



FIRESTONE WALKER BREWING COMPANY

10-09-12

Since founding our brewery in 1996, we have specialized in the rare art of brewing beer in oak barrels. In the fall of 2006, we released a limited edition oak-aged strong ale called 10 to commemorate our 10th anniversary. The experience was greater than any one of us could have ever imagined. We now present XVI, our seventh release in what has become an annual autumn rite at our brewery.

The Vision Behind Our Barrel Aging and Blending Program Is Still the Same!

The Goal: To create complexity centering on oak, in a multitude of forms, by brewing high gravity beers in complementary styles, aging them in different barrel formats and then blending them together to achieve harmonious new flavors.

The Puzzle: To blend these various components (or lots) to create a synergistic whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This is done with the help of a few of our neighboring Paso Robles winemakers who are practicing experts in the art of blending.

The Inspiration: Firestone Walker's oak brewing tradition and our connection with winemaking. Of course until the advent of stainless steel, brewing was intimately linked to wood barrels and vessels. Brewing has a deeply rooted history in the alchemy of blending.

The Barrels

The individual lots were aged in oak barrels, many of which were hand selected from premium Kentucky spirits producers by Tom Griffin, who is extremely passionate and knowledgeable about bourbon barrels and beer. Each barrel lends its own unique influence to the final blend.

The Aging Cellar – The Components

We blended together 226 oak barrels and 8 different beers creating something truly complex and exceptional.

The following are descriptions of key components with their original code names:

	Final Blend %
Velvet Merkin (8.7% ABV) - Aged in Bourbon barrels <i>-Traditional Oatmeal Stout</i> OG=15P FG=5.5 IBU=32.5 Color=Black / 15% Oats / Hopped with 100% US grown Fuggles	(23%)
Stickee Monkee (12.5% ABV) - Aged in Bourbon and Brandy barrels <i>-English Barley Wine</i> OG=27P FG=5.4P IBU=45 Color=28 / Brewed with Mexican Turbinado (Brown) sugar	(22.5%)
Double Double Barrel Ale (14.2% ABV) - Aged 100% in retired Firestone Union barrels <i>-Double strength English Pale Ale</i> OG=25.0P FG=5.1P IBU=30 Color=16 / A double version of our flagship created by Ali Razi	(20.3%)
Parabola (13% ABV) - Aged in Bourbon barrels <i>-Russian Imperial Oatmeal Stout</i> OG=31P FG=8.5P IBU=80 Color=Black / Hopped with Simcoe, Bravo, Styrian Golding and East Kent Golding	(10.8%)
PNC (13.0% ABV) - Aged in Tequila barrels <i>-American Strong Buckwheat Stout</i> OG = 25P FG = 5.0P IBU=80 Color=100 / Brewed with Buckwheat	(8.1%)
Helldorado (11.5% ABV) - Aged in Bourbon and Brandy barrels <i>-Blonde Barley Wine</i> OG=24.7P FG=4.5P IBU=24 Color=8 / Brewed with buckwheat honey & 100% El Dorado hops	(5.4%)
Bravo (13.4% ABV) - Aged in Bourbon and Brandy barrels <i>-Imperial Brown Ale</i> OG=26.5 FG=7.7 IBU=35 Color=32 / Hopped with 100% US grown Fuggles	(5.4%)
Wookey Jack (8.3% ABV) - 100% Fresh, dank & hoppy 100% Stainless Steel <i>-Black Rye India Pale Ale</i> OG=18P FG=3.0P IBU=80 Color=Black / Extremely hoppy double dry hopped BIPA	(4.5%)

A Note from Brewmaster Matt Brynildson

Our 16th Year – The Wild Ride Continues

If you are reading this then you should be in possession of a bottle of one of our very finest achievements - XVI. This beer represents everything that we love about brewing: **Exploration** - Over the years we have studied the art of brewing by traveling to far away lands to visit and observe other brewers. Once in a while we get lucky and even get to brew a batch or two while over seas. Seeing and understanding our brewing heritage has been a key to developing our brewing program. We have also stayed close to our brewing and winemaking friends here in the States spending countless hours tasting and observing the magic that IS the American Craft Beer Revolution. Dozens of notebooks, hundreds of questions, thousands of pictures and too many beers to count have resulted in the refinement of our brewing philosophy and our approach to making the best flavors possible. **Networking** - One of the most amazing elements of the craft brew age is the sharing and networking that continues to fuel this moment. In honor of this phenomenon we hosted three collaborations at our brewery in 2012. A collaboration brew with the Publican National Congress "PNC" where we created a beautiful tequila barrel aged buckwheat stout with some of the best publicans from around the country. A second collaboration with Mikkel Borg Bjergsø of Mikkeller fame in which we created a Saison and utilized local white wine grapes and aged the beer in wine barrels. Our masterpiece was a giant collaboration hosting our first annual **Firestone Walker Invitational Beer Fest** here in our hometown of Paso Robles. The ground rules were simple, the brewers themselves needed to come and pour one session beer and one special beer. We invited some of our very best friends and favorite brewers from around the country and some from outside the States. The talent that arrived and the beers that were shared culminated in one of the very best beer events we have ever experienced. Even more impressive was the willingness of brewers, big and small, to travel to our brewery to share the fruits of their labors. I continue to find that the very best people in the entire world are brewers and the people who love beer. **Blending** – This beer is a testament to the fact that incredible flavors can be created through blending and that in certain moments with special people and exceptional raw materials, the result of those blends far exceed the sum of their parts. We started back in 1996 by fermenting a single beer in many barrels and blending them together to create Double Barrel Ale. We then embarked on this barrel aged blending project that you taste today, with our winemaker friends. **More Barrels** - We now have officially launched our next exploration into the unknown with **Barrelworks** - a project that will incorporate wine barrels and a host of new critters, sparking secondary fermentation flavors, creating a new line of wild barrel aged and blended beers. We are positioning this project in Buellton California in the middle of the Santa Ynez Valley where it all started for us – far enough away from our Paso brewery not to cause our clean beers harm but close enough to allow us to create freely. If that isn't enough, our 16th year brought with it some additional excitement. This spring we were named **Champion Mid-sized Brewer for an unprecedented 4th time at the World Beer Cup!** To have our beers recognized as world class by our peers once again was a humbling proud moment. Our brewery also gave birth to a new German built, Huppmann Brewhouse in 2012. We were able to add some amazing new toys to our kit, like wet milling, hop dosing and automated lautering that will not only allow us to brew more but give us the flexibility to brew even more interesting, technically correct and balanced beers. We also added a beautiful restaurant to our Paso campus so that you can come and break bread with us while visiting the brewery. It was an amazing year of growth and change. Most importantly, our family continues to grow and our team continues to develop. I can't tell you how proud I am to work with some of the best and hardest working folks you will ever meet. If you haven't yet, you need to come to Paso and meet our crew!

The Winemakers and Friends

As I have said before, this project is all about creating flavors through blending and no one knows blending better than a winemaker. As brewers in this project, we create individual beers that we believe will lend something to the blend. Our hardest work is done months before the final beer is realized. We then step aside and allow our brothers in fermentation science to take over and formulate the blend. It is an amazingly educational experience. I have learned so much from watching and listening to them in these blending sessions. Many of the folks who have helped us in the past returned to lend their well-tuned senses to this project. This year's blenders included: **Chuck Carlson** – Curtis Winery, **Matt Trevisan** – Linne Calodo, **Eric Jensen** – Booker, **Justin Smith** – Saxum, **Brock Waterman** – Brochelle, **Kevin Sass** – Halter Ranch, **Sherman Thacher** – Thacher Winery, **Russell From** – Herman Story, **Mark Adams** – Saxum / One Time Space Man, and **Terry Hoage** – Hoage Cellars. Also joining us were beer writers **William Bostwick** and **Jessi Rymill** as well as our good friends **Pete Slosberg** and **Arie Litman**. It was a great group who worked well together and nailed an awesome blend. (Team Saxum's blend won for a second year in a row – go figure!) With their support, our barrel aging program has grown since the first 30 barrels we had when we made "10" to over 1000 barrels this year!

The Finished Piece-

As a finished beer, XVI takes us back to some of the wonderful dark notes (the black keys) that I remember from the original 10 blending. XVI is 42% stout with **Velvet Merkin**, **Parabola** and "PNC" working together as three roasty toasty friends that create rich cacao, chocolate and mocha flavors together. "PNC" also introduces tequila barrels into our blend for the first time and brings some interesting south of the boarder spirit notes to the mix – a welcome twist. **Helldorado**, with flavors of lavender honey liqueur was again a favorite of the winemakers and made the cut adding some flowery notes. **DDBA** continues to deliver its signature American toasted oak, English caramel toffee and light leather nuances. **DDBA** was also release on its own in 2012 and is now established as a solid annual brew. **Stickee Monkee** is fast becoming one of our favorite pieces with its rich maple syrup, spicy cinnamon, and ripe fig flavors which has developed into a bolder cousin of perennial blend component **Bravo** who carries barrel character and bourbon notes like no other. The additional twist this year is **Wookey Jack**, Black Rye IPA with its wily citrusy hop notes and spicy rye backbone. The finished blend is unfiltered and unfined, so there will be a small amount of sediment in the bottom of the bottle. XVI is best enjoyed poured carefully into a half filled brandy snifter or red wine glass. Allow it to warm to 55F to fully enjoy the pleasing and complex aromas. It takes a while, but as this beer sits and breathes in the glass, more rich dusty chocolate, stone fruit and crème brulee character is reveled as the rich spirit characters fade - so take your time. If you wait to open your bottle later, store it in a cool dark place. I suspect that this beer will age well and

change favorably for years to come. It was an absolute pleasure in the making and I truly hope you enjoy our Seventh oak-aged blend! The journey continues and its just as fun and exciting now as it was back in 1996. Thank you so much for spending a little time with us!

This beer is dedicated to the Firestone Walker Brewery production management team – with whom I could never live without and who continually blow me away. I couldn't ask for a better group of humans to spend my working days with!

All the very best
Matt

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew R. Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

TheFullPint.com