



JASON CARRIER

PHOTOS BY TRASK BEDORTHA

SKY HAS FALLEN

Local brewing at Falling Sky BY ALI ENRIGHT

As somewhat of a beer virgin, I met up with part owner and brewery manager Jason Carriere to find out why Falling Sky Brewing's beer has Eugene buzzing.

Carriere began brewing in 1999 while working as a scientist on the Human Genome Project at Stanford. "Brewing was so similar to what I was already doing; they both use biochemistry and biology," Carriere says. In 2002 he purchased the Valley Vintner & Brewer, and since then he has formulated a team of four to create the Falling Sky family at its former location. Brewers Scott Sieber and Michael Zarkesh bring their brewing expertise, while former New York restaurant owner Rob Cohen oversees the eatery.

With an exceptional brewing system found primarily in Germany and only a few places in Oregon, Falling Sky is

working to bring fresh elements to traditional Northwest brews. Taking pride in this system, Carriere says it's what sets Falling Sky apart from other local breweries.

"The design of the system allows us to make a lot of European beers in a more traditional manner than many North American breweries," Carriere says. And so while still providing brews that are cherished by Oregon beer lovers, Falling Sky is mixing it up.

"People come for the great food and the great beer, but the clincher is the environment," Carriere says. With the attentive service, communal picnic tables and comfortable outdoor seating, the great food and beer seem almost like an added bonus.

Falling Sky reaches a wide demographic through diverse taps. By incorporating sessionable beers, or brews with lower than 5 percent alcohol by volume, this brewery is all about getting everyone to savor suds. In addition to the lower gravity beers, Falling Sky now

boasts its first gluten-free beer for those who have to steer clear of wheat and other gluteny-grains. "We are still getting input and perfecting the taste," Carriere says.

Veteran beer drinkers and newbies alike can mingle at Falling Sky, sipping on favorites like the Golden Naked Blonde, Hey Hay IPA or 2 Towns Ciderhouse Incider. And don't worry, you won't grow tired of the menu.

"People are drinking the beer faster than we can brew it, so our menu changes," Carriere says. He explains that it takes about three weeks for a batch to be completed and about two weeks for customers to drink it, so there is a constant rotation.

"We tried to create a place that's both simple and beautiful," Carriere says. "Just because we are casual doesn't mean we can't provide the best quality in beer."

That quality is what sticks with you when you walk away from Falling Sky, a quality that will be sure to bring you back for another glass. ■

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