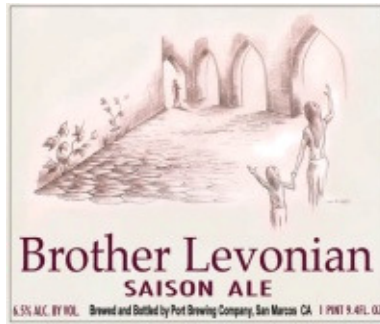


# BROTHER LEVONIAN SAISON ALE

Port Brewing Company, San Marcos, CA



Beer as a drink can be many things: a relaxant, a refresher, or a restorative, perhaps. In some of its finest forms, like the artisanal brews that our club members appreciate, it is artistic, civilized, and appropriate for particular foods, moods and moments.

And every so often it also finds a comfortable place in a charitable, altruistic role, not just as a bottom line generator for industrial producers seeking the high volumes and fast turnover generated by Super Bowl commercials and hydroplane sponsorships (not to knock either football or boat racing, mind you).

A little project called "Pink Triangle" lager in the mid-90's raised money for local AIDS foundations, for instance. More recently, Reunion red rye ale was created to donate its profits to the Institute for Myeloma and Bone Cancer Research. Shortly after Michael Jackson's death in 2007, funds raised during a coordinated national toast event in his honor benefited the National Parkinson Foundation. Noble efforts all, and certainly countless others have done the same for worthy causes around the world.

From the craft brewer's perspective, it seems that no inspirational influence, and no friendship made over a beer or a brew kettle, is ever forgotten. Guys know guys who know guys who shared a recipe once, or helped come up with a name, or sketched out a label design, maybe connected them with a source of obscure ingredients, or simply enjoyed their beers immensely and told a bunch of friends. It's truly a closely-knit family of beer lovers, with firm roots set in local homebrewers' organizations.

Last fall, Lost Abbey/Port Brewing's renown brewer Tomme Arthur was approached by the members of the American Homebrewers Association's organizing committee, who were working on the Homebrewer's Conference scheduled to be held in Oakland in June of 2009. He was asked to work up a recipe that belonged to Dave Levonian, a homebrewer from there in San Diego, who was taken by cancer at the young age of 39 in February of 2008.

Dave was a friend, homebrewer and passionate beer enthusiast. And Dave loved Saisons. To honor his memory, and his great recipes, the Port team selected one of his more interesting Saisons and brewed it to be released as one of two commemorative beers for the conference. This means that in June of 2009, every participant at the conference will be receiving a bottle of this beer, free of charge.

When brewed in January '09, they produced a limited number of extra cases of this special beer with the intention of self-distributing the excess inventory in southern California, enabling them to garner some profit from the batch so that they could write a check to Dave's widow and young daughter. Through a recent arrangement, the Rare Beer Club purchased all of that inventory for this month's selection, and all profits that resulted will be put into Dave's family trust.

The beer itself is a Saison that was brewed with Mandarin orange peels, black pepper, and turmeric. It was also spiked with a bit of Brettanomyces yeast at bottling, and should be worthy of cellaring for years to come. Dave was well known for his flavorful Saison ales, and always emphasized two points about them: be sure to use enough Vienna malt so the beer has a nice orange hue, and make sure that all spices are added conservatively, as they should not be identifiable in the flavor profile; one should know that it is a spiced beer, but never be able to actually identify a specific spice.

Enjoy this opportunity to raise your glass to a fellow beer aficionado, his family, and the entire global community of artisanal beer lovers who know that the journey, and the creativity, and the people that are met along the way are more important than the destination!