

CELEBRATING WINES, BREWS & SPIRITS

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NORTHWEST

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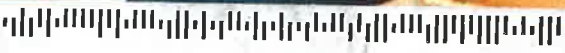
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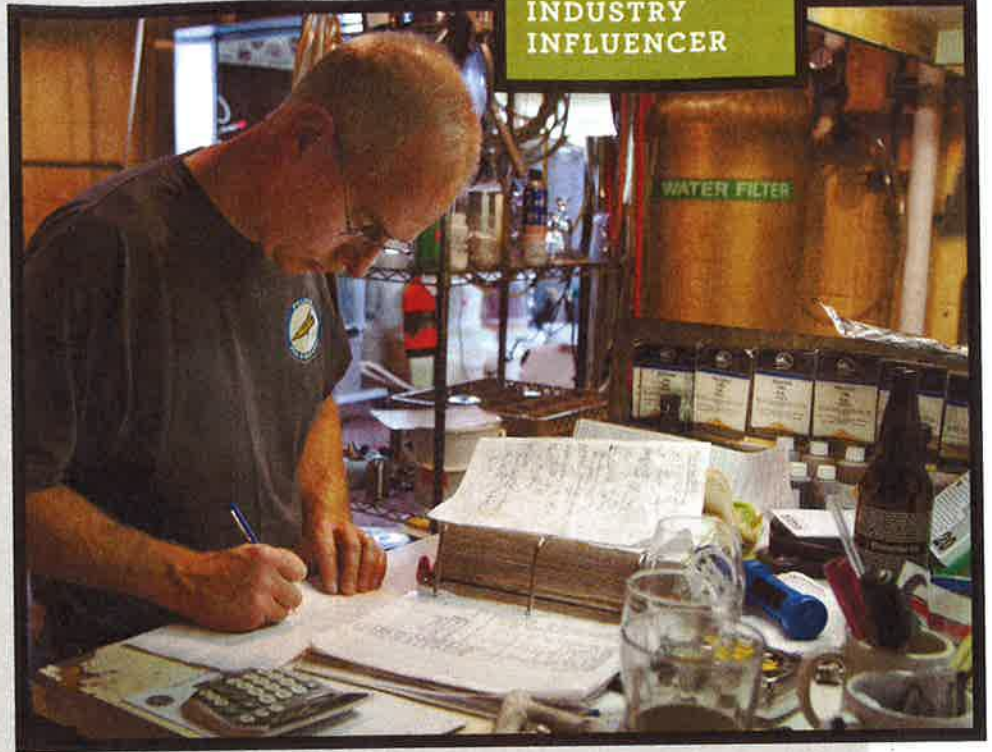
# DARRON WELCH, PELICAN PUB & BREWERY

BY PETER SZYMCZAK

**B**eer aficionados and aspiring brewers make a beeline for the Pelican in Pacific City, Ore., where brewmaster Darron Welch has crafted award-winning ales for the past 14 years — and counting.

Welch has been named “Brewer of the Year” four times (thrice at the Great American Beer Festival and once at the World Beer Cup). But perhaps Welch’s greatest accomplishment is mentoring the next generation of craft brewers.

“Darron’s emphasis on quality control and sensory analysis remains unrivaled in the craft brewing scene,” says Travis Guterson, a



former assistant brewer who left the roost to start 7 Seas Brewery in Gig Harbor, Wash. “He instilled in me that we must critique, evaluate and form a coherent judgment on the beer we brew and drink.”

Constantly improving one’s palate and process is also cited by Ben Love, who was an assistant brewer in 2004. “Everyone in the brewery would get together almost every day and do sensory evaluation on beers in fermentation,” recalls Love, who kick-started two Portland breweries, Hopworks Urban Brewery and Gigantic Brewing Company.

Welch is nowhere near being tapped out. Presently, he is building a larger production facility to quadruple the brewery’s output and move it into the mainstream with six packs and wider distribution.

On the opposite side of the production spectrum, Welch gets psyched talking about his “Lone Pelican” nano-brew series. These one-offs, available only on draft at the pub, let brewery staff brew beers of their own design.

Welch pours a Belgian stout designed by Whitney Burnside, currently lead cellar person. “She designed a really nice, medium-strength stout, using our saison yeast to ferment it,” says Welch with pride in his voice. “It has a great flavor profile, color and aroma. I try to give back, to keep the circle going. If it broadens the whole market for more flavorful beer, then that’s a good thing.”

|| [yourlittlebeachtown.com/pelican](http://yourlittlebeachtown.com/pelican)

