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The under-represented faces of Richmond’s craft beer scene.

Untapped
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German Mardi Gras Karneval

SUNDAY, FEB 26 | 5:30-8:30PM
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Positive Vibe’s German Mardi Gras Karneval will feature a fantastic German Buffet, live music with The Sauerkrauts (authentic German Oom Pah Band), magic show with Jonathan Austin and special beverages including Legend Brewing’s Utebier (new spring ale). Plus, the Positive Vibe training program graduates will be assisting at the event. Call 560-9622 for reservations and be sure to wear your favorite Mardi Gras outfit. Sponsored by the Richmond Rotary Club.

All proceeds go to support the Positive Vibe Foundation’s Food Service Training Program for People with Disabilities.
New IPAs and More for 2017 page 5
Breweries are bringing out the hops with these new releases.

Big Brewery page 10
Väsen Brewing Co. is coming soon to Scott’s Addition — and it’s a doozy.

Craft Beer and Race page 12
The relationship is complicated.

Catching a Ride page 16
The fast-paced day of a beer rep.

Cooking with Beer page 18
Metzger Bar and Butchery’s Brittany Anderson shares her recipe for beer-brined pork chops.

Events page 18
Sip a few at brunch, stop and smell the flowers, and put some hops in that glass of cider.
5th Anniversary

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by Hilary Langford

While plenty of tasty winter warmers remain out there, the abundance of fresh India pale ales in this city and unseasonable weather makes us long for porch drinks, river rock hangs and longer days. After exploring what’s to come, I’ve rounded up offerings from both ends of the spectrum to make sure to keep everyone happy and satiated.

**Helles Frozen Over**

5 percent alcohol

*Strangeways Brewing, Richmond*

They said it would never happen. The curious purveyors of strange have crafted a good, old-fashioned lager. To be fair, it’s anything but ordinary. Hopped with Glacier, Galena and Centennial, it’s low on bitterness with a robust, malty backbone and light to medium body. This crafty creature is an easy drinker sure to please lager heads as well as those looking for something that can take them through the evening without a headbanger in the morning.
Kentucky French Toast
10 percent alcohol
Lickinghole Creek Craft Brewery, Goochland

Another stellar offering from the farm. This barrel-aged imperial brown ale boasts a prominent bourbon flavor that hits you right up front. Swirl it around in your mouth to reveal subtle maple and vanilla notes followed by a smidge of cinnamon at the finish. Its creamy mouthfeel and medium body make this one an easy drinker — even before noon.

Quadrahop
8.5 percent alcohol
Hardywood Park Craft Brewery, Richmond

Fans of this 2015 release will rejoice knowing it’s now back annually. Lots of hops come together to tantalize your buds with citrus zings and a wallop of tropical aromas. This imperial IPA pours hazy amber with a pillowy head. It has a hearty helping of malted barley from Copper Fox Distillery that offers up a nice balance. Despite the alcohol, it’s not a booze bomb.
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Malibu Nights, Tangerine Dreams
6.5 percent alcohol
Champion Brewing, Richmond

A unique brew that’s the cool kid at the party based on looks alone, this American IPA pours pinkish amber with an off-white head. Brewed with tangerines and hibiscus, it’s dry-hopped with Citra and Amarillo hops, making it tangy, dank and bursting with fruity aroma. Bonus points to Champion for crafting a label akin to an album cover straight out of the ‘80s that would make Duran Duran proud.

Piece of the Action
7.0 percent alcohol
The Answer Brewpub, Richmond

Fans of Mosaic hops will absolutely want in on this citrusy little number. Pours hazy golden and immediately delivers a phenomenal floral bouquet that includes hints of pineapple, papaya and mango. The finish is nice and dry. This beer will make you want to punch winter square between the eyes.
Your favorite Tap House

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Väsen Brewing Co. is big. It takes up most of the back end of the HandCraft Building in Scott’s Addition, a cavernous space still under construction. Steel framing is slowly getting covered by drywall, pipes stick out of dirt trenches and there’s a whole lot of gravel around. Part of the concrete flooring is in, but it’s still important to watch your step.

The plan is to produce 2,750 barrels of beer in the first year and swell to around 17,000, co-founder Tony Giordano says. He wants to try out different varieties to see which ones sell the best. Just because a brewer likes it, he says, doesn’t mean customers will.

On this cold day, it’s hard to imagine the space full of beer drinkers. But opening day is closer than it looks, Giordano says: “I think it’s a real possibility that we can be making beer here in about three months and opening in about five [months].”

Giordano, an Army veteran and a University of Colorado graduate, began working at Boulder Beer Co. with a plan to learn as much as he could about the business and then start his own brewery with his cousin Joey Darragh. They grew up in Northern Virginia, and both were introduced to the burgeoning craft beer and home-brewing scene out West. While Giordano was in Boulder, Darragh was living in California where he worked as an engineer for Apple and Tesla Motors.

Two years ago, the bearded cousins Richmond and immediately fell in love with the HandCraft Building. “We wanted to take what we’d learned on the West Coast and bring it back here,” Giordano says. “Opening this kind of brewery in Boulder — we probably would have been successful, but it would have been just another brewery.” They also were ready to come home — although not back to the Washington area. “We wanted more of a laid-back scene,” he says. And that’s helped drive the message behind the brand as well.

Giordano and Darragh look at it as a lifestyle brand. The word “väsen” means inner spirit, or essence, in Swedish. Before moving to Richmond, the two traveled to Europe to learn as much as they could about brewing and beer styles. Their last stop was in Sweden, and when they heard the word’s translation they knew they had the name for their business.

“We want our brewery to be a place where people can be themselves,” Darragh says.

They also want to pair the company with such groups as the American Alpine Club and Blue Sky Fund. They plan to sponsor athletes, too — in fact, Väsen’s first event will be with the Richmond Kickers.

Although they see their beer as something that can ride along in a kayak on the river or get thrown in a backpack for a hike, along with the nonprofit Blue Sky Fund, Väsen’s also working with One Percent for the Planet. “The environment is really important to us,” Darragh says. “It goes beyond the outdoor athletic community.”

Until then, they’re focused on developing different recipes with head brewery scientist Jonathan Warner. “We’ve created this whole other thing,” Giordano says. “It’ll be interesting to see how Richmond takes it. It’s not going to taste like anything they’ve ever had before.”
The craft beer industry is overwhelmingly white. How can that be changed?

by Annie Tobey
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If only the sea of faces at a brewery were as colorful as the beer pouring from the taps.

A rich imperial stout might be served alongside a pale ale, but only a few black and brown faces mingle in a predominantly white crowd, even in racially diverse Richmond.

Nationwide, the stereotypical craft beer drinker is a white male in his 30s — beard optional — according to demographic data reported by the Brewers Association trade organization in August.

Women and Hispanic craft beer drinkers are increasing in numbers, says the association’s craft beer program director, Julia Herz, and blacks represent 10 percent of craft beer drinkers. That’s not bad compared with national numbers, considering that blacks make up 12 percent of the population. But it’s a poor showing for metropolitan Richmond, whose population is about 50 percent black.

There’s no hard data on the demographics of Richmond beer drinkers, but anecdotally, observations at breweries and beer-centric restaurants reveal a heavy white skew.

The racial reasons are as complex as the chemistry of brewing, infused with centuries of oppression and conflict, sometimes overt but often subtle and unintentional. The problem is more complex than who’s drinking what beer and where.

As a white woman, I’m no more qualified to pontificate on black America than a man can empathize with pregnancy, but I crave a colorblind America, so I’ll give it a stab.

### Neighborhood Placement

Location, location, location. Mostly for reasons of rent and industrial zoning, craft breweries often situate themselves where customers must seek them out, beyond neighborhoods that otherwise might attract minority customers.

But consider beer-focused businesses in Old Towne Petersburg.

“We have a very diverse crowd, including color, age and gender,” James Hartle of Bucket Trade says, citing nearby Virginia State University and the military as key drivers.

Amanda Marable, marketing manager at Love-land Distributing, says she’s noticed that demographic lines at restaurants have blurred in the past decade. “You find pockets of beer lovers all over now,” she says, “in every neighborhood.”

Two examples are Mama J’s and Carena’s Jamaican Grill, both of which offer a handful of craft beers.

The owner of the grill, Carena Ives, likens craft beer to NASCAR. “It’s not like we can’t go to a NASCAR event, but not many people of color do,” she says. “If it’s embraced by one segment of the population that we don’t have anything in common with, then it’s just assumed that it’s not for us.”

When it comes to the beers on tap at her restaurant, she says: “I don’t even call Legend a craft beer. I say it’s a local beer. … Putting ‘craft’ in front of it makes it this other thing.”

In many ways, the status quo reflects a chicken-and-egg conundrum. A neighborhood’s average income, its restaurants’ menu prices and community popularity of products influence beverage offerings.

A budget-conscious restaurant serves inexpensive beers and upscale restaurants focus on wine lists. When restaurants don’t carry craft beers, brand reps don’t visit them, so regulars don’t have the opportunity to try new products. Because beer has a limited shelf life, bar managers have another reason to avoid buying unproven products.

And from a business standpoint, location carries risk. Breweries tend to open closer to an established fan base rather than pioneering in areas where success is less assured.
Groundbreakers

Bobby Faithful, who works as front-of-house manager at the Answer Brewpub, recently helped launch a brewing certificate program at the University of Richmond.

Faithful initially became interested in craft beer as a consumer, he says, before taking a job with a well-known Delaware brewery, Dogfish Head.

The company promoted "off-centered ales for off-centered people," he says, "so I felt like I fit in even though I was the only black guy."

He finds the Answer to be a comfortable workplace, he says, with an Asian owner and female and minority management.

Black Richmonders fill other important roles at local breweries, including Triple Crossing Brewing Co., Stone Brewing, Ardent Craft Ales and Trapezium Brewing Co. in Petersburg. One area brewery, 7 Hills Seafood and Brewing Co., now is black-owned.

Someone who's observed the issue up close is Sterling Stokes, known across social media and the blogging world as RVA Beermeister — a regular in the beer community.

"For the most part," he says, "I think our local community is very accepting of diverse backgrounds." He notes Hardywood's Heart and Soul Brew Fest as an example: "It was very uplifting to see more African-Americans like myself at a beer event. ... Honestly, it was something I didn’t know was missing from my life."

A Molehill

Michael Abdelmagid, owner of 7 Hills, has another theory: Craft beer simply is a relatively new concept to the black community.

"It isn’t necessarily part of broad African-American culture right now," he says. "Not even all of white America or Asian-Americans like craft beer."

There also are fewer women than men, Abdelmagid says: "It’s not like there isn’t inclusion. ... It just takes time to catch on."

Integrating the craft beer community can be small part of a solution to today’s broader problems. As a safe place where the focus is on fun and relaxation, breweries and beer-centric bars can begin to break down barriers.

"The community is completely inclusive in some ways," says Jacob Brunow of Brown Distributing. And as someone from a diverse family, he says he’s attuned to racial tensions. "We need to diversify badly, but how do you bridge that gap?"

To that end, Brown has been the host of wing, bacon and barbecue festivals that attracted a wide range of people who want to drink craft beer. Exposure is the answer, he says: "Get beers in people’s hands."

Abdelmagid agrees with that approach. "Market it to different people in different ways, pair it with foods and events," he says. "They’ll enjoy the beer and get exposed to it."

At 7 Hills, he holds a variety of events that bring in people who wouldn’t have come only for the beer brewed on-site.

And while America may just need to step outside of its comfort zone too. It’s time to visit restaurants, businesses and organizations that aren’t on regular rotation. In my dream world, as more of us embrace the diversity of beer styles, our appreciation for the diversity of people will increase as well.
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A day in the life of a beer representative.
by Karen Newton

It’s not even lunchtime, and Wes Duke has made six stops on his Wednesday route.

For three years, Duke has been an on-premises sales representative for Brown Distributing Co. He services only restaurants and bars, he says — “anywhere with draft beer.”

When we meet at Supper around 11 a.m., he’s already visited Sticky Rice, Richard’s Restaurant & Gentleman’s Club, the Sidewalk Cafe, Dot’s Back Inn, Curbside Cafe and Station 2.

Like an obedient student, I follow him through the bustling kitchen and out the back door to the walk-in, where he assesses the stock to see what might be needed during the next week.

Tablet in hand, he tracks down the bar manager to extol the newly available Ardent Craft Ales’ Earl Grey Brown Ale.

He notes the restaurant’s inventory level, and suggests how to fill gaps. “Some tell you what they want,” he says, “others want you to tell them what they have.”

And everyone, I soon learn, is on the lookout for the newest thing.

11:30 a.m. — Arriving at Postbellum, Duke finds the manager unavailable, busy with a renovation project. No moss grows under a beer rep, so we move on.

11:35 — Lunch is in full swing at City Dogs. Blues Traveler blares from the speakers, and a server immediately informs Duke that they’re running low on Bud Light, a major problem. Because City Dogs hums and its walk-in is small, Duke visits twice weekly to ensure that stock is rotated and the inventory is ready for events. He’ll be back Friday with Super Bowl signs. One final reminder about a scheduled training session for the staff, and we’re out.

11:45 — We’re back at Postbellum for a tasting of Bold Rock Citrus Cider, a new flavor brought out early when the cidery ran out of the blood oranges that it was going to use for its winter run. I’m asked for my opinion. I give it a thumbs-up for warm-weather sipping.

The manager needs IPAs, so Duke reels off options — Victory Brewing Co.’s Vital, Kindred Spirit Brewing’s Headspace, Lickinghole Creek Craft Brewery’s Nonesuch — before discussing what’s on hand, alcohol percentages and cost per half barrel vs. a full barrel. It’s apparent to a novice that much of this job is inventory management. Duke tries to move beer in and out of the warehouse as quickly as possible.

12:10 p.m. — Dire Straits’ “Money for Nothing” greets us at Joe’s Inn, a spot with 24 taps and a devoted happy hour crowd. I’m told Joe’s moves through a lot of beer. It’s here I meet my first keg hoarder — an owner who’s willing to buy extra kegs of limited-release beers because customers will flock to the bar when everyone else in town runs out.

Today, Ardent Craft Ales’ Earl Grey Brown Ale gets the hoarder nod.

With this order complete, we stay to eat lunch at Joe’s. Duke says he tried bringing lunch from home, but it was always gone by 10:30 a.m. Now he works a meal into his daily route.

1:30 — At Commercial Taphouse & Grill, a longtime beer-geek destination, Duke is pouring Victory Brewing Co.’s Prima Pils while the manager reminisces about how they carried pilsners “when they were nothing.” Now they’re back in style.

Today, Ardent Craft Ales’ Earl Grey Brown Ale gets the hoarder nod.

Handles are the bane of a beer rep’s existence because restaurants tend to collect or lose the pricey objects, making it part of Duke’s job to retrieve them. Foo Dog’s manager needs a Center of the Universe Brewing Co. handle, so Duke heads out and grabs one from his car.

3:00 — There are five stops left before Duke can call it quits: Metro Bar & Grill, Sheppard Street Tavern, 3 Monkeys Bar and Grill, FW. Sullivan’s and Lady N’Awlins Cajun Cafe.

Success for Duke is measured by daily emails from the boss who shares any rep’s noteworthy accomplishments. “It’s motivating to see what others do,” Duke says. “Plus you always want to be mentioned in the email.”
Post a picture of your completed Spot the Difference game on Instagram or Twitter with #jackbrownsrva for the chance to win a $20 gift card.

Don’t know how to hashtag? Bring in your completed Spot the Difference game to get a free fried Oreo with a $10 purchase.

Cheers to the 2017 Women in the Arts!

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Cooking with Beer

Metzger Bar and Butchery’s Brittany Anderson, a James Beard Foundation semifinalist for 2017 Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic, shares this recipe to pump up the flavor of an ordinary pork chop.

**Beer-Brined Pork Chops**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 1/4 cups salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 5 bay leaves
- 10 peppercorns
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 lemon, sliced
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 quarts water
- 32 ounces beer
- 4 bone-in pork chops

**Directions:**
Combine all the ingredients except the beer in a large pot and bring to a boil. Once the salt and sugar have dissolved, turn off the heat and allow the mixture to steep for 30 minutes. Then add the beer and chill until it’s cold.

Using a large bowl or gallon-sized freezer bag, pour the beer mixture over the pork chops. Brine for three hours in the refrigerator.

Remove the pork chops, pat them dry and season to taste with salt and pepper. Grill the chops on each side for 5 minutes or until they’re medium.
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