

## Spotted Dog Brewery unleashes craft beers

By **Zak Hansen** Las Cruces Bulletin

Spend a few hours at **Spotted** Dog Brewery and you're likely to come out knowing a thing or two about beer.

It's not just because **Spotted** Dog has stellar unfiltered craft brews on tap you can't find anywhere else in the region – they do – but, too, because proprietor and brewer Jerry Grandle knows a heck of a lot about beer and is more than happy to share it.

He knows how the English, once upon a time, were bittering their beer with heavy metals and, later, filtering and clarifying them with asbestos. He knows how America, after the Second World War, was oversold on light, watery lagers, the birth of great taste, less filling. He knows to put the bright steel tanks out front and on display in the taproom, because, after all, “beer drinkers are like raccoons – they like big, shiny things” – a fact I can neither confirm nor deny.

Knowing what he does about beer and brewing, the craft's dubious past included, it's little surprise Grandle has chosen to brew the kind of beer he does in the ways he does, leading to the company's motto: “Unfiltered, unconditional, unconventional and unleashed.”

A Las Cruces-via-Roswell native, Grandle fell in love with brewing his own craft beer 15 years ago, when his wife, Susan, gifted him a brew kit.

Though that experience – and the export stout it produced – hooked Grandle, his prior, first foray was somewhat less successful.

“The first time I tried home brewing was 1981, and I dumped it,” Grandle said with a laugh, the first of many. “What you could get back then in terms of materials and equipment was very sparse – nothing like what you can get ahold of now – and it came out tasting like a steel bucket.”

In the decade and a half since, however, Grandle said he's only had three other bad batches, each due to problems with the yeast used in the brewing process, making his record pretty impressive.

Grandle, whose background is in construction, said he decided to make the jump into brewing for a thirsty public after recognizing “I had to do what I wanted to do before I turned 80 and couldn't do it anymore” – along, of course, with a little urging from his wife.

For **Spotted** Dog Brewery's grand opening, Grandle had on tap six of his craft creations – Hefeweizen, Belgian Wit, Pale Ale, Milk Stout, India Pale Ale and Irish Red.

By the end of the night, he was down to four, and by the following Sunday, that number had dropped to two, which, Grandle admits, is “a good problem to have,” and one he's able to remedy by brewing fivebarrel batches – about 155 gallons – every Monday and Tuesday, when **Spotted** Dog closes its doors.

On my visit, I was able to sample four of Grandle's brews – Hefeweizen, Belgian Wit, Milk Stout and Pale Ale – along with, blessedly, the very last of the keg of Irish Red, which won't be back on tap for a few more weeks. Sorry, not sorry.

**Spotted** Dog's Belgian Wit – which Grandle calls “a good choice for people who don't like beer, or think they don't” – is a light, refreshing wheat beer with tangerine, grapefruit zest and coriander. For those unfamiliar with the world of craft beer – or wed to the world of wine – Grandle said the Belgian Wit is always a surprise. “With a beer like that, people start finding out really how much flavor beer can have, how complex they can be,” he said.

Next up, the Hefeweizen – a German wheat beer hopped with the fruity, spicy Hallertau hops, leading to a crisp, refreshing and highly carbonated beer Grandle brews close to its traditional profile.

The Pale Ale, with its barley base and mild, hoppy finish, imparts strong flavors of grain and hints of sweetness, and the Milk Stout, which Grandle said begins as a dry Irish stout before the addition of lactose sugar, which cannot be completely digested by the active yeast, leaving a smooth flavor and nice body.

I won't go in to how good the Irish Red was, but you'll have your chance in the upcoming weeks.

So what's on tap for Grandle and **Spotted** Dog Brewery next? Keeping up with demand.

Grandle said he aims to have six beers on tap at all times for the next couple months and, by Christmas, increasing that number to

eight, allowing him to keep favorites available along with seasonal brews.

And while the **brewery** doesn't currently serve food – especially with business as it has been, Grandle said happily he's "here to focus on the beer" – **Spotted Dog Brewery** does allow its patrons to bring their own food.

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Samples of craft beer – Hefeweizen, Belgian Wit, Pale Ale and Milk Stout – rest on the bar top of **Spotted Dog Brewery**. Owner/ brewer Jerry Grandle said the taproom aims to have six to eight beers on tap at all times.

LAS CRUCES BULLETIN PHOTOS BY ZAK HANSEN



**Grandle shows off a sample flight of his beers along with hats, shirts and ceramics bearing the company's logo – a spotted dog, modeled after his own bluetick hound, Ryliegh.**

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