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BEER, HAPPY HOURS & MORE

Goschie Farms Estate Beer from The Ale Apothecary

Story and photo by
JON ABERNATHY • For The Bulletin

When we consider terroir, it's usually in the context of wine, how the particular aspects of a "place" impact the nature of wine —factors such as soil and environment, climate, and even farming practices. Less often do we apply this concept to beer, but if any brewery can be said to embody it, it's The Ale Apothecary.

One of brewmaster Paul Arney's objectives in founding The Ale Apothecary was to source all or as much of the ingredients from Oregon as possible: "Our goal," he writes on the website, "is to tie the brewery to the land

and create beer with a sense of place."

Malts are primarily from Mecca Grade Estate Malt in Madras, while hops come from Goschie Farms in Silverton. Honey and fruits come from various Oregon farms, and the yeasts and microorganisms that ferment the beer are native to the Deschutes National Forest that surround Arney's small brewery.

All of these factors combine to confer a terroir to his beers that give them a uniquely Oregon character. Recently, Arney released a beer that tightens the focus on this sense of place, Goschie Farms Estate Beer.

As the name implies, this beer was created with ingredients entirely sourced from Goschie Farms, a fourth-generation family

farm that primarily grows hops and wine grapes, with a mix of other crops including barley, clover, corn, sugar beets, and more.

It was the first hop farm in the country to earn Salmon-Safe certification, and grows all of its crops in accordance with these guidelines, which promote ecologically sustainable practices to help protect water quality and river habitats.

"This beer came about when I was talking to (owner) Gayle Goschie," said Arney via email. "Gayle mentioned that she was growing barley and with our use of her hops and the honey ... made from her farm, the idea was, ahem, spontaneous. Gayle sold the malt to Tiller malt and we set to brewing."

The honey is from Pacific Honeybee; owner Leo Rumley travels with his bees to various parts of Oregon to produce honey influenced by the local flowers and environment. Honey is a component in every Ale Apothecary beer, typically used as a priming sugar to condition and carbonate the bottles.

The brewing process for Goschie Farms followed a typical regimen for the brewery. The malt is mashed overnight in converted puncheons (oak barrels) before undergoing an extensive boil; the resulting wort subsequently cools overnight before being transferred to open fermenters and inoculated with the brewery's house wild yeast culture.

This particular beer diverged at that point.

"We produced two beers from the main fermentation," Arney said. "One we dry-hopped with Gayle's hops, and the other we pressed viognier grapes she grew and added the juice to barrels. The grapes were grown during the wildfire season so we avoided skin contact. Both of these additions added microflora from Goschie Farms to the beer."

The idea to press the grapes to avoid the smoky character came from brewer and partner Connor Currie, who has been with the brewery since nearly the beginning. The



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viognier wine version will be released in the fall; the dry-hopped version is currently on the shelves and is the one I tasted.

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gar, red wine tannins, oak, and sherry. There are the telltale notes of wild yeasts that offer up funky tang, as well as sharp citrus, hints of sweat, and even a touch of cordite followed by earthy hop aromatics.

On the tongue it's bright and tart, with big notes of fresh-picked, underripe berries splashed with red wine vinegar, delicate floral notes, citrus fruit skin, and some sweet-roll malt flavors. It has a bracing

amount of acid with a layered complexity bringing to mind aged balsamic with spritzzy levels of carbonation.

It has a moderate strength of 6.83% alcohol by volume and is available in corked 375 milliliter bottles.

While there are no specific plans on the horizon for a similar project with Goschie Farms (beyond the viognier version releasing later this year), Arney continues to primarily use only Goschie Cascade hops for all of his beers.

"We will probably bring in some other varieties as well as obtaining more fruit from her farm," he said.

Oregon terroir isn't just to be found in the state's pinot noir wines; it imbues all of the brews crafted at The Ale Apothecary, and Goschie Farms Estate Beer is a complex yet approachable introduction to this beer terroir.

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