Crystal Ale, a pale ale, and Terminator

Stout, are the most popular among the patrons at these establishments, but the brewery does offer some strange brews, and one can observe the ferment under the eerie glow of the neon lights in the fermenting room. Raspberries, blueberries, grapes, and no end of other odd ingredients go into Capt Neon's brew kettles and, while the names of the beers (Ruby Tuesday, Stella blue, Moby Grape) might bring a smile to one's lips, Captain Neon laughs loudly all the way to the bank. The McMenamin enterprise opened two more pub breweries in 1986: Cornelius Pass Brewery in May in Hillsboro (Sunset Highway and Cornelius Pass Rd.), and in Lincoln City in August (Lighthouse BrewPub, 4157 Logan Rd.). The Fulton Pub and Brewery (0618 SW Nebraska--off Macadam) and the Highland Pub and Brewery (4225 SE 182d Av. - off Powell, Gresham) opened in June and July.

Mike started all that some \$300,000 in the hole. His first venture in restaurateur-manship was Portland's popular Produce Row Cafe and Bogart's Joint. This was the beginning of Portland's multiple tap taverns specializing in quality beer. Both proved successful, but Mike wasn't satisfied; he had a thirst for beer and the knowledge thereof. He sold Produce Row, Bogart's Joint and a third tavern, the Stockyard Café. This allowed him to open a distributorship; thereby lining himself up for failure. It didn't take long. Distributing beer is a sometimes grim business. That's when he joined with brother Brian, who had been successful-

ly operating his own McMenamin's Pub in Hillsboro. The brothers soon opened The Barley Mill Pub in a run-down area in East Portland (1982). Portlanders do a lot of pub drinking, and any tavern offering a good beer selection and good food has a good chance to succeed. The Hillsdale soon followed, and success has been keeping them company since then. <

The McMenamins are most famous for their expansion of brewing craft beer to renovating several historic old buildings, such as Edgefield, a former county 'Poor Farm'; Kennedy School, where the little girls room is now a brewery; and Portland's elegant old Baghdad Theater, showing popular movies and serving good beer, which has become their most popular idea. Many of their establishments offer these amenities in their huge strong of pubs and pub-breweries around Washington and Oregon.

### **Full Sail Brewing Company in Hood River**

No story of northwest brewing would be complete without mentioning Full Sail Brewing of Hood River ([fullsailbrewing.com](http://fullsailbrewing.com)), which started selling beer on Saturday, 26 September 1987, under the guidance of then president Meg Roland and German-trained brewmaster James Emmerson, with the production of Full Sail Golden Ale, a lovely and delicious blond ale (12P/1048, 4.8%abv, 33ibu). The new brewery was built in Hood River's old Diamond Fruit Cannery Press

Room, at 506 Columbia Street, featuring an outdoor beer garden overlooking the river and a 15bbl/465gal/ 1760litre brew-house by JV Northwest at a total cost of around \$350,000.

The brewery was the 1982 vision of Jerome Chicvara and Meg Rowland, who'd dreamed of establishing a brewery in the lovely and scenic town of Hood River about 65 miles east of Portland on the Columbia River. They were joined by Joe Hill, Roger Barry and Irene Firmat and raised \$50,000 from 33 friends and relatives and borrowed an additional \$150,000 from the Oregon Resource Technology Development Corp. They were soon joined by home brewer David Logsdon, owner, Wyeast Yeast Cultures, whose revolutionary new yeast packaging simplified management of that important part of fermentation science.

They were soon to increase production in stages. In 1989 doubling and the 1990 installation of a brewhouse bottling line, and had shown a \$87,000 profit. They finally obtained a state high risk capital loan of \$250,000, allowing increased production to increase ranking nationally just behind Red Hook and Sierra Nevada nationally. Production that year was 15,000- barrels/ 465,000-gallons/17,595M hl.

In July 1992, they negotiated a deal with Portland restaurant McCormick and Schmick at that company's westside Portland Willamette riverfront at 0307 SW Montgomery. Harborside Restaurant

Brewery was to be managed by John Harris hired from Deschutes Brewery; Harris had begun his training under the McMenamin's, before joining Deschutes. In 1993 they were second only to Widmer at 38,500bbls/1,193,500gals/45,160,500hl.

In June 1998, the five founding shareholders, with a 65% interest, were offered a bid by India based United Breweries, which had been attempting to buy short-lived and failing Nor'west Brewing in Portland. By February 1999, the deal began to go sour and United Breweries backed out, allowing Full Sail's board to negotiate an employee buyout under the direction of Irene Firmat and James Emmerson, Full Sail's last two original stockholders. They negotiated an 'Employee Stock Option Program' (ESOP) to buy out shareholders. The employees (four brewers, three office workers and two management types) finalized the changeover on 29 April 1999.

## **Oregon Trail Brewery**

Jerry Shadomy, a landscaper and award-winning homebrewer, produced his first brew for sale on 15 July 1987 at the Old World Deli in Corvallis. Shadomy's Oregon Trail Brewery ([Oregontrailbrewery.com](http://Oregontrailbrewery.com)) hides itself next to the Deli kitchen, in that establishment, at the corner of Second and Adams. Shadomy's interest in brewing began in 1980, after he began making homebrew, and finally decided to take the plunge into building his own brewery. He

cornered two of Charles Coury's old Cartwright Brewery vessels for fermenters and then, from Hart Brewing (Kalama, WA), he obtained their 215-gallon mash-tun and copper brew kettle, when Hart was updating and enlarging that operation.

## **Deschutes and Rogue**

Oregon's next two major craft entries were Deschutes ([deschutesbrewing.com](http://deschutesbrewing.com)) and Rogue ([rogue.com](http://rogue.com)) Brewing. In Bend, Oregon, Gary Fish opened his delightful Deschutes Brewery and Public House. The Brew pub opened on 27 June 1988, at 1044 Bond Street, with John Harris as brewmaster. They expanded (in November 1993) to a second location, a spanking new brewery at 901 SW Simpson Street, with present brewing capacity of 200,000 bbls/6.2mgals/234,700Mhl. In 2008 they opened a brewpub in Portland, at 210 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Av. Deschutes beer production popularity ranks sixteenth, and the quality is among the very best in the U.S.

## **Rogue more than just a name**

Rogue (named after the Rogue River in Southern Oregon) was established originally in Ashland (1 October 1988) as a brew pub by a recovering attorney Jack Joyce (the original pub is now closed, as well as their next move, The Bayfront Brewery and public house in Newport city). In 1992 they finally built a full size

brewery in the coastal town of Newport just south of that city in South Beach, Oregon. They now rank 34<sup>th</sup> in U.S. production and specialize in brewing a great number of interesting and innovative beers.

## **First Oregon Brewers Festival, 1988**

In 1988, Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt declared July as 'Oregon Microbrewery Month'. The three Portland brewers (BridgePort, Widmer and Portland Brewing) joined together with the Oregon Brewer's Association and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. They assembled the first exhibit of independent small brewers ever held. 22 of America's smallest and finest craft brewers were present to the delight of Portland beer lovers (see Appendix 1). They invited no large brewers at all, including Portland's Blitz-Weinhard. This post-dates the Denver based Great American Brewers Festival, but which was open to all breweries in the country.

The Oregon Brewers Festival ([oregon-brewfest.com](http://oregon-brewfest.com)) was set up annually for the last three days in July at Portland's Waterfront Park along the Willamette River. It was designed as a family educational activity with more than just beer tasting. Several Portland restaurants joined in to offer 'beer foods' and non-alcoholic beverages, to the accompaniment of live Dixieland jazz.

Agricultural exhibits showed the process by which barley, hops, and water become

liquid beer. A 'big top' and numerous small tents shielded festival visitors from the elements. Members of the Oregon Brew Crew, were on hand with volunteers to assist and educate the public about the world's oldest alcohol libation.

Visitors purchased a plastic mug (glass is not allowed at Waterfront Park) for \$1, and buys beer in four ounce tastings up to full glass amounts. 49 different hand-made beers were available to sample.

The first festival was very successful. Sponsors were stunned when a huge crowd of 15,000 people materialized; with the result that some of the brews were drained within a very short time. The 2010 festival hosted 78,000 visitors. It is indeed a popular destination for a good number of tourists, many of whom travel here to just to volunteer their services in the festival.

The Oregon Brewers Festival has been instrumental in promoting Portland as 'Beervana Am Der Willamette', one of the world's greatest beer venues. Oregon currently has about 96-100 breweries, with 74 brewing companies. Portland has 34 breweries and brew-pubs *inside* the City limits.

## Appendix 1

### Brewers at the 1988 Oregon Brewers Festival

ALASKA: Alaskan Brewing Co, Douglas (Juneau).

CALIFORNIA: Anderson Valley Brewing, Booneville, Buffalo Bill's Pub Brewery, Hayward (Oakland), Saxton Brewing Co., Chico, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Chico; Triple Rock Pub Brewery, Berkeley.

MINNESOTA: James Page Brewing Co., Minneapolis.

MONTANA: Bayern Brewery, Missoula, Kessler Brewing, Helena.

WASHINGTON: Hales Ales, Colville and Kirkland, Hart Brewing, Kalama, Red Hook Brewing, Seattle, Thomas Kemper Brewing, Poulsbo, Yakima (Grant's) Brewing Co., Yakima.

WISCONSIN: Hibernia Brewing, Eau Claire.

OREGON: BridgePort, Portland, McMenamins Cornelius Pass/ Hillsdale Breweries, Deschutes Pub Brewery, Bend, Full Sail Brewing, Hood River, Oregon Trail Brewery, Corvallis, Portland Brewing Co., Portland, Widmer Brewing Co., Portland.