Brews and bluegrass

Tamassee hosting craft beer celebration Saturday

BY ELLEN MENY
THE JOURNAL

SALEM — Brews and bluegrass — two staples of the Tamassee Craft Brew Celebration on Saturday at the Keowee Towne Market along Highway 11 from 3-7 p.m.

Beer fanatics will be able to sample small glasses of many different beers, and they are free to go back for seconds or thirds of their favorite types. With unique beer flavors like strawberry and honeysuckle, the festival is sure to bring fresh taste to Oconee's craft beer scene. At least that's the goal of organizer Eddie Martin.

"We wanted to focus on people that had the most eclectic beers that you're not going to be able to find in a regular store," Martin said.

Expect to see brewers such as Thomas Creek, Carolina Bauerhaus, Frothy Beard and others at the festival.



Bands such as Conservation Theory, the Howling Brothers and the Po' Ramblin' Boys, pictured above, will entertain festivalgoers.

The festival will also feature a homebrew contest with a cash prize. Contestants can sign up online when buy their tickets and should bring six 12-ounce bottles of their beer to the festival. Prizes will be given for first through third place.

The craft beer business is slowly growing in South Carolina thanks to the passing of the Pint Law, which makes it easier for breweries to serve beer tastings to customers. For Carolina Bauerhaus co-founder Keston Helfrich, it has made his life much better.

"Over the past three or four years, it's been easier for people like me, who used to be homebrewers, to open a brewery in South Carolina," Helfrich said.

Bauerhaus will feature fruit brews such as a Clementine Wit and a raspberry beer at the festival.

"I love sharing my beer with people and getting their reactions and talking to everybody," Helfrich said. "It's a lot of fun to get immediate feedback."

Martin was inspired to create the festival after traveling with his band, Conservation Theory, and tasting beers across the Southeast and beyond.

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PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

From strawberry and blueberry to honeysuckle and clementine, count on finding lots of fruit brews at the Tamassee Craft Brew Celebration.

them up, took a chance and it's worked out ever since," Lewandowski said.

Much like the other participants in the festival, the Po' Ramblin' Boys are fond of beer as well. Their band's logo is a Pabst Blue Ribbon sign.

The event will be outside the Keowee Towne Market. When it's not acting as a venue, the market caters toward mostly vacation crowds. Seth Carrig, manager of the Keowee Towne Market, said it has four times as much business in the summer. The beer festival event kicks off the start of its summer season.

"The owners, myself and the team are really excited about it," Carrig said. "This is the first big event that we've done this year, and they're normally really well received."

The market hosts a collection of roughly 200 craft beers for sale.

All proceeds from the festival will go to the Oconee Preservation Unlimited Stewardship trust, an organization that educates residents about the use of natural resources.

"I hope we grow it this year and it becomes a mainstay in the county where people will look forward to having the opportunity to come out to this and experience beer from different places," Martin said.

Tickets are $30 in advance and $40 on the day of the festival. Designated driver tickets are $10. Tickets can be bought

BREWS: Festival kicks off start of summer for Keowee market

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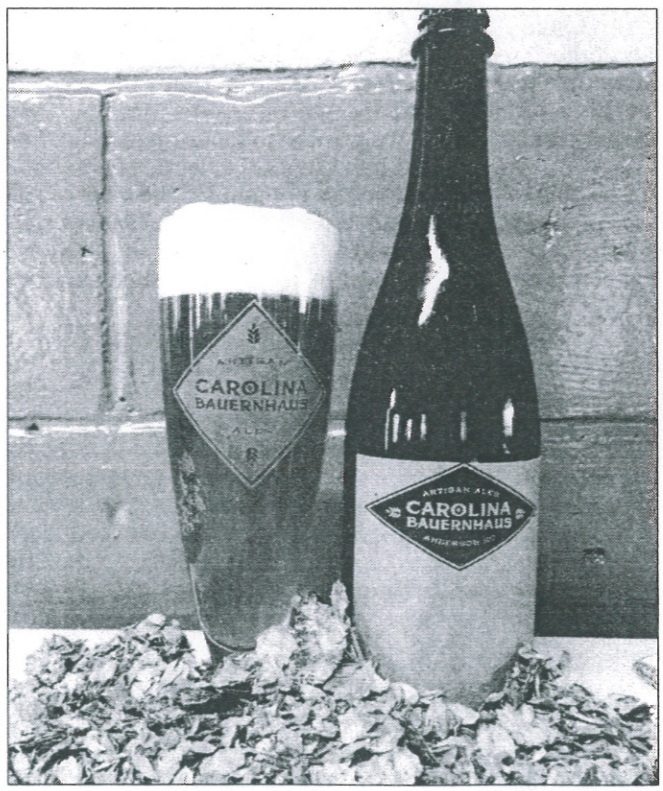
"We've been to festivals like this in other places, but we wanted to bring it home to Oconee County so folks here can experience what we've experienced in other places," Martin said.

Conservation Theory is an Americana folk band with an environmentally friendly twist. Whenever Martin plays a large concert, the band takes time between sets to talk about being kind to the earth.

"We try to get people to understand about caring for the earth and what you can do on an individual basis to help protect our environment," Martin said.

The festival will feature other bands like the bluegrass strumming Po' Ramblin' Boys. After playing at Old Smokey Moonshine in Gatlinburg, Tenn., band leader C.J. Lewandowski called his friends and offered them the opportunity to fulfill their musical dreams.

"I always knew they wanted to play music for a living, too, so I called



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Carolina Bauerhaus' "Native IPA" is a hop zinger with a tropical yet Southern feel.

online, and the first 300 to buy receive commemorative glassware. The event will happen rain or shine, and guests are encouraged to bring folding chairs to hang out and enjoy the day.