

HighLife

VAILDAILY SECTION B

SATURDAY, 8 · 18 · 12

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TASTY BREW Sand BLUEGRASS TUNES

ED FEST 2012 ADDS MORE MUSIC — INCLUDING THE EMMITT-NERSHI BAND — TO TODAY'S BEER-LOVING BONANZA

Rockyard Brewing Co.'s Kjell "Jelly Man" Wygant, left, hands a sample of apricot wheat beer to Betsy Wolcott, center, as Kyle Stoveken, left, looks on during last year's Ed Fest in Edwards. The event returns to Riverwalk in Edwards this afternoon. DAILY FILE PHOTO



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY
If anyone at Ed Fest gets too rowdy, a few bluegrass bandits have a plan to keep the peace. "We carry duct tape with us just in case," said Drew Emmitt, mandolin maestro and singer of the Emmitt-Nershi Band. "If someone is too drunk, you just tape them to a light post until they sober up."

By Rosanna Turner
DAILY CORRESPONDENT

Back to their bluegrass roots

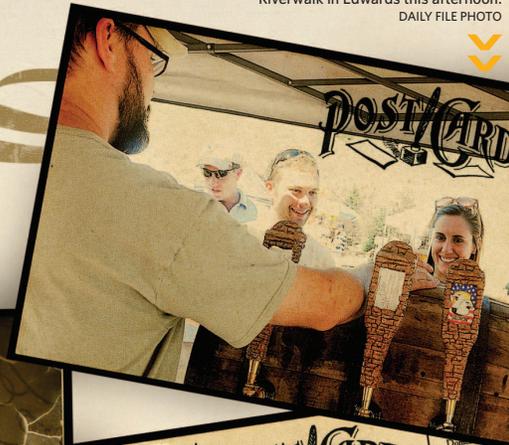
If the Emmitt-Nershi Band were a beer, it would be a pilsner, because it's cool, refreshing and satisfies the drinker from the first sip to the last drop, said mandolin player Drew Emmitt. The popular Colorado bluegrass string quartet will try to entertain the crowd from the first chord to the final song this afternoon at the second annual Ed Fest, a one-day beer taste-a-thon held in Edwards. This time around Ed Fest will have more bluegrass, more breweries, and naturally, more beer. Funk-rock group Frogs Gone Fishin' will open for the Emmitt-Nershi Band.

Marisa Selvy, co-owner of Crazy Mountain Brewery, planned this year's Ed Fest to bring beer lovers and music lovers together. "Most beer festivals are very beer-centric," Selvy said. "They hire these random bands to perform as background music. (At Ed Fest) the focus will be on the music, not just the beer."

While some bands benefit from an alcohol-enthusiastic audience, the Emmitt-Nershi Band is one group that's pleasing even to sober ears. Formed six years ago by Emmitt, of Leftover Salmon, and Bill Nershi, of the String Cheese Incident, the musicians wanted to strip down their sound and return to their bluegrass origins.

While some may feel nostalgic for the group members' jamband past, many Emmitt-Nershi fans like the new direction they've taken.

"The String Cheese fans, as well as the Salmon fans, like to come out and see this band and see Bill and I in a whole different context," Emmitt said. "(Our sound) was what the bands started out with (before) getting away from it a little bit. It's nice to see us going back to our roots."



This Space for Writing Messages

POSTCARD

if you go ...

What: Ed Fest 2012.
When: Today from 3 to 7 p.m., after party following the festival at e-town.
Where: The Riverwalk in Edwards.
Cost: \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door. Includes unlimited beer tastings and music shows; food can be purchased separately. Must be 21 or older to attend.
More information: 970-926-3009 or www.crazymountainbrewery.com.
For address only

'An art form versus a science'

The proceeds from Ed Fest will go to the Eagle Valley Land Trust, which has been actively involved in planning the event. One of the festival's goals is to introduce people to the culture and taste of craft-style beer.

"We want to convert people to appreciating craft beer and liking beer that has a more intense flavor," Selvy said.

Selvy thinks that American light lagers, the most common type of beer found in the U.S., often "taste like water," she said.

Beers brewed craft-style are richer, hoppier, more complex in taste and made from malted barley, not corn.

"(Our) beers are hand-crafted with much love," Selvy said. "Blood, sweat, and tears go into it. It's almost like an art form versus a science."

While fortunately the beers at Ed Fest don't

literally taste like blood, sweat, or tears, there are a few new brews to look out for. Selvy recommends trying the Green Flash, a Belgian IPA from a brewery in San Diego that most Colorado beer aficionados haven't tasted yet.

"A normal India Pale Ale is very hop-forward and a little bit bitter," Selvy said. "With a Belgian-style IPA you add in Belgian yeast. A lot of people say they taste bananas or cloves; it takes the edge off the beer."

With 26 booths overflowing with beer to try, Selvy said people should pace themselves, drink plenty of water, and challenge their taste buds with an unfamiliar flavor. "Try something you've never heard of before," Selvy said. "It might end up being your new favorite beer."

Organizers are hoping that by the end of Ed Fest, you'll have traded in cans of Budweiser and those old String Cheese records for a pint, and the sounds of something cooler, more refreshing, and more satisfying from start to finish.