

Key & Coak

Block 15

Block15.com

3415 SW Deschutes Street, Corvallis

541-752-BEER

This brewery is one of the best reasons to head up to Corvallis, and what's just as good as its beer is its artistic labeling for every beer. Among the selection the brewery sent us was **Nebula Oat Stout**, which was delightfully thick. *EW* tasters said this is a beer that can easily become a campfire favorite or one to warm you up during the dark winter nights, or maybe the rainy nights of COVID spring, because of its chocolate milk and toasty marshmallow tasting notes.

The brewery also sent its **Gloria Pilsner**, which is a light hoppy but watery beer. One of *EW*'s staffers said it tasted like the beer had been left outside overnight and soaked in the ambient nature moisture. But when another taster suggested its lightness made it a great rafting beer, she agreed. Can you social distance on a raft? If so, it's beer time.

And then there was **Sticky Hands**. One of *EW*'s IPA haters uttered, "Oh, no!" when she took a sip. That's actually a good sign for those who appreciate the special bitterness that hops provide. The beer is next level hop-piness and at times feels like you're chomping into a dank



piece of weed — and if your thing is hops, this is your beer.

Block 15 sent a Belgian-style beer, too. **Illuminated Belgian-Style Tripel Ale** tasted a lot like a typical Belgian: full of yeast but also full bodied. Like IPAs, *EW* beer savvy tasters were divided on it mostly because of our views on Belgian-style beers. The non-beer people apparently like drinking bread.

Portland Cider Co.

PortlandCider.com

8925 SE Janssen Road, Bldg. F, Clackamas

503-908-7654

Everyone needs a refreshing, crisp summer cider, and Portland Cider Co.'s **Razzberry Cider** does not disappoint. This was the only cider that made its way into our tasting, and it was easy to drink and easy to enjoy. Like most of the company's other ciders, the Razzberry is a tasteful balance of tart and sweet. *EW* staff agreed that the berry flavor was strong, but not artificial. Instead, the cider boasts a real fruit taste, pure enough for a warm, sunny day. The Razzberries didn't taste like Snozzberries.

2 Towns Ciderhouse

2townsciderhouse.com

33930 SE Eastgate Circle, Corvallis

541-207-3915

Way back before COVID-19 put the world on pause, 2 Towns sent *EW* a couple samples of its Prickly Pearade, an annual cider made with prickly pear cactus fruit and Northwest apples, which might sound like a weird combination but was a melony sip that made summer feel just a global pandemic away.

BREW TO YOU

Local restaurants, breweries, wineries in Eugene and beyond provide beer and wine deliveries

BY FRANKIE KERNER

Spring is a favorite season for many in Eugene, probably because that's when people can start sitting outside on restaurant patios, enjoying craft beer and local wine, eating and conversing.

This year things are a bit different thanks to those COVID-19-induced social distancing orders. Springtime sipping, snacking and chatting activities will likely be done at home for the foreseeable future, or at least not in the same way we were once used to.

Luckily, plenty of local restaurants, breweries and wineries can deliver craft beverages right to your doorstep.

The Oregon Wine LAB is a local winery that has been transitioning its menu to be enjoyed at home. General Manager Kacy Minnis says the winery is typically enjoyed by customers as an experience — with an outdoor patio, wine tastings and events.

"Our business has been based primarily in the local community," she says. "Because it's so local, we were a destination, we were an experience to go have."

The Oregon Wine LAB is adjusting to the new circumstances, updating its website to make it more user-friendly and offering both delivery and pick-up options. Oregon wineries were given the go-head by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to pour wines on-premise under the Phase 1 reopening.

"We've seen great support from the community so far," Minnis says.

Like wineries, brewpubs and breweries are gradually reopening under the Phase 1 guidelines. Many breweries have been offering both delivery and take out options. Brenna Foerster, general manager of sister bars **PublicHouse** and **beergarden.**, detailed the simple process for getting beergarden. brews and food delivered. The entire menu is available on a web-based app called Porter, with the option to include fare from any of beergarden.'s five surrounding food carts all in the same order.

Foerster, originally from Southern California, moved to

Oregon 10 years ago and fell in love with the beer culture.

"The beer community in Oregon is such a big part of everyone's life here," she says. "We're in the land of hops, so naturally the beer community is huge here."

It may be a while until the camaraderie of the beer community can be fully restored. In the meantime, you can still enjoy all of the same menu items while supporting a local business. Continuing to operate with delivery and pickup options "has really helped us be able to stay alive during the COVID pandemic," Foerster says.

Another beer-centric restaurant that has stayed afloat with deliveries recently is **The Bier Stein** on Willamette



Street. On March 16, owner Troy Potter made the tough decision to close down the restaurant, even before the government-issued stay-at-home order on March 23. "I wanted to be proactive because I was concerned about the safety of my family and my staff," Potter says.

The Bier Stein was closed until about two weeks ago when it opened back up for delivery and take out.

One of Potter's priorities when reopening was making his fare more affordable during a time when many are losing their source of income.

"We know people are struggling right now financially," Potter says. "We're not here to rob the bank. We're here to keep the lights on and get really good beer out there."

Customers can now order directly from the website, with 60 percent of the food menu available and the entire beer, wine and cider menus available. All 28 draft lines are open and packaged directly into 32-ounce "crawlers" (large metal cans), as well as the pre-packaged beer cooler with more than 1,000 different cans and bottles. Potter says one of his current favorite beers is the Sticky Hands Ale from **Block 15** in Corvallis, another brewery that offers pick up and delivery within the city.

Philomath resident Ruth Mandsager remembers visiting Block 15 when she first moved to the Corvallis area from Minneapolis in 2009. Until then she says she was "a Bud Light girl," but she discovered IPAs and different beers after moving to Oregon.

"Gradually my tastebuds grew up," she says. "Then my husband dabbled in brewing for a while. We did several years of him brewing his home brew."

She still visits Block 15 often, currently opting for their pick-up option. Right now, while quarantining, Mandsager says good beer is like a dessert, something to look forward to and enjoy.

You can find Block 15 at Block15.com, The Bier Stein at TheBierStein.com, beergarden. at beergardenme.com, and Oregon Wine LAB at OregonWineLAB.com. For more on Phase 1 guidelines for wineries and breweries go to Oregon.gov/olcc/Pages/Reopening-Oregon.aspx.