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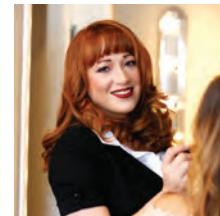
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# BREWS *clues*

CRAFTING THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BEER AND FOOD PAIRINGS IN SAN DIEGO — 

WRITTEN BY: **DEIRDRE MICHALSKI** | PHOTOGRAPHED BY: **PATRICK MARTIN**



**W**e set out to uncover the inside track of pairings by local chefs with an affinity for fine comfort food and craft brews. Our mission was to find the pairing of winter comfort entrées with iconic craft beers here in San Diego. Traversing the city, we traveled from Carlsbad Village to Encinitas, weaved our way down through Mission Beach and Belmont Park. Then we scampered uptown to Hillcrest and over to North Park, which hovers above the downtown area. Executive chefs and beer experts alike guided us through to a magic combination—rich entrées of deliciousness, matched with the perfect pint. Cheers to all that good fun!



**TRUCKSTOP**

4150 Mission Blvd  
San Diego, CA 92109  
858.274.8785

[www.thewoodgroupsd.com/truckstop](http://www.thewoodgroupsd.com/truckstop)

#1

**Truckstop**

4150 Mission Blvd  
San Diego, CA 92109  
858.274.8785  
[www.thewoodgroupsd.com/truckstop](http://www.thewoodgroupsd.com/truckstop)

This Mission Beach spot is a pleasant surprise, located along the bustling thoroughfare of Mission Boulevard. As I entered, I noticed the bare wood, auto signage and a huge red truck hood protruding from the wall. What fun! A large bar is front and center, with large picture windows surrounding the dining room and outdoor patio. Famous for their Bloody Marys, breakfast and lunch fare, the restaurant has added dinner to the line-up in the fall. This is one of the few farm fresh, gourmet comfort food restaurants open from 7am to 11pm, and certainly is popular among the locals.

Chef Lloyd hails from Sonoma, with a pedigree culinary education from The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. His food is innovative and stems from his strong gourmet roots. For this comfort food pairing, Chef Lloyd prepared the Tri-Tip Dip, a sandwich served on a brioche bun with au jus dipping sauce, coleslaw and thick cut French fries. The rub for the tri-tip has 15 ingredients including salt, pepper and rosemary. The meat is made daily in-house and is slow roasted for three hours. The sandwich includes caramelized onions, arugula and horseradish cream sauce. The Pulled Pork Sandwich is served with crispy onions, coleslaw and homemade BBQ sauce. The pork is slow roasted for four hours in-house. This is accompanied by hand cut thick French fries. Chef Lloyd paired these sandwiches with a cold, crisp glass of Coors Light. With only 102 calories in a 12-ounce bottle, this is the perfect choice for rich sandwiches like these.

**PAIRING #1**

PULLED PORK SANDWICH + COORS LIGHT

**PAIRING #2**

TRI-TIP DIP + COORS LIGHT

*Chef Lloyd paired these sandwiches with a cold, crisp glass of Coors Light. With only 102 calories in a 12-ounce bottle, this is the perfect choice for rich sandwiches like these.*

#1

**Uptown Tavern**

1236 University Ave  
San Diego, CA 92103  
619.241.2710  
[www.uptowntavernsd.com](http://www.uptowntavernsd.com)

This is a real local bar and eatery located in the heart of the Hillcrest neighborhood. The staff wins the prize for being extremely friendly and welcoming. The space is rustic, yet modern and is open and airy with a lovely street-side patio. The interior space features high-top dining surrounding the central bar, and tucked around the side is a hidden gem of a patio with brick flooring, a cozy fireplace and a canvas roof that rolls back for star gazing in the evening.

In addition to having 20 beers on tap, this bar and eatery is also known for its vodka, with a plethora of over 50 different vodkas, including small-batch spirits, with 10 of them infused in-house. They had me at Blueberry Basil. Executive Sous Chef Gabe Beszeditz received his training at the Art Institute right here in Mission Beach, however his love of food was fostered by his Mexican heritage; growing up in the kitchen with an early passion for cooking. He has been here since the bar's inception two years ago.

For this pairing, Chef Gabe created two wonderful dishes. Both were paired with specialty Karl Strauss craft beers. Let's start with the seafood. This line-caught Local Halibut was served atop a bed of snap pea and fava bean orzo, accompanied by a watercress and Easter-egg radish salad for a little crunch, finished with a rich chimichurri sauce and garnished with sprigs of arugula. Chef Gabe paired this entrée with a Karl Strauss Endless Summer Gold beer. This light and refreshing brew paired perfectly with the delicate flavors of halibut. It is not too overpowering and has the perfect balance as he described.

The second comfort food dish Gabe prepared was a double-rack of sweet braised pork ribs stacked atop a deviled egg and potato salad (with herbs, green onions, chives and cilantro) and a light mustard house aioli. The ribs are slow braised in peppercorns, caramelized onions and Coca-Cola (of all things) for four hours. Dill-pickled asparagus added color. Gabe's secret BBQ sauce is made with vodka, and a dash of horseradish—that's all I could sneak out of him. This dish was paired with a Karl Strauss Mosaic beer. The hoppy flavor of this draft cuts the richness of the sauce and replaces it with a refined finish and lingering flavor on the palate. Chef Gabe's creativity with flavors are refined, uptown and playful, gladly sending us back for more.

**PAIRING #1**

LOCAL HALIBUT + ENDLESS SUMMER GOLD BY KARL STRAUSS

**PAIRING #2**

PORK RIBS + MOSAIC SESSION ALE BY KARL STRAUSS

#2



*The hoppy flavor of this draft cuts the richness of the sauce and replaces it with a refined finish and lingering flavor on the palate.*



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### Carnitas Snack Shack

2632 University Ave  
San Diego, CA 92104  
619.294.7675  
www.carnitassnackshack.com

Executive Chef Hanis Cavin was born and raised in San Diego and was first introduced to cooking by his home economics teacher. He attended the New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier, Vermont and cut his teeth in Nantucket. Returning to San Diego, he worked at a number of well-known tawny restaurants. In 2011, he opened his first restaurant with Sara Stroud in North Park and has been incredibly busy ever since. The lines down the street of the Snack Shack are a testament to the great food that keeps the locals coming back for more. Many were happy to hear that a second outpost was opened just this fall in Del Mar Highlands. And aside from his booming business success, Chef Hanis seems most proud of his drive to give back to his community. On his website, one can see the many ways he is touching the lives of others in his North Park neighborhood.

Guests order at a small counter, just like we used to do at a local A&W Root Beer stand. However, as you step to the left and saunter toward the patio, a real surprise awaits. The garden is beautiful, adorned with natural woods, umbrellas, an herb garden and a fountain. It is a tranquil spot to spend an afternoon. In the evening, the TVs are put in place, the bar opens up in back, and the beer really starts to flow. They have a barbecue and a smoker in back for special events on the patio. The Snack Shack has five beers on tap and 15 by the bottle, which matches perfectly with the slow food-inspired, pork-centric American cuisine. Two specials are featured each day on a rotating schedule.

Chef Hanis prepared his famous Triple Threat Pork Sandwich. The pork loin schnitzel is paired with pulled pork, smoked bacon, a pickle, peperoncini relish, shack aioli and comes on a Sadie Rose brioche bun. The French fries are sprinkled with the Shack Seasoning and served with a homemade BBQ ketchup. This was paired with the Claritas Kolsch, a German-style lager created by Mike Hess Brewing Company. Chef selected this beer because it is crisp and refreshing, yet hoppy with a 5.8% ABV. The finish on the palate stands up to the richness of this comfort bun of pork-side deliciousness.



### THE PAIRING

TRIPLE THREAT PORK SANDWICH + CLARITAS KOLSCH  
FROM MIKE HESS BREWING

*Chef selected this beer because it is crisp and refreshing, yet hoppy. The finish on the palate stands up to the richness of this comfort bun of pork-side deliciousness.*



### **Draft Mission Beach**

3105 Ocean Front Walk  
San Diego, CA 92109  
858.228.9305  
[www.belmontpark.com/restaurants/draft](http://www.belmontpark.com/restaurants/draft)

At the turn of the century, Belmont Park was an iconic hub of activity all along the boardwalk in Mission Beach. In 1925, this park unveiled The Plunge, a building for indoor swimming and a variety of restaurants and shops. Underway now is a complete renovation of the park, and numerous new restaurant and entertainment venues are being added to the fold of new found fun. Draft is the newest darling, with a gigantic sports bar (and a staggering 69 beers on tap), a large dining room, and a jaw-dropping 31 foot-wide television screen to view events from clear across the dining area and bar. It is a dramatic site to behold. And as the 20-foot tall panel windows are folded back each morning, a lovely patio is revealed and that indoor/outdoor boardwalk, toes in the sand vibe sets in. It is “brews and views” plain and simple. Definitely worth a visit.

Brad Wise is the Corporate Executive Chef for numerous restaurant outlets of the parent company Eat.Drink.Sleep. He has packed a great deal of experience into 28 years, which is beyond impressive. Here at Draft, his vision is clearly “innovative bar food” and offering “a play on the classics.” For example, there are 10 different burgers, including bison, beef and lamb. The comfort food entrée was the Braised Lamb Shepherd’s Pie with gravy, topped with a sunny-side-up egg. The lamb is slow-roasted with hearty winter vegetables, and a rich ragu sauce is born from that base. Justin Lopez, the opening Director of Operations stepped in to select the beer for this pairing. Justin is very knowledgeable and offered some insightful context to this particular draft selection. He chose Wreck Alley Imperial Stout by Karl Strauss. This stout originated in England and Ireland, which plays perfectly to the pie, which also harkens back to such beginnings. The roasted “black patent malt” gives the beer its deep color, and the bold flavor profile magically cuts through the richness of the stew. What also complements the lamb ragu sauce is its higher alcohol content (9.5% ABV). Simply sublime.



### **THE PAIRING**

BRAISED LAMB SHEPHERD’S PIE + WRECK ALLEY IMPERIAL STOUT BY KARL STRAUSS

*The roasted “black patent malt” gives the beer its deep color, and the bold flavor profile magically cuts through the richness of the stew.*



### **Lumberyard Tavern**

967 S Coast Hwy 101, Ste 101  
Encinitas, CA 92024  
760.479.1657  
[www.lumberyard101.com](http://www.lumberyard101.com)

This tavern is tucked into a rambling outdoor mall along historic South Coast Highway 101. Lisa McMahon Belasco opened this tavern five years ago, however she and Executive Chef Javier Rubio Montoya have worked together for 15 years prior to this opening. They collaborate nicely, writing the menus together, and sharing recipes as the seasons change. The horseshoe bar is a popular stomping ground for locals, with 20 beer taps front and center. The dining room is expansive, flanked by an outdoor patio. The menu is rooted in tavern-style fare, including starters, soups, salads, flatbreads, burgers of all types (beef, turkey, lamb and shrimp), sandwiches, and tavern faves such as fish tacos, meatloaf, braised short-ribs and pork chops.

The Meatloaf is a popular family tavern recipe. It is made with the finest of ground beef, carrots, ketchup and spices. This is served atop cheesy, garlic mashed potatoes, a rich, dark mushroom gravy, and a side of broccoli. This entrée has been paired with Lagunitas Sucks, which is a “Brown Shugga Substitute Ale” with 8% ABV and is brewed by Lagunitas Brewing Company. Grace, the lead bartender, selected this limited specialty IPA for its desired notes of citrus and at the same time, for it having some depth. She explained that this choice of beer cuts the richness of the hearty gravy, enhancing the dish by rounding out the fullness.



### **THE PAIRING**

MEATLOAF + LAGUNITAS SUCKS BY LAGUNITAS BREWING COMPANY

*The beer cuts the richness of the hearty gravy, enhancing the dish by rounding out the fullness.*

### Waypoint Public

3794 30th St  
San Diego, CA 92104  
619.255.8778  
www.waypointpublic.com

Meet Executive Chef Amanda Baumgarten. She has spent over a decade training and working at several prestigious restaurants in London and here in the US. Amanda wanted to bring an eclectic and truly neighborhood bistro-style concept to life here in the North Park area. Amanda's menus are seasonal and draw on Latin, Asian and European cultures. And eclectic it is—with a charming wall of various antique kitchen tools, mirrors and bare wood. Waypoint's beer program is led by the San Diego's consummate beer expert Brian Jensen. The bar is center stage in the dining room with 30 draft pulls and a nod to West Coast draft brew houses. The 20 or so bar stools are painted bright blue and stand at attention for the next wave of locals to saunter on in for a draft and some amazing comfort food.

Chef Amanda prepared the rich and hearty Cassoulet of Toulouse sausage, duck confit and pork belly, served with white beans in a rich sauce and dusted with bread crumbs. Cassoulet is a rich, slow-cooked casserole originating in the south of France, and typically contains meat, such as pork sausage, goose, or duck.

Amanda and Brian paired the Cassoulet with the Judgement Day ale by The Lost Abbey. It's hard to get past the bottle as each label is created by an artist, and they are so beautiful. The motto is "Live life on your own terms." The beer is a Belgian-style, dark quad ale (yes as in quadruple), and is brewed with raisins. The beer has a 10.5% ABV, and this high alcohol content gives that richness to off-set the hearty and delicious pork-based cassoulet.



#### THE PAIRING

CASSOULET + JUDGEMENT DAY BY THE LOST ABBEY

*The beer has a 10.5% ABV, and this high alcohol content gives that richness to off-set the hearty and delicious pork-based cassoulet.*



### 83 Degrees

660 Carlsbad Village Dr  
Carlsbad, CA 92008  
760.729.7904  
www.83degrees.net

Carlsbad is a charming beach town, and 83 Degrees is on point. The restaurant is in the perfect location along Carlsbad Village Drive, and one foot in the door I can hear celebrations in full gear. There is almost a warehouse vibe, with sky tall ceilings, two bars, two dining rooms of primarily high-top seating, floor to ceiling windows and a lovely patio with a conversation fire bowl. General Manager Jon Wantz is very engaging and so proud of the restaurant's 48 beers on tap, with half of those from local brew houses. They have every category amply and seriously covered, including ambers, ciders, browns and reds, lagers, ales, hefes, wheats and blondes, IPAs, stouts and pilsners. Whew! And for wine lovers they feature 40-plus wines by the glass or bottle and prohibition era inspired cocktails. Jon is equally boastful of his cuisine, which he terms American comfort food with a twist on the classics, and at reasonable prices. The menu includes a fine selection of starters, salads, sandwiches, burgers, flatbreads, seafood and meatloaf.

The Beach Body Burger is a double beef patty, pepper jack cheese, bacon, grilled onions, 83 Degrees secret sauce, sandwiched between a huge hamburger bun, and accented with sliced pickles. The sauce is no longer a secret, as Jon shared with me the key ingredients—a mayo-based Thai chile sauce. This comfort grub is being paired with the Unapologetic beer, which was personally selected to pair with this meaty burger given its hoppy and slightly bitter double IPA-style, with a 9% ABV, as well as its ability to tone down the richness of this hand-held feast.



#### THE PAIRING

BEACH BODY BURGER + UNAPOLOGETIC IPA BY STONE/HERETIC/BEACHWOOD

*This comfort grub is being paired with the Unapologetic beer, which was personally selected to pair with this meaty burger given its hoppy and slightly bitter double IPA-style. ■*

