

A collage of various beer cans and ice cubes. The cans are from different brands, including 'PEOPLE'S PALE ALE', 'INTUITION ALEWORKS', and 'JOHN BOAT'. The cans are surrounded by numerous ice cubes, creating a refreshing and cold aesthetic. The text 'eu' is overlaid in large white letters at the top left, and 'LOCAL BREWS' is overlaid in large white letters at the bottom center.

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photo by anna rabhan

MAGICAL BREWERY TOUR

A spin through Jacksonville's craft breweries **BY ANNA RABHAN**

The River City has very active and visible art, music and sports scenes. But Jacksonville is like an onion—you can just keep peeling back layer after layer. So for those who may have doubted that this is a cool place, we present to you: The Beer Scene! You may have visited one or two of the craft microbreweries or the brewpub we feature but, trust us, the scene is best experienced by hopping on the bus—the Jax Brew Bus, that is. Uncross your eyes; we're not talking about yet another haunted tour. Just grab a beer and keep reading.

THE BUS CAME BY AND I GOT ON; THAT'S WHEN IT ALL BEGAN

Meet the geniuses behind this concept: Glenn, Mike and Josh grew up together and went to college in Jacksonville. With degrees in finance and law, they could have settled back and satisfied themselves with their home brewing hobby. But when the craft brew market blew up nationwide, the guys wanted to share the joy of drinking locally-made craft beer. Mike quips, "I do brew my own beer, and I think it's the best in Jacksonville." But after running down the cost of brewery equipment, he explains, "Thus we are running a brew *bus*, rather than a brewery."

They hatched their plan in June of 2011 and hit a bankruptcy auction, where they picked up a 17-seat airport shuttle. However, they were still unsure of the wisdom of the venture. Mike's former roommate, Chris, recounts, "I asked him what the worst result he could imagine was. He said, 'I own a bus?'" Things moved fast after that and Jax Brew Bus gave its first tour in October 2011.

Jax Brew Bus runs one tour every Saturday from 1-6 pm. Given that they are full every weekend except for the two around Christmas, they possibly can add more tours. At this point, though, they simply rent out the bus during off hours for sporting events, birthday and bachelor parties—just about anything. They'll even provide the coolers, ice and cups! The brewery tour is \$50 per person; reservations are taken by phone, email or through jaxbrewbus.com.

The tour picks up at Tinseltown behind Seven Bridges, which seems like a good, central location. The day *EU* "hopped on the bus," as the Brew Bus guys say, there were riders from the Beaches, Orange Park, Mandarin, Riverside and elsewhere.

The first thing you notice on the bus is that the luggage rack has been replaced by a cabinet for cups, Brew Bus swag and other supplies. That's topped by a giant cooler for riders' food and personal beer stash. Eating on the bus is allowed and

even encouraged, and you can bring your own beer. Most riders seemed to want to reserve valuable cooler space, though, for the *raison d'être*—beer purchases from the breweries themselves. But, by consensus, the coolest part of the whole concept is that you can drink. On the bus. For real.

Riders did have additional, more sober, reasons for checking out the tour. Samantha and Chris wanted to expand their horizons. "Because we live near the beach," Chris says, "it's a lot easier to see the Green Room and not the other ones that are all over the city. That's why we were so interested to see all the different breweries in Jacksonville."

On the way to the first stop, the Jax Brew Bus crew educated their audience with a bit of Jacksonville brew history and a breakdown of how beer is made. The route into Riverside took us past the same scene as appears on the side of the bus, the Main Street Bridge with the city's skyline behind it, reminding us all of yet another reason why Jacksonville is a cool place.

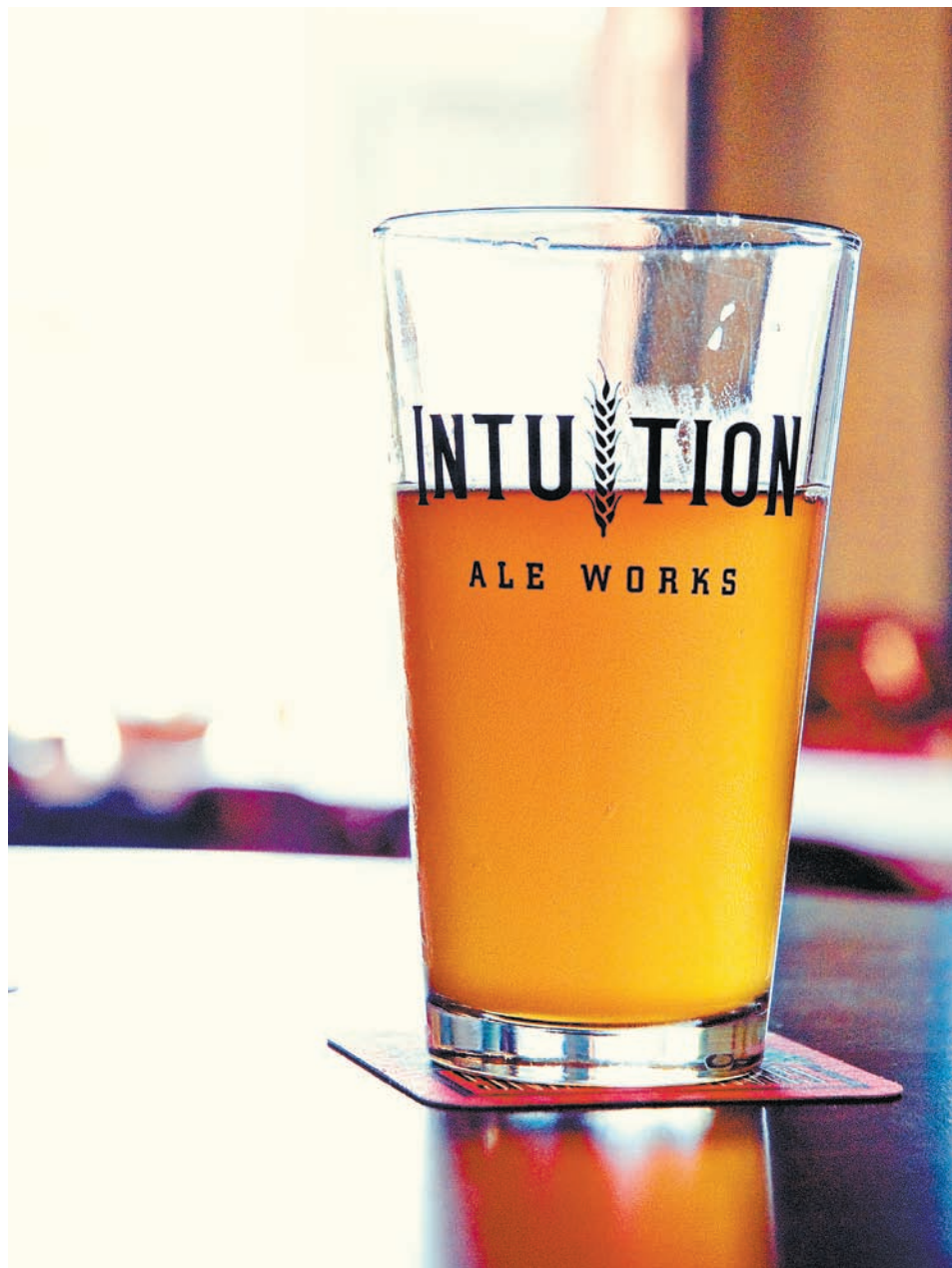


photo by oliver dodd

THIS IS THE AGE OF INTUITION

What's striking about **Intuition Ale Works** on King Street is how huge it is. The brewery itself is spread out in the back half of an enormous warehouse. The front half is used for events and as an overflow taproom. The Jax Brew Bus group settled at the long tables there like a small flock of birds in an open airplane hangar.

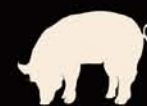
While waiting for samples, Jax Brew Bus' Josh explained that Jacksonville native Ben Davis, who at one point owned and operated the Grotto wine and tapas bar in San Marco, was making wine under his own label in California until 2007. "But he felt that making beer was his calling, and he came back from California really on intuition."

Intuition has more of their own beers on tap, 23 the week we were there, than anyone actually drinking them could ever keep track of. Our group tried the Jon Boat German ale, I-10 IPA, People's Pale Ale and Truck Stop Stout. Jax Brew Bus' Mike says, "The I-10 is, by far, the most popular beer here, but if you go out to any restaurant in town that has Intuition, [People's Pale] is probably the one they're serving."

For that reason, we offer tasting notes on those two brews from experienced food and beverage blogger Oliver Dodd: "The People's Pale Ale is one of the best pale ales I've had the pleasure of consuming. It's characterized by a full body with a fragrant, citrusy hoppiness that isn't at all overbearing

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

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Intuition Tanks

photo by oliver dodd

and rivals well-known brands such as Sierra Nevada. The I-10 IPA is also a shining example of that particular style. Though an almost overwhelming hop character is the signature of the style, some brands are a little too extreme in this measure. Others sweeten the mixture too much in order to mask some of the bitter notes or the often elevated alcohol content. The I-10 IPA is hoppy enough to please the fanatics, but balanced enough that most people can appreciate a pint."

Nothing goes better with a beer than a good story, though, and brewer Bryan Massey stopped by to tell the Truck Stop story and explain why the Brew Bus guys were passing out Sweet Sixteen powdered donuts. "We have a security officer on nights. He came in and brought us Dunkin' Donuts' maple-glazed donuts. I'd been thinking about it for a long while and finally had a donut in the bar. I'm like, 'Dude, pour me a Truck Stop; I'm goin' for it right now!' Dipped it in, took one bite and everyone at the bar is like, 'Ooh, can I get one?!' And we only had a dozen, so I had to be like, 'All right, everyone gets a quarter of a donut.' Everyone at the bar orders Truck Stop; everyone's got a little quarter of a donut, dipping it in. And they were like, 'Oh, man, who's goin' for more?!' Now, had I not actually been eating a donut dipped in beer *while* being regaled with that story, the idea might have seemed as strange as it probably seems in print. But Truck Stop is a breakfast stout with pure maple syrup and locally roasted Lucky Dog coffee in it. In spite of not usually being a Stout fan or a donut fan, the combo was surprisingly tasty.

Refreshed, we joined owner Ben Davis for a tour of the brewery. He explained the entire brewing process, leading us past shelves stacked with sacks of hops and the massive 30-barrel-plus fermenting tanks, all the while talking about the yeast as though they were drinking buddies. "Then we chill it down, and that temperature change is like turning the lights on in the bar. These guys don't like that too much and they head for the door." He clearly has a winemaker's appreciation of what the materials can do for the finished product.

Finally we came to the most recent reason Intuition Ale Works is unique among Jacksonville's craft brewers, the canning operation. Intuition is the first craft microbrewery in Florida to can their beers. "It was a little bit of a race," says Davis. "Another one starts [in three days]." Davis gestures toward the canning line, his hand following the contours of the machine as though it were a recently acquired luxury car. He demonstrates how the machine, inactive at the time, works by pushing an example can through the conveyor like a kid would demonstrate a Lego creation, again personifying the different parts of the machine as though they were each employees. His obvious enjoyment of what he does was, frankly, infectious.

Davis is a pretty shrewd businessman too, and canning has been his plan for a long time. "The only reason not to go into cans is because Americans think shitty beer goes in cans. It's a better packaging though. Bottles are dangerous. Cans keep out air and light, which will just kill beer. They're lighter and they fit in a cooler better." They had just begun selling six-packs of People's Pale the day of our tour in February, and their other two most popular brews, I-10 IPA and Jon Boat, were ready in cans in time to kick off St. Patty's Day weekend. Get all the can news and more on Intuition's website: intuitionaleworks.com.

After the tour, those who had brought their gallon or quart Intuition growlers were anxious to get them filled, so we headed outside and into the separate taproom. The bar is reminiscent of an old English pub with its dim lighting, brick walls and plank-top tables. Charming, in a word, and definitely a place you could see yourself hanging out with friends after work. We were already planning our return to Intuition well before we got back on the bus for the short ride to the next brewery.

BREW YOUR OWN

BY OLIVER DODD

I suggested to my boss that we should have a team brewing session at Engine 15 to celebrate a few recent milestones. Having a number of beer snobs on the team, the suggestion was well-received and we made an appointment a couple months out. Due to demand, a lead time of a month or more is to be expected but, for anyone who's ever toyed with the idea of brewing their own beer, it's worth the wait.

The consumption of beer is not required during the brewing process, but is highly advised. Not only does it serve as a great motivator, it also helps take the edge off of some of the drudgery. The first thing to keep in mind is cleanliness. The second thing to keep in mind is cleanliness. Everything is sanitized. After all, when your recipe involves encouraging a colony of microorganisms to multiply and consume the concoction you've prepared for them, you better be sure you haven't introduced any unfriendly competition.

Disclaimer: Everything that follows is merely a brief recounting of our experience brewing beer at Engine 15 with some very simplistic explanations of the process. There are many good resources online detailing the history and process of brewing. To any experienced brewers reading this, please forgive me.



photo by oliver dodd



photo by oliver dodd

For the sake of time and convenience, many amateur home brewers use malt extract to make their beer. Malt is dried, germinated grains. Malt extract is a thick syrup consisting of the sugars extracted from malted grains. At Engine 15, they employ a hybrid approach. First we ground up some malt, wrapped it in cheesecloth and stuck it in the boiling waters of the brew kettle. This part of the process is called mashing. The starches in the grain are broken down into sugars by the heat and the enzymes created during the malting process. What you end up with is a liquid called wort, which is later filtered out of the mash. Since we didn't use a particularly large amount of actual malt, we supplemented our wort with the malt extract. To put it in crude terms, wort is to beer what grape juice is to wine. It is the fermentable fuel upon which your carefully chosen strand of yeast is going to feast, converting sugars into ethanol.

The next part of the process calls for the addition of hops to the mix. Hops are the flower cones from the female Common Hop (*Humulus lupulus*) plant. Hops are used as a bittering agent to balance out the sweetness of the wort, which can still be a bit sweet even after fermentation, and are also used for their antibiotic properties. There are many varieties of hops, and they can be added to the wort at different times throughout the boiling process in order to impart different aromas and flavors.

Once the boiling process is complete, the wort is filtered, cooled and transferred to a fermentation vessel. If I remember correctly, the yeast is added at this point and the vessel is sealed, not to be opened for three weeks or more as the yeast works on converting as many of the sugars in the wort into ethanol as it can before dying of acute alcohol intoxication.

When the fermentation process is complete, you must return to Engine 15 to bottle your brew. Again, cleanliness is key and everything is sanitized. Drinking beer while bottling is not required, but is strongly recommended. Now I understand why some microbreweries don't bottle their beer. It's incredibly repetitive work, but can be an enjoyable experience when armed with a pint and the knowledge that you're not going to be doing it very often (if ever again).

So here they are, the finished products: Ping Pong Pale Ale and Mess You Up Wheat. Both brews were pretty good, and their character changed over the weeks they aged in the bottles.

Conclusion: Do it. Overall, it was a great experience: ideal for small teams, if you have a group of interested friends or an employer who doesn't object to such activities. But even if you can't be bothered, you can always just head to Engine 15 for a good sausage and a great beer.



Bold City Grains photo by anna rabhan

BOLD AS LOVE

Bold City Brewery is right down the road from Intuition and, as food and beverage blogger Oliver Dodd says, the confluence of the two, in addition to Kickbacks Gastropub, has “established the area near the intersection of Rosselle Street and King Street as Jacksonville’s brewing district and created one amazing pub crawl.”

In fact, Bold City was the first of the breweries in Jacksonville’s beer renaissance to open and is credited with kicking the whole thing off. Brian Miller, Bold City’s owner, had been home brewing since 2002 and, when he found out in 2005 that he was going to be laid off from his corporate job, he convinced his dad to take out a second mortgage (how many beers did that take?!) so that Brian could open the brewery. The whole family is now involved in the business, from management to brewing to slinging beer in the taproom.

Bold City is housed in a large warehouse, much like Intuition. It also has a taproom and brewery-floor bar. What’s unique about it, though, is the building’s age and the Cannery Row ambiance provided mainly by the old, high, wood-plank ceiling and walls and the transom windows. The Jax Brew Bus crew set up at the tasting table and were served flights that were, curiously, communal. As our tour was made up mostly of people who didn’t know each other, only the thirstiest seemed willing to share glasses. The variety was also surprising. Bold City generally has eight to 12 beers available at a time, and we tasted eight. The flight glasses were also conveniently served on a labeled tray so you didn’t have to keep asking which was which.

The Jax Brew Bus guys informed us that Duke’s Cold Nose Brown Ale and Killer Whale Cream Ale are the two Bold City brews one is likely to find all over town. The Duke’s was a nice balance of body and sweetness, and it’s easy to see why it’s so popular. Another thing that makes Bold City unique is their wide



Bold City Tanks

photo by anna rabhan

distribution. Of all of Jacksonville’s craft breweries, Bold City is the one you’re most likely to find in your favorite restaurant, pub, grocery store or beverage outlet. Look for the list on their website: boldcitybrewery.com.

One of Bold City’s brewers, Cody, gave us a very thorough tour. After that, we were free to grab a pint in the cozy taproom or play giant Jenga while folks were getting their gallon or quart growlers filled. By the time the tour left Bold City, we were all eager to see what it would take to try our own hand at brewing. Fortunately, the tour includes a visit to Just Brew It right next door!



Giant Jenga at the Green Room

photo by anna rabhan

RICH ARE THE ROOMS AND THE COMFORTS THERE

Quick: Where would you want to end up after a long night (or afternoon) of brewery and pub hopping? In a buddy's garage, hanging out, playing games and drinking more beer, right? That's exactly the experience that **Green Room Brewing**, on 3rd Street North in Jacksonville Beach, offers.

Green Room's owner, Eric Luman, who is also co-owner of Just Brew It, used to be head brewer at Seven Bridges. His reputation, especially with the small-batch brews, was well-established by the time he left to open his own microbrewery, which he did in June of 2011.

Green Room (greenroombrewing.com) has 16 taps, six or seven of which are occupied by their own brews. The others are dedicated to beer from other Jacksonville and Florida breweries such as Intuition and Gainesville's Swamp Head. Luman's interest in collaboration is clear, and he has helped develop and brew recipes at several other breweries. In fact, that collaborative spirit is present in physical form on the brewery floor. Luman purchased Bold City's original tanks for Green Room's operation. That bit of Jacksonville brew history is worth a look, as are the Maker's Mark barrels in which Luman is ageing a special brew for Green Room's one-year anniversary.

On the day of our Jax Brew Bus tour, we were given our choice of a Green Room pint. Unfortunately, their most well-known brew, the Helles Yeah, wasn't available, so we turn to food and beverage blogger Oliver Dodd for his impression. He says, "The Helles stands out for me as a particularly well-balanced lager." We also enjoyed the Undertow Barleywine, which was sweet and soothing.

Although the bar at Green Room is rather small, the bar room is huge, and patrons regularly spill over into the brewery. By the time our tour was coming to a close, Green Room was packed and there was a wait for the Ping-Pong table. That's right, Ping-Pong. Aside from great beer and a relaxed atmosphere, the games are what make Green Room unique. They have the ubiquitous giant Jenga and Cornhole, of course, but, in addition to Ping-Pong, they have a bazillion board games in the front bar area, making it a great place to end up for a heaping helping of lighthearted fun along with your brew.



There's a new store on the beer block, Beer:30. Started by locals Warren Fryefield and Justen Mann, Beer:30 is a welcome addition to the growing Jacksonville Brewery District occupying what used to be Hammerhall Gaming on King Street in Riverside. This new "craft emporium", as they are dubbing it, opened June 1st just in time for summer heat waves and football season.

EU: Why did you decide to open a beer emporium, and how did you originally settle on the concept?

WF: The idea spawned when I visited Atlanta in December to watch the Jags take on the Falcons in that miserable Thursday night blowout loss. A buddy of mine who lived up there told me I had to check out this beer store in the area. As soon as I walked in I said "Riverside needs this!"

EU: What sort of things will you offer? Will you have particular items that can't be found anywhere else locally?

WF: We are primarily carrying harder to find domestic craft beers. We are carrying the full portfolio of a lot of well known craft breweries from around the country, as well as some not so well known breweries that aren't really visible in the Jacksonville market. We are also going to carry imports, ciders, and wines; but our main focus is on domestic crafts.

EU: What made you choose the King Street Corridor?

WF: There was no question where it had to be. With local staples Kickbacks, Intuition and Bold City all serving great draft beer in the area, as well as all the local bars and restaurants with so many great beers on tap, we knew it was the right side of town for us.

EU: What are you hoping to bring to the new "Brewery District"?

WF: A package store! There are so many places to get good beers on draft in the area, but not enough places to get good beers to go. It's too expensive to drink out every night.

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DO TRY THIS AT HOME: JACKSONVILLE'S BREW SUPPLY STORE AND BEER EVENTS

If you could see yourself as Jacksonville's next big brew star, or even if you're just passionate about your hoppy hobby, you'd do well to visit **Just Brew It** (www.justbrewitjax.com). Not only is Just Brew It where Brian Miller, owner of Bold City Brewery, stocked up during his home brewing days, but the co-owner is none other than Eric Luman, owner of Green Room Brewing. Besides, they really are *the* local beer and wine home brewing supply store. When the Jax Brew Bus tour showed up with their exclusive, tour-only 15 percent discount cards in hand, Ken Stevens was kind enough to show us around the shop, which is next door to Bold City Brewery on Rosselle Street. From refrigerators full of different yeast strains to brew kits to honey to hoses to sacks of malt and grain, they really do have it all. Stevens even let us crunch a few grains just to get a taste of what beer is all about. And raise your glasses, beach brewers, Just Brew It has a location in Jacksonville Beach on 3rd Street North.

Just Brew It is also a great place to find out about the Jax brew culture and related events. The manager is also Past President of the Cowford Ale Sharing Klub, or C.A.S.K. (www.thecask.org). Who knew Northeast Florida had its very own home brewing club? They hold regular meetings and are also on Twitter. Another resource for breaking brew news is Beer Junto (www.beerjunto.com), whose mission is to "unite the Jacksonville beer community."

Also check out the breweries' own sites, Facebook pages and tweets. Jacksonville's breweries are incredibly active and partner with local organizations and restaurants to hold dinners, benefits and other events all the time. Don't miss out on any of the fun—or the beer!



ALL RIGHT, GET OFF THE BUS

A

ll good things must come to an end, and as the Jax Brew Bus made its way back to Tinseltown, others on the road would never have guessed that the group had just met that day. There was good-natured joking, much laughter and the asshole hat was finally awarded for a second, albeit small, spill.

There was also some comparing of notes about the different breweries and their beer. Finally, someone asked one of our wise and judicious guides, Mike, which among Jacksonville's awesome craft breweries was his favorite. "I love them all differently," he replied. Cheers to that!

Please email your questions, comments or suggestions to anna@eujacksonville.com.

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Beaches location 3117 10th Ave N, Jax Beach, FL 32250	Bachata 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Cha-Cha 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Hustle 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Practice Party 8 pm (Jax Beach)	Practice Party 8 pm (Jax Beach)	
	Tango 7 pm (Jax Beach)	Cha-Cha 6:15 pm (Jax Beach)	Waltz 6:15 pm (Jax Beach)	Swing 7 pm (Jax Beach)	Salsa Rueda 7 pm (Jax Beach)	
	Salsa Rueda 8 pm (Arlington)	Swing 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Tango 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Practice Party 8 pm (Jax Beach)	Practice Party 8 pm (Jax Beach)	
	Foxtrot 7 pm (Jax Beach)	Hustle 6:15 pm (Jax Beach)	Bachata 6:15 pm (Jax Beach)	Samba 7 pm (Jax Beach)	Champagne Open House Guest Party 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Formal Achievement Ball 6:15 pm (Jax Beach) \$35 per person—RSVP
	Tango 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Waltz 7:45 pm (Arlington)	Salsa 7:45 pm (Arlington)			
	Swing 7 pm (Jax Beach)	Salsa 6:15 pm (Jax Beach)	Tango 6:15 pm (Jax Beach)	Rumba 7 pm (Jax Beach)		
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