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CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2018

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Mayor Emanuel Interviews Beer Writer Josh Noel on "Chicago Stories"

On this week's episode of "[Chicago Stories](#)," Mayor Emanuel joined beer writer Josh Noel at Begyle Brewing Company on Chicago's "Malt Row" to talk about his new book, *Barrel-Aged Stout and Selling Out*, along with the broader story behind the craft beer movement and the culture it created, all while sampling a few of their own beers along the way.

As Josh told Mayor Emanuel, craft beer today encompasses a universe of tastes, flavors, notes, and textures that draws on hundreds of years of tradition from Europe, as well as new and inspired innovations taking place seemingly every day in cities across the United States.

And yet, what craft beer *is* goes far beyond the beer itself.

"When someone walks into a brewery they're not just having a beer, they're having an experience, they're talking with the brewer, the brewer could be behind the bar, the brewer could be leading a tour, they're seeing the tanks where the beer is made," Josh told the mayor. "It is very much an experience and a cultural experience."

It is that experience and its convergence with "Big Beer" that Josh explores in his book, which tells the story of the craft beer movement in America through the arc of Chicago's Goose Island Brewery, beginning with its founding in 1988 as a fledgling start-up, through its rise as a trailblazing innovator, its stunning sale to Anheuser-Busch in 2011 and finally its complex aftermath.

"Soon after the sale I reached out to Goose Island's founder John Hall...and said 'I think there's more than another newspaper article here, I think there's a book-length narrative in the Goose Island story—the innovations, the struggles, the success,'" Josh told Mayor Emanuel. "It served as sort of a metaphor for the rest of the industry."

As Josh explained during the conversation, the craft brew movement got its start in the late 1970s—thanks in no small part to a tax code amendment that lifted the ban on home brewing—and has since grown from less than a hundred breweries nationwide to over 7,000 today, and in the process developed into a fascinating, dynamic industry that's far deeper than simply 'beer is fun.'

"It's complicated, and it's full of colorful characters," Josh said, "and it just so happens that the product is really fun to consume and indulge in and smell and taste."

Be sure to tune into the rest of the episode as Josh and Mayor Emanuel talk about craft beer's connections to broader social trends, Big Beer's response to the movement's rise, and where Chicago's own exciting scene fits into craft brewing's future.

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