

Beeradvocate

Move Over, Margaritaville

IN THE SUBTROPICS, SOUTH FLORIDA'S CRAFT BEER SCENE EMERGES

Funky Buddha has evolved from its humble beginnings in 2007 as a Boca Raton hookah-and-tea lounge that also served craft beer. The brewing facility Sentsz opened in June has a bocce court in the taproom and fermenting tanks named after his employees' kids, grandparents and pets. It's a draft-only operation for now; Sentsz says he hopes to have a bottling line in place by mid-2014.

"As for distribution outside of Florida, we will occasionally send a keg or two for special events, but

we want our main backyard," he says.

Even with talented quality beers, it takes an area's beer scene fully embracing them.

Chris Birnie-Vis Boulud's DB Bistrò smiled recently as dinner tear into draft with Brewery Om Quad. As more area craft beer options date them.

"We have such fingertips now, so isn't a problem," Birnie-Vis educates myself and styles are, and who menu. I'm at a point full beer pairing with them—and do it very well."

Food and beer also come together in a special way at MC Kitchen in Miami's Design District. There, beverage director/operations manager (and beer fanatic) Marcus Wade curates the deepest Dogfish Head selection of any South Florida restaurant, along with dozens of other US craft brews. And customers, he says, can't get enough.

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And the beer enjoyment extends beyond restaurants and bars. Florida International University in North Miami has offered its students a brewing-science course since 2007 and recently began hosting sold-out homebrew classes to the public. (More proof that beer is gaining ground: FIU's student brewers poured their beers at the popular South Beach Wine and Food Festival last year and will do so

Lisa Siegel's Riverside on for the area's craft tax with friends over brews. If Riverside's of which are local—holds more than 550

onor system, bottle eiling, and customer hanging out. When bring their empties to ey drank.

we believe if you trust ng," says Lisa, who's a service environment ally builds friend-choice. Strangers talk formed, and deci-

Beer Academy this

summer as a Father's Day promotion. It filled up so fast that the Siegels immediately announced a second semester.

"The community had a thirst and need to learn about craft beer," Julian says. "The response has been overwhelming. Students never want to skip school!"

Evan S. Bonn is a staff writer at the Miami Herald, Esquire's online beer columnist and author of *Brew in the Lou: St. Louis' Beer Culture—Past, Present & Future*. Contact him at evansbenn@gmail.com or on Twitter @EvanBonn.