

“There are enough breweries all over the coast now that they’ve become a force of nature,” he said. “Craft beer is certainly popular on the coast, but I don’t think the industry is saturated here on the coast, yet.”

Pouring at the Coast, which typically sells out at around 600 to 800 festivalgoers, brings many small and large breweries together in one place. “It’s a beer-specific event,” Griffin said. “Even though it’s held at the Convention Center, it still has the feel of being homegrown and grassroots.”

While attendees may want to wear green and some breweries may play on the St. Paddy’s theme, “we don’t lean on the St. Patrick’s Day thing just because it tends to be a drinking holiday,” Griffin said. “This isn’t about getting hammered for guests, it’s about introducing them to different kinds of beers that they might not have access to. People tend to take this festival seriously.”

Josh Allison, co-owner and brewer of Reach Break Brewing in Astoria, will be pouring their beers at the event for the second year in a row.

“There is no singular vibe for Pouring at the Coast, which makes it really fun,” he said. “There’s so many different aspects to this event — the beach, music, food and camaraderie, coming to the coast and sharing a laugh and a beer. There’s something for everybody.”

People’s Choice

Pouring at the Coast grew out of a need to represent the breweries as the coastal craft beer industry developed.

“The coast has always been a destination for people, but now it’s become a craft beer destination as well,” Griffin said.

Another special treat for many attendees of Pouring at the Coast: the opportunity to taste beers not yet released to the public. “Many breweries break out their new spring seasonals just for this event — lighter, fresher beers like lagers, kolsch and pilsners,” Griffin said.

WolfTree Brewery from Seal Rock will also be pouring at the event for the second year. Co-owner and brewer Joe Hitselberger said that in addition to their flagship “Spruce Tip Ale,” they will bring a new beer called “Beaver Creek Peche,” which is “spontaneously fermented.”

The special process includes fermenting the beer outdoors, which allows it to be inoculated with wild yeast overnight. The next day, the beer is transferred into barrels where it will



DAMIAN MULINIX PHOTO

Logan Marks of Stickmen Brewing chats with patrons at 2017’s Pouring at the Coast in the Seaside Civic & Convention Center.



COURTESY SEASIDE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Try tastes from Astoria’s Buoy Beer Co. during Pouring at the Coast.

ferment again for more than a year.

“It’s a beer that can’t be replicated and is very specific to the valley and the conditions of the particular night when it’s fermented,” Hitselberger said.

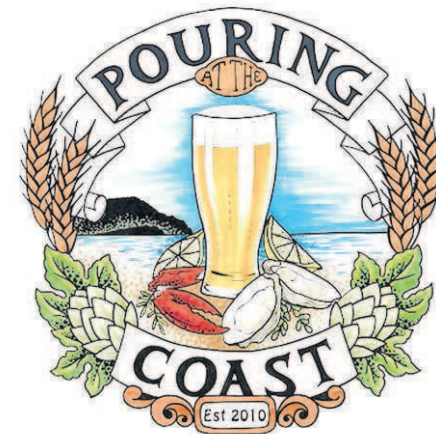
Taste reigns king with the tradition of the coveted People’s Choice award, a “healthy competition” based on ballot votes from attendees on their favorite beer.

“The contest is based solely on taste,” Griffin said. “It’s all about the craft and the flavor.”

A great equalizer among breweries that range from lesser-known to extremely popular, the People’s Choice removes the usual gatekeepers that may exist in the outside world.

“The People’s Choice Award has nothing to do with how rich or successful a particular brewery is,” Griffin said. “The beers stand on their own.”

Reach Break Brewing — a brewery that is fairly new to the coastal scene — had their very first taste of Pouring at the Coast in 2015, when they collaborated



INFO BOX

What: Pouring at the Coast

When: 3 to 8 p.m. Saturday, March 17

Where: Seaside Civic & Convention Center (415 First Ave., Seaside)

For tickets and more information, visit pouringatthecoast.com

with 7 Devils Brewing from Coos Bay to create the Symbiosis Fig Stout. From that collaboration they received second place in People’s Choice.

Engaged in craft beer

Griffin wants to make something clear: Pouring at the Coast is a beer festival for beer lovers, not a dance party.

“We don’t get in the way of the beer. There are no smoke machines, fireworks or people running around,” he said. “Our guests are largely people who are genuinely engaged in craft beer and look forward to this all year.”

A number of the breweries have told Griffin that Pouring at the Coast is their favorite festival because of the high engagement among attendees.

Brian Owen, director of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, put it this way:

“At other beer festivals, a volunteer may pour the beer and guests read about it on a flier — that person may know very little about the beer they’re pouring,” he said. “In our event, the guests get to interact with someone who actually knows all about the beer they’re pouring. You’re getting to talk to someone and ask in depth about the process. You get to have that intimate experience of someone who knows about the beer in the glass that you’re tasting.”

To sign up, attendees can either show up at the door or pre-purchase their tickets online and pick them up at will call. Guests may get their desired number of tasting tickets and commemorative pilsner glass depending on the package selected. 