

LIFE ON TAP

# DRAFT

OUR FIRST!  
**100**  
POINT  
WILD ALE

# 25 BREWERIES

YOU NEED TO KNOW

**FALL FLAVORS**

**PUMPKIN ALES**  
PRETZELS  
**COFFEE STOUTS**  
SAUSAGES  
**FRESH HOPS**



**FOOTBALL & BEER**

10 WINNING  
GAME DAY BEERS

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TAILGATE RECIPES

THE BIG TEN'S  
BEST BEERTOWNS



SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2014

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ON THE COVER (story p. 61)  
design by Kevin Robie





BEER TABLE

# HOLLYWOOD GROWS A PAIR

Can a meatball restaurant named for a jailhouse restraint make it in L.A.?

BY MIKE SCHULTE





**Ball & Chain**  
1643 N. Cahuenga  
Blvd., Los Angeles  
ball-and-chain-  
restaurant.com

Pork meatballs and  
cheese sauce over fries

**Ducking out of the afternoon glare into Ball & Chain** is like descending into a beer geek's doomsday bunker. The tunnel-vaulted corridor glints and shimmers beneath caged Edison bulbs and beetle-black subway tiles. Long rows of bottles flank the Jules Verne-esque draft tower behind the bar. A waitress sizzles by with a skillet of meatballs and gravy on a bed of fries.

The partners behind the dusky new "meatballery" on North Cahuenga Boulevard didn't have far to look for their concept and design. Mark Kreiner owns the burger-fixated, 41-tap Morrison gastropub in nearby Atwater Village and Kris Keith signs the checks at Spacecraft, the omnipresent L.A. design firm.

Kreiner and Keith tapped a pair of long-time friends to combine meatballs with a sweeping beer program. Mark deSalvo spent 10 years at San Francisco's late, lamented 20 Tank Brewery before helping to launch The Glendale Tap just across the L.A. River. He's also an artist with an armload of punk rock

album covers to his name and handles Ball & Chain's design chores. Michael Ruiz ran the kitchen at small plates pioneer Cobras & Matadors before landing the executive chef job at The Morrison, where he helped conceive Ball & Chain's meatball/beerhall concept. He also curates the wine list.

Two weeks after kicking the doors open, Ruiz is fine-tuning the core menu, which offers more customizing options than the Harley-Davidson Parts & Accessories Catalog. "We're working on incorporating beer into some of the recipes," he says.

For now, beef and pork balls are obvious mainstays, with turducken and veggie rounding out the lineup. There are specials with tailored sauces as well—on this day, Ruiz serves up a keenly balanced Chicken Bacon Ball with Sriracha barbecue sauce, drizzled with blue cheese cream. As I dig in, deSalvo pours me a Cismontane Holy Jim Falls XPA. "Probably my favorite thing on the list right now," he says. My mouth is too stuffed with mashed potatoes to offer more than a grinning thumbs-up.

DeSalvo intends to keep his 20 taps focused on California brews.

"Right now our list runs from Eureka down to San Diego," he says. L.A. area breweries are well-repped, claiming a quarter of the faucets. As they rotate out, deSalvo will offer lesser-known producers from throughout the state, but you won't see double IPA or imperial stout handles. "Those are all available in bottles," he says. "I want to keep everything on tap at six dollars and in a pint glass."

The taps are forbidden to cross state lines, but the 120-plus bottle list globetrotts, running the gamut from big-market lagers to Japanese imperial espresso stouts. I notice the list leans heavy on ciders, sours and fruit beers. DeSalvo nods. "Even if you're not a beer drinker, I guarantee that I can pull a bottle out of the refrigerator that you will like, be it a fruit beer or some crazy mead." With that, he springs a B. Nektar Zombie Killer for Marie—a cherry cyser—and his point is made.

If Ball & Chain is still in "spring training," as Kreiner puts it, Ruiz's small plates are already hitting it out of the park. Standouts like the elote-inspired Cobb Corn and the addictive, garlicky charred Brussel Balls will keep vegetarians in leg irons until the feather-light doughnut balls arrive with a Young's Double Chocolate Stout in tow.

Ruiz promises meats like wild boar and elk will pop up on the menu during game season. He's also working with deSalvo on special events. "We're definitely going to do pairing dinners," he says. "Hopefully, we'll get some brewers in here."

Getting them into Ball & Chain should be easy. Getting them out by closing time may require a catapult. ●

## GOOD BEER HUNTING

Geeks, get ticking: Sip these L.A. breweries at Ball & Chain

### 1 Eagle Rock Brewery

This craft brewery jump-started the city's beer renaissance. Watch for Populist, a classically American IPA, and spinoffs like Unionist, a Belgian-style version.

### 2 Strand Brewing

This Torrance-based brewhouse specializes in hops; watch for flavorful spins on IPAs like Musashi, a roasty, ink-black version.

### 3 Angel City Brewery

Its year-rounders like Angeleo IPA are city staples; its Arts District environs inspire liquid creativity like a loquat wheat and chai stout.

### 4 Bayhawk Ales

Down in Irvine, the O.C.'s O.G. churns out easy-drinkers like CPA (that's California pale ale) and dessertery Chocolate Porter.

### 5 Venice Beach Brewing

One-third of this tiny beer company's portfolio is June Gloom, a witbier that—despite its dreary name—perfectly captures Venice's sunshine.