

TASTE

BRINGING MORE TO THE TABLE by LAURA SICILIANO-ROSEN

At Beer Table in Park Slope, Brooklyn, unexpected beers meet uncommon service. Justin and Tricia Philips opened the bar in February, having noticed something missing from the restaurant scene: A venue for presenting high-quality suds "with serious table service, or at least direct customer interaction that's not only at the bar," says Justin. Beer Table brings those conversations to its three narrow communal tables, where patrons get help navigating an intriguing, near-daily menu of fresh drafts.

Announced on a hand-scrawled sign, one cask and three drafts are offered every day—selections as diverse as a Flemish sour, a domestic wheat wine, a Belgian golden ale and a heady IPA. When a keg's kicked, another goes in. "We really just want to do one-offs," says Justin, who has experience in both wine retail and beer importing. The rotating bottle menu, arranged by flavor, is just as diverse. Taking a different approach to menu selection, the listed information includes serving size (330 to 750 milliliters), price (\$5-\$60), and descriptions (a "thirst-quenching" Schlenkerla Helles), but not the country of origin. "You're not

forced to pay attention to brand names or origin—just the liquid," he explains.

All this beer talk doesn't mean you'll go hungry. Beer Table serves an artisanal cheese and charcuterie plate, with such versatile components as Fra'mani Gentle salami and Cahill's Porter cheddar (flavored with beer). Plans for expansion include offerings of homemade sausages, baked goods and daily salads with "lots of vinegary things that are interesting to pair with beers." The bar's rustic décor even includes shelves of home-pickled vegetables along an exposed brick wall.

Two-hour tastings, held most Saturdays, reflect the couple's move to think outside the box. In past events, pairings have run the gamut, from smoked beers with cheeses and sausages, to brews with pizza, and even whiskeys that complement beer aged in whiskey barrels. "I'm really into the adventure of beer, always finding new surprises around the corner," says Justin. A beer adventure with good food and thoughtful service? Count us in. www.beertable.com

