

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Old Style Brew



Geoff Logan
Head Brewer
Williamsburg AleWerks

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor

Geoff Logan toured the East Coast with his band, playing in many restaurants and bars, bringing a mix of pop and rock music to the crowds. He produced a musical recipe that pleased the listener. Today, he's supplying the other side of the bar, creating a blend of hops and yeast that tempt the palate. Geoff Logan is the head brewer at Williamsburg AleWerks.

"I'm originally from Delaware," Geoff says, "then I went to West Virginia University for a Bachelors of Art in music with a minor in business administration." With his degree in one hand and his guitar in the other, Geoff headed to Virginia to play music. "We were a pop-rock band; we

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called it smart-rock because of our focus on intelligent lyrics." The band was called *Rain Market*, an incarnation of an earlier band Geoff had that would always get rained out. "We were supposed to open a show for Dave Matthews," he explains, "and it would get rained out; we'd book a show to open for Ben Harper and it'd get rained out, and on and on. So someone said we had the rain market cornered. It became the name."

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- Geoff Logan

Geoff and his friends headed to Nashville. "We did some showcases, took our shot, but it didn't stick," he says. "We chalked it up and played a little longer. Then we went our separate ways. I went into beer." Not the crying in your beer of country songs, but the craft and art of making beer.

Geoff and his brother ordered a home brewing kit off the Internet. "I started out with the cheesiest of brewing, something called Mr. Beer," Geoff laughs. "They send you the stuff and you boil it then throw it into this little plastic barrel." Although the beer produced wasn't that sophisticated, Geoff and his brother learned the basic process. "With my brother's engineering background, he wanted to make the process better and better, and so did I," Geoff explains. We started buying different homebrew supplies, taking it and running with it. Experimenting is a lot of fun."

With *Rain Market* dissolved and his home brewing interest piqued, Geoff started working at Williamsburg AleWerks. "I started almost at the genesis of the company," he says. "I was sales, tour guide, store manager, bottle operator... In a small company, we all wear many hats."

According to Geoff, beer has two main styles: ales and lagers. The designation has to do with the types of yeast used and how that yeast ferments. "There are many different types of ale yeast and many different types of lager yeast," he explains. "Some prefer different conditions during fermentation and produce different flavors, flavor profiles, compounds. Budweiser is a lager. It's fermented cold for a smoother flavor. I only do ales right now – the big, bold flavors. I like a little more flavor in our beers."

The brewery uses a direct fire process as opposed to steam, which bigger and more modern breweries utilize. "We figure we're a Williamsburg brewery, so we'll make beer the old style," he says. "That affects how

some of the beers we make taste. We thought we'd start with the more authentic version of making the ales. We call the brown ale a tavern ale, like something you would find here a few hundred years ago. That and the porter are more authentic to those times." Today's alcohol content is a bit higher than the beer of Williamsburg's history - back when beer was an everyday drink.

Ales branch out in many different styles: brown, pale, porters, stouts. "It's all how you make it and what you make it with," Geoff says. "There are certain parameters for each style: color, bitterness, alcohol, sugar. Take those guidelines and put your stamp on it."

A porter is a type of beer popularized in Europe, Geoff explains. "It's a drink the dockworkers in the ports of Britain preferred. Initially it was a blend of beers. Old and new, light and dark, that's what the porters liked and that's how it got its name. [It's] dark in color, malty, a little bit of hops, a good beer."

Along with the craft of beer making, there is an art, a personalization from the brewer. "I had the luxury of redesigning all the beers when I



Inside the brewery at Williamsburg AleWerks.

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became head brewer," Geoff describes. "I designed them the way I like them - a little more hop-forward than they used to be. They carry a little more...not just hop-bitterness, but hop-flavor. I've been given creative license on crafting new styles. Rapadou Porter is a beer I'm proud of. It's a big porter we make with Haitian sugar and then aged in oak barrels." The result is a big, bold porter with a hint of vanilla and bourbon tones from the barrels.

Last autumn, Geoff introduced Pumpkin Ale. "I'm kind of a dork for pumpkin pie," he admits. "I just love it. When I was doing test batches for that ale, I really wanted to dial in the pumpkin pie flavor. A lot of people say it's a pumpkin pie in a glass. I went to an extreme with a bold beer that tasted like pumpkin pie. That turned out great. It was one of my favorites."

His creativity is tapped by developing new beers, different beers that people may not have heard of or tried before. "We have our base beers," he says, "but I like to get creative too. Not every beer is for everybody."

Nor is every beer for every food. Like the basic guidelines of white wine for lighter foods and red for more robust food, beers generally follow the same path. Lagers with their smooth characteristics pair well with lighter fare. Bold ales make great companions to hearty meals.

"There are so many different styles of beers," Geoff explains. "You can definitely find a match for any type of food. There are certain places where wine can't go with food. Really rich and fatty foods, sometimes wine can get lost, but beer can come through it because it has carbonation and cleanses your palate with every sip."

Geoff participates in Beer Dinners around the region and demonstrates how different beers combine with the flavors of food. "For example," he says, "a bold brown ale goes great with steaks. Or for a salad with a light balsamic dressing, an American wheat ale would work well. The lightness of the salad and the lightness of the beer complement each other. Wines tend to contrast food. Beers complement food."

For summer, Geoff has produced a special seasonal beer: a white ale. "It's a light wheat ale brewed with coriander and orange peel — light and refreshing for a summer day. It has those orange tones from the peel that give it a citrus flavor that's refreshing and the low alcohol makes it palatable in the warmer temperatures."

Geoff says he looks at the food first then chooses the beer. "It's about the food," he says. "One course at a Beer Dinner was a curry dish, and I paired an IPA (India Pale Ale) with it. For dessert, a raspberry chocolate cake... A porter with a lot of chocolate tones will wrap around the chocolate and raspberry dessert. There's an old saying that wine is like a handshake and beer is like a hug. The wine will contrast the chocolate and show off the difference in the flavors, whereas the beer will blend with it and bring out the combination of the flavors."

The future for Geoff includes developing more special beers, spreading the word of beer and food, plus bringing his music into the beer world again. "I'd love to have a local beer and music festival," he says and raises his glass. Cheers! NDN

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Q&A

An Interview with Kathy Chambers

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There is more talk in the media about short sales. What exactly are short sales and how do they affect buyers and sellers?

CHAMBERS:

Ask any Realtor® in the area and they will probably tell you that their ability to serve their clients has improved recently. Home sales in the Williamsburg market are slowly increasing and that is good news for everyone. However, the news isn't all picture perfect since the recovery from the economic downturn is more like the tortoise slowly moving ahead - not the hare racing to the finish line. As in any challenging situation, the key is to look for opportunities.

One of the byproducts of the economic crisis has been an increase in short sales. For certain buyers who can be patient and have the ability to work through a slower closing process, this could mean an opportunity.

A short sale results when a property is sold where the lender agrees to accept a payoff at an amount that is less than the

mortgage amount owed by the homeowner.

This usually happens when the homeowner has missed a number of payments and the property is in danger of going into foreclosure.

In some cases the lender forgives the difference completely. In other cases, the homeowner must make arrangements with the lender to settle the remainder of the debt. Either way, the buyer has the opportunity to purchase the property at a discounted price.

In a short sale, the seller will make no profit on the sale but avoids many of the problems of a foreclosure. For the buyer the savings when purchasing the home can be significant.

However, getting a deal on a short sale is not always that simple. There are a number of things a buyer must do and understand in order to take advantage of this type of opportunity. Your Realtor® can help you through this process, which could take two to six months - much longer than a normal closing. Once you have a property in mind, you will need to gauge its condition. Some short sales properties are "as is" properties, so inspect the home carefully. It is always good to do your homework. What is the prop-

erty worth? Many lenders will have a short sale application specifically for this type of sale and they will require solid offers. You may also have to post a sizeable amount of money to demonstrate your ability to stand good on the arrangement. And...the list goes on.

A foreclosure will impact the credit score of a seller much more than a short sale could. Generally, a short sale appears on a person's credit report if it settles for less than what was owed.

Mortgage lenders also benefit by avoiding a foreclosure. They want to steer clear of the responsibility for selling a home and they want to get their money back. In a foreclosure, the bank will spend thousands of dollars and wait months to take possession of the home. They will need to spend additional dollars to market it, maintain it and wait for it to sell.

If you are in the market for a home, ask your Realtor® if a short sale is the right option for you.

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