



## On-Tap

Greg Evans

### Lucky Baldwin's

During a recent work-related trip to Southern California, I had the good fortune to visit a true Heaven for beer drinkers – Lucky Baldwin's. Located in the heart of Old Pasadena, it's named after Elias "Lucky" Baldwin, the founder of the famous Santa Anita Racetrack. This British-style pub, opened over twenty years ago by David Farnworth, had been scouted out earlier in the day by friend and colleague Joel Hiller, from Prescott, Arizona. He could hardly contain his excitement as he described a pub where he was certain I would have a "melt down." He was right!

Upon first glance, Lucky Baldwin's doesn't look like your typical pub. As you enter from the street, you first pass the kitchen, which offers British pub favourites like fish and chips, bangers and mash, and cottage pie. English chocolate bars, baked beans and mushy peas can also be purchased for home consumption while along one wall you'll find authentic beer glasses for sale from around the world. Once through the kitchen and shop you enter the bar itself. Cozy, it consists of two small rooms, an upper level and of course a bar, complete with a dazzling array of tap handles. There's also a large fridge full of bottled beer from around the world, trophies and keepsakes and plenty of brewing memorabilia decorating the walls. An outdoor patio, which fronts onto a tree-lined pedestrian alley, completes the scene.

The beer selection is something to behold. It is so large in fact that you are offered a six page beer menu to assist in the daunting task of decision making. There are over fifty varieties of beer on tap at any given time. Permanent taps include **Marston Pedigree** from Burton-upon-Trent, England and Belgium's **Chimay Triple**, while rotating taps include **Spaten Optimator** from Munich, Germany and **Anchor Christmas Ale** from San Francisco. The range of bottled beers is equally impressive with over forty Belgian and twenty British breweries represented along with the products from a number of top quality American brewers.

Overwhelmed, we sought the assistance of Andrais, the bartender. With his advice, we ventured into new territory after Joel had started the evening with a **Dupont Moinette** from Belgium and I with one of my favourites, **Fuller's London Pride**. Andrais recommended we try the products from the local Craftsman Brewery, which was excellent advice. Their **Eye of the Goat**, is a robust, yet rich and smooth Doppelbock with hints of cherry and licorice. With an almost brandy-like feel, it weighs in at 14% alcohol by volume. We also tried their **Cabern Ale**, a beer fermented with California Cabernet grapes - 50 pounds per keg! It was smooth with a subtle grape sweetness and a crisp finish. We finished the evening with **Pliny the Younger** an aggressively hopped and complex India Pale Ale from the Russian River Brewing Company in Guerneville, California. I remember a beautiful dense head, fruity sweet nose culminating with a gratifying warming effect on the back of my mouth. All three alone were worth the trip. Lucky's is located at 17 South Raymond Street in Pasadena.

*Greg Evans is the Executive Director of the Maritime Museum of B.C. and a brewing historian.*

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