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Dionicess IV: Beer, Chocolate and Charity

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Charity has to be the best possible reason to drink six craft beers and devour a box of artisanal chocolates. On May 17, Gev Kazanchyan provided that motivation when he hosted **Dionicess IV**, pairing Stone beer with Mignon Chocolate at Side Bar in Glendale. The event raised almost \$1400 for the Real Medicine Foundation (RMF), an organization that provides humanitarian support to people living in disaster, post-war and poverty stricken areas.

Kazanchyan is an Environmental Health Professor at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) and a Food Safety & Sanitation Professor at College of the Canyons. To maintain an element of surprise, he refused to reveal the pairings until the event. That definitely made the event more fun, since all of us took part in a guessing game, including fellow food bloggers [Caroline on Crack](#), [e*star](#) and John from [Social Domain](#).

L.A. based Stone rep Nate Sellergren was on hand to help showcase the Escondido-based craft brewery. First up: Stone Levitation Ale, a smooth American amber ale. The pairing: orange peel that had been soaked in a sugar solution, baked three times and coated in dark chocolate. The sweet citrus played well off of Stone's light, citrusy beer.

Stone IPA was hoppy, but not over the top bitter. Sellergren shared the story of India Pale Ale, saying that it's a style of beer the English developed to help preserve beer when shipping barrels to Colonial India. Hops act as preservatives. For Stone IPA, hops are added during brewing and again after fermentation. The pairing: dark chocolate filled with limoncello ganache and lime-infused sea salt.

Sellergren said that Stone Ruination Ale was named due to the effect on palates, since the brewmaster doubles the amount of hops you'll find in the IPA. This beer was too intense, but the chocolate pairing was a welcome relief, a dark chocolate filled with aromatic lavender ganache.

Arrogant Bastard Ale was Stone's first experimental beer, an aggressive dry-malted brew that defies classification. This was the least successful pairing, milk chocolate filled with Madagascar vanilla and overpowering white chocolate.

The oak in Stone's Oaked Arrogant Bastard Ale helped take the edge off of the beer's overpowering flavor. Sellergren said Stone places Arrogant Bastard on oak chips after fermentation and the beer extracts the wood's flavor the way a chardonnay or bourbon would pull flavors from oak barrels. This pairing: milk chocolate with dark chocolate caramel and espresso sea salt. Score.

The rich Stone Smoked Porter was my second favorite Stone beer after the Pale Ale, a dark, drinkable ale that incorporates peat-smoked barley.

Kazanchyan and Mignon provided three chocolates to pair with our final beer. This included a chocolate containing marzipan, diced orange peel and undetectable hint of East Indian saffron. We also received milk chocolate with pistachio cream and a dark chocolate truffle with Dutch cocoa powder.

Near the close of the first Dionicess seating, Dr. Martina Fuchs, a pediatrician and the founder of Real Medicine Foundation (RMF), spoke about the importance of her organization. She established a small Sri Lankan children's clinic after the 2004 tsunami and has since gone on to assist in Myanmar after the cyclone and New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. RMF has also established clinics in other areas of extreme poverty and disaster, including Peru, Africa, and now Armenia. The assistance isn't just medical; it's also psychological and financial. The goal: "friends helping friends helping friends."