

# The RARE BEER CLUB

## JOLLY PUMPKIN ARTISAN ALES DEXTER, MICHIGAN

### MAKING THE TURN (RARE BEER CLUB EXCLUSIVE)

For this month we're proud to bring you a very special beer brewed exclusively for members of The Rare Beer Club by one of our favorite breweries, Jolly Pumpkin, and its founder and brewer,

our friend Ron Jeffries. This is the latest in a number of Jolly Pumpkin exclusives that we've had the pleasure of featuring in recent years; others include Los Vivos y Los Muertos in 2014, Rosie del Barrio in 2016, L'épouvantail Noir in 2017,

The Regifted in 2018, El Pastor in 2020, Flor de los Muertos in 2021, and Who Needs an Occasion in 2022—all exceptional releases that captured our favorite aspects of this brewery. The latest exclusive is sure to intrigue—a mildly sour wild stout brewed with juniper berries and unsweetened

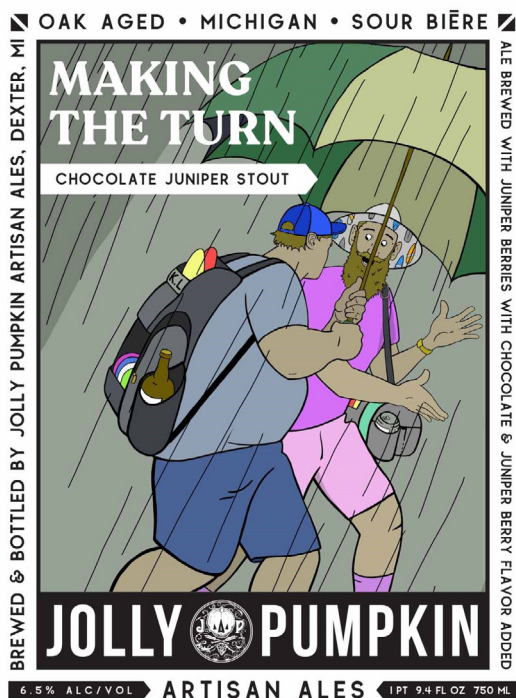
chocolate that spent 12 months in oak barrels.

Approaching the nondescript structure that houses the Jolly Pumpkin Artisan

Ales brewery, you might think the place looks more like a defunct paper products warehouse than a world-class brewery. But step inside and not only will you find shiny brewing equipment, you'll also encounter row upon row

of wooden barrels in which beer of various ages, blends and funk-levels is maturing. The brewery performs barrel aging on all of the Jolly Pumpkin beers. The time, labor and expense required to age every ounce of beer they make in traditional wooden barrels, is, some would say, madness. But it's what breeds their awesome array of truly distinctive beers. Well, that and open fermentation, meaning that the yeast are left to work their magic in a container that's left wide open—instead of being inside a closed stainless steel tank. This means that any wild yeast floating about in the air can get into the beer and apply a bit of their own natural funk to the flavor of the beer. Talk about personalization—the combination of open fermentation and barrel aging is not only artisanal brewing, it's an additional element of the art of brewing that has largely disappeared from the craft. Sure, barrel aging has become increasingly popular among craft brewers and

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### SPECIFICATIONS

#### Style

Barrel-Aged Wild Stout with Juniper Berries and Chocolate

#### Alcohol By Volume

6.5%

#### Serving Temperature

45–50° F

#### Suggested Glassware

Tulip, Chalice, Goblet, or Teku Glass

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beer geeks, but as a proportion of the overall amount of beer produced in the U.S., few people are doing it, and fewer do it as well as Jolly Pumpkin. JP takes it a step further by even fermenting its beers in wood before aging them further—a risky process when it comes to consistency and quality control, but founder and brewer Ron Jeffries somehow manages to pull it off beautifully.

Ron has steered Jolly Pumpkin Artisan Ales since 2004, and the brewery currently operates under the Northern United Brewing Company. Visitors to Jolly Pumpkin's main brewery in Dexter, Michigan can tour the 50-barrel brewhouse that houses both Jolly Pumpkin and the non-wild-fermented beers of North Peak Brewing Co., which are also made on site (though kept well separated from Jolly Pumpkin's funky operations). For the latest info on setting up a tour, or for visiting one of the Jolly Pumpkin brewpubs in Michigan, head over to their website at [www.jollypumpkin.com](http://www.jollypumpkin.com) for more info.

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## MAKING THE TURN

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One of our two featured beers this month is a Rare Beer Club exclusive from our friends at Jolly Pumpkin: the delicious and unique Making the Turn. This release will be available exclusively through the Rare Beer Club and the brewery's tasting room.

This wild stout was brewed with an array of specialty malts to impart deep complexity and juniper berries to give

a distinct gin-like fruitiness. It spent twelve months in oak barrels before the addition of unsweetened chocolate which added character and depth to the flavor. Fuggle hops give the beer an easy 20 IBUs of bitterness. The ABV touches 6.5%, from incorporating 2 Row, Rye Malt, Roasted Barley, C-120, and Black Malt, bringing forth a complex beer with the aromas and flavors of a fruited and spiced chocolate stout and characteristics of a *Bière Noire des Flandres*.

Making the Turn pours an opaque, deep, dark, chocolatey brown to black, capped by a tan head. Pronounced deeply toasted and roasted aromas rise from the glass as it's poured, with cocoa, caramel, and hints of chocolate and pronounced juniper notes. As it settles, savory wild yeast aromas abound with notes of rye, citrus, and berries. Dark, rich, and earthy aromas arise as it warms slightly, giving way to notes of black peppercorns and roasted barley.

Sipping this beer, one finds a mouthwatering tartness with savory, unsweetened chocolate, fine underlying bitterness, and opulent juniper berry. The beer is somewhat concentrated and silky, with a finely bubbled mousse, and round, full bodied mouthfeel. Dark unsweetened chocolate bitterness with light acidity showcases the rye malt and roasted barley backbone of this unique beer. The juniper berries are enveloped in roasty malt flavors, dark coffee notes, and sprucy and piney flavors. The twelve-month

maturation in oak barrels allows this beer to integrate wood expressions and tannins over time, essentially being used as "seasoning" and not the driving force behind the flavors. The long lingering finish highlights the use of juniper and brought to mind traditional Finnish farmhouse ales known as *Sahti*, which include juniper berries, and often branches, into the brew, while using similar grains such as barley and rye. The similarities end there, however, as Jolly Pumpkin goes further by adding unsweetened chocolate and using black malt for a deeper, darker color.

Making the Turn is another outstanding release from Jolly Pumpkin and we here at the Rare Beer Club are very happy to present it to our members. We're also honored to continue our relationship with Jolly Pumpkin which began in 2009 and we hope for many more years to come.

## AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

Making the Turn has great potential for further aging but can be enjoyed now. The juniper flavors in this beer should continue to develop as it matures as should the chocolate flavors. For food pairings, we're inclined to try this with dishes that are traditionally flavored with juniper such as *choucroute garnie*, *sauerbraten*, and some northern Italian cuisine like *Coniglio Bianco* (braised rabbit).

# The RARE BEER CLUB

THE BRUERY  
PLACENTIA, CALIFORNIA

## SUCRÉ (2014) (RARE BEER CLUB EXCLUSIVE)

The impact of The Bruery on the craft beer scene in Orange County, California, is undeniably impressive, but it only scratches the surface of their influence on the broader brewing landscape. What was once a somewhat perplexingly named, obscure brewery nestled in a quaint Southern California town has been transformed into a renowned institution, earning recognition from beer enthusiasts across the nation and around the world. Their journey has encompassed the expansion of an extensive barrel-aging program, the inception of the Bruery Terreux line of wild and sour ales, the establishment of their hop-focused sister brand known as Offshoot, and the eventual ascent to one of the most esteemed breweries in the United States.

Thanks to their boundless creativity and mastery of brewing techniques, The Bruery's



beers remain, without question, among the most sought after in the industry. The pivotal moment came in 2009 when they unveiled a brew that sent shockwaves through the brewing community: Black Tuesday – an immense imperial stout boasting a staggering 20% abv, meticulously aged in bourbon barrels for well over a year.

This extraordinary creation exuded profound oakiness, opulent richness, a velvety smooth texture, and an almost nourishing quality, sparking both fervor and an annual tradition. The clamor for this stout prompted enthusiasts to embark on journeys spanning hundreds, if not thousands of miles. Only select few breweries have matched The Bruery's ability to push the boundaries of the "limited release" concept, with annual vintages often selling out within a day.

Should you be traveling to SoCal, definitely

swing by The Bruery's Tasting Room to check out what they're currently working on. We've been following the path of this brewery basically since they first opened, and the continued energy and innovation coming from these folks is inspiring. For more information on The Bruery, visit their website at [thebruery.com](http://thebruery.com).

### SUCRÉ

The Bruery's Sucré is a commemorative ale celebrating their sixth anniversary. Originally released to the public in 2014, Sucré is no longer available to purchase directly from The Bruery. We're pleased to be able to offer Sucré as a Rare Beer Club exclusive this month. This will be available only to our club members. The Rare Beer Club has exclusively procured a small number of cases of Sucré from deep within The Bruery's library

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### SPECIFICATIONS

#### Style

New American Oak Aged Old Ale

#### Alcohol By Volume

14.5%

#### Serving Temperature

50–57° F

#### Suggested Glassware

Chalice, Goblet, Tulip, or Snifter Glass



and we're honored to continue our long-standing relationship with them.

Sucr 's creation is one that pays homage to the rich English-style Old Ale tradition. A part of each annual anniversary ale is meticulously preserved within The Bruery's oak barrels, seamlessly blending with the forthcoming year's production. This process imparts unrivaled complexity and an evolving character that only deepens with the passage of time. Crafted with their signature Belgian yeast strain and refined through the time-honored solera method, it stands as a testament to the art of brewing. English-style Old Ales are characterized by a prominent malt presence and typically have a deep amber to dark brown color, and that is exactly what we saw in the Sucr '. It poured with a lasting head made of light tan foam which left behind a bit of lacing after every sip.

As we put The Bruery Sucr ' up to our noses we discovered the wide range of malt-derived aromas co-mingled with pronounced brand-new American oak barrel

notes including vanilla, caramelized brown sugar, toffee, and dark fruit. The experience continued with aromas of molasses, plump raisins, chewy figs, and luscious dates. We were further treated to signature aromas of new American oak barrels with wafts of toasted coconut and crushed dried dill.

The first sip of The Bruery Sucr ' confirmed what our olfactory senses alluded to with pronounced flavors of toasted vanilla, caramelized brown sugar and toffee, hints of whipped molasses, raisins, figs, and dates. A dollop of bittering hops added a bit of balance to the sweetness and gave a hint of dried fruit blossom to the overall flavor profile, which was surprising and welcome. This beer satisfied our tastebuds further as each sip unveiled a different layer of flavor showcasing the craftsmanship that went into its production. The combination of malts and use of barrels produced refined sweetness, palate coating textures, and unforgettable lasting impressions.

The Bruery Sucr ' exhibited a full-bodied mouthfeel with a creamy, finely bubbled

mousse, that led to indulgent overall richness. The smooth finish was prolonged and velvety, with a finely layered texture.

English-style Old Ales are often allowed to develop their complexity over a prolonged period of time. This one is shining with age as it matures in the bottle where new complexities continue to emerge.

#### AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

The potential for aging here is astonishing. Bottled at 14.5% abv in 2014 after beginning its journey six years prior, we can see this easily maturing for another five, seven, even 10 more years. Get as much as you can. Drink some now, drink some later, and enjoy all it has to offer as supplies are very limited.

Paired with hearty and savory dishes of roasted meats, rich stews, or strong cheeses and charcuterie, the combinations abound. We even recommend it alongside your favorite chocolate and caramel centric desserts.

## TASTING WITH TONY

### BY TONY VASILE

Hello and welcome to Tasting with Tony. I'm Tony Vasile and I have the privilege of being the product curator for the Microbrewed Beer of the Month Club. About a year ago I took over the newsletter writing duties for the Rare Beer Club from our friend and colleague Ken Weaver, who had been writing them for almost ten years. Big shoes to fill indeed. Here I'll share with you my experiences with all things beer, wine, spirits, and cuisine, and hopefully, you'll share yours as well.

A little bit about me...

My adventures in the beer industry actually started in the wine industry. In 2007 I began hosting the Saturday wine tastings at my local BevMo, a large West Coast retailer of beer, wine, and spirits after a brief conversation with the manager. He said he needed somebody to take over as the regular host had moved on to a different company. The knowledge, experience, and connections I gained from my days at BevMo, plus having earned the first level Sommelier from the Court of Master Sommeliers, allowed me to secure a position hosting tours and tasting experiences at Monte de Oro Winery in Temecula, California, on the weekends, starting in late 2010. During the week I worked for a

couple local wine bars, one of them having an extensive selection of 18 craft beer taps and over 200 bottled beers to choose from. I garnered precious beer knowledge and experience over the next several years, all the while continuing my education and pursuit of wine, earning Certified Sommelier from the Court of Master Sommeliers, WSET Advanced Certificate, and CSW.

Through this education, knowledge, experience, and exposure to the adult beverage industry, I eventually crossed paths with MonthlyClubs.com, home of the Microbrewed Beer of the Month Club in Fall of 2016. Within the last couple of years, I've been handed the reins of product curation, having been a customer service rep and part of the tasting panel, and as I mentioned before, in the last year, writing the Rare Beer Club newsletters. The way I see it, I'm just getting started.

If you're ever in Southern California's South Orange County and want to grab a beer, just send me a note at [tony@monthlyclubs.com](mailto:tony@monthlyclubs.com) and you'll be "Tasting with Tony!"

Cheers!