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Bucking the IPA Trend in Bend

BY SCOTT LINDEN

Bend, Oregon's tiny Van Henion brewery is on a mission to put traditional German beer styles back in the spotlight.

It's a heady goal (pun intended), worth the detour from a city awash in IPAs. Lagers, Pilsners and their cousins demand extra fermentation time, hard-to-obtain ingredients and refined brewing skills. But founders John Van Duzer and Mark and Dana Henion are convinced Central Oregon is ready for time-honored techniques and the subtleties of flavor and aroma.

With a combined 65 years brewing experience, the team understands zigging when others zag is good business. While many brewers cater to the lowest common IPA denominator, Mark Henion says "We're making beers that we like to drink."

If you know beer, you understand. After all, why do we drink beer? To be refreshed, slake our thirst, be pleasantly surprised, expand our palate—to find a little adventure in a glass. Van Henion beers are loving interpretations defined by what they can do with four simple ingredients, including just enough hops, and no artifice. The proof is in the pour: John draws a Pilsner artfully, adding a robust froth. Watch the bubbles rise, augmenting that creamy topping, admire the rich golden color. Inhale the rich melange of yeast-hops-malt in perfect proportion, sip and savor. It finishes cleanly with no lingering aftertaste to clutter the anticipation of another gulp.

Unsurprisingly, Van Henion's bucking the IPA trend seems to be getting traction in this hoppy hotbed. A loyal local clientele (including many of the town's other brewers) is augmented by adventurous tourists. Conviviality and easy banter permeate the cozy tasting room; even first-timers are included in conversations as is the occasional dog.

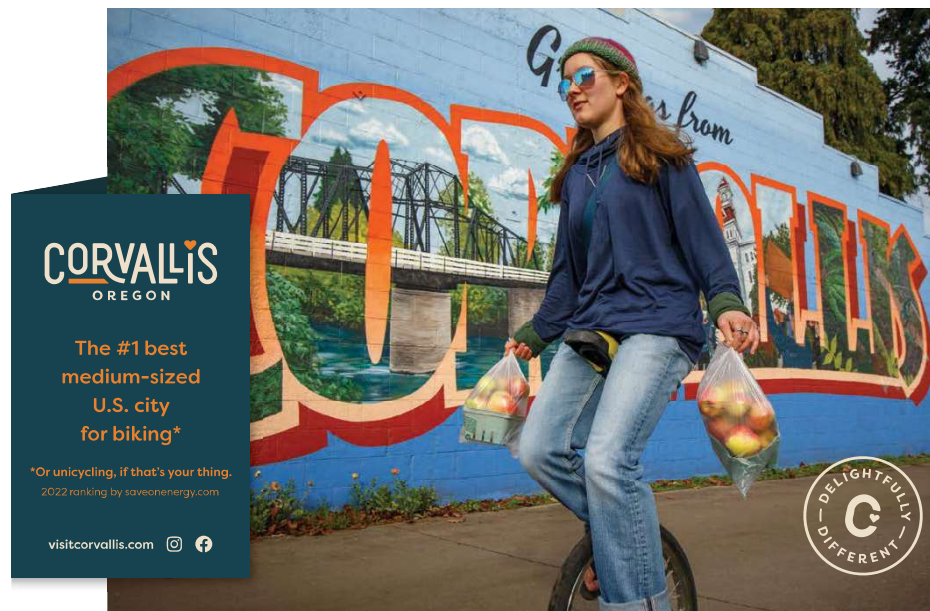
Van Henion is turning heads among beer aficionados who seldom have a chance to quaff German style beers. (A lager will spend up to 10 weeks in a fermentation tank, as compared to a couple weeks for most ales. That longer fermentation infuses the young beer with subtleties of flavor and aroma that are often described as "bright," smooth or crisp.) At Van Henion the founder-brewers see

their work as more art than production, curating German ingredients, select domestic hops, malts, and yeasts into a true-to-style brew worth waiting for.

The brewery is hidden on a cul-de-sac in a light industrial park on the north end of town, the attached intimate tasting room more resembling



(L-R) Mark Henion, Dana Henion, John Van Duzer, credit Van Henion Brewing



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