



Kristen and Nick Arzner, owners of Block 15 Restaurant and Brewery

NEW RESTAURANT, OLD WORLD BEER

Can you tell me how to get to Block 15? WORDS BY MARY HENDRICKS | PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

I recently had the pleasure of drinking incredible beer with Block 15 Restaurant and Brewery owners Nick and Kristen Arzner. If I were to pick one word to sum up my introduction to Block 15 and the Arznern's unequivocal devotion to pairing old world style beer with casual food prepared with regional ingredients, that word would be "passion."

"I have always had an entrepreneurial spirit and the dream was always to have a restaurant and brewery," says Kristen Arzner.

Block 15 is situated in the heart of downtown Corvallis, only a few blocks from OSU, in the old *Gazette-Times* location. The son of the man who built the existing building recently visited Block 15 and commented how it didn't smell like ink anymore.

The restaurant and brewery's name hails from Corvallis' previous incarnation as Marysville and the old plat map location from the old town.

The Arznerns have been actively involved in home

brewing for the past five years and with their many years of brewery and restaurant experience, the dream has become an exquisite reality. Almost four months new to the Corvallis hospitality scene, Block 15 serves beers true-to-style and makes beer with the finest ingredients imported from different parts of the world, along with all the best Northwest and locally produced grains, hops, fruits, herbs and yeast. The ales are uniquely crafted and take a minimum of two weeks and up to a year to brew in the old world tradition.

Nick Arzner credits Block 15's signature style to gold medal brewer Steve van Rossum, who has over 11 years experience in brewing. Van Rossum started brewing at McMenamins High Street Café in Eugene and brought his beer making chops to West Bros BBQ and Brewing where he gained recognition for a Great American Beer Festival gold medal stout. "We are lucky to have great beer right away," says Nick Arzner. "The difference between good beer and great beer is

consistent product and Steve makes great beer," he says.

Arzner is not only Block 15's owner; he's van Rossum's trusty assistant and fellow avid student of beer, and he helps in the making of the Block 15 ales: Glo, a golden ale; Ridgeback Red, named after the Arzner's Ridgeback, Caspian (I think I heard Kristen say Caspian helped pour at Rouge Brewer's Memorial Festival); Nebula Oatmeal Stout, a dark contemplative ale with flavors of chocolate, coffee and caramel with a semi-sweet body and lingering finish; Print Master, an homage to the working newspaper men and women at the *Gazette-Times*; Aborigine, the Block 15 freestyle ale; and a rotating variety of wheat ales — an especially delightful one is Marionberry Wheat Ale. There is always a Belgian ale and a rotating variety of ales including Abby, Dubbel, Tripple, Saison, Farmhouse and more.

Such an aromatic elixir should be enjoyed in the classic Belgian ale style glass that looks like a fluted brandy snifter. Their latest, called Trubbed Monk, blends imported Belgian malts, a caramelized sugar called "candi sugar" and three different yeast strains sourced from Belgian monasteries.

Block 15 models their new establishment on the brewer's philosophy of "create something new based on age old traditions." The Arznerns also want to make beer in a sustainable way that makes beer making possible for their children. Restaurants and breweries create a large amount of waste and the Arznerns and their staff take the necessary steps to reduce waste and limit resource consumption. They are always searching for better and more efficient ways to make their operations more sustainable.

Kristen Arzner insists the food came before the beer as she and Nick first enjoyed cooking together before their adventure in home brewing. Kristen Arzner runs the restaurant end of things and makes certain the best ingredients are used, like Painted Hills Natural Beef that is naturally raised hormone free and vegetarian fed. Carlton Farms provides naturally raised pork for the pulled pork sandwiches and ribs.

Also included on this fantastic menu: unique pastas, burgers, sandwiches, beer battered French fries and a very tempting appetizer and bar menu. The bar offers cocktails too.

Perhaps a little whiskey with your beer?

Block 15 takes casual food to a new level and makes meeting for a beer a truly delicious gift to the Corvallis community. Dogs will soon be welcome to accompany their thirsty companion when the restaurant adds their sidewalk café.

Block 15, 300 SW Jefferson, Corvallis. (541) 758-2077. www.block15.com

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