

# Choc it up to experiences

## Krebs brewery tells its tales in the labels

BY MIKE AVERILL  
World Scene Writer

This is the story of Pete Prichard, founder of Pete's Place restaurant in Krebs, as told by a six-pack of beer.

### BOTTLE 1 Pietro Piegari

*Style: American-style Amber*  
Pietro Piegari was 8 in 1903 when his family came to the states from Italy. In search of work, they made their way along with many other Italian immigrants to the coal-mining community of Krebs.

### BOTTLE 2 Miner Mishap

*Style: Black Lager*  
At the age of 11, Piegari changed his name to Pete Prichard and signed on to work in the coal mines. He spent 10 years working in the mines until one day in 1916 when a massive cave-in crushed his leg, leaving him unable to return to work.

### BOTTLE 3 Waving Wheat

*Style: Belgian White*  
Without steady work, Prichard took to brewing beer. Instead of making traditional European-style brew he used a recipe from the Choctaw tribe that made use of the abundant supply of golden wheat.

### BOTTLE 4 1919

*Style: American-style Dark Wheat*  
By this time, Prichard had refined his recipe, naming it Choc in honor of the Choctaws, and began selling it out of his home to the miners. The miners would hang around and buy the beer, so he started serving them food as well. In 1925 he officially opened a restaurant in his home and called it "Pete's Place."



Each of the Choc beer styles is named for a story in the life of founder Pete Prichard, who arrived in Krebs in 1903 named Pietro Piegari. TOM GILBERT/Tulsa World

### BOTTLE 5 Basement Batch

*Style: American-style Pale Ale*  
Prohibition didn't stop him from brewing; instead he moved the operation into the basement where he secretly brewed and hand-bottled his beer. Even after Prohibition was repealed, brewing at home remained illegal. That still didn't stop him from serving Choc to customers in his restaurant.

### BOTTLE 6 Last Laugh

*Style: American-style Unfiltered Wheat*  
Pete turned the restaurant over to his son Bill in 1964, and it was passed on to his grandson Joe in 1984. But it wasn't until 1995, nearly 60 years later, that the restaurant's beer could legally be served to its customers.

## A beer with conviction

When you're the owner of an 80-plus year-old restaurant, stories like these are important, said Joe Prichard, owner of Pete's Place and Choc Beer Co.

So when it came time to market and package the new beers coming from the brewery, it was decided that each beer would tell a part of his grandfather's story.

Last Laugh, the sixth and final of the story series, recently hit liquor store shelves along with a six-pack sampler containing one of each.

Other stories aren't told on the bottles. Many of them involve both brewing and cooking.

Pete Prichard was convicted twice of violating the Federal Prohibition Act and both times was denied parole because he was the best cook they'd had behind bars. But those weren't the only times he was detained for his cooking prowess.

"My fondest story is that every time the local sheriff's family came to town he'd come and arrest my grandfather, making him spend the week or the weekend in jail so he could cook for his relatives," Prichard said.

Prichard said the stories are one of the coolest things about having an 80-year-old restaurant and that he never knows when or where he'll hear one.

"We were in Beaver Creek (Colo.) skiing. My wife looks up and says, 'Hey, there's Barry Switzer.' She introduces herself and he's telling her Choc beer stories for about 15 minutes," he said. "That's the romantic part about it. Obviously it's a serious business but it's very fun when you have that history and get to play that history out."

## Two brews

Pietro Piegari, an American-style amber, hit shelves a couple of months ago.

"It's an American amber but really is a little bit different. The



Brewery owner Joe Prichard (left) and brewer Michael Lalli inside the Choc Beer brewery in Krebs. JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World file

challenge is taking a beer we might like to brew and making it ours," said Brewmaster Michael Lalli.

"We use a lot of victory hops which gives it a biscuity malt taste. It might not be what you expect, but in a good way."

The Last Laugh is an American-style wit, or white.

"When trying to come out with new brands it's always fun experimenting with different recipes and styles," Lalli said. "One of

the brewers here is also a home-brewer and said 'I want you to try this.'"

Last Laugh has a strong citrus aroma and taste compliments of coriander, lots of coriander.

"Compared to our Belgian white, it's 10 times as much, but it works," Lalli said. "It was a fun experiment and it's done pretty well."

Mike Averill 581-8489  
mike.averill@tulsaworld.com



©2009 Osage Million Dollar Elm Casino. Gambling Problem? Call 1-800-522-4700

# Ready to spring into some action?

**you Betcha.**

## Eggstatic Easter

Sunday • April 12 • 2:30 pm – 8 pm  
Drawings Every Half-Hour

Players Club members start earning entries on April 1, for drawings and a chance to pop open a balloon containing \$50-\$500.

## It's Raining Diamonds!

Every Tuesday • 7 pm – 9 pm

Drawings every hour for Players Club members and a chance to win sparkling diamond jewelry or 30% of its cash value up to \$150.



TULSA BARTLESVILLE SAND SPRINGS PONCA CITY SKIATOOK HOMINY PAWHUSKA

End of Tisdale Parkway 918.699.7777 milliondollarelm.com