

Local Brewers Attend Hops School

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Diana Gish/KMXT

History's

first commercial brewers worked under the sign of the alchemist. But instead of turning metal to gold their specialty was turning grain into beer. Since they didn't know about yeast, those early beer-making alchemists attributed the brewing process to magic. They were known to perform elaborate rituals in an attempt to replicate whatever worked for them in the past. These days the science of making beer is better understood. Instead of conducting rituals and conjuring spells, modern brewers can take classes to quench their thirst for better beer making. And as KMXT's Diana Gish reports, Kodiak's local brewers are doing just that.

Ben

Millstein of the Kodiak Island Brewing Company is going to beer college.

But

forget about that image of John Belushi in a toga. It's not that kind of beer college.

-- (hops school
)

Millstein is attending the "Hops and Brew School" in Yakima, Washington. And brewers, I found out, love their hops.

-- (hops school)

The "Hops and Brew School"

is put on by the HopsUnion, a collective of six Northwest hops growers who cater to the craft and small brewery segment of the beer making industry.

-- (hops school attendees)

Millstein

doesn't have a particular problem he's hoping to solve by attending the school. But he does have a clear goal in mind for his time in Yakima.

-- (hops school fresh hops
taste....fresh hop beers.")

"To

So while chemistry and science have replaced spells and rituals, Millstein, who sounds a whole lot like a scientist, says there's still an element of magic involved in beer making. Brewers now know how to create the formula or extract but they can't do what only the yeast can do: it's up to the yeast to actually create the beer. That's the magic part. And that Millstein says, makes it both frustrating and fun.

I'm Diana

Gish.