

## Oregon Beer Fest Goes to the Dogs

**Rogue Brewery's second annual Brewer's Memorial Ale Fest draws thousands of dog lovers.**

*Wendy Bedwell-Wilson*

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Dogs enjoyed socializing with their owners tasted beers from the 50 attending microbreweries.

At Rogue Ale's world headquarters in Newport, Ore., 3,000 beer lovers, 50 microbreweries, and 387 dogs came together in May to honor brew master John Maier's beloved black Labrador Retriever, Brewer, who died in 2006. The second annual event, dubbed Brewer's Memorial Ale Fest, spanned two days and featured beer tasting for the humans and activities for the dogs.

"It's a great opportunity for the dogs to socialize and interact with other dogs and people," said Debbie Olsen, owner of two Golden Retrievers, 9-year-old Barley and 2-year-old Clancy, and second-year attendee of the event.

Dog lovers from across the country attended the event with their four-legged family members. Proceeds from the festival, which was sponsored by Rogue Ale, KG Specialties, and Fred Meyer, will be donated to area pet charities, said Jack Joyce, Rogue Ale founder. Show organizers had yet to decide on beneficiaries as of press time. In 2007, the Oregon Coast Therapy Animals, Central Coast Humane Society and other local animal charities received portions of the \$5,000 raised.

Beer lovers and their pups came from all around the state, with some traveling several hours to enjoy the festival. Amanda Atkinson and her Golden Retriever, Jezebel, and John Richardson and his black Labrador Retriever, Sammy, drove from Portland to the scenic Yaquina Bay town to join in the fun. They came with Travis Golkin and Kaitlin Bonner from Corvallis, who were celebrating their chocolate Lab's birthday.

"James is 4 years old today," Bonner said. "We thought this would be a festive way to celebrate his birthday. He's having a great time!"

The humans had a great time, too, thanks to all the tasty brews. Microbreweries from across the country were poured, including Allagash, Amnesia, Bear Republic, Calapooia, Caldera, Diamond Knot, Dogfish Head, Eugene City Brewery, Fish, Georgetown, Issaquah Brewhouse, Lagunitas, Laurelwood, McMenamin's, Lighthouse, Ninkasi, Pelican, Rogue Ales, Sierra Nevada, Siletz, Skagit River, Standing Stone, Steelhead, Max's Fanno Creek, Wakonda and more, according to festival organizers.

Also on tap: live music from Ty Curtis Band, Whisky Robbers, and HooDoo Johnson, tasty local seafood and snacks, arts and crafts vendors, and tours of Rogue Ale's brewery and House of Spirits distillery, Rogue's craft distillery.

Despite the abundance of dogs, only small squabbles broke out. The worst occurred between two roommates.

"We had a couple fights, but nothing major," Joyce said. "I think what the fest brings out is responsible pet owners, so it doesn't seem to be a problem to have so many dogs together."

Besides sniffing and socializing, the dogs participated in events especially for them, including doggie musical chairs, relay races, dog dancing, dog washes, and celebrity look-alike contests.

Many of the dogs, like Whitney, a stylish Shih Tzu, preferred to lounge in the warm 90-degree-Fahrenheit sunshine – a rarity for the frequently fogged-in Oregon coast. Her owners, John and Verla Ritchey, soaked up the sun and sipped Maier's 2008 batch of Brewer's Ale, which he called, "a tribute to my best friend of 12 and a half years."

Joyce said he will continue hosting the event, with next year's already in the planning stages. For more information about



Rogue Ales or Brewer's Memorial Ale Fest, visit [www.rogue.com](http://www.rogue.com) or [www.brewersalefest.com](http://www.brewersalefest.com)