



School of sips and suds: Elijah P's hosts informative brewer sessions

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Not all classrooms have to be boring.

A beer school, usually hosted once a month at **Elijah P's**, offers curious tasters and beer aficionados alike a chance to learn about various beers and their brewers. At a class Wednesday evening, **Marikah Josephson**, co-owner of **Scratch brewery** of Ava, Ill., discussed four different types of beer her brewery has been making with ingredients sourced locally, many of them from within 100 yards of the brewery itself. The brewer also uses yeast sourced from inside their operation.

“We use whatever is wild and floating around in the air,” she said at the presentation.

The four beers sampled by Josephson and the rest of the “students” were a turmeric and oak leaf brew, a burdock dandelion bierdegarde, a lemon balm saison and a sour strawberry.



Josephson said most Scratch beers are sold on site, but added Elijah P's is one of the few places in the state outside of Ava where it could be found. Another place is Global Brew in Edwardsville as well as a few places in Northern Illinois and Chicago.

Former brewers involved in the beer school at Elijah P's have been **4 Hands**, **Civil Life**, **Perennial** and **Revolution**. Elijah P's owner, **Russ Smith**, said the events were a good way to get the community more connected to the people behind the 60 beers he has on tap. He said the free event, which features a sample of various brews, attains a standing-room-only crowd at each inception. Wednesday evening was no exception to that.

“We've had an incredible amount of speakers to talk about and give away samples,” Smith said. “We try to do these at least once a month, whenever we have an available brewer.”

The event is assisted in-house by Certified Cicerone®, **Zachary Pohlman**, who works at Elijah P's. A certified Cicerone is a sort of beer expert christened by the Cicerone® Certification Program in Chicago.

“It's a really great way to promote Elijah P's as well as the craft beer industry,” Smith said. “Promoting the craft beer industry is really a huge part of what we do here.”

Among those 60 beers on tap at Elijah P's is a Thai basil from Scratch.



