

= Beer in San Diego County , California =

San Diego County , California has been called " the Craft Beer Capital of America . " The county is home to more than 100 breweries , microbreweries , and brewpubs . Based on 2014 sales volume , four San Diego County breweries rank among the 50 largest craft brewers in the United States . San Diego County brewers pioneered the specialty beer style known as Double India Pale Ale (Double IPA) , sometimes called San Diego Pale Ale . Its beer culture is a draw for tourism , particularly during major festivals such as San Diego Beer Week and the San Diego International Beer Competition . San Diego County breweries like Stone Brewing Co . , AleSmith Brewing Company and Ballast Point Brewing Company are consistently rated among the top breweries in the world .

= = History = =

The San Diego Brewing Company opened in 1896 as the first commercial brewery in San Diego County ; Alonzo Horton , the father of modern San Diego , was one of the founders . At the time it was the largest manufacturing enterprise in the county . It was located on 32nd street in San Diego . It closed in 1920 because of Prohibition . It reopened in 1935 and continued in operation until 1942 , when it was displaced by the U.S. Navy 's 32nd Street Naval Station . A brewpub by the same name now operates in the Mission Valley neighborhood .

Mission Brewery , located in the Middletown neighborhood of San Diego , opened in 1913 and closed due to Prohibition . It was never reopened as a brewery , but the landmark five @-@ story brick building was repurposed several times , for kelp extraction until the 1980s and ultimately as an office building , still in operation . The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 . The name Mission Brewery was revived in 2007 by a brewery at 14th and L Streets in Downtown San Diego .

The Aztec Brewing Company was founded in Mexicali , Baja California , Mexico , in 1921 as Cerveceria Azteca SA . During Prohibition it helped to supply Americans with the beer they could not legally buy in the United States . The company moved to San Diego in 1933 , following the repeal of Prohibition , and became San Diego 's largest brewery . It was located on Main Street in Barrio Logan . It featured a large Rathskeller , or basement beer hall , decorated with murals , paintings , and woodcarvings by Jose Moya del Pino . By 1944 Aztec was the only brewery still operating in Southern California . The company was purchased by Altes Brewing Company in 1948 ; Altes was then bought by the National Brewing Company , which closed Aztec Brewing Company in 1953 . For the next 36 years there was no local commercially brewed beer in San Diego County . The name Aztec Brewing Company has been revived in a Vista brewery which opened in 2011 .

During Prohibition (1920 ? 1933) , San Diegans could still drink beer by crossing the border into Mexico . In the formerly small town of Tijuana more than 180 cantinas were built to serve American visitors , and the city 's population grew tenfold between 1920 and 1930 . Several modern breweries were built in Mexicali to supply the demand .

Before Prohibition there had been seven breweries in San Diego . After repeal there were three : Aztec Brewing Company , San Diego Brewing Company , and Balboa Brewing Company . These were soon either purchased by the Big Three national brewing companies (Anheuser @-@ Busch , Coors , and Miller) or driven out of business by the aggressive marketing practices of the Big Three . From 1953 until the 1980s the local beer market was dominated by the large national brewers , with the alternative being imported beer from Mexico . But changes in national and state law in the late 1970s made home brewing legal , and in 1982 California allowed breweries to operate restaurants on their premises , which made brewpubs possible .

In 1989 the Karl Strauss Brewing Company opened a brewery and brewpub on Columbia Street in Downtown San Diego and expanded into distribution brewing in 1991 . This was the first commercial brewery in San Diego since 1953 , and for many San Diego consumers it was their first exposure to freshly brewed beer and to styles such as amber lager and pale ale . In the mid @-@ 1990s a second , more adventurous wave of craft breweries appeared , led by Pizza Port , Stone and Alesmith . The local craft beer movement was inspired in part by homebrewing hobbyists ,

supported by the storefront Home Brew Mart , which opened in 1992 and later spun off the Ballast Point Brewing Company .

Beer festivals promoted the new styles and educated a new generation of beer drinkers . In 1997 local brewers Tomme Arthur and Tom Nickel organized the first such event , the Strong Ale Festival (still an annual event) , and in 1998 they added the Real Ale Festival (discontinued after 2012) . Other festivals were added , and in 2009 the San Diego Brewers Guild launched an annual Beer Week . San Diego became so well established in the brewing world that the biennial World Beer Cup competition was held there in 2004 ; 11 medals (out of more than 200) went to locals . San Diego hosted the event again in 2008 , taking 14 medals , and in 2012 , taking 16 medals . At the 2015 Great American Beer Festival , San Diego County brewers brought home a total of 20 medals (6 gold , 2 silver , and 11 bronze) .

The Great American Beer Festival 's " Best Small Brewer " Award has gone to San Diego County brewers multiple times : 2004 (Tomme Arthur for Pizza Port Solana Beach) , 2007 (Arthur for Port Brewing / Lost Abbey) , 2008 (Alesmith) , and 2011 (Yiga Miyashiro , Pizza Port Ocean Beach) . Pizza Port Carlsbad won the Best Large Brewpub award in 2009 , 2010 , and 2011 . The World Beer Cup 's biennial " Best Small Brewer " award went to San Diego County Brewers in 2004 (Tom Nickel for Oggi 's Pizza and Brewing) , 2008 (Arthur for Port Brewing / Lost Abbey) , 2010 (Ballast Point) , and 2014 (Coronado Brewing Company) .

In 2013 ? 14 the San Diego History Center featured a special exhibit on the history of beer in the county , titled " Bottled and Kegged : San Diego 's Craft Beer Culture . "

= = Beer styles = =

San Diego County brewers produce the full range of craft beers , but they are best known for strongly @-@ hopped , high @-@ alcohol beers such as India Pale Ale (IPA) , and particularly for an even stronger , hoppier style known as Double IPA . Double IPA beers are made with intensely aromatic , bitter hops , which result in a very bitter beer . A standard mass @-@ produced American beer scores less than 20 on the International Bitterness Units (IBU) scale ; an average IPA scores about 60 IBU ; and a double IPA commonly scores 100 IBU or higher . The style was pioneered by brewer Vinnie Cilurzo at the now @-@ defunct Blind Pig Brewery in Temecula in 1994 ; nowadays almost every brewery in San Diego County produces a double IPA . Double IPA has been called San Diego 's signature beer , and some people refer to Double IPA beers as San Diego Pale Ale .

= = Economic impact = =

As of April 2016 the county was home to 123 licensed breweries and brewpubs , with several dozen more in the planning stages . Brewing has been one of the fastest @-@ growing business sectors in San Diego , with seven new licenses issued in 2010 , fifteen in 2011 and eighteen in 2012 . In 2015 the county 's brewers generated \$ 851 million in sales , a 17 % increase over 2014 . More than 4 @, @ 500 people worked in the brewing industry , a 20 % increase over 2014 . Beer @-@ related tourism is an important part of San Diego County 's visitor industry throughout the year ; the county is described as a " beer city destination " . Many breweries offer tours of their facilities and tasting rooms , and dozens of commercial tour operators market " beer tours " in San Diego County .

= = Annual events = =

San Diego Beer Week , launched in 2009 , is now a ten @-@ day county @-@ wide festival , held in early November and aimed at both local residents and tourists . It showcases the local beer scene and fosters knowledge about the area 's brewing heritage . The festival kicks off with the San Diego Brewers Guild Festival and continues with hundreds of large and small events hosted by breweries , nano @-@ breweries , pubs , and alehouses . In 2012 there were more than 500 events scheduled during Beer Week .

The San Diego International Beer Festival takes place during the San Diego County Fair every

June . It includes seminars and classes , beer tasting , and beer judging . Participating breweries in 2013 came from 22 states and 16 countries . Other special beer events throughout the year include the San Diego Beer Festival in July , the San Diego Festival of Beer in September , and the Strong Ale Festival in December .

= = Notable breweries = =

One @-@ third of all the breweries in the county are located in the North County along the 60 @-@ mile (97 km) stretch of California State Route 78 from Oceanside to Julian , so that the route is sometimes called the " Hops Highway . "

Stone Brewing Co. is the largest brewery in Southern California and the ninth largest craft brewery in the United States . Located in Escondido in San Diego 's North County , it is known for hoppy , high @-@ alcohol beers and an in @-@ your @-@ face attitude . (The company 's best @-@ known brand , Arrogant Bastard Ale , uses the slogan " Hated by many . Loved by few . You 're not worthy . ") Arrogant Bastard Ale is regarded as a " watershed beer " that " put San Diego on the craft brew map . " Stone Pale Ale is their flagship brew . The company produces eight beers year @-@ round , as well as special releases and collaborations . In addition to the brewery and tasting room it has two brewery restaurants , in Escondido and San Diego , and five " company stores " . In 2014 Stone announced plans to open brewery restaurants in Richmond , Virginia and in Berlin , Germany .

Karl Strauss Brewing Company was the first brewery in San Diego since 1953 and launched the current wave of breweries . It is now the third largest brewery in San Diego County . It operates a production brewery in San Diego 's Pacific Beach neighborhood as well as eight brewery restaurants in San Diego , Orange , Los Angeles and Riverside counties . The company 's flagship brew is Karl Strauss Amber Lager . Its best selling beer , Red Trolley Ale , won gold medals in its category at both the Great American Beer Festival (2011 and 2013) and the World Beer Cup (2010 and 2012) .

Ballast Point Brewing Company was opened in 1996 and is now the second largest brewery in the county . In 2010 the company was named the World Champion Small Brewery at the World Beer Cup .

The five brewpubs of Pizza Port , together with its spinoffs Port Brewing Company (San Marcos) and Lost Abbey (San Marcos) , have won dozens of medals in international competition . Pizza Port started brewing commercially in 1992 ; in 1994 it became the first @-@ ever San Diego brewery to win a medal at the Great American Beer Festival . In 2012 Pizza Port 's Ocean Beach location won three medals at the World Beer Cup including two golds , and the Carlsbad location won two ; Lost Abbey also won a gold and a bronze . The Great American Beer Festival named Pizza Port 's Carlsbad location the " best large brewpub " in 2009 , 2010 and 2011 . Port Brewing / Lost Abbey was named the " Small Brewing Company and Small Brewing Company Brewer of the Year " at the Great American Beer Festival in 2007 , and the Best Small Brewing Company at the World Beer Cup event in 2008 . The franchise took five medals at the 2013 Great American Beer Festival .

AleSmith Brewing Company , located in San Diego , was founded in 1995 . Many of their beers are strongly hopped and high in alcoholic content . Between 1998 and 2012 the company won eight medals in World Beer Cup competition , including four gold . It was the most popular brewery on RateBeer 's surveys in 2004 and 2005 . In 2008 , AleSmith was awarded " Small Brewing Company and Small Brewing Company Brewer of the Year " at the Great American Beer Festival .