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## Beer: It's not just for breakfast anymore

### Combo Uno and 50 microbrewers give locals an event fit for champions

BY CHAD SIMMONS  
STAFF A & E WRITER

Some people seem to think beer is the alcoholic beverage for the commoner, the plebeian. Crude booze swilled in between handfuls of pretzels and salted nuts, by those who lack class and sophistication.

People who think a beer is a beer is a beer probably can't imagine that there is a difference between a Pabst and a triple bock wheat beer.

Well, there is a big difference, and I'm not talking about taste alone. I had the beer drinkers fantasy fulfilled this past Sunday when I attended the First Brews Festival at the Palace Station Hotel & Casino.

Approximately 700 people entered the Roundhouse Central Ballroom at the Palace Station to participate in this beer-taster's delight. Brews from more than 50 microbreweries were offered up to taste. A delightful array of free



Holy Cow! employees participated in the Brews Fest. From left: brewmaster Dan Rogers, Greg Brown, owner Tom Wiesner, Tommy Almquist and manager Dave Penzcek.

food to sample and the tasteful jazz of UNLV's own **Combo Uno** made the afternoon a happening time, to say the least.

Even that kooky weatherman Nate Tannenbaum was on hand, mingling in the crowd and serving as the auctioneer guy. He is wacky.

Combo Uno turned out to be a real highlight of the festival. A talented group, they lived up to my expectations, cooking up some hot jazz that fit in nicely with the flowing cold

brew.

The Brews Festival was an event that dispelled the myth that beer is unsophisticated. It is an art form. Ask any person that brews their own; they'll tell you. A lot of these beers were about as expensive as champagne anyway. Not only are those beers the "gourmet" cream of the crop but they have enough alcohol in them to cause a dent in your liver.

Of course I tried to taste all 50; I think that was the goal of

most everyone in attendance. By the end of the event you could tell which people attempted this challenge, and which people wanted to help support public radio.

It takes a special breed of person to be a beer connoisseur. You have to be familiar with the whole process of brewing. You have to know the ingredients. You have to be able to judge a beer in the context of appearance, aroma, and taste. And lastly, you have to be able to keep your compo-

sure while standing in line to use the john.

There were beers to fit every palette: nutty, fruity, bitter, sweet. And there were beers with names only drunks could appreciate: Gila Monster, Ichthyosaur Pale Ale, even Buzzard Breath and Fat Weasel beer!

I had a hard time deciding which beer was my favorite. Looking back I'm having a hard time remembering which beers I drank; after those first five, I just swallowed whatever the closest booth offered. I do remember that Pyramid's Apricot Ale was sweet and delicate. Went down smooth.

Some of the others that stood out, or the ones I had second helpings of were: Thomas Kemper Weizenberry, Rogue Hazelnut(wow!) and Portland's Honey Beer.

One thing is for sure: I won't be drinking for a few days. It's going to be hard enough to go back to Hamm's after that experience.

Presented by KNPR 89.5 FM, the local public radio station, proceeds from this "suds" raiser go to the station and Radio Reading Services, a program which provides the daily reading of newspapers and other related materials to the physically/visually impaired population in southern Nevada.



Anne Heche and Josh Charles (L) watch traffic in *Pie in the Sky*; John Cusak (R) investigates murder in *City Hall*.

## He who knows the road, knows the way

BY JEFF HOWARD  
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There comes a time in every one's life when you have to pursue your dreams despite life's challenges. Such is the theme to Fine Line's charming *Pie In The Sky*.

It's a tale about Charlie Dunlap, portrayed by the talented Josh Charles, whose two passions in life are counting traffic and loving Amy (Anne Heche), the girl next door. Charlie's life is much like the gridlock on the Hollywood freeway; he follows his dream to be a traffic reporter while learning to balance his career and hold on to his true love.

*Pie In The Sky* unfolds a story of discovery and personal strife. No one handles the lead better than Charles. He shines in probably the most original quest ever concocted. When is the last time you

sat and counted cars? Typically, not a first choice in careers.

Unfortunately, the love story between Charles and Heche is unbelievable. After being rejected so often by Amy, Charlie continues his pursuit of her long after the audience is crying, "Move on, Charlie."

The most surprising performance came from John Goodman, who portrays "Sky King" Alan Davenport. Davenport, whom Goodman described as "a good buy at the bottom of the talent pool who lucked his way to the top," is Charlie's role model. He has listened and learned from Davenport since childhood.

The film's best scene is when Davenport, in a fit of drunkenness, is unable to fly high above Los Angeles to guide the commuters home. Charlie seizes the day and takes Davenport's place. Although Goodman's screen time is short, the time he does put in is enough to rank him as a true comic genius.

*Pie In the Sky* was written and directed by Bryan Gordon, who won an Academy Award for his short film, *Ray's Male Heterosexual Dance Hall*. Gordon developed *Pie* through the efforts of Robert Redford's Sundance Institute.

"This film was truly a labor of love," Gordon said. "It's about chasing your dreams and never letting go." After five years of working to get the story just right, Gordon premiered his movie to a zealous audience at the 1995 Telluride Film Festival, then in the American Spectrum at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival. With a tremendous cast, witty dialogue and a satisfying story line, *Pie In the Sky* serves up the perfect slice of entertainment that doesn't leave you hungry.

Grab one or two of your favorite people and take in this movie about traffic, love and modern dance. You'll find the menu engaging and the versatility delicious.



## City Hall gets the votes to win

BY BRIAN J. KUCHAR  
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Feel like a good Mafia story? Why not go see *Casino*, whoops, I mean *City Hall*?

For some strange reason, whenever I see Al Pacino's name above the title of a movie, I feel like it has to do with some harsh criminal movie with loads of gunfire.

I was relieved to see that *City Hall* was not as violent as *Heat*, which co-stars Pacino

and Deniro, and the Las Vegas gangster movie, *Casino*, which stars DeNiro. *City Hall* uses strong dialogue to get the audience nailed to their seats.

*City Hall* has plenty of political talk, just enough to enthrall the political fanatic in your life. The speeches and bureaucracy could get on the nerves

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