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Mike Conrad brews his “Master Gunner Maibock” on-site.  
 PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES

# At Ease Brewing Company

**Nestled in a tree-lined stretch of I Street**, in the heart of Midtown, At Ease is one of the newest breweries to hit the Sacramento craft beer scene – and a perfect choice for this November column, the same week as Veterans Day.

That’s because owner/brewer Mike Conrad is a retired U.S. Army colonel who served 27 years active duty in 15 locations, including three overseas: Germany, Japan and Iraq. His last assignment was at the Pentagon. “I come from a big Army family,” he said, as he sat in his sleekly designed pub, the autumn sunlight glinting off the seven-barrel stainless steel brewing system (that also includes three 15-barrel fermenters). “My dad, granddad, uncle were all in the Army – it’s a family thing. I went to West Point right out of high school.”

When he was stationed in Buffalo in the ’90s, some neighbors taught him to brew beer – and he became an avid home brewer. “When we were kids, our job was to bottle his beer,” laughed Taylor Conrad,

his daughter and operations manager. “My parents would always throw parties and serve it.”

About five years ago, the dream of opening a brewery became a solid plan. Mike and his wife eventually left D.C. and settled here, where two of their grown children live, and he and Taylor began scouting locations. Robert Maurer (of the design firm Commuter Industries) helped make this spot their dream pub. “He got everything right,” said Taylor, including the “subtle military theme,” which Maurer achieved with wide dark-wood doors and windows; tan, navy and gray paint; corrugated wall panels; and retro metal chairs.

The theme is reinforced by the clever beer names, such as the hazy IPA “Fog of War,” the seasonal pumpkin spice ale “Basic Training,” or the special Veterans Day release “DD214,” which will raise \$1 per pint for the Fisher House at Travis AFB.

Also look for trivia night every Thursday, board game day the first Sunday of the month, and frequent food trucks (American River Provisions rolls in regularly). The Conrads are happy to do private events too – think holiday office parties.

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

**At Ease Brewing Company, 1825 I St., Sacramento, 916-431-7940, ateasebrewing.com. Open every day but Tuesday; dog- and kid-friendly; easy parking.**

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