

BC Brews News

BC beer lovers were disappointed last June when **Sailor Hagar's** in North Vancouver closed its brewery. The brewing equipment went to northern France, and *Gary Lohin*, the brewer behind those wonderful beers (remember the Wit?), went on to other things. *Al Reidlinger*, one of Sailor Hagar's owners, explained that they needed the space to expand their beer and wine store. The good news is that the beers continue to live! *Fabian Sprecht*, Lohin's former assistant brewer, is now making some of the same great beers at **Howe Sound Inn and Brewing** in Squamish. Reidlinger says that they are adding Phillips' Maple Cream Ale, Crannóg's Organic Brown Ale, Tree's Amber, and Peak's Lager to the draught selection.

Gary Lohin has reappeared at **Central City Brewing Company** (604-582-6620). This new brewpub is located in Central City Mall near the end of the Skytrain run in Surrey. This is a very large (250 seat) pub with space for another 450 in the standing only areas. One of the partners is Colin James (the blues/rock guitarist), and so there are frequent concerts in the pub: Doug and the Slugs, Barney Bentall and the Legendary Hearts to name a couple. According to Lohin, there's an extensive menu of great food, and the full range of his beers. "I've been given license to brew whatever I want and that's been successful so far. My beers range from a copper bock to stout to a bitter, German lager, and a wheat beer. This is the challenge - educating a new clientele to what beer really can be."

Belgian beer heaven is the theme of Vancouver's new restaurant **Chambar**, (562 Beatty Street, Vancouver, 604-879-7119). The name is a derivative of the French *chambard* meaning mayhem or disturbance, maybe even crazy. Owners *Nico and Karri Shuermans* aren't crazy. They've come up with an interesting focus: nouveau Belgian cuisine with an African twist. All the traditional dishes will be there (there are five variations on moules frites alone!) but Nico's Rwandan upbringing is reflected in some of the dishes. One of the Moules frites comes a la Congolaise, cooked with fresh tomato, smoked chili and cilantro with a touch of coconut cream and lime. All the standard Belgian beers are there from Stella Artois to Hoegaarden, but there's also about 25 more ranging from Abbaye des Rocs to Westmalle Abbey tripel. The amazing part of the menu is the right hand side. None of the main courses are more than \$20. Now that's crazy!

New from **Vancouver Island Brewing** is Islander Lager. This beer is a clean light bodied, lightly hopped, and crisp refreshing lager. It is very pleasant, is well balanced, and has a mild flavour. This year's VIB Hermanator ice bock sold out even before December.

Looks like some interesting beers ahead at **Spinnakers Brewpub** in Victoria. For the winter *Lon Ladell* brought back last year's very popular Fogfighter, a strong Belgian blonde ale. Lon has brewed chai vanilla stout and expects an Apple Honey Lager soon made with fresh Merridale apple juice. In addition to the regular Friday night cask conditioned beer, he will be continuing with the experimental small cask every couple of weeks.

Gulf Islands Brewery has released a limited edition seasonal Fireside Winter Ale. This is a true winter warmer, a rich full-bodied, big flavoured beer, dark copper in colour, and 7 percent alcohol by volume (ABV). Fireside Winter Ale comes in a collectable ½ litre ceramic swing top bottle.

Phillips Brewing has moved to a larger building and has installed more tanks. With the increased brewing capacity *Matt Phillips* has launched three new beers. The first is Amnesiac Double IPA (what could be better than an IPA? A double IPA!). This beer is in the West Coast big beer style. According to Matt, “We’ve added more malt to our usual IPA to give a bigger body and 8.5% alcohol, and matched that with beefy additions of Pacific Northwest hops to give a mind blowing beer”. Next up is Longboat Double Chocolate Porter, which is a rich porter made with an addition of chocolate. The last is Black Toque India Dark Ale (IDA), a cross between Brown Ale and IPA. In addition, the Maple Cream has been renamed Draught Dodger Maple Cream Ale, and together with the regular IPA will now be sold in six packs of 355ml bottles.

Okanagan Spring Brewery introduced two new beers in 2004. Bavarian Helles is a lower alcohol (4% ABV) well balanced beer that has more hops than the average light beer. Munich Dark Mild is a traditional Munich dark (dunkel) lager made with lots of dark malts with a little roasted and caramel malts, and a mild hop flavour. This is an easy-going beer more for the malt lover.

Granville Island Brewing has several new beers in their 650ml Limited Releases series. The Merry Monks Dopplebock (8.0% ABV) was released in November. Also the Lions Winter Ale (similar to the Amber Ale but with vanilla and chocolate notes) is back. In January the Scottish Ale returned: brewer *Vern Lambourne* describes it as “A big malty beer full bodied, at 5.7 percent. Made with lots of pale, crystal, and chocolate malts, plus roast barley”.

Longwood Brewpub, Nanaimo, has their spectacular Barley Wine on tap. This beer is 3 years old and 10 percent ABV.

Larry Caza of **Old Yale Brewing** at Chilliwack reports that their Seargents IPA won a Gold medal at the Canadian Brewing Awards. He also gave a hint of a future brew that will be “a big thick stout”.

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Six Mile Pub in Victoria is celebrating 150 years of beer drinking on the banks of Millstream Creek. Friday, 13th July 1855, was when Bill Parsons, ignoring the inauspicious date, opened for business. Bill Parsons is alleged to have been a senior London 'Bobbie' who left England in a hurry after one of his men was killed while he was drinking at a party. He built the Parsons Bridge Hotel, as it was known, in 1855, and beer has been served continuously there ever since. Parsons didn't purchase his "country retail licence" until the next year (perhaps encouraged to do so after paying a fine of two pounds 10 shillings). This made official what is the oldest pub in B.C. still operating today.

The Six Mile was the heart of the community and was used as a postal address when the stage coaches began to run in the 1880's. Roadhouses, as they were called (hence the name Six Mile House) were dropping off points for the mail. All that's left of Bill Parsons' original hotel are the bricks from the foundation that you see in today's fireplace. The hotel burnt down in the late 1800's and the hotel was completely rebuilt and expanded. During prohibition, though officially closed, the hotel continued to be a meeting place for many locals, who met to talk politics and drink. Bootlegging was a popular sport and Six Mile House was the local hub.

Today the enlarged pub has 250 seats, with another 75 on the patio. The patio with its gazebo and flower boxes is one of the nicest spots in the neighbourhood on a summer evening. There are twenty two taps with BC micros well represented. This is a happy pub. The menus on the tables carry pictures of the fun of last New Years Eve. This building has an atmosphere about it that reeks of history. And so it should.

At the other end of the spectrum, **Dix Barbecue & Brewery**, in Vancouver's trendy Yaletown district is a relatively new pub. On the last Saturday of April, Dix hosted the first **Hop Madness**: "all the meanest, gnarliest, most challenging, highly hopped, aggressive, mind-blowing IPA's in the province gathered together". It was meant to be a cask-conditioned IPA Fest, but not everyone was prepared for that. In the end there were nine gravity fed casks, eight draughts and one party pig. This was a delightful beer festival. It was small, intimate and the beers were wonderful. With virtually no line ups, plenty of space and a wonderful food menu, the afternoon passed all too quickly.

The beers ranged from plain and simple IPA's, to taste challenges such as Storm Brewing's Wormwood IPA or Yaletown's Lavender IPA (O.G. 1050). The latter produced quite a few comments, "tasted like Grandma's old sock drawer", being one of the printable ones. Iain Hill, Yaletown's head brewer, said he made it for fun, hoping to "make it smell like Grandma's drawers", at which point I stopped writing down any more comments. Storm's Wormwood IPA (O.G. 1060) has tincture of wormwood added, and was exceptionally bitter, especially at the back of the tongue.

By unanimous consent the crowd favourite was Central City Empire IPA (O.G. 1062). This was not cask-conditioned, but was a superbly balanced beer, finished with Amarillo and Crystal hops. It was very drinkable and disappeared quickly. Gary

Lohin, former brewer at Sailor Hagar's, has succeeded in introducing several exciting new beers at Central City. Two more outstanding entries (both cask-conditioned) were Old Yale Sergeant's IPA and Granville Island IPA. The Old Yale (O.G. 1055) was finished with East Kent Golding and dry hopped with Chinook hops. This beer had recently been picked as the best of the B.C.'s bottled IPA's. The Granville Island IPA (O.G. 1067) was very smooth with a lovely maltiness. It was finished with Chinook and dry-hopped with Centennial.

Many brewers were present and it was nice to be able to discuss the beers with the people that made them. Tony DeWalt, Dix's head brewer, hosted the festival, together with Keith Lemke of the Siebel Institute of Technology. Lyn Kruger, president of the Siebel Institute also was in attendance. Both Rick and Barry of R&B Brewing were there, Barry proudly showing off photos of his new twin boys.

There are three new beers we tasted especially for this magazine from **Phillips Brewing**, available in 650ml bottles. Matt Phillips has pushed the envelope and raised the standard for B.C. beers:

The first beer was **Longboat Double Chocolate Porter**. There's lots of sweetish dark chocolate aroma in the nose, just like opening a new box of chocolates. The beer is very dark red with a tan head, and is smooth and surprisingly full bodied for a 5.2% ABV beer. The initial taste of chocolate gives way to chocolate, and then more chocolate! There's a bit of tartness at the beginning, but it has a nice clean dry mild hop finish. This beer would go very well with a fruit tart, or you could drink it curled up with a good book and a box of cherry chocolates! Next was **Black Toque India Dark Ale**. This beer pours with a nice dense head and has a gorgeous mahogany colour. It has a beautiful fruity aroma, with an interesting interplay between the roasted barley and the hops. The initial impression of malty sweetness quickly gives way to hops. However there's a long lingering malt finish that dominates the hops. This is a very good beer that is deceptively strong (6.5% ABV). It would go very well with curry or other rich meat dishes. Last up was **Amnesiac Double IPA**. This has a deep amber coppery colour with a dense white head. Great aroma of candied orange or marmalade from the very fruity and citrusy Pacific Northwest hops. This is an extremely bitter beer that is well balanced with lots of malt creating a very clean flavour. Despite being 8.5% ABV there is no heat from the alcohol which is testimony to the skill of the brewer. This beer is not for the faint of heart, but is so well balanced that it will make hop fans everywhere sing its praises.

Six Mile Pub

494 Island Hwy
Victoria, V9B-1H5
250-478-3121

www.sixmilepub.com

DIX Barbecue & Brewery

871 Beatty Street
Vancouver, V6B 2M6
604-682-2739

www.markjamesgroup.com/restbrew/dix/dix.html

Great Canadian Beer Festival tickets go on sale July 16th, at outlets in Victoria, Mainland BC, Washington and Portland. For details visit www.gcbf.com. Note that the dates and times are changed for this year's GCBF: Friday, September 9, 3-8 p.m., Saturday, September 10, Noon -7 p.m. (If you really want to have fun, why not become a GCBF Volunteer? Application forms are on the website.) Hotline 250-383-2332.

Pubbing Around BC

When was the last time you walked into the front door of a pub and found an airline counter in front of you? Or went to check in for a flight and mistakenly walked into a bar? I certainly never had until visiting the **Flying Beaver** on the Fraser River on the south side of Vancouver Airport in Richmond recently. We went to the pub for the scenery, or at least the float planes. On a late Friday afternoon Harbour Air and their neighbours W.G. Air just downstream were busy with weekend traffic. The best spot to sip a beer and see the action is on the pub's outdoor patio on stilts over the Middle Arm of the Fraser River. The beer selection is pretty standard but covers all the bases. Delicious food, super burgers (the Bi-Plane was a favourite) and Thursday night is steak night (with baked potato, salad and tiger prawns for \$7.95!). The atmosphere here is unique: it's West Coast at its best.

One of the most popular beers at the Great Canadian Beer Festival last September was Peter Hauptenthal's Jamaican Lager. This light (4.7 percent alcohol) refreshing beer was made with hibiscus concentrate from Mexico to giving it its unique flavour. Peter is the brewer at **Dockside Brewing**, the brewpub in Vancouver's Granville Island Hotel. Born in Merzig Germany, Peter has been brewing beer for over 30 years in countries including Nigeria, Bolivia, Belize, and the Marshall Islands. The brewery has always concentrated on German-style beers since opening. It is not surprising, then, that, with Peter's background, the beer styles include light and dark lagers, a honey lager, a pilsner, and a Hefeweizen. He also brews a pale ale and a stout. There are three separate spots to drink in the hotel. The pub is a sports bar with a fireplace, pool tables, and TV's. The food is great with lovely pizza from the *forno* in the kitchen. Next door is the Dockside Brewing Lounge overlooking the patio and boardwalk. The Dockside Restaurant is a beautiful room with floor to ceiling windows and a 50 foot aquarium. My favourite spot is to find a seat at the bar in the restaurant just before sunset. This is one of the most stunning waterfront views in Vancouver. Nothing could be better than to sit at the great curved bar sipping Peter's beers watching the lights come on over False Creek.

As you drive into the Longwood Station shopping centre at the north end of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, the **Longwood Brewpub** is impossible to miss. The impressive wooden building with the big silver 10 metre-high grain silo next to the entrance is certainly eye-catching. On your left as you enter the pub is the brewhouse proudly on display behind glass walls. No hiding secrets here! The gleaming stainless steel brewery was made in Victoria by Specific Mechanical. Publican Barry Ladell and brewer Harley Smith offer a range of beers that cover the entire world of beer styles. From German Wheat Ales and Lagers to British Ales and Belgium fruit beers, Harley brews beers of outstanding quality. My personal favourite is the **Copper Bock, a huge creamy seasonal lager well balanced with mild hop aroma. The Czech pilsner is very clean and has a huge aroma of Saaz hops. Other great beers are the IPA, an Extra Special Bitter, and**

a **Scottish Ale to die for**. In the food department the cuisine is definitely fresh and local West Coast style. The baked salmon comes with a dill mustard glaze that works very well with the **Czech pilsner, and the Halibut with its mango salsa is perfect with an Irish red ale**. The Longwood Brewpub is a great place to enjoy wonderful ales and lagers and savour a splendid West Coast menu.

Flying Beaver Pub, located at the south end of the Number Two Road Bridge in Richmond; 4760 Inglis Drive, Richmond, V7B 1W4 - 604-273-0278.

Dockside Brewing, 1253 Johnston Street, Granville Island, Vancouver. 604-685-7070 www.docksidebrewing.com

*Longwood Brewpub, Logwood Station, 5775 Turner Road, Nanaimo **250-729-8225. Brewery tours and tastings: 3 p.m. Saturdays (by reservation).***