



# BREW

## SAGGY STONE AND WILD CLOVER MERGE

Over the past year we have seen increasing numbers of closures and a few buyouts – and now a South African craft beer merger. Jackie Robinson of Saggy Stone in Robertson confirmed to On Tap that Saggy Stone and Wild Clover have joined forces. “We were approached by Ampie of Wild Clover brewery to consider a merger,” said Jackie. “They are able to offer us extra brewing capacity on a larger system – a Spadoni system, which we are already familiar with.”

Wild Clover’s 2400-litre system will be moved to Saggy Stone’s premises outside Robertson and used to brew core-range beers, while speciality, small batch brews will take place on Saggy Stone’s 1200-litre system. Wild Clover founder Ampie Kruger will continue to brew, but all distribution will be managed by Saggy Stone. And although the brewhouse is moving, the Wild Clover taproom will continue at its location on the R304 north

of Stellenbosch, albeit on a different part of the farm. Long-term craft beer drinkers might remember where Wild Clover’s brewery began, and this smaller space will once again become the tasting room for the brand, as well as Saggy Stone’s brews.

The merger makes perfect sense for both parties. Saggy Stone can increase their capacity and gain a dedicated outlet in the Winelands, while Wild Clover gains a successful distribution channel – and more importantly, a revised sense of fun. “There was a time when it was just production, production, production,” says Ampie. “When things get corporate you definitely lose the fun. It became all about the sales and now it’s starting to become fun again.” Wild Clover’s core range will remain, along with the various contract brands Ampie brews, but he has plenty of plans for seasonal and one-off beers. The new taproom is scheduled to open on Wild Clover farm in June.



## GAUTENG BEER COMMUNITY BIDS FAREWELL TO SOLSTICE FEST FOUNDER

Industry veteran Dirk van Tonder passed away in March after a long battle with cancer. Dirk was the founder of the Irish Ale House in Broederstroom as well as the annual Solstice Festival, one of South Africa’s longest running beer festivals. Hosted annually in June since 2007, the quirky fest showcases local beers alongside homebrews and always features plenty of live music and games. Brendan Watcham of Copperlake Breweries had known Dirk for many years. “He was an unsung hero and pioneer in the craft beer industry and a loving father,” said Brendan. “I will sorely miss him and am always indebted to him for all the help, knowledge and friendship he so selflessly and kindly gave me in the early years.” Dirk’s daughter Jackie plans to continue running the Ale House and hosting the annual festival.

## “DE BEERMAN” RETIRES



Theo de Beer, founder of Hops Hollow and Anvil Ale House, has retired after nearly 20 years in the craft beer industry and another few decades of homebrewing. Introduced to the hobby by Moritz Kallmeyer, founder of Draymans Brewery, Theo opened Hops Hollow in 2000 with his wife Sarie. The couple sold in 2008 but when plans to move to New Zealand fell through, they opened Anvil Ale House in Dullstroom. Uncle Theo, as he is lovingly known in the industry, has always been known for his meticulous approach to brewing, his excellent beers and to me

at least, his direct manner of getting things done. I always knew I was in trouble when he started a sentence with “look lassie...”. Theo’s beers won numerous awards both locally and internationally and I for one am very sad to see him step away from the kettles. Anvil is now under new management, although Theo’s right-hand man, Christo, is staying on at the brewery. Theo and Sarie will be enjoying their retirement in the Western Cape, but I have a feeling there might be a small homebrew rig in Theo’s future. Cheers Theo, thanks for all the excellent beers over the years. - LC

# NEWS



## WINNERS OF 2ND ANNUAL BEER LABEL AWARDS ANNOUNCED



The Karoo Craft Breweries team collect their People's Choice Award

Sponsored by Rotolabel, the winners of the second annual Beer Label Awards were announced earlier this year. Medals are awarded in two categories: single beer labels and those in a series. In the single label category, silvers went to De Gendel Three Spades Cider, Spilhaus Brewery's Märzen Lager and Premium Lager and to Nobleman Brewing Company's Checkup Charlie Light Ale, DJ Mashesh IPA, Farmer Fred Lager and Peleton

Pete Saison, while Dissident Brewing Company took a bronze for their Golden Ale. Awards for labels in a series went to Blouberg Brewery (bronze), Broers Brew (bronze), Karoo Craft Breweries (silver), Nobleman Brewing Company (silver) and Spilhaus Brewery (silver). Hoghouse Haybale Saison received the only gold for a single label, while Flatrock Brewery took the gold for beer labels in a series. The people's choice award went to Karoo Craft Breweries.

## BREWERS CO-OP CELEBRATES 4TH BIRTHDAY

Weathering all sorts of storms and weathering them well, the Woodstock-based Brewers Co-op, celebrates its fourth birthday in June. Nine brewing teams have been invited to brew a special beer for the day – no restrictions – with the beers going head to head for public votes. Teams are made up of current members, former members, locals, home-brew clubs and even a team of professionals in a collab. Metal Lane, Shackleton and Little Wolf are joining forces to brew a Kveik that will be served from the cask on the day of the event.

Some of the special brews will be available in the days leading up to the event, with the big party taking place on Saturday 29th June. On the Sunday there will be a more relaxed vibe and all are welcome at the regular 'bring-and-braai'.

## NEW BREWS

### Stellenbosch Brewing Co Umlungu Witbier (4.5%)

A collab with French brewery Brasserie La Blonde et La Brune, Stellies first witbier is supporting local community upliftment project, PIP.

### Little Wolf Sidra del Porto (7%)

Originally launched at Fools & Fans, Little Wolf's port barrel-aged cider with brettanomyces is now available in 500ml bottles.

### Agar's Northside Bohemian Pilsner (4.5%)

Launched at the Clarens Craft Beer Festival in February, Agar's Czech-style pilsner is now available in bottles at select Gauteng outlets

### Sedgefield Hound Dog (5.3%)

Inspired by BrewDog's Elvis Juice, Hound Dog is an IPA with added grapefruit peel, brewed in collaboration with Craig Mayhew, formerly of Daxi's in East London. Grab it from Sedgefield's taproom.

### Spilhaus Premium Lager (4%)

The second beer in the Spilhaus range is a Czech-style lager, which scooped a silver in the 2019 African Beer Cup.

### Kennel Brewery x Karoo Craft Breweries O is for Orange (5%)

The latest in Kennel's range of limited release cans is an orange infused NEIPA. Look out also for Vanilla Ice, a frappe milkshake IPA (5%) brewed in collaboration with Lakeside.

### Riot Beer Vintages

Two further beers will be released in Riot's Vintage range this winter: Vintage 5 (9.1%) is an Imperial Stout aged in bourbon barrels for three months, Vintage 6 (7.4%) is a dark rye sour ale aged in brandy barrels for 14 months.



### Frontier Beer Co. Tart of Darkness (7.5%)

As well as this port barrel-aged Flanders red-style ale, look out for Frontier's as-yet-unnamed bourbon barrel-aged stout (10%), due to be released in July.

## ZEBONKEY CLOSES TAP ROOM



Much-loved Stellenbosch brewery Zebonkey announced the surprise closure of their taproom on Facebook in April. Founder and brewer Jan Schmidborn is taking a short break but the end of the taproom does not spell the end of the brand. He plans to become a gypsy brewer, releasing limited edition brews at festivals and events around the region.

## NOBLEMAN OPENS MAGALIESBERG TAPROOM



The Magaliesberg brew route has a new addition. Nobleman Brewing Company have launched a taproom in Hekpoort, on the border of Gauteng and the North West. As well as light lunches and tastings in the lapa-style taproom, there is a range of activities on the farm including archery, tractor rides and obstacle courses.

## ROUNDUP OF BREWERY CLOSURES



Since the last issue of On Tap, three further South African microbreweries have closed. Daxi's in East London announced their closure on Facebook in February. Hermanus based Folke & Goode confirmed that their brewery had closed after the equipment went up for sale on Gumtree. Lazy Lizard Brewhouse in Broederstroom also announced their sale via their Facebook page.

## BREWSTER'S CRAFT OPENS CONTRACT BREWING FACILITY



Brewster's Craft has launched a dedicated contract brewing facility in Gauteng. The 1000-litre brewhouse is headed up by industry veteran Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela and will exclusively be used for contract manufacturing services.

## NEW BREWERIES FOR MAURITIUS, UGANDA



African craft breweries outside of SA now number in the 20s, with two recent additions in Mauritius and Uganda. Camelthorn founder and beer consultant Jörg Finkeldey has been developing recipes and brewing with the founders of Oxenham Craft Brewery in Phoenix, Mauritius. Beers are under The Thirsty Fox label and include a lager, Weiss and pale ale. Back on the mainland, Uganda is the latest African country to join the craft beer community. Banange Brewing Company opened in Kampala in March. The range includes amber ale, English pale ale and session IPA.

## NEWLANDS SPRING RELEASES COLLAB WITH US ELYSIAN



AB InBev-owned Newlands Spring Brewing Company launched a one-off collaboration brew with Seattle-based Elysian Brewing Company, also part of ABI's "High End" range. Elysian's brewer Markus Stintson joined Newlands Spring's Warren Wiese to brew 10,000 Miles – named for the distance between the two breweries. The beer, a wet-hopped IPA using both South African and American hops, is available at select Cape Town locations in bottles while stocks last.

## PRO-AM COLLABS



**H**omebrewers and pro brewers are teaming up to produce once-off beers. Look out for the Worthogs/Frontier bourbon barrel-aged imperial stout, released this winter. The beer was brewed at Frontier with individual wort production on site from nine legendary worthogs home brewers. The Durban Homebrewers are also dabbling in pro-am collabs. Their first, a Candied Orange IPA was brewed at Nguni Brewing for this year's Clarens Craft Beer Festival. Look out for details of their next pro-am competition, taking place in September. Meanwhile in the Cape, Stellenbosch Brewing Company have teamed up with long-time homebrewer Russell Naude (Fishbone Beerworks) to produce a 10% imperial stout – keep an eye on Stellies' social media for release details.