

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Museum of Sonoma County Presents

On Tap: Sonoma County Hops & The Beer Revolution

April 20 – September 1, 2024

[Member's Preview and Reception: Friday, April 19, 2024 from 5 – 7pm](#)

Santa Rosa, CA – (April 4) In Sonoma County, hops were the king of crops for more than half a century. By 1976, the hops were long gone, yet, in the town of Sonoma, the first microbrewery in the nation was born. Explore the remarkable history of hops and the origins of microbreweries in the exhibition [On Tap: Sonoma County Hops & the Beer Revolution](#).

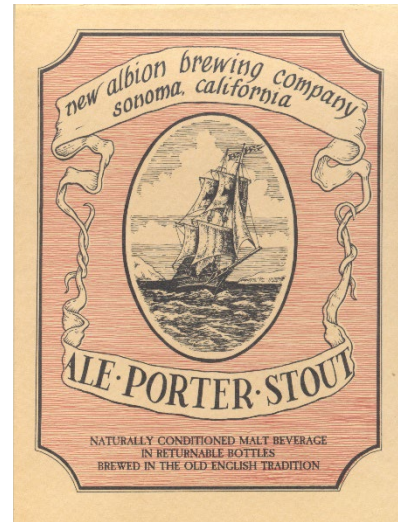


Something revolutionary happened in Sonoma County in 1976. Using discarded dairy tanks, Coca Cola barrels and modified, cast-off equipment, New Albion Brewery started making beer in the town of Sonoma, launching the first modern microbrewery in the United States. Today, we take microbreweries and world-class beer for granted. Every year, thousands of people descend on Sonoma County for the release of internationally renowned beers. But how did it come to be? Why Sonoma County?

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Jack and Suzy of New Albion Brewing Company



New Albion Brewing Company Sign

The Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) is pleased to present *On Tap: Sonoma County Hops & The Beer Revolution*, which is on display from April 20- September 1, 2024. The exhibition explores the revolutionary beginnings of the county's microbreweries, and the rich legacy of local hop culture that dates back to the 19th century.

Hops, the plant crucial to the flavoring of beer, was first established as an agricultural crop in Sonoma County in the 1850's. *On Tap* traces the rich history of hop farming in the region, exploring the historical rise of hops as a local crop, the diverse participants who cultivated and harvested hops, and the notable reemergence of current hop farmers in Sonoma County decades after the demise of the local crop.

On Tap also explores microbreweries, both past and present. The 19th century was a time of numerous local breweries, but when Sonoma County saw a decline in regional hops farming, small breweries disappeared and national, mass-produced beers came to dominate the marketplace. In the 1970s, a new generation of craft brewers bucked this trend, with the widely acknowledged first microbrewery, New Albion, starting in the town of Sonoma. Today, Sonoma County is a productive hotbed of small batch brewers and entrepreneurs experimenting with different styles, flavors, and innovative approaches. Their brews, in turn, have encouraged the return of some local hop growing.

On Tap: Sonoma County Hops & The Beer Revolution will include artifacts, photographs and personal narratives that trace the story of hops farming, local breweries and the innovators and entrepreneurs who have cultivated a regional beer renaissance. The exhibition will further explore the social importance of beer, a beverage thousands of years old that plays a unique and multi-faceted role in social life. Join us for this exciting exhibition and raise a glass to the rich history of hops in Sonoma County. Cheers!

This exhibition is generously supported by Lemonstrike Creative Studios, Belly Left Coast Kitchen & Taproom, Russian River Brewing Company, Veale Outdoor Advertising, Staci Pastis, and David Salm.

Special thanks to our Beer and Museum Matchmaker, Herlinda Heras, Cohost of Brew Ha Ha on The Drive Krush radio!

Programs and Events

[Member Preview and Reception](#)

April 19, 2024 from 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Join us for an exclusive preview of this exciting exhibition!

[SpringFest at MSC!](#)

April 27, 2024 from 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Join us at MSC for a celebration of International Sculpture Day and our newest exhibition [On Tap: Sonoma County and the Beer Revolution](#) with a special day of live metal arts demonstration and local beer culture! Featuring beer from local breweries, artists from MSC's exhibition [A Question of Balance](#), and very special guest Tara Nurin, for a book reading and signing. Nurin is the author of [A Woman's Place Is in the Brewhouse: A Forgotten History of Alewives, Brewsters, Witches, and CEOs](#), the very first book of global history of women in beer.

Beer Garden at MSC

July 20, 2024

Sample craft beers from local breweries in MSC's Sculpture Garden.

More Details to come!

Additional public programs related to the exhibition will be posted: www.museumsc.org/events

Museum of Sonoma County

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Museum Hours

Wednesday - Sunday, 11 am – 5 pm

Admission

Adults: \$10
Seniors 62+, Students, People with Disabilities: \$7
Museum Members: FREE
Children 12 & under: FREE
Through Museums for All, those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) can gain free admission for up to four (4) people to the Museum of Sonoma County simply by presenting their EBT card.

About the Museum of Sonoma County

Located in Downtown Santa Rosa on Seventh Street between A and B Streets, the Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and local and regional history. MSC is open year-round with changing exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and special events. MSC preserves and manages a regional art and history collection of over 18,000 objects, the region's largest object documentation of Sonoma County's history and culture.

Mission

The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community with art and history exhibitions, collections, and public programs that are inclusive, educational, and relevant.

Smithsonian Affiliate

The Museum of Sonoma County has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2009. Smithsonian Affiliations establishes long-term partnerships with museums, education and cultural organizations to facilitate the loan of Smithsonian artifacts and traveling exhibitions, as well as to develop innovative educational collaborations locally and nationally. Created in 1996 by an act of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, the program is overseen by the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access and is one of the pillars of the Institution's national outreach efforts. There are more than 200 Smithsonian Affiliates in nearly every state, Puerto Rico and Panama. Affiliates represent the diversity of America's museum community—size, location and subject— and serve all audiences. More than 8,000 Smithsonian artifacts have been displayed at Affiliate locations for the past 20 years.

To support this and other upcoming exhibitions contact: Rena Wang rwng@museumsc.org 707.579.1500 ext 101.

Exhibition Images ([click here](#) to view and download)



Talmadge "Babe" Wood during a hop harvest, circa 1918



Erin of Blossom & Bine, courtesy of Press Democrat, photographed by Kent Porter



Grace Brothers Happy Hops label, circa 1960



Grace Brothers workers, circa 1900s



Wholer Ranch Hop Pickers, circa 1920s



Ballard Ranch Hop Kiln