

## Vinegary Beer at Spinnakers!!

One day in the early 1990's, Paul Hadfield was cleaning out the empties from a cold corner of his basement when he was assailed by a wonderful vinegary smell. He traced it to a half bottle of Spinnakers Hefeweizen, and, taking a swig, realized he'd accidentally produced real malt vinegar. He started to experiment using different beers, and began to get better and better results. Paul is the publican and a partner in Spinnakers, so obtaining a wide range of source beers was no problem. By coincidence a few doors away Jim Pryor was doing the same thing. Jim, an ex-Bass UK brewing guru, is an international brewing consultant. Eventually complaints from their wives about the "flies" drove the experimenters to join forces. They built a structure at the rear of one of the Spinnakers B&B's and installed a vinegar generator. The rest is history.....today the plant produces 150 litres of vinegar a week most of which is used in the pub and restaurant.

The plant is not pretty: a 8 hectolitre Grundy tank at the base is surmounted by the cylindrical bacteria generator and topped by the condenser. The whole has been re-welded and modified so many times that it looks like it's going to fall apart at any time. Flat beer is cycled continuously from the tank into the generator where bacteria feed on the alcohol and convert it into acetic acid. A barley wine that starts at 9½ percent alcohol will convert to about 5.5 percent acidity. The bacteria multiply like mad if the conditions are just right. Ideally the vinegar is then aged in French oak barrels. This makes the vinegar mellow and very soft. Currently only the barley wine vinegar is aged in oak barrels.

The generator has to be cleaned every week or so, and it was this messy chore that caused head brewer Lon Laddell and his staff to rebel a couple of years ago. There was such a demand in the pub and in retail sales that they could not afford to spend valuable brewing time making vinegar. For a while there was no vinegar being made. The Spinnakers chefs, Jeff Penner and Alison Ryan, were horrified to discover that they would have to resort to ordinary commercial vinegar! As a result, Paul Hadfield assigned vinegar production to the kitchen staff, and now there is good cooperation between kitchen and brewery.

The brewing of the source beer requires some recipe changes. For example, Lon makes the IPA for vinegar production far less hoppy than that brewed for drinking. As Paul explained it would make very bitter vinegar. "What we need is a fairly high alcohol beer. We can take any big complex beer and turn it into vinegar. The alcohol should be at least 6½ percent alcohol for a starter beer". The process takes about five weeks. Because of the demands in the kitchen, the pub, and from retail sales, the generator is working year round. A second generator is planned which will allow production to get far enough ahead that all the vinegars can be barrel aged.

I tasted the vinegars one afternoon with Paul and Jeff. We started with the lightest, the IPA vinegar. It has a clean mellow flavour that is very refreshing. The chefs use it on the tender spring greens that have a delicate flavour, since it is the lightest of the vinegars.

They love to splash it on shellfish instead of lemon. We sampled fresh local oysters this way, and of course, washed them down with some of the “real” IPA!

The Scottish Ale vinegar is darker. Since this style of beer is traditionally made with lots of malt and is only lightly hopped it produces a vinegar that is ideal for cooking with. It has a soft round finish. “One would normally think of this as the classic malt vinegar,” explained Hadfield, “It is great for deglazing a pan. It is also a great meat tenderizer. We use it to pour over a roast. And of course it’s the one for fish and chips in the pub.” It works well for Asian cuisine where sweet and sour flavours are melded, for example in the Hot and Sour soup. This vinegar is the one to use for pickling.

The Barley Wine vinegar is the darkest and most interestingly flavoured. It is the vinegar that is served with an order of grilled focaccio bread. This very full-bodied vinegar works well with the more intensely flavoured winter greens. It is excellent in reductions and has a huge aroma. We sampled it with Earl Grey tea ice cream. An amazing range of flavours came from the combination, from hints of peach through raisins to a raspberry finish. We also tasted the reduction with crab cakes. This really brought out the sweetness and went well with the crab.

Lastly, we tasted a mint infused Scottish Ale vinegar. This had a real Wow! factor. A beautiful mint aroma and the taste came through superbly. Jeff Penner was apologetic that we were too early in the year for his favourite, French mint. However the early spring mint worked well for me. It will surprise patrons that order the spring lamb.

The development of the vinegars is typical of the innovative cuisine that has been developed at Spinnakers. As Paul Hadfield put it, “To have a brewery in a restaurant is to have access to a whole lot of ingredients not available to the average restaurant. To have a vinegar brewery takes it to the next level. We can come up with products that they just cannot make. There are so many by-products – to not use them is simply a lost opportunity”

To add on that this establishment is a B&B with adjacent guest houses makes it one of the most interesting destinations in the Pacific Northwest. It’s only a short ferry ride from Vancouver and Seattle.

Spinnakers Brewpub and Guest Houses, 308 Catherine Street, Victoria, BC Canada V9A 3S8. Toll free 1-877-838-2739 [www.spinnakers.com](http://www.spinnakers.com)

John Rowling and his wife, Carol, have been “regulars” at Spinnakers for nearly 20 years. They can be found there Friday afternoons enjoying Lon Ladells weekly cask conditioned ales.

## **BC Destination Pub: Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Company**

### *Picture of pub sign*

Anyone planning on skiing at Whistler this fall should consider stopping at Squamish, just a 35 minute drive south of the slopes. One of B.C.'s best kept secrets is the Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Company, a brewpub and hotel locate at the south end of the town. Apart from the attraction of drinking the best beer north of Vancouver, the hotel is affordable accommodation at a fraction of the cost of Whistler village.

Sitting on the pub patio the towering massif of Stawamus Chief is overpowering. Owners Dave Fenn and Deborah Ashley knew what they were doing when they chose the location at the southern end of downtown Squamish. The Inn is a favourite of the rock climbers who come from all over the world to challenge the 1200' rock face, Western Canada's premiere rock climbing venue. The Chief is a granite monolith, the second largest in the world, and ever since Jim Baldwin and Ed Cooper found the first route up the Grand Wall in 1961, climbers have been testing themselves ever since. Together with other outdoorsy people of other ilk, cyclists, hikers, kayakers, bird watchers, the climbers gather in the pub to swap stories and celebrate their exploits.

More importantly, they get to sample the awesome beers brewed by Franco Corno. Franco was trained to brew at Howe Sound Brewing by BC's legendary pioneer brewer, John Mitchell. Franco brews ten different beers over the period of a year and there are usually five on tap at any time. The five that were on when we were at the Inn were Whitecap Dry Wheat, Pilsner Plunge, Diamond Head Stout, Baldwin and Coopers Best Bitter, and Devil's Elbow IPA. The Wheat was nice and cloudy, definitely a Belgian Wit-style beer that was very refreshing with hints of coriander and orange. The Pilsner had a very nice malty start with citrus overtones from the abundant use of Czech Saaz hops. The Stout was our favourite. It is a beautiful dark, opaque beer with a lovely head and has a very toasty roasty flavour. It is deep and dark all the way down! The Bitter is a classic, complex malty and bitter, made with English hops especially Goldings. The IPA is a strong amber ale bittered with Horizon, German Magnum and Centennial hops, finished with Sterling, and dry-hopped with Mt Hood Cascades.

The Inn itself is the bonus. Every room has stunning views from the cozy bay-window seats, whether it is of the Chief, or of the glacier topped mountains to the north. There are 20 rooms, one of which is handicap equipped. The rooms are very cheerful and have wooden furnishings, and warm duvet comforters on the beds. Besides the pub food there is the North Beach Lounge and Grill with a very reasonably priced menu. The food is excellent, the staff friendly and helpful. Our stay was so enjoyable and relaxing, I wish it was located here on Vancouver Island!

*Located at 37801 Cleveland Avenue, Squamish, BC. Contact: 604-892-2603; toll free 1-800-919-ALES, [hsibrew@howesound.com](mailto:hsibrew@howesound.com). Info: [www.howesound.com](http://www.howesound.com)*

## A Pot Pourri of Purbeck Pubs

I was fifteen when I first saw the Square & Compass as I cycled through the village of Worth Matravers. I was on my way to the Dorset coast to collect fossils at some of the best collecting spots in the world. My grandparents had retired to Swanage, a popular British South Coast resort in the Isle of Purbeck, and I used it as my headquarters for exploration. Fast forward about forty five years, and the family decided to hold a reunion in Swanage. My wife Carol and I wanted to check out some of the local pubs. The Square & Compass was an obvious start. It has been in every CAMRA Good Beer Guide & is on the CAMRA National Inventory of Pub Interiors. The pub hadn't changed since I first saw it. In fact, it's unlikely that it has changed much in a couple of centuries.

The Isle of Purbeck is not an island, but it was isolated historically from the rest of Dorset by the east-west chalk ridge known as Ballard Downs (in England, Downs are "ups"! ). There is a river gap in the 600-foot high steep ridge defended by a Norman fort known as Corfe Castle. Otherwise, there is no way a mediaeval army could enter the Isle. The way of life here, based largely on farming, fishing and quarrying, has not changed for centuries. Neither have the pubs.

The Square & Compass has been run by the Newman family since 1907. It was built several hundred years ago as a farmhouse, and its history goes back to the time of William the Conqueror. The Normans used the local Purbeck Limestone to build the nearby St. Nicholas church. It was also used in Westminster Abbey and Salisbury Cathedral. The pub, its name coming from the tools used by the local quarrymen and stonecutters, was first licensed in the 1720's. Each year in August the pub hosts a stone sculpture carving fortnight, with some participants choosing to camp in a nearby field. Built solidly of whitewashed limestone with a stone roof and flagstone floors, the building will endure for ever.

Carol and I arrived just before lunch time and parked in the field just around the corner. Inside the front door were two locals standing in the corridor, chatting away. Nodding a Hallo, we stepped over their dogs and looked for the bar. We came to another corridor stretching to left and right. A door at one end was labeled Museum, hmm? We looked into a room full of chatting people, but still no bar. A hatch in the corridor revealed the bar with cool beer served by gravity straight from the cask. The choice was Badger Tanglefoot, Ringwood Best Bitter, Quay Old Rott, Palmers Dorset Gold and Tally Ho!, or farm ciders (some organic). Wow! We took our beers into the busy room and squeezed in to a table. Time to eat, so I head back to the hatchway:

"Do you have anything to eat?"

"Yep."

"Er, do you have a menu?"

"Nope."

"What do you have?"

"Cornish pasties."

I've forgotten what they have in them. "Do they come with different fillings?"

"Nope. Just pasties."

"I'll check with my wife."

"There's only two left."

"I'll take them!"

The pasties, filled with beef, potatoes, onion and turnip, were fantastic. Just as good as I remembered! Apparently sometimes there is cheese and onion pie, too. Or, you can buy a sandwich from the Craft Centre nearby.

Afterwards we spend time looking at all the pictures and cartoons on the walls. Curiosity got the better of us so we check out the room labeled "Museum". It is full of "Stuff". That is the only way to describe this extraordinary collection of artifacts. There is one of the finest collections of local Purbeck Limestone fossils piled from floor to ceiling. There are items retrieved from ancient shipwrecks by local divers, farm tools, evil looking ancient weapons, a mammoth tooth, and even stuffed animals.

This is a totally rustic pub, with chickens and dogs outside, and even occasionally inside. In winter there are roaring log fires and occasional musicians. Most of the locals stand up in the corridor to drink their beer and chat. Outside there are stone seats and weather beaten and bleached wooden benches from which there are great views out to the English Channel. From here you can see ancient field systems, visible as narrow green terraces. I don't think I have ever seen so much clutter in front of a pub, with stone carvings, a big old cider press, ancient-looking vehicles, and cart wheels. Roger Protz, former Good Beer Guide editor wrote: "If I had to choose a favourite ale house from the roll of 20 years honour, I would plump for The Square And Compasses in Worth Matravers". Life definitely moves at a slower pace at the Square & Compass – it is a real gem.

One of our favorite hikes takes us north out of Swanage and up over the Downs to Studland. The walk is fairly steep at first but is well worth the climb. The views over the English Channel and inland over Poole Harbor are fabulous. In addition, a walk to the east end brings you to a spectacular view of a group of chalk pillars called Old Harry Rocks. On the way back look for several ancient burial mounds. The reward for all this hiking is the Bankes Arms in Studland, owned by the National Trust. Follow the signs: it is just outside the village and is easy to recognize as it is completely covered in ivy! This is a large building originally built in 1549. There is a cozy fire burning most days, and if there is no room inside there are tables outside. At busy times customers can sit at picnic tables in the field opposite and enjoy the lovely views of Studland Bay. The pub has a restaurant and a large L-shaped bar with eight ever changing craft brewery beers on handpumps. These will usually be from such breweries as Hopback, Smiles and Wychwood. There are also local real ciders: Old Rosie plus several others in the summer. Since our visit, the pub now has its own brewery; something for us to check out on our next visit. Today it is also a bed and breakfast.

It is probably best to centre yourself in Swanage for a visit to this forgotten corner of England. Stay at the Black Swan Inn on the High Street. It is a bed and breakfast. The building is over 400 years old, and it has been a pub for the last 200 years. The two bar rooms have low-beam ceilings decorated with keys and mugs. There are lots of historic pictures of Swanage on the walls. The beers (on hand pumps) change periodically, but will include such ales as Flowers Original or Ringwood Fortyniner. The food is excellent and includes vegetarian items. Nearby is the start of a beautiful coastal trail over the cliffs to Worth Matravers. There are

many other hotels and bed and breakfasts in Swanage, and you can also camp near the Square & Compass. Other attractions are the Swanage Steam Railway and several golf courses.

Square & Compass, M-F 12-3, 6-11; Sat 12-11; Sun 12-3, 7-10<sup>30</sup> (closed winter Sunday evenings)

Worth Matravers, nr Swanage, Dorset, UK, BH19 3LF  
01929-439229

Bankes Arms Hotel, M-Sat 11-11; Sun 12-10<sup>30</sup>

Manor Road,  
Studland, Dorset, UK, BH19 3AU  
01929-450225

Black Swan Inn, M-Sat 12-2, 6<sup>30</sup>-11; Sun 12-10<sup>30</sup>

159 High Street,  
Swanage, Dorset, UK  
01929-422761

*John went on from fossil collecting to become a petroleum geologist in Alberta and British Columbia. And, is still exploring the 4500 pubs in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.*























## Pubbing Around BC

Victoria's **Spinnakers Brewpub** has a new item on the menu: beer and local artisan cheese. Six tasters of Spinnakers ales are paired with Vancouver Island cheeses, local fruit chutney, and English-style homemade flatbread crackers. The Hefeweizen is paired with Moonstruck 'White Grace', a well aged cheese in the English style with high acidity. Next comes the Honey Pale Ale and Natural Pastures 'Comox Brie', traditionally styled with a bloomy rind. The seasonal Raspberry Ale is spot on with Natural Pastures 'Wasabi', a true verdalait cheese infused with wasabi and ginger: the flavours are so varied. My favourite beer, the ESB goes well with Poplar Grove 'Tiger Blue', intense and aromatic in the style of a Stilton (this pair is to die for!). The Scottish Ale is matched with Poplar Grove 'Double Cream Camembert', rich and creamy with notes of white truffles. And, my favourite pair is the Imperial Stout with Moonstruck 'Tome d'Or', an Italian style hard cheese with a nutty taste.

The **Craig Street Brewpub** opened on Canada Day (July 1<sup>st</sup>), a bit behind schedule, but the wait was worth it. The pub is located in Duncan (about 40 miles north of Victoria) in the heart of the heritage downtown district. The owners, Liz and Lance Steward, have owned Just Jakes, the restaurant next door, for 15 years, and have built it up to be Duncan's premier dining place. They fell in love with California's brewpubs a few years ago while a trip for a family wedding. "We wanted to follow the California brewpub trend", says Liz. When the clothing store next door closed they leapt at the opportunity to realize their dream. The expanded kitchen now serves both businesses.

During renovations they discovered that the building had a lot of old growth lumber in it. Some was salvaged to make the stairs. A bar that came from a 1906 Montreal hotel was purchased. The Stewards also bought all the original paneling from the same hotel and it has been used throughout the establishment. There are several levels and the various nooks and crannies give the pub an intimate atmosphere. There is seating, including the rooftop patio, for 220.

"The brewing system was lost at sea on a boat for 30 days" says brewer Chris Gress. Despite this the brewery is working well and making great beer. It was manufactured by IDD in California and shipped with two other systems to a wealthy client in the Dominican Republic. This system stayed in storage and was purchased for the Duncan brewpub. And, yes, it was "lost at sea", mostly due to a miscommunication between the shipper and the agent in Canada. It has extra heating jackets on all the vessels so that decoction mashes will be possible. As Chris says, "I can make any style of beer in the world." For now he will stay with four regular house beers until everything is running smoothly. Chris was a Victoria home brewer who trained with Sean Hoyne. Sean, the brewer at Canoe in Victoria, consulted on the brewery project.

Incidentally, customers are welcome to get beer at the self-serve bar.

All of the beers are named after paintings by E.J. Hughes, a renowned BC artist living in Duncan. Hughes is a regular at Just Jakes, and was pleased to let the Stewards use his paintings for their bottle labels. (Bottling has not started yet but the art work is on display in the lobby.) Reproductions of many of Hughes' paintings hang throughout the building giving the pub a strong West Coast feeling.

To check out the beers my wife, Carol, and I ordered the Craig Street Toolbox for \$10.00. This was a sample of each beer, and, as a nice touch, it came with a glass of peanuts. We started with the Cowichan Bay Lager (5%), a pale gold, really clean refreshing lager with an excellent hop aroma. Next up was the Shawnigan Irish Ale (5.7%), a brilliant medium bodied red ale, with distinct hoppiness. Mt. Prevost Porter (5%) has a nice rocky head and is a dark reddish brown. It is a light porter but otherwise an excellent example of the style. It is very drinkable and was our favourite. We finished up with Arbutus Ale (5%) an amber gold medium bodied beer with a good head, obvious caramel maltiness, and a nice bitter aftertaste.

Most of the delicious food is locally sourced. Chef Brandon Aris has been with Just Jakes for 13 years. He is using the house beers in many menu items. He has a Mt. Prevost Porter BBQ sauce that comes with the chicken wings and the BBQ chicken pizza. The Irish Ale is used to make the excellent batter for the fish and chips I had. Incidentally the homemade tartar sauce is the best I've ever tasted. Carol loved the Panini. It was a large grilled ciabatta bun stuffed with roasted vegetables (red peppers portabella mushrooms, red onions, artichoke hearts), basil pesto and Monterey Jack cheese, and served with Asian coleslaw.

It is refreshing to find a new establishment that doesn't gouge the customers. Good beer at \$5.50 for a 20-ounce pint is less than at most bars. The pub is so popular with locals that some beers ran out during the opening weeks. Chris has everything back on track – he even has enough in the tanks to pour at the Great Canadian Beer Festival. With Liz Steward buzzing around greeting customers, this has become a favourite meeting place for local people. Craig Street Brewpub is a delightfully classy pub and a great addition to the beer world of Vancouver Island.

What a contrast **Central City Brewing Company** is. This swish brewpub is set in Surrey's Central City Mall, located near the Central Skytrain station. This might be a questionable destination for someone seeking out an interesting pub! However, if beer, music, and good food are what you are looking for, then this pub is for you. It has a modern chrome and glass look, and is definitely a sports bar, with lots of TV screens.

The beer is brewed by Gary Lohin whose reputation preceded him from his great beers at Sailor Hagar's Pub in North Vancouver. In a recent visit we found that there is definitely a hint of the Sailor Hagar brews at Central City. Since it was lunch, we ordered a taster tray. The first beer was Signal Light Pale Ale, which has lots of malt and hops flavour. This would be a great beer to accompany a pizza. Next we tried the summer seasonal, a Raspberry Wheat Ale. This was a very tasty brilliant beer with raspberry very distinct in both aroma and taste. Springboard Lager is a clean, sweetish lager with a very pleasant and distinctive Hallertau hop aroma. The Steelhead Stout is dark, smooth, and creamy, and has a nice chocolate taste and aroma. Our favourite was the Iceberg Copper Bock, a huge sweet (Munich) malty beer with a lovely dry finish. Nearby in the mall is the Central City Liquor Store where "Growlers" of the beer from the pub are available. These are 2 litre containers (equivalent to a six-pack) and are refillable for \$10. A new Italian canning line capable of 50 cans a minute is packaging Central City Premium Lager. Plans include canning the IPA next.

Partner Colin James is well known in the music world and has lined up entertainment ranging from Doug and the Slugs to Barney Bentall and the Legendary Hearts. Most nights DJ Adam West is in the house playing requests. Monday Night Football is hosted by BC Lion's Geroy Simon. Patrons can use the free wireless internet.

The food at Central City is excellent. Although the extensive menu is largely standard pub fare there are some interesting twists for lunch: tempura and coconut battered jumbo prawns as an appetizer, fish and chips made with Copper Bock batter, and a great Teriyaki Bowl.

**Craig Street Brewpub,**  
25 Craig Street,  
Duncan, B.C.  
250-737-2337

**Central City Brewing Company**  
Central City Mall, 13450 - 102nd Avenue,  
Surrey, B.C. V5L 1V9  
604-582-6620



## **GCBF 2006: Notes from the Inside**

Overall the GCBF was a resounding success. The weather held, everything was on budget, we didn't quite run out of beer, and, at the end of the day, my fellow directors and I found that we had retained most of our sanity.

However, there is one thing I hate about the Great Canadian Beer Festival: I have to be there as one of the organizers, but I can't drink any of the great beers being poured.

The selection of the beers to be poured is one of the tasks that we do in the weeks before the festival. I share the responsibility for this with Gerry Hieter, the Chairman of the GCBF. We try to make sure that the selection is balanced by styles, and to bring to the festival beers that will impress even the most hardened beer geek. But we cannot drink them, and by the time it's all over the good ones are all gone.

The beer choice this year was great. With over 140 beers ranging from exotic Belgians to heavy Imperial pilsners and IPA's, and from pale wheat ales to the darkest stouts, there was plenty of variety for everyone. Four new breweries came – Fernie Brewing Company, Bushwakker from Regina, Sask., Craig Street from Duncan, and Rogue Ales from Oregon.

Backwoods Brewing changed their image completely. A name change to Dead Frog Brewing gave rise to lots of advertising potential. From frog-legged tap handles to great slogans like: "Nothing Goes Down Like a Cold Dead Frog", "There's More Hops in a Dead Frog", or the really corny, "Don't Worry, Be Hoppy". You get the idea. And the new funky packaging by Calgary's Wildrose Brewery ("The Pint-Sized Brewery") was really catching.

We were delighted when Rose Ann and Charles Finkel enthusiastically agreed to attend. It has been a number of years since Pike Brewery has been to the GCBF. It was great to see them there, and to taste their beers again. We were honoured that they chose to launch a new beer at the festival. Tandem Double Ale is a marvellously complex big beer in the same class as the XXXXX Stout that they were also pouring. And Adam Lambert brought back Rogue after a ten year absence from the GCBF. The introduction of private liquor stores in B.C. has opened up the market to all craft brewers.

As for the beers, there's no predicting which will sell well. None of us can figure out what the GCBF crowd sees in Steamworks Great Pumpkin Ale. Is it the Charlie Brown connection? Whatever it is Steamworks had blown 8 kegs two hours before the festival was over on Saturday. Most other breweries only go through three or four kegs of each brand. Conrad Gmoser, Steamworks brewer says that at their Vancouver brewpub the beer is about as popular as all the other beers. The GCBF crowd have made this a cult beer. Walking in the door people are looking for the

Steamworks tent and going for the Pumpkin Ale. Dockside the Granville Island brewpub has another favourite in their Jamaican Lager flavoured with hibiscus concentrate (from Mexico). Same thing, you can hear the buzz in the crowd – gotta have that Jamaican Lager!

It's really not hard to run the Great Canadian Beer Festival. Just organize it so that it is fun for three groups of people: the brewers, the volunteers, and the public. Judging by the number of repeaters in all three categories we must be doing something right!

The brewers love this festival because there's no pressure. There are no medals, no judging, and no stress, just a place to show off their beers and hang out with other brewers.

The volunteers take a lot of pride in making this the best craft beer festival in the country, and they are the backbone of the festival. They all get a weekend pass and a great party afterwards (someone has to finish off the last of those kegs).

The public have come to look forward to this annual celebration of the brewer's craft. There's lots of entertainment at all times all over the festival. From jugglers and magicians to brass bands and marimba groups, there's something for everybody. It almost gives the festival a carnival atmosphere. Local radio stations join in, too. 100.3 The Q! organized a Rock, Paper, Scissors contest on Friday, and Zone 91.3 had a Dunk-the-DJ tank on Saturday afternoon.

See you next year, September 7 and 8, in Victoria.

*Fourteen years ago John Rowling and Gerry Hieter, over a very long lunch hour in the Broughton Street Fogg N'Suds, planned a microbrewery festival for Victoria. They are still planning and tweaking what is now the Great Canadian Beer Festival.*

## BC Brews News

'Tis the season of the Winter Warmers.

The beer with the most warming name is **Gulf Islands Brewing's** Fireside Winter Ale. This is back again in those very elegant ceramic bottles. Murray Hunter, Gulf Island's brewer, says that he used "a ton of malt making this a very smooth, dark golden ale, coming in at 7 percent alcohol". It is made with two-row pale and caramel malts and traditional English East Kent Goldings hops. The brewery has a new image emphasizing the Salt Spring Island connection in all their beer labeling and packaging: "Salt Spring Fine Ales from an Island of Freethinkers". The first series of new labels recognize the Pioneers of Salt Spring Island: the first people to come to the Island and who made it what it was. Starting this series is the Salt Spring Golden Ale. The new Golden Ale label is a tribute to Jesse Bond, an Island farmer, whose vegetables were so sought after that there were said to be three grades grown on the island: A, B, and Bond! The second series will recognize Island People who are living on the Island and who make it what it is today. The third series will honour Salt Spring Island Artisans.

Next up is **Granville Island's** Lions Winter Ale. This winter ale is a sweetish ale that combines the flavors of caramel with hints of chocolate to help carry us through the winter (5.5% ABV). Merry Monks Doplebock is also returning. This is a deep mahogany coloured lager with 8% alcohol. Five different malts and Horizon and Sterling hops combine to make a fine beer to keep you warm on those damp and cold Wetcoast winter nights. Also back in the stores is the Granville Island Winter Mingler mixed 12 pack, with 3 of each: Lions Winter Ale, Island Lager, Gastown Amber Ale, and English Bay Pale Ale.

Lon Ladell at **Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub** has Fogfighter on tap and available in bottles through the winter. This strong (8.3% ABV) Belgian Ale is made with a traditional Belgian yeast and Belgian crystal malt to give it that big flavor. In addition, around Christmas and New Years there will be a Spiced Pumpkin Porter, made with twenty medium sized locally grown pumpkins. These were roasted with brown sugar and cinnamon, spiced and added to a malty porter to finish up as a really good winter beer. Canada's foremost beer writer, Stephen Beaumont, recently wrote about the Great Canadian Beer Festival: "my star of the fest was...the supremely balanced Twenty from Spinnakers Brewpub, a wonderfully reserved pale ale". Stephen will be pleased to know that Twenty is now available for sale in 650ml bottles. This is the beer that was first brewed for Spinnakers 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2004.

**R&B Brewing's** Old Nick is back. Brewed in the style of a Scottish "Wee Heavy", it is a strong, ruby-red warming winter beer and owes its smoothness to a long maturation in R&B's cellars. This unfiltered full bodied ale is available in 50 Litre kegs and 650ml bottles (6.5% ABV).

The **X-mas X-treme Beer Festival** is at Dix Brewpub on Saturday December 10, 2005 from 12 noon until 5pm. It will showcase most of the Christmas ales and lagers from all corners of the province as well as a selection of the strong beers (Barley Wine, Belgians, Imperials, etc.) made in BC. Admission will be \$20 with 4oz. tasters for \$1. A selection of Holiday food cooked with beer will also be featured. For Tickets call DIX Barbecue & Brewery, 871 Beatty Street, Vancouver, 604-682-2739. And at **Caskival II** at Dix Brewpub in July, the Golden Bung (most popular beer) was awarded to Mission Springs brew master Tim Brown for his smooth and malty Stout, and Dave Varga at Big Ridge Brewing won the Golden Spile (as voted by the brewers present) for his Saison, a farmhouse style ale.



**Chambar Belgian Restaurant** in Vancouver received a couple of awards recently: Best New Fine Dining 2005, Vancouver magazine, and, Best Other European 2005, Where Memorable Meal Awards. The best way to describe Chambar is that it is very much like a Belgian café. It is also very much a popular restaurant serving very elegant dishes based on Pacific Northwest ingredients. Mark Brand, the bar manager walked us through the beer list recently. We both agreed that the ultimate beer on the list is the Tripel Karmeliet This was very drinkable quite complex and dangerously deceptive at 8%.

**Phillips Brewing** will be temporarily dropping their Raspberry Ale because of a BC LDB restriction that only allows small breweries to list seven products. Replacing it for the winter is a big bodied Doppelbock, The Instigator. Matt Phillips used lots of German Musdorfer Munich and dark crystal malts, and North American Mount Hood hops all the way through, making it a malty dark beer with a touch of alcohol apparent in the taste (8.6% ABV).

Andrew Tessier, brewer at **Swan's Buckerfield Brewery**, has brought back Judge Begbie's Dark Lager for the winter. (The beer is named after Sir Matthew Bailey Begbie, "The Hanging Judge", BC's first presiding judge.) Conditioned for ten weeks, this is brewed in the style of a single bock, with imported and domestic chocolate and caramel malts, and made with German Hallertau hops. It is a dark sweetish rich beer with a warm finish from the 6.5 percent alcohol.

Surrey's **Central City Brewing** has a very mellow Porter on tap which has been aged for three months. It is not completely black but has garnet red hues. It was made with all British Hugh Baird Marris Otter malts and English hops. Brewer Gary Lohin says he is planning a Belgian Tripel in the near future. This sounds like a beer worth traveling to Surrey for: it will be made with Dingemans Belgian Pale Ale Malt and a Belgian yeast brought in for this beer. Lohin says it will finish somewhere between 8 and 9% ABV.

**Longwood Brewpub** is currently serving a single batch of the Framboise that general manager Barry Ladell describes as "a reminder of the beautiful summer that we had this year". Also on tap is the Doppelbock, a great Winter Warmer! Another "warmer" is the barley wine. Traditionally this beer is aged 12 months before serving. This year Longwood is serving a blend of a 4-year old with the last 100 litres of a very mellow 6-year old barley wine. This is the beer with no recipe, "just about every malt, and the kitchen sink", comments Ladell. It is served in small glasses as it is a strong (10.5% ABV) beer in the Thomas Hardy Ale style. **Next up will be the Two-Penny Ale, a winter special that is a great session beer (4.0% ABV).** Ladell reports that all their beers are now available in 50-litre kegs.

Gerry Hieter's Beer Camps have been so successful that more are planned for the fall. Two camps were sold out this winter, and no wonder. At \$35 (Cdn.) they are a bargain. Not only were they fun.....they were educational! Gerry has teamed up with Becky Hays at Vancouver Island Brewery in Victoria to give these four-hour courses. Becky starts off with a comprehensive tour of Vancouver Island Brewery's state-of-the-art brewery and packaging plant. Gerry then runs the group through beer history, beer brewing, what to look for in tasting beer, and what to look for (or avoid) when purchasing beer. Throughout the evening participants sample about a dozen BC craft beers and match them with various foods, finishing up with dessert: a chocolate brownie paired with Vancouver Island's Hermanator Ice Bock. (For details about next winter's Beer Camps call Becky at Vancouver Island Brewery: 250-361-0007.)

#### PHOTO OF GERRY AND BECKY

**Spinnakers Brewpub**, Victoria, was recently voted Best Brew Pub in BC by the readers of the Northwest Brewing News. The Best BC Brewery was **Granville Island Brewing**, the Best BC Beer Store went to **Swans**, Victoria, and the vote for the Best BC Ale House was split between the **Strathcona Hotel** and **Christies Carriage House**, both in Victoria.

There is a busy summer is ahead for BC brewers. At **Granville Island Brewing**, Vern Lambourne is brewing several beers that will only be available at the brewery store. The new Ginger Beer (5%ABV) is made with lots of imported Hawaiian ginger, especially in the dry-hopping to give a very fresh ginger aroma. This beer pours with a beautiful golden colour and has a spicy warmth to it. It will be followed in the store by the Raspberry Ale. In the limited edition series GI Bitter is now available. Vern brewed the Bitter with Warminster Marris Otter malt from the UK, bittered with Target hops, and finished and dry-hopped with East Kent Goldings. This copper coloured beer is a good example of an English Best Bitter, with a moderate hopping level (35 IBU), medium malt body, and lots of Goldings in the aroma (makes you think of Earl Grey!). Also back is the IPA and the ever popular Mingler, a 12 pack comprising Cypress Honey Lager, Robson Street Hefeweizen, Island Lager, and Kitsilano Maple Cream Ale

Downtown Vancouver at **Steamworks**, fans will be pleased to know that the Frambozen and Ipanema Summer White are here again. The White ("Tall and tan and young and lovely" to quote brewer Conrad Gmoser) has a subtle, perfumey spiciness, just right for hot summer evenings. The high gravity raspberry undergoes a slow second fermentation with tons of fresh, whole Fraser Valley raspberries, resulting in an intense raspberry flavour, and a luscious pink head.

The Empire Strikes Back at **Central City Brewing** in Surrey. The Empire IPA is back and is a new and improved version. Gary Lohin has brewed this beer with floor-malted Marris Otter pale malt from the UK's Warminster Maltings. This great beer now has more body, and was hopped at 70 IBU to make a well-balanced big (6.5%ABV) beer. Soon the Raspberry Wheat Ale (5%) will be on tap. This is made with unpasteurized de-seeded Fraser Valley raspberry puree. Also new in the brewery is an Italian-built canning line. Gary Lohin is brewing a premium German-style lager to be canned for sale at the on-site liquor store.

Alyson Tomlin, **R & B Brewing** head brewer, and brewer, Ben Van Hae, were very pleased when their Raven Cream Ale won a Bronze Medal at the World Beer Cup in the English-Style Mild Ale class. This beer won Silver in the 1998 World Beer Cup. And now, according to Barry Benson (the B of R&B), it's heads down for a busy summer!

Over on the Island in Nanaimo, **Longwood Brewpub** has expanded their kegging operation to accommodate the demand for their beer. The Framboise, made with whole organic raspberries, is on hand all summer. On hand pump Harley Smith has a Two Penny Ale for a summer session beer (4%) and a 60 Shilling Ale for a lighter Scottish Tap. He has brewed a Vienna Lager in honour of Spinnakers Lon Ladell's Tying-the-Knot this summer.

In Victoria, Benjamin Schottle at **Hugo's Grill & Brewhouse** has a Mandarin Hefeweizen in line for the summer. Ben serves this beer with a wedge of Mandarin orange. "It works better than lemon", according to Ben, "try it with a Hacker-Pschorr Weisse Bier and you'll see what I mean." Never at a loss for experimentation, Ben is also planning a Green Tea Lager made with Shotgun tea from Victoria's Chinatown. Some will be added in the last two minutes of the boil and the rest will be used for dry-hopping. To counteract the bitterness of the tea, spicy hops such as Perle or Spalt will be used.

Smooth Sailing Honey Ale is on tap again at **Swans Hotel**. This is the beer that was brewed as a special for last year's Tall Ships Festival in Victoria. After this Tessier's Witbier will be available on draft and in bottles. This is a refreshing spicy traditional Belgian white beer, made with imported Belgian yeast. Also on all summer will be the Extra IPA. Brewer Andrew Tessier has brewed Blue Bridge Barley Wine ready for the winter season. This beer is mostly Marris Otter pale malt and is hopped with Warrior and Fuggles. Andrew has had to add three extra taps (two hand pumps) to keep his more popular beers on all year round.

The Hefeweizen will be pouring at **Spinnakers Brewpub** all summer, together with the Dunkelweizen on a more regular basis. Spinnakers brewers, Lon Ladell and Rob Monk, have been brewing with new yeasts and the results show in their beers. As soon as the local raspberry crop is at its peak Lon will making his very refreshing Raspberry ale ready for the September crowd.



**Canoe Brewpub** will have the Summer Honey Wheat Beer again on tap for the summer. This light (4.8% ABV) golden beer has citrus notes in the nose, and is an “easy drinking” beer brewed with the patio crowd in mind. The good news is that it will be available for take-out in bottles this summer.

**Phillips Brewing** has doubled its floor space and added more conditioning tanks. Matt Phillips has made a couple of changes to his beers. Replacing the Espresso Stout is a brilliant Oatmeal stout (5%). He describes it as “a really nice robust stout”. It pours with a nice dense tan head and leaves a nice lace all the way down the glass. It has a beautiful aroma and a lot of roast flavour. Also new is a small batch of bottle conditioned Surly Blonde Tripel. This is a seasonal blonde brewed to the Belgian Tripel style which means it is strong (9.1%ABV). It has fruity flavours up front with a clean dry finish.

*Postscript:* Chris Gress, **Craig Street Brew Pub’s** new brewer, says that the Duncan brewpub should be open by the end of June.

John Rowling lives in Victoria, B.C., definitely the Best Beer City in Canada. John was CAMRA Victoria’s first president, and is one of the founders of the Great Canadian Beer Festival.

## **BC Beer and Winter Travel Destinations**

In the middle of the SAD season most western Canadians either travel south for sun and seas, or to the mountains for fun and skis! A few years ago that meant entering the beer deserts of Hawaii and Mexico, or Whistler and Banff. Today, thanks to a few entrepreneurs, this is no longer true. While Mexico is still awash in yellow fizz, Hawaii is a delight – a true beer lover's destination. And, relatively speaking, the same can be said about the Canadian winter resorts.

In Whistler, the High Mountain Brewing Co. is a great brewpub. In-house beers include Big Wolf Bitter, Dirty Miner Stout in the Irish style, Frank's Nut Brown (named for brewer Frank Appleton), Lifty Lager, a Munich-Style Helles, Northern Light Lager, and Twin Peaks Ale. Also in Whistler Village is Dubh Linn Gate Old Irish Pub. Predictably, with a name like that this is an Irish theme pub. There are 29 beers on tap with Guinness featured prominently, together with British ales and Canadian megabrews, and some craft beers from Big Rock, Vancouver Island Brewery, and Shaftebury. Everything in Whistler is dreadfully expensive, especially accommodation. There is an economical alternative in Squamish just 30 minutes south of Whistler. Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Co., is both a brewpub and a hotel. The rooms are half the price of Whistler, and the food and beer are exceptional.

There are 33 other ski resorts in British Columbia, some of which have decent bars and pubs. However, there are a large number of winter travellers coming to BC who come not for skiing but for the warmth. Compared to say, Winnipeg, the coast is (almost) tropical. The warmest and driest spot is Victoria, and there are some great places to stay. Spinnakers has expanded in its 22 years of existence from a small 66-seat brewpub to include several very nice B&B suites. Swans Suites Hotel is one of the best bargains in Victoria, and together with the Brewpub and Wild Saffron Bistro, makes this a complete destination.

### **What New in BC Brews:**

The Hermanator is Bock! Vancouver Island Brewery has released the 2006 version of the Hermanator. The Bavarian style ice bock is in high demand as usual. Some store managers even have been taking orders from customers. However, the brewery hopes that by doubling production everyone will get at least a few bottles. Brewmaster Ralf Pitroff says that it's a 14 week process to brew this annual favourite. He conditions at minus four Celsius for ten weeks, and it finishes up at 9.5% ABV.

Gulf Islands Brewing is bringing out a new IPA. This quite malty dark copper beer falls between an English-style and a Pacific Northwest IPA. Hopped with Palisades and Crystal it has a bite but is not too harsh. It will be on draught at first with bottles coming out in the New Year.

In Victoria, Spinnakers has a full slate of seasonals (all Belgian) chalked up for the Holiday Season. First up is the Winter Blonde, a light (6% ABV) abbey-style ale somewhat similar to Leffe Blonde. This will be followed by the annual release of

Spinnakers Fogfighter, a strong (8%) blonde ale. And then, shortly before Christmas, there will be a couple of 9% Belgian ales, one flavoured with 300 lbs of local cherries, and the other with 300 lbs of local blackcurrants.

Across the Blue Bridge, Andrew Tessier at Swans has a new beer: Legacy Ale. This beer was launched November 9<sup>th</sup>, the second anniversary of the death of Michael Williams, founder of Swans Hotel and Brewpub. Andrew has created a 10% ABV barley wine using only English pale malt. The boil was extended to three hours, caramelizing the wort and giving a deep amber colour. The beer was then aged for six months. It will be served in 10 ounce brandy snifters in the pub and will be available in 12 ounce bottles by Christmas. Currently the Brewers Choice in the pub is Swans Porter. This is a mild (4.3%) London-style porter made with chocolate malt instead of roasted barley to give it a more mellow flavour.

Round the corner on the water, Sean Hoyne is serving Winter Gale Strong Ale at Canoe Brewpub. This 8.3% ABV brew is a rich amber colour with subtle hints of spice. Sean says he made it even more subtle than last year so it will be a challenge to guess the spices he used (hint: probably cinnamon, cloves and ginger). Lots of pale, crystal, carastan and chocolate give this beer a malty sweetness, with a well rounded almost brandy-like finish.

In downtown Victoria, Ben Schottle at Hugo's is planning a new beer, Chocolate Nut Brown Ale, for the end of December. This will be a robust nut brown colour, darker than Newcastle Brown, coming from the chocolate and black malts and the pinch of roasted barley used. Ben will be using coco nibs to give this beer a lovely smooth chocolate taste.

Matt Phillips is twinning his Instigator Doppelbock with Burly Wine this Christmas. The Instigator is a 10.2% ABV beer brewed with lots of Munich and German malts and is a rich, malty and well balanced seasonal warmer. The Burly Wine is reminiscent of the Big Bad John Barley Wine of several years ago. English malts and an ale yeast together with lots of hops make this a very dry strong (10%) winter ale. Both of these will be available in 650 ml bottles.

## **Postscriptum**

The sad news is that over the past decade we have watched the amalgamation of several of BC craft breweries. Whistler, Bear, Horseshoe bay, Shaftebury, and Okanagan Spring. The latter two we felt were relatively safe as part of the Sleeman empire. John Sleeman had repeatedly talked of the Sleeman family of breweries. But now that is hot air. Japanese brewing giant Sapporo has taken over Sleemans. That means that the brewing of over 92 percent of Canadian beer is controlled by foreign owned companies.

*John Rowling takes a trip every winter to somewhere even warmer than Victoria. But he's always glad to get back to BC's Beer Heaven!*