

comers will get the opportunity to practice and expand upon developing skill sets, as students of Seaside High School's Culinary Arts Program will design and prepare Friday night's Brewer's Dinner.

Inviting the students to cook — and for the Culinary Arts Program to reap the proceeds after food and logistical costs — was Griffin's second big addition to the 2015 festival.

It came to him last year at the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism in Sunriver. The banquet meal, served to many hundreds of attendees, had been prepared by the Seaside students.

"I was struck by the quality of it," said Griffin. "I thought, why can't we have the kids do that at the Brewer's Dinner in Seaside?"

"I thought it was a great idea," added Duffy. "We want to acknowledge this great culinary program here, that it's a pipeline for kids to get to make exciting foods."

Griffin figured too that students cycling through the program would keep the meal fresh.

"What people are looking for in brewer's dinners," said Griffin, "is that they want something new and something cool."

For the dinner, students of the Culinary Arts program, led by Chef Chris Holen of Baked Alaska, will design and serve five courses to be paired with beers from breweries along the North Coast, including Buoy Beer, Fort George, Pelican, Bill's Tavern and Seaside Brewing Company. Selection of those pairings will remain up to Griffin and his contemporaries.

"I just sent the menu out to the breweries to suggest what beers they would think would pair best with the different courses," said Griffin. As of press-time those selections have yet to be made. The choices must be made from among a multitude.

"This is where beer actually gets a little more sophisticated than wine," said Griffin. "There's a lot more styles of beer."

"For example," he added, "I got an email from Ken at Pelican, who suggested a beer for the second course, a soup that had a fancy cheddar kind of basing. In the notes he said, 'I would not use an IPA unless this white cheddar was the dominant flavor in the soup.'"

However tantalizing the brewed pairings may be, the culinary students are creating the bigger buzz. Twice as many tickets — 125 — were available this year, and they went fast: As of press time, the event sold out.

'A lot of the young breweries are self-distributing, and they haven't reached the valley yet. So a lot of the people who are coming out will get to try those beers for the first time. That makes it really cool for people.'

Griffin, meanwhile, feels local interest blooming.

"I notice a lot of younger folks who are big community movers and shakers wanting to be a part of it," Griffin said of the dinner. "Before it was a little bit more passive. Now people are kind of fighting for spots. We've got a big buy-in from local businesses who have the opportunity to sponsor tables, and they're jumping at it."

All of this excites the Culinary Arts program students, who will not only benefit from the funds raised, but will be tested on their execution Friday evening. It is, in effect, the class' final exam. And while the students might be sweating, Griffin couldn't be

happier.

"Now it's more than just enjoying a fantastic meal and a bunch of fantastic beers," he said. "You get all of that plus you get to help kids in your own community. It's a lot more symbiotic than just a dinner."

Saturday's events too have charitable aims. After costs, ticket and tasting sales will benefit the Seaside Food Bank.

As such, Griffin said, all participating breweries are essentially donating their product in exchange for marketing and out-reach opportunities.

"It's a really unique deal," said Griffin. "They get to support the community, they get to come out and tell their story, and they get to do it in the coolest place in the world, on the North Coast of Oregon. So everybody wins, all the way around."

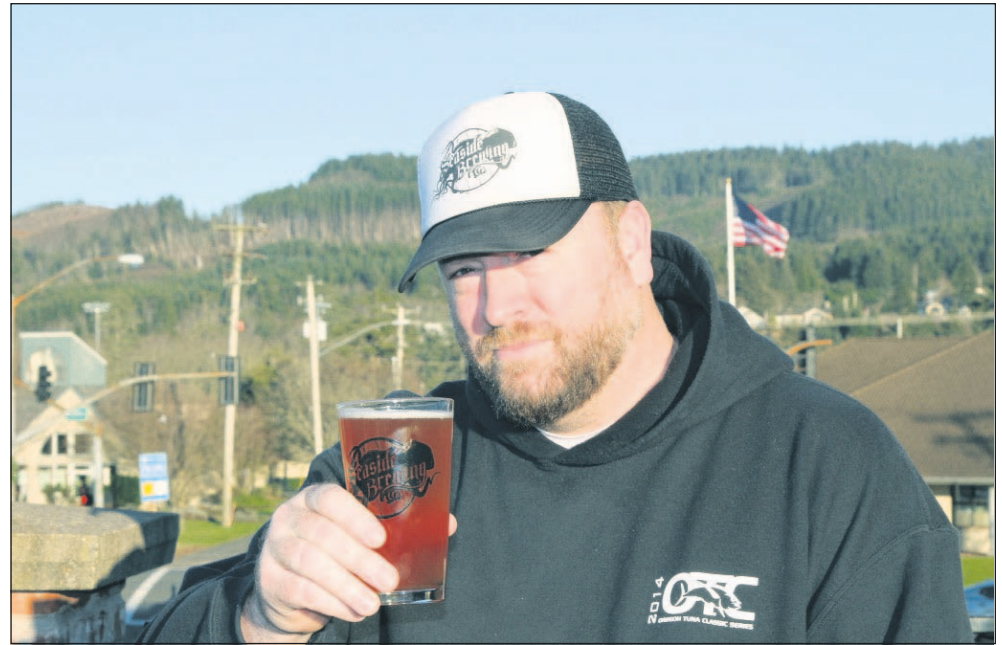


Photo by Andrew Tonry

Jimmy Griffin, co-owner of Seaside Brewing Company, approached the Seaside Chamber of Commerce with some ideas to make this



Photo by Joshua Bessex

Seaside Brewing Company brewer Vince Berg checks in on the Mutha Hefer beer he's brewing.



Submitted photo

Last year's Pouring at the Coast Brewer's Dinner featured corned beef croquettes with horseradish mustard sauce. This year, the five-course menu will be prepared by Seaside Culinary Arts students.



Submitted photo

Pouring at the Coast takes place in the Seaside Convention Center. This year the festival features over 35 breweries, food vendors and live music.