

Not all San Diego beer tasting rooms look alike

R sandiegoreader.com/news/2016/nov/27/beer-news-not-all-san-diego-beer-tasting-rooms/



0

Six spots that go beyond reclaimed wood

By [Ian Anderson](#), Nov. 27, 2016

They may range in size and scope, but most of the nearly 150 breweries and tasting rooms pouring across greater San Diego have at least one thing in common — their looks. Since the majority operate out of warehouses and business park suites, their brewing equipment prominently featured, there's really only one cost-effective design option: go industrial. And why not? All the restaurants are doing it.

Fresh beer is the number one reason to visit a tasting room, so customers rarely care which color paint a brewery has slapped on their drywall to liven things up. But for those who like a little atmosphere to go with their tasting notes, here are a few spots that have made an effort to go above and beyond the patchworks of reclaimed wood and other contemporary industrial tropes.

Half Door Brewing Co.

The fact [Half Door](#) set up its brewpub in a century-old house gave it a decorative head start. From the outside, the Petco Park–adjacent house seems like something out of the American South, each of its two stories fronted by wide, railed porches. Inside, the dark and polished wood bar gives it the warmth of an Irish pub, finished by parquet floors, floral wallpaper, and vintage photographs.

Acoustic Ales Brewing Experiment

Though both occupy red brick buildings built in the early 20th Century, there's no connection between the current [Mission Brewery](#) of East Village, and the pre-Prohibition beermaker that lent its name to Mission Brewery Plaza, at the foot of Mission Hills. [Acoustic Ales](#) is the only brewery working out of the Plaza these days, where it offers the most comfortable tasting room in the county. Overstuffed leather sofas and chairs invite you to sink in and drink beer

in the sort of den-like setting one might expect to take a snifter of brandy.

The wall decor at the Border X tasting room goes a different direction than most.

North Park Beer Co.

With almost 9000 square feet of warehouse to fill, [North Park](#) could easily have looked the part of just another urban reclamation project and nobody would have minded. Instead, the brewery enlisted one of the city's most acclaimed restaurant designers, Paul Basile, to craft an elegant space that somehow invokes both Irish pub and 19th-century street corner.



Border X Brewing

A couple blocks off Chicano Park in Barrio Logan, [Border X](#) exemplifies the expressive spirit of its neighborhood. From tin ceiling medallions to checkered floor tiles, it does its own thing from top to bottom, with walls split between rotating art shows and a quirky collage of cartoonish white on black illustrations.

Modern Times Beer

The Lomaland Fermentarium and North Park's Flavordome each embody the design savvy that's helped [Modern Times](#) create international demand for its beer (and merchandise). The Point Loma brewhouse forces attention away from its nuts and bolts with comic-book-pages-as-wallpaper and a post-it note mural of Michael Jackson holding his chimp. The North Park satellite may be summed up in two words: lampshade ceiling.

Kilowatt Brewing Company

This Kearny Mesa brewery can't entirely shake its industrial setting, but when the black lights go on it's an altogether otherworldly experience. Rotating blacklight art sets a unique tone, bolstered by a color-shifting LED bar top reminiscent of a *Star Trek* drinking venue. This distinctive vision promises to be further embellished when [Kilowatt](#) opens a satellite tasting room in [Ocean Beach](#).