



Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book)

By Ken Wells

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Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) By Ken Wells

Do beer yeast rustlers really exist? Who patented the Beer Goddess? How can you tell a Beer Geek from a Beer Nazi? Where exactly is Beervana? Does Big Beer hate Little Beer?

Ken Wells, a novelist, Pulitzer Prize finalist, and longtime Wall Street Journal writer, answers these questions and more by bringing a keen eye and prodigious reportage to the people and passions that have propelled beer into America's favorite alcoholic beverage and the beer industry into a \$75 billion commercial juggernaut, not to mention a potent force in American culture.

Travels with Barley is a lively, literate tour through the precincts of the beer makers, sellers, drinkers, and thinkers who collectively drive the mighty River of Beer onward. The heart of the book is a journey along the Mississippi River, from Minnesota to Louisiana, in a quixotic search for the Perfect Beer Joint -- a journey that turns out to be the perfect pretext for viewing America through the prism of a beer glass. Along the river, you'll visit the beer bar once owned by the brewer Al Capone, glide by The World's Largest Six Pack, and check into Elvis Presley's Heartbreak Hotel to plumb the surprisingly controversial question of whether Elvis actually drank beer. But the trip also includes numerous detours up quirky tributaries, among them: a visit to an Extreme Beer maker in Delaware with ambitions to make 50-proof brew, a look at the murky world of beer yeast rustlers in California, and a journey to the portals of ultimate beer power at the Anheuser-Busch plant in St. Louis, where making the grade as a Clydesdale draft horse is harder than you might imagine. Entertaining, enlightening, and written with Wells's trademark verve, *Travels with Barley* is a perfect gift -- not just for America's 84 million beer enthusiasts, but for all discerning readers of flavorful nonfiction.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Thoreau said, "The tavern will compare favorably with the church." Following this premise rather closely, longtime *Wall Street Journal* writer and novelist Wells (*Junior's Leg*) searches for his preferred house of worship: the "perfect beer joint." Setting out to follow the Mississippi River, Wells writes, "I would begin in Minnesota among folk who, geographically speaking, are practically Canadians and by reputation descended from good beer-drinking Swedes and Germans. I would slide down soon enough into the Great Beer Belly of America, for, by lore at least, Midwesterners are presumed to be the mightiest of U.S. beer drinkers." Full of profundities ("One thing you can say about lagers: the good ones don't make you work very hard to like them"), the book also lends historical, scientific and cultural insights into the \$75 billion industry—from the likes of beer behemoths like Budweiser to newfangled Extreme Beer, which has bottle values comparable to fine Bordeaux. Along the way, Wells encounters quirky characters, and the pages he devotes to describing brewers, bar proprietors, bartenders and plain ol' beer drinkers prove he's more interested in beer people (84 million Americans drink beer) than the industry itself. Wells's storytelling abilities complement his journalist's eye for stats and facts, making this a humorous, lively and informational tour.

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From [Booklist](#)

This account of journeys through the soft beer belly of America exudes that expansive happiness that springs from a guy who is truly enjoying his bottle of brew. Wells, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, has crisscrossed the U.S., visiting breweries and bars to find out just what makes beer the nation's leading adult beverage. In the wake of the "lager wars" that drove so many midsize breweries to extinction in the late twentieth century, Wells finds newly prospering microbreweries. He visits the deceptively down-market Flora-Bama Lounge on the Gulf Coast to find out how it maintains its record consumption levels. He travels the length of the Mississippi to assess the heartland's appetite for brewskis. Wells delves into the history of the giant breweries such as Anheuser-Busch with its trademark Clydesdale draft horses and Miller with its phenomenally successful campaign to encourage that quaffing of "light" beer. As one would expect from a reporter of his background, Wells focuses his eye less flatteringly on the economic, social, and political role of beer, whose powerful lobbyists jealously guard industry prerogatives. *Mark Knoblauch*

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Review

Julie Johnson Bradford editor, *All About Beer* magazine Ken Wells is the engaging Everyman of beer...but his quest to find the Perfect Beer Joint delivers more than beer: *Travels with Barley* is a perceptive and affectionate essay on everyday American culture through the lens of a beer glass.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Adele Rowan:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book specially book entitled Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely

might be your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a guide then become one form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get just before. The Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) giving you one more experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful facts for your better life within this era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary paying spare time activity?

Christopher Jones:

Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) can be one of your basic books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into delight arrangement in writing Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) nevertheless doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource data that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information can draw you into brand-new stage of crucial contemplating.

Audrey Stockman:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, magazine, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to you is Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) this book consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. That book was represented how does the world has grown up. The language styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some analysis when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book suited all of you.

Francisco Garcia:

Don't be worry should you be afraid that this book can filled the space in your house, you can have it in e-book approach, more simple and reachable. This kind of Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book) can give you a lot of pals because by you looking at this one book you have factor that they don't and make you more like an interesting person. This book can be one of a step for you to get success. This publication offer you information that probably your friend doesn't realize, by knowing more than different make you to be great individuals. So , why hesitate? Let us have Travels with Barley: A Journey Through Beer Culture in America (Wall Street Journal Book).

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