



## MOUNTAIN BREW

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Beer and food aficionados flock to the little mountain town of Truckee, California for FiftyFifty Brewing Co's craft ales

[www.fiftyfiftybrewing.com](http://www.fiftyfiftybrewing.com)

“After working as hardware engineers at a multinational IT company, my husband and I decided on a complete change in lifestyle,” says Alicia Barr, co-owner of FiftyFifty Brewing Co. “So about 12 years ago we left suburbia, moved to the mountains, and started our own brewery.”

For several years Alicia and husband Andy had dabbled in homebrewing, and had always loved local brewpubs for their beer and good food, as well as the place they often occupy at the center of their communities. Visiting Truckee—a northern California mountain town popular with skiers and mountain bikers—and finding there was no local watering hole gave them the idea to found one of their own.

The result was FiftyFifty Brewing Co, where the Barrs first made their signature beer, Eclipse Imperial Stout, which has earned international accolades. Eclipse's special flavor comes from being aged in barrels that formerly contained whiskey, bourbon, or cognac, the rolling selection of prime spirits imparting a unique flavor to each new batch. It is designed to age similarly to fine wine, and many connoisseurs store bottles

in their cellars for special occasions. “Eclipse can be enjoyed right away,” says Andy, “but, if cellared dark and cool, the flavors mature and drink well for more than five years.”

FiftyFifty brews a range of traditional craft ales, but is especially known for its innovative barrel-aged brews. “Making a good home brew is one thing,” says Alicia, “but to consistently repeat an outstanding beer takes a great deal of skill.” So the first thing the Barrs did was to hire experts, including a brewmaster and a restaurant manager. The brewery and pub now employ over 50 people. “Our name represents the concept of balance, between work and play, beer and food, and so on,” says Alicia. “We take great pride in our menu, sourcing as much produce as possible from local farmers, and all of our beef is grass-fed.”

Making a success of FiftyFifty has been an exciting adventure, but has also had its anxious moments. “Within the space of two years, Andy and I had quit our corporate jobs, sold our house, moved to the mountains, had a child and started a business,” says Alicia. “We were determined that we wouldn't look back one day and say: ‘We had this great idea, but we never gave it a shot.’”