

# Then and now: Tahoe Beer still on tap



Tahoe Beer cans and bottles through the years since the mid-1800s. Photo/Bill Kingman

Various microbreweries have produced beers with Tahoe-like names, but the original 1860s patented brand “Tahoe Beer – Famous As The Lake” has been dormant for decades.

This National Park Service [website](#) offers an enlightening one-page pictorial history of Tahoe Beer and its origination in Carson City, two years before Nevada became a state. Today, the Tahoe Beer brand is being restored, albeit gradually.

Chris Bayer, a musician and historian in Carson City, says that one of the succeeding owners of the Carson Brewing Company in 1910 was a German vaudeville yodeler and brewer named Max Stenz. Stenz came to Carson City from Goldfield, Nev., and from a brewery in Santa Cruz. His Carson Brewery on King Street was on the "Tahoe Auto Route" of the historic Lincoln Highway which Stenz believed was a concept of romantic adventure important to Tahoe. But when nationwide Prohibition was imposed, the brewery briefly closed.



Brewer's Cabinet new Tahoe Beer label. Photo/Bill Kingman

A year later, the clear glass Tahoe-brand bottle (shown second from left) omitted the word beer because Stenz was bottling only soda pop and drinking water, primarily for central Nevada and hard rock mines.

Then Arnold Millard, also an owner, began producing near-beer by boiling-off the alcohol content of actual "Tahoe Beer."

Carson Brewing Company survived after Prohibition ended in 1932. But during World War II, the shortage of metal to make bottle caps and beer cans hampered production, and as mentioned in the above website, large breweries were absorbing small independents. Arnold Millard closed the Carson Brewing Company in 1948.



Brewer's Cabinet sell T-shirts touting Tahoe Beer. Photo/Bill Kingman

In 1982, the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company of Wisconsin produced a short-lived re-incarnation of Tahoe Beer for CBC Incorporated of Carson City. A six-pack typically sold for \$2.60 (far-right can in above photo).

Today, a microbrewery in Reno named Brewer's Cabinet exhibits ownership of "Tahoe Beer – Famous As The Lake," which it currently serves on-tap only.

A new Tahoe Beer label design is depicted in their bar and on T-shirts. Retaining the classic logo lettering, the new design includes a waterskier and "BC" notation. Plans to initiate distribution of Tahoe Beer are yet to be announced.

– *Bill Kingman*