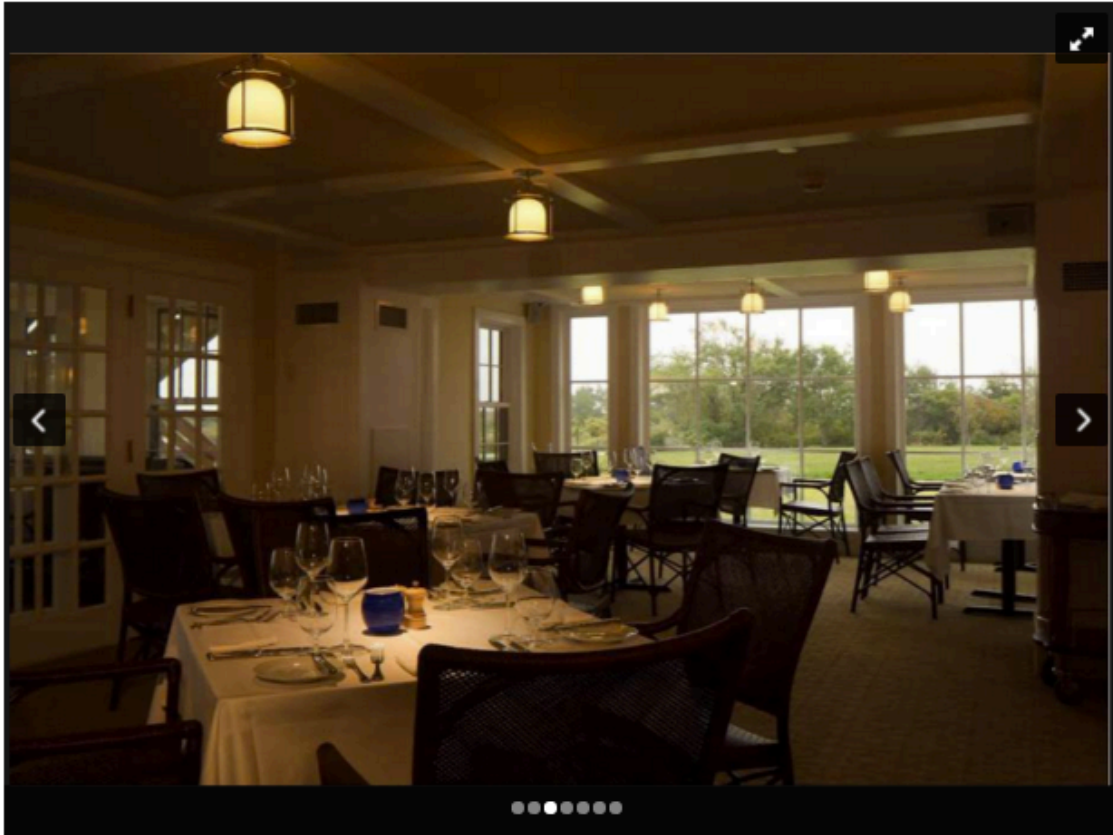


## Weekapaug Inn's Brewmaster Series pairs local beer with fine dining



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By NANCY BURNS-FUSARO Sun Staff Writer

What better time to talk about beer — and the fairly new phenomenon of beer pairings — than smack dab in the middle of American Craft Beer Week?

No wonder small and independent craft brewers across the country are celebrating the success of their burgeoning industry.

Beer, once relegated to back yard barbecues and ball games, has been elevated to a whole new level and now takes center stage at all sorts of events.

Beer pairings continue to be a rising culinary trend for the finest restaurants, and Westerly's own Weekapaug Inn is leading the charge.

Last month, the inn launched the first in what will be an ongoing "Brewmaster's Social Series," an evening full of delicious food and tasty beer served in a casual

family-style, where local brewers are invited to join diners for a dinner, where each course is expertly paired with his or her choice of beer.

What fun we had, seated around the table chatting with the interesting folks gathered at our table.

The April guest brewer was Nate Broomfield of Pawtucket-based Bucket Brewery. (Wednesday's brewer was Westerly's Alan Brinton from Grey Sail Brewery.)

As we gathered in the lobby of the Inn in April for the "midweek house party" where The Prudence & Patience Rosehip Gose was served with BBQ popcorn-crusted chicken, red pepper and goat cheese; Crescent duckling with pomegranate, and cod ceviche with sour lemon, I had the chance to chat with Daniel Hostettler, president and managing director of the Ocean House and Weekapaug Inn, who said the craft beer brouhaha (sorry, I couldn't resist) is on the rise, especially among the 30-something crowd. Hostettler said he hopes local beer lovers will feel welcome to visit the inn and experience the fun and food.

The fellows from Bucket shared four beers with hors d'oeuvres and dinner followed by a fifth (Park Loop Porter) outside by the pondside fire pit at evening's end. (Where scrumptious S'mores were also passed around.)

Appetizers included rosemary smoked mackerel served with purple beetroot meringues, a spring vegetable salad with homemade potato chips and pork and littleneck clams with carrots and kale served on a bed of saffron risotto; spring vegetable salad with red bliss potato chips.

The beer pairing was B.O.G. Cranberry Orange Saison, described as "Light, tart and refreshing. This subtle take on a fruit beer hints at orange zest and cranberries, and is the perfect refresher for a summer day."

For dinner, a 33rd Inning Red Rye Lager (you guessed it, named after the longest baseball game ever played at McCoy Stadium between the Pawtucket Red Sox and the Rochester Red Wings!) accompanied the entrees; rare bred sirloin with cognac peppercorn sauce; wild striped bass with spring vegetables and Hasselbeck potatoes, Fazzoletti Pasta with black truffles, arugula, toasted pine nuts and Pecorino cheese.

Speaking of cheese, the cheesemakers from Cato Corner in Colchester, Conn., were at the dinner, (along with a number of other food lovers from around New England,) and served one of their farmstead raw milk cheeses with candied hazelnuts and honey, orange macaroons, Valrhona chocolate delice, and milk ice cream for dessert.

The monthly series, under the direction of executive chef Ryan Murphy, will continue to offer the pairings on June 15 with Revival Brewing Company of Cranston, then take a break for the summer and resume again in the fall with dinners scheduled for Sept. 21 with Overshores Brewing Company of East Haven; Oct. 19 with Cottrell Brewing Company and Nov. 16 with Beer'd Brewing of Stonington.

Sadly, as a person with Celiac disease, I couldn't partake of the beer tastings, but the inn's gracious and attentive staff made certain my glass was always more than half full with gluten-free cider the whole evening long.

My husband, Sam, however, who sampled and enjoyed every beer served and every tasty item on the menu, proclaimed the inaugural dinner in the brewmaster's series "a beer lovers dream come true"

Brewmaster Socials will be held monthly, except for July and August, at The Restaurant, The Weekapaug Inn, 25 Spray Rock Rd., Westerly for \$75 a person. 401-322-0301, [weekapauginnevents.com](http://weekapauginnevents.com).

— Nancy Burns-Fusaro