

LET'S SAY YOU HAVE TO HAVE BC BEER WITH YOUR CHOCOLATE

There are people to whom chocolate is the most important of the food groups. (Even more important than beer!) At dessert time, chocolate is hard to match to most drinks except coffees or chocolaty liqueurs. But beer works really well! Not the light, hoppy ales or crisp pilsners that we started the meal with, but bold, flavourful, malty sweet beers that can counter the richness of good chocolate. Chocolate is used in so many ways that one has to pick and choose which style of beer to match a particular chocolate fare.

Begin by matching its richness (or decadence) with the richness or alcohol content of the beer. So a smooth oatmeal stout would go well with a chocolate pudding, and a stronger richer one would go with chocolate candy or cookies. The only exception is if there's acidic fruit such as raspberry with the chocolate. The best pairing with that is a fruit beer such as a Belgian Kriek or Unibroue's *Quelque Chose*.

As a starter match a stout with a chocolate cake: a beautiful glass of **McAuslan St. Ambrose Oatmeal Stout** with a chocolate sin cake (topped with whipped cream). When you've got over the shock of how well this combination fits try another stout such as **Phillips Espresso Stout** with some homemade oatmeal chocolate fudge brownies. If the oatmeal has turned you on, whip up some buttery oatmeal carmalitas and sip some McEwans Scotch Ale. Then get adventurous and go for Vancouver Island Hermanator with Bernard Callebaut Chocolates hand dipped cherries!

Phillips Oatmeal Stout **Lighthouse Keepers Stout (can)**

If you're into chocolate and peanut butter try matching the Ol'Woodenhead Smoked Porter by Mt. Begbie Brewing with Purdy's Zoo-Littles, or a Gulf Island's Pender Island Porter will go well with Purdy's peanut clusters.

For a rich experience accompany an Okanagan Spring's Old English Porter with The Great Canadian Fudge Company's Belgian walnut fudge log. Then pour a glass of an old favourite, Youngs Double Chocolate Stout, and enjoy it with the smooth silkiness of homemade Chocolate Stout ice cream.

Other beers that would go well with chocolate based foods are Sam Smith's Oatmeal Stout, or their Famous Taddy Porter, O'Hanlons Original Port Stout, Fullers London Porter, **Nelson Blackheart Oatmeal Stout**, **Mt. Begbie Selkirk Stout**, Cannery Blackberry Porter, or the original, Guinness. As for the choice of chocolate, I'll leave that up to you.

Old Yale Sasquatch Stout

Keoki Brewing Company : Change Can Do You Good

By Mike Pitsker w/Lisa Pitsker

In the last issue of the *Celebrator*, I raved on about Kauai's winter rain and shades of green and changes, those necessary and sometimes sweet harbingers of freshness, and if you missed it, shame on you! We were enjoying a quiet vacation on the Garden Island, listening to the rain beat a tune on the roof, watching rainbows apologize for the inconvenience, and enjoying some great island hospitality.

We'd already run across several locations where **Keoki Brewing Company** brands were available, both on draft and bottled. We had a few such beers during happy hour and bought a six-pack for the condo's fridge. When I finally spoke on the phone with the brewery's very busy owner, George Wells, he was delighted to have us visit.

"We've been getting the beer exactly where we want it," George beamed as he poured a fresh pint of the brew for us. "It's been a long, slow process, but changes can't be forced. The Kauai Sunset [amber] is fine, the best I can make it, but the Kauai Gold was a little heavier than I wanted it, and I was looking for more hop presence, so I changed the recipe until it was right."

While George was talking, his assistant brewer flitted around the brewhouse, checking levels as he filtered a batch of Gold. "Keola has been the best assistant I've had," said George. Keola Taniguchi simultaneously filtered the batch and cleaned the boiler, scurrying between the raised boiler platform and the concrete slab bearing the weight of the conditioning and bright tanks.

George grinned and returned to his story. "My wife, Jan, and I moved here about six and a half years ago," he said. "We'd been retired for 18 years, traveling a lot, visiting Kauai three or four times a year, before we decided we wanted to move here. I started looking for something to keep me busy — to get involved with something. I thought I'd work at brewing maybe a couple of days a week." He chuckled. "I've never worked so hard in all my life."

We watched Keola adjust the flow through the filter. "I had trouble with several brewers I hired at first. Some were well schooled but just didn't get the job done. Some just didn't want to work. None of them understood what I wanted to accomplish. After several brewer changes, I eventually decided I had to do the brewing myself or the beer wouldn't be what I wanted." George has no formal brewing training; he never went to school or apprenticed with another brewer. "I don't know anything about brewing," he admitted, "except what I've read. But I believe brewing is intuitive, like cooking."

George self-distributes his brands on Kauai. "I had some trouble with the major distributors. They were unable to devote the necessary effort to my brands, and I didn't

see any increase in market share. They really wanted me to give the beer away. So I decided to self-distribute. I scaled back to just Kauai, distributing draft and bottles.” His production is still small; he uses a hand-bottling system that limits his output to about 700 cases per month, and he kegs about 5,000 gallons a month, or about 160 barrels, but his profits grew through self-distribution. “Actually,” George said, “my losses shrank.”

Then the big change occurred. Kona Brewing Company teamed up with the Redhook/Widmer Brothers sales crew and went nationwide. “The Miller/Coors distribution house here in the islands lost the [Kona] brands to the Budweiser house, and they were not happy at all. The Paradise Beverages [Miller/Coors] general manager came to visit me and said, ‘I’ll leave you the Kauai market and distribute your draft beer on all the other islands.’ They are really motivated to go after Kona draft handles now.” The big surge has not yet happened, but these things take time. “Kona is a good brand, and the customer is not going to drop them just because the distributor asks them to. But I’m patient. And it doesn’t really matter to Kona, in the long run. Los Angeles alone has twice the population of the entire state of Hawaii,” said George, “Kona has bigger fish to fry.”

George’s retail sales growth is his second priority. “My wife, Jan, has been working hard on the Web site,” he said. “She has it looking sharp, and we have some good merchandise.” Visit keokibrewing.com. George and Jan have also been working on changing the label design, and the new labels look great.

Keoki brands recently became available in Japan; the bottled product is contract-brewed by Abita Brewing in Louisiana, where it can be pasteurized for transport. But George is busy with his small tropical island, keeping up with demand and rolling with the changes. And sometimes, change can do you good.

Keoki Brewing Co. | Visit Website

Lihui, Hawaii
(808) 245-8884

Mike Pitsker is an associate editor of the Celebrator Beer News and a longtime beer industry professional.

Nelson news

Goodday John,

Hope the winter season is treating you well and youre getting your fill of fresh beer from Nelson. Awhile back you told me if I had any new information about The Nelson Brewing Company to drop you a quick line. The big excitement grows as all our products have been Certified Organic since November of 2006. We are currently repackaging as the old boxes dwindle and look forward to a great year in new markets.

As well, we certainly await the beer festivals of the summer and fall including the pinnacle GCBF. Cheers and here's to good health and great beer

Al Mcleod

Nelson Brewing Company
Sales,Marketing and Delivery

Destination Pub: Blackfin Pub, Comox

Intro & Description

Enjoy lunch or dinner with a spectacular view of the ocean and Comox Marina, and in the summer spend some time on our oceanfront deck.

The beer selection

We offer a detailed new global wine list, 30 varieties of Scotch, an extensive selection of martinis and 10 Draught beers and ales

Delicious food

Enjoy lunch or dinner with a spectacular view of the ocean and Comox Marina, and in the summer spend some time on our oceanfront deck.

Signature dishes include Grilled Beef Tenderloin, Oven Baked Halibut and Jack Daniels Baby Back Ribs.

Catch of the Day

Ask your server about today's fresh fish feature

Oven Baked Queen Charlotte Islands Halibut

Sesame seeds, tiger prawns, sweet Thai chili sauce

23

Wild BC Salmon

Citrus dill aioli or strawberry pineapple salsa

18

Caribbean Snapper

Jamaican jerk spiced, pineapple curry

17

Fanny Bay Six Pack

Local oysters lightly breaded, fried golden brown

17

West Coast Halibut & Chips

Blackfin Veal Schnitzel

Mushroom, bacon, white wine rosemary sauce

16

Grilled Beef Tenderloin

Brandy peppercorn sauce or mushroom demi-glaze

6 oz 21 | 8 oz 24

Jack Daniels Baby Back Ribs

Slow roasted, BBQ Bourbon sauce

20

6oz Peppered Lamb Sirloin

Black pepper, rosemary mint demi-glaze

19

Bombay Chicken

Indonesian curry, wild rice, pita, mango chutney

13 | 16

Blackfin Stirfry

Prawns or chicken, Asian noodles, teriyaki, market vegetables

13 | 15

Pasta

Lobster and Wild Mushroom Ravioli

White wine, tarragon, cream

14

Prawn Fettucine

Roasted red peppers, sun-dried tomatoes, pine nuts, pesto

15

Snappy ending

Located at 132 Port Augusta Street

Comox, BC V9M 3N7

Phone number 250.339.5030

www.blackfinpub.com

The Blackfin Pub first opened its doors in 1989 in our scenic oceanfront location overlooking Comox Harbour, the Beaufort Mountain Range and the Comox Glacier. After a fire destroyed the building in 1991 it was reconstructed and finished in finely crafted cherry wood and Honduras mahogany by local craftsman Ernie Winstanley, complete with our famous ship's nautical wheel. Thus it remained until May 2005, when present owners Edd and Lisa Moyes purchased and refurbished this West Coast Pub, a favourite with the locals.

One of the Blackfin's most interesting accents is the custom Boston-design Whitehall boat, which hangs effortlessly from the ceiling. Whitehall boats were in great demand as water taxis in the days of sail on the waterfront of busy commercial ports, such as New York City in the early 19th century. Sadly the Whitehall construction is now nearly unknown and lost to this generation of boat builders, but luckily for the Blackfin, Hugh Campbell of Winard Wood Industries in Sidney, BC remains a talented boat builder.

These unique nautical touches, combined with our oceanfront location, stunning views, friendly service and great food make the Blackfin a popular destination for locals and visitors alike. In the summer, enjoy the views from our sunny deck as you relax and soak in the scenery.

Pubbing around BC:

You can tell straight away when the owners know how to run a good pub. They must be doing something right if it's full of locals in the off season. This was the case when we walked into the **Blackfin Pub** in Comox. The friendly staff of this fine upscale pub immediately made us feel welcome, particularly on a cold blustery day at the end of November. We'd been out checking out the town and the museum with its collection of local dinosaur bones, and needed a beer. We had not visited the pub since it changed hands, and were impressed. In 1991 a fire destroyed the original building, only a couple of years after it had opened. The current building was finished in finely crafted cherry wood and Honduras mahogany by local craftsman Ernie Winstanley. Present owners Edd and Lisa Moyes purchased the pub in 2005, and refurbished it with cosy booths and original art work by local artists.

Since Comox is halfway up Vancouver Island we did not have high hopes for the beer list. Indeed the scotch and wine selections are far more impressive than the beer. But of the ten taps, four were craft beers. We were impressed that the glasses were 20 ounce pints, and that the beers came at the right temperature. While the menu is mostly pub food, it does include many seafood dishes. The food is great here and they make a lovely rich fish chowder with local snapper, clams, shrimps and scallops.

Even though it is on the east coast of Vancouver Island, the pub overlooks Comox Harbour and Marina, and it faces south west. This means that on a clear day you can see the Beaufort Mountain Range and the Comox Glacier. There's a deck on the oceanfront which is one of the best spots on the Island on a summer evening. Come and try it when you are touring Vancouver Island next summer!

*Located at 132 Port Augusta Street, Comox, BC. Contact 250-339-5030.
www.blackfinpub.com*

News from Here and There

The B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch released sales figures for the year ending March 2006. B.C.'s craft breweries are expanding sales at a great rate with Russell Brewing leading the pack with 137 percent growth over the previous year. Phillips Brewing is close behind at 134 percent increase, and Mark James Groups Avalon Brewing is up 117 percent. Tin Whistle, Fat Cat, Lighthouse, Mount Begbie, Firewood Brewing (Tree), and Crannog Ales all experienced significant growth.

After 11 years at the Bay Street location, **Vancouver Island Brewing** maxed out its tank capacity this summer. Three more conditioning tanks are being installed to keep up with demand. To improve the quality of their packaged beers, the brewery has recently put in new canning and kegging lines. Another successful Beer Camp was held at Vancouver Island Brewery in November. Led by Becky Hayes and Gerry Hieter, this is a great way to spend a Saturday evening, learning about your favourite beverage. The next one will be held February 24th. Call the brewery at 250-361-007 to register.

In Nanaimo, **Fat Cat Brewing** has their annual Old Bad Cat Barley Wine Ale in liquor stores. Brewed with a hefty amount of malt this strong (11% ABV) beer is aged in Bourbon barrels for six weeks. It has a lighter colour than most barley wines, and is a very smooth sipping beer. The slight sweetness is well balanced by the hops. Also in Nanaimo, **Longwood Brewpub** is preparing to distribute their beers in 650 ml bottles this spring. Harley Smith has brewed their wonderful Copperbock again, and this year's batch of Framboise will only be available in bottles.

Vancouver brewery, **R&B Brewing** has only made one batch of Auld Nick this year. According to Barry Benson, the beer, which is available in 650ml bottles, is all going to Vancouver stores, both private and government. The beer is similar to a Scottish "Wee Heavy". It is a strong, unfiltered, ruby-red warming winter warmer that has a long maturation period at R&B.

Gary Lohin at **Central City Brewing** in Surrey had two brews on the go during the blackout in the November storm. The one in the mash tun was not affected, but the batch in the kettle has turned out very dark because of a rather extended boiling phase! Typhoon Ale might be a good name for this, hopefully, once in a lifetime brew. Gary is experimenting with his first attempt at brewing a Belgian Tripel-style beer. He is using Dingman's specialty Belgian pale malt and some year-old East Kent Goldings hops.

Chilliwack brewery **Old Yale Brewing** has a new beer: Cultus Lake Pilsner. Brewer Larry Caza says "I really like a pilsner, and since there aren't many good ones around, the only alternative was to brew one for myself". Made with Pale Malt and Sterling hops the beer is fermented with a German yeast. Sterling is a new North American hop variety similar to the Saaz hops used in Czech pilsners. The good news is that the rest of us also get to enjoy the beer as it is available in draught and bottles.

Howe Sound Brewing of Squamish are expanding their beer sales into the Whistler, Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria markets. Eight different beers are being sold in one litre bottles and in draught. The brewery size has been doubled to allow for the production increase.

Bedford Brewing in Victoria has some specialty beers in its menu list. This popular Victoria U-Brew is responding to customers demands according to owner Dave Harvey. New recipes include a Double IPA made with the extra bitter Tomahawk hops bringing the bitterness up to a big 85 IBU's. Another double is the Double Chocolate Porter, made with chocolate malt and cocoa, giving the beer a subtle lingering chocolate aroma. The complex Holiday Spiced Ale is made with cinnamon, orange and lemon peel, and Ginger Classic Ale has ginger added at the finish. The Vanilla Blonde and Vanilla dark Ales each have an addition of real whole vanilla beans infused with Baccardi 151 overproof rum.

Crannog Ales in Sorrento won the Best Organic Alcoholic Beverage category at the recent Organic Harvest Awards with their Hell's Kitchen Ale. These province-wide awards are given by the Certified Organic Associations of BC, and include categories for certified organic products of all sorts, as well as for ecological farming and organic retailing. In 2005, Crannog won the same award for the Backhand of God Stout. Hell's

Kitchen Ale is an Irish Red Ale made with organic potatoes. It is named after a famous Irish ghetto.

After 11 years at spinnakers, Lon Ladell is hanging up his brewers paddle and will be the owner of Fuse Waterfront Grill in Sooke. Taking over at Spinnakers as head brewer is Rob Monk who has been there for three years. Prior to that Rob was brewing with Yukon Brewing Company in his hometown of Whitehorse, Yukon.

February 14th and All That

Victoria runs a distant second to Las Vegas as a romantic spot for Valentines Day. However, it is way ahead as a destination for amorous couples focussing on the two most important food groups: beer and chocolate. The first obvious destination on Government Street is Rogers Chocolates, in business in Victoria since 1885. There is something really decadent about a Victoria Cream with a glass of Vancouver Island Brewing's Hermanator. The Creams come in 21 sweet fillings covered with bitter sweet chocolate. Round the corner on Broughton Street is Chocolaterie Bernard Callebaut. Callebaut was awarded the prestigious Grand Prix International Artisan Chocolatier, the top award presented at the International Chocolate Festival. For a rich experience accompany an Okanagan Spring's Old English Porter with Bernard Callebaut Chocolates hand dipped cherries.

Further up the street at the Bay Centre, Purdy's Chocolates' sell their legendary Hedgehogs These are made with a creamy hazelnut truffle filling, in a shell of smooth milk chocolate and go extremely well with the Selkirk Stout by Mt. Begbie Brewing. Or try a Gulf Island's Saltspring Porter with Purdy's peanut clusters.

When you are heading home pick some other beers and start cooking. As a starter match McAuslan St. Ambrose Oatmeal Stout with a chocolate sin cake. Try another stout such as Phillips Oatmeal with some homemade oatmeal chocolate fudge brownies. If the oatmeal has turned you on, whip up some carmelitas and sip Nelson Blackheart Oatmeal Stout. Otherwise grab a Cannery Brewing Blackberry Porter, Phillips Chocolate Porter, or an Old Yale Sasquatch Stout. As for the choice of chocolate, I'll leave that up to you.

B.C. Brewers Choices

I was curious as to which beers craft brewers drink when their own beers are not available. I asked for a draught choice, and favourite bottled beers, both Canadian and imported. This was a tough call for some. Matt Phillips, as president of the Craft Brewers Association of B.C., diplomatically stepped aside from naming names, but did offer these general suggestions:

Matt Phillips – PHILLIPS BREWING, Victoria

Draught beer: Fresh, and poured through clean lines. There are lots of great beers, but beer is fragile, and if it is not cared for properly, the best beer can be a disappointment.

Bottled Canadian beer: Again, there are lots of great beers. Sometimes I am looking for a hop bomb, other days a hefe or a sulphur laden lager. The diversity of beer makes it impossible to choose a favourite, but it helps if it is in a dark bottle and the date code indicates that it is fresh!

Imported beer: Some of the most interesting imported beers that I have had in bottles don't seem to make the crossing very well. The ones that seem to deal best with the crossing are usually a bit bigger in alcohol, and to my taste, brewed with a quirky Belgian abbey yeast.

Chris Gress, CRAIG ST. BREWPUB, Duncan

Draught beer: I love bocks, so I'd pick Sean Hoyne's Copper Bock at Canoe Brewpub.

Bottled Canadian beer: Big Rock Traditional, especially if in Alberta. It appears to have a rounder, more robust flavour there.

Imported beer: a tie between the very complex Wychwood Hobgoblin, and Innes and Gunn (Edinburgh) , an oak aged beer that I've got something different out of each time I've tried it.

Murray Hunter – GULF ISLANDS BREWING, Salt Spring Island

Draught beer: whatever's local. Freshness is the key. Vancouver Island Brewery's Hermanns Dark Lager, if it's fresh.

Bottled Canadian beer: Alley Kat Full Moon Pale Ale – fantastic.

Imported beer: usually Pilsner Urquell or something along that line.

Gary Lohin – CENTRAL CITY BREWING, Surrey

Draught beer: I can't really pick one because I'll drink locally wherever I am. My favourite style though is IPA. When I'm at a local watering hole, I'll always check to see what micro-brewed beers are on tap and if it's available, go with an IPA. The hoppier the better. One of my favourites in this style is made by Boundary Bay Brewing in Bellingham, Washington.

Bottled Canadian beer: I've always admired the beers from Unibroue, and consider them world class. If I'm out camping and selection is an issue I'll try to find Tree Brewing's Hophead, beers from Phillips Brewing, or cans from Fernie Brewing.

Imported beer: My choice would be some of the Micro's from the States, but if we're talking what's available in B.C. stores, I enjoy the tall cans from Warsteiner, Pilsner Urquell, and some of the bottle-conditioned Belgian products.

R&B BREWING, Vancouver, decided to split the questions between their three brewers:
Rick Dellows - *Draught beer*: Steamworks NNW Pale Ale – it's the perfect balance of malt, hops aroma, and reminds me of the best British beers.

Allyson Tomlin – *Bottled Canadian beer*: – Phillips Oatmeal Stout, because she's a huge fan of Matt Phillips' beers.

Ben Van Hee - *Imported beer*: Fullers London Porter – a real quality beer, a fine example of the style.

Andrew Harris – RUSSELL BREWING, Surrey

Draught beer: I recently visited Montreal and discovered an affinity for the St-Amboise Pale Ale. This is a super amber pale ale, hoppy and full flavoured with a very clean mouth feel.

Bottled Canadian beer: Amsterdam Brewery's Blonde Lager (Toronto) – an un-pasteurized, lightly hopped, easy drinking lager without a bitter finish.

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquell – I enjoy the crisp clean finish, in my opinion this pilsner has the perfect ratio of bitterness and hop. Delicious.

Bart Larsen – MT. BEGBIE BREWING, Revelstoke

Draught beer: Guinness because it is dark, smooth, and is nicely hopped.

Bottled Canadian beer: I only drink ours!

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquell as it is a flavourful lager with good bittering hops.

Benjamin Schottle – HUGO's BREWPUB, Victoria

Draught beer: Phillips Brewing Co. IPA. The head on this beer is just ferocious - thick and creamy and then some! A very welcome and respectable IPA in a land where hoppy beers are not always easy to find.

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue's Trois Pistoles (La Fin Du Monde, eau Benite, and Terrible are all neck and neck for the number one position). I applaud their dedication to producing authentic Belgian beerstyles. Flavours of dark fruit/plum/candy/esters in big bodied, bottle conditioned ales really turn my crank.

Imported beer: Rochefort 8. Trappist ales are the pinnacle of quality in my opinion. If a beer is made by monks, chances are, I'm going to love it. This one reminds me of a very pleasant springtime afternoon spent on a patio in the rustic, cozy town of Rochefort, Belgium.

Neil Herbst - ALLEY KAT BREWING, Edmonton

Draught beer: Hm. tough one. On reflection I would have to say Brewsters' Pilsner. It is a really nice, hoppy, Czech style pilsner. I've even been known to have it on draught at home!

Bottled Canadian beer: I really don't drink a lot of Canadian bottled beer, but when I do it is usually on the coast in your lovely province and I usually try to drink from the local brewery. In the Victoria area I usually drink Lighthouse Amber or pale ale.

Imported beer: recently had a chocolate stout from Brooklyn Brewing that was absolutely delightful. It got its dark chocolate flavours entirely from black malts.

Paul Hoyne - LIGHTHOUSE BREWERY, Victoria

Draught beer: Dix IPA brewed by Tony Dewald. This is a wonderful fresh draught beer...beautiful malt character and balance...grapefruit, mandarin and a hint of pine are the dominate flavours.

Bottled Canadian beer: La Fin du Monde by Unibroue. This is a very good Canadian version of a Belgian Triple...spicy and citrus flavours.

Imported beer: Schneider Aventinus, a great example of how tasty weizenbock beer can be. A warming finish that is creamy and smooth that leaves you wanting more!

Ralf Pittroff – VANCOUVER ISLAND BREWERY, Victoria

Draught beer: Sleemans Honey Brown Lager.

Bottled Canadian beer: Big Rock Pale Ale

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquell.

Vern Lambourne - GRANVILLE ISLAND BREWING, Vancouver

Your questions are probably some of the hardest I've had in a while. I honestly can't say that I have a favourite beer, but if pushed here are three answers for beers that have impressed me lately.

Draught beer: ESB at High Mountain in Whistler. It is a very well balanced bitter, and went well with a rainy afternoon in the pub.

Bottled Canadian beer: Phillips Black Toque India Dark Ale. I had this just before Christmas and was really impressed with the bitterness and the dark malt and hop flavours.

Imported beer: a tie between Fullers London Pride and Coniston's Bluebird Bitter. Why? They're both delicious.

Dave Fenn - HOWE SOUND BREWING, Squamish

Draught beer: Lighthouse IPA. It's refreshing to get some great flavour in a draught product, in a market dominated by mild ales and lagers.

Bottled Canadian beer: Phillips IPA. A great beer that gives people a surprised look that beer can be this flavourful.

Imported beer: Grolsch. Although I prefer not to buy imported products, I like this Dutch beer for its clean finish.

Tim Brown – MISSION SPRINGS BREWING, Mission

Draught beer: Dix BBQ and Brewery IPA.

Bottled Canadian beer: Phillips Longboat Double Chocolate Porter.

Imported beer: Chimay Grande Reserve.

Tony DeWalt – DIX BBQ & BREWERY, Vancouver

Draught beer: Central City's IPA. It has loads of bitterness and the abundant hops are well balanced with malt.

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue Noir de Chambly with its unique flavour of roast malt and anise.

Imported beer: I've always been particular to Duvel but now I'm asking friends to bring back Stone Ruination from the US. This is as intense as it gets, especially when fresh.

Larry Caza - OLD YALE BREWING, Chilliwack

Draught beer: Boundary Bay IPA.

Bottled Canadian beer: Mt Begbie Brewing's High Country Kolsch.

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquel.

And the team from CRANNOG ALES, Sorrento, agreed to differ:

Brian MacIassac:

Draught beer: Longwood Brewpub's Imperial Stout. Intense, true to style, lots of great roast character and the alcohol level to match it.

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue Raftman: Intense flavour, massive body, bottle-conditioned.

Imported beer: Fraoch, from Scotland. This beer has a unique malt profile, delicate heather notes; it is subtle and very pleasant.

Rebecca Kneen:

Draught beer: Hurricane IPA by Storm Brewing. Very complex, lots of lovely hops and plenty of alcohol to lift them to your palate, plus it's a bit different every time (this is a good thing).

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue Maudite - because if you have to have bottled beer, bottle-conditioned is the only way to go. All the Unibroue beers are massive, even the lighter ones, with complexity and balance. Magic.

Imported beer: Stone Brewing's IPA (California), because it's the best IPA I've ever tasted, seconded by Pelican Brewpub's IPA (Oregon). Unbelievably hoppy, but it carries it off well, with enough alcohol to balance the bitterness and a nice malt profile.

And, we'll leave the last words to Rebecca & Brian: "That's a fun little exercise!"

The Craft Brewers Association of British Columbia (CBABC) recently announced the appointment of Gerry Hieter as Executive Director of the association. Matt Phillips, Chairman of the CBABC, said “The CBABC is really delighted. This appointment will allow us to better represent the excellent craft beers of British Columbia to consumers”.

Gerry Hieter is excited over the prospects of the job. “I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities of working with diverse elements of the CBABC”, he said, He has considerable expertise in the craft brewing industry in British Columbia. He was the first President of Whistler Brewing in 1989, and of Lighthouse Brewing in 1999, and has represented Shaftebury Brewing, Spinnakers Brewpub, and the Sleeman’s group. He is also the Chairman of the Great Canadian Beer Festival.

Kaua'i Revisited

It had been two years since we first visited Kaua'i and its breweries. A quick e-mail to Keoki Brewing Company assured us that they were still very much in business. So with swim and snorkel gear packed Carol and I flew off for some winter sun and fun.

First Kaua'i Beer Moment: At Pizetta's in Kapa'a a bottle of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale was served so cold I was sure it was stale. It had so little aroma and taste that I almost sent it back. Near the end of the meal I tried it again only to find it had thawed and had taken its old familiar form again! Ah well, the calzone and the fettuccine were great.

Second Kaua'i Beer Moment: At Wahoo's Seafood Grill we found Keoki Brewing's Wahoo Tropical Tan brown Ale on tap. This is a great dark brown ale with a good body. It's well balanced and has a nice gentle hoppy finish. It seems that is the favourite of the staff too!

Keoki Brewing Company now has a permanent brewer. Matt Hall and his wife, Chris, came to Kauai on their honeymoon in 2003 and decided to move there. (Last December they had a baby, Elsa Maili.) Matt had brewed for 11 years at Strohs, Stevens Point Brewery, Big Sky, and had studied at the Siebel Institute, before finishing up at Keoki. Matt has a passion for brewing, and, as he says, "I have fun here and I love working in a brewery. And now I'm learning to surf which is just great." The main beers produced are Keoki Sunset (hopped with Simcoe) and Keoki Gold (hopped with Amarillo). The Tropical Tan is a brown ale, fairly hoppy with a middle of the road flavour. It is sort of an Island Brown, and is only available in draught, according to Jan Formato Wells. Jan is the marketing person, known locally as the "beer lady". Jan and George (or "Keoki" in Hawaiian) Wells have established a market for their beers in Japan. They ship Peach and Mango beers and are planning on shipping a blue beer in February.

Third Kaua'i Beer Moment: We stopping at the Hanalima Bakery on Puhi Road, and found **The Wine Garden** next door. Despite the name, owner Collette Savage has the best beer selection on Kaua'i. Her beers range from Mainland greats to international favourites. The stock varies, but included all the Chimays (including Grand Reserve), Lindemans lambics, Sam Smiths, Sierra Nevada, Rogue, and, well, you get the picture. (Oh, and don't bother to ask for North Coast Old Rasputin Russian Imperial Stout – we bought the last four bottles.) By the way, the cherry rolls at the bakery were heavenly.

Out west on Kauai is **Waimea Brewing** (the westernmost brewpub in the world, and I've got the shirt to prove it!). Brewer Dave Curry has been brewing here for five years. Originally from California, Dave started at the now defunct Butte Creek Brewing, and trained at the American Brewers Guild at Davis. Dave brews one day at Waimea Brewing, and works/plays at the golf course at the Kaua'i

Marriott resort the rest of the week. Production at Waimea Brewing increased 20 percent in 2005 and 30 percent in 2006. This has meant Dave has had to brew the more popular beers more often, sometimes at the cost of not brewing his own favourites (such as IPA). Waimea Bay Pale Ale and Luau Lager are now available in six-packs in California and all the Hawaiian islands. We sampled the Uli Uli Brown Ale (named for a mountain tree) and the Pakala Porter (named for a local surfers favourite spot).

Fourth Kaua'i Beer Moment: Coming round the corner in the Koke'e Museum we met Boundary Bay's Ed Bennett. "Ed Bennett!?! What the.....!", and then Janet too! We exchanged Kaua'i beer info and then went our separate ways, Ed and Janet to hike the Waimea Canyon, and Carol and I for a final dip in the sea to end the day.

The Wine Garden

4495 Puhi Road
Lihu'e, HI 96766
808-245-5766
winegarden@hawaiiantel.net

Waimea Brewing Co.,

Waimea Plantation Cottages
9400 Kaumualii Highway
Waimea, HI 96796
808-338-1625
www.waimea-plantation.com/brew.html

Keoki Brewing Company

2976 Aukele Street
Lihu'e, HI 96766
808-245-8884
www.keokibrewing.com

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. He and Carol occasionally search out great beer destinations.

B.C. Brewers Choices

I was curious as to which beers craft brewers drink when their own beers are not available. I asked for a draught choice, and favourite bottled beers, both Canadian and imported. This was a tough call for some. Matt Phillips, as president of the Craft Brewers Association of B.C., diplomatically stepped aside from naming names, but did offer these general suggestions:

Matt Phillips – PHILLIPS BREWING, Victoria

Draught beer: Fresh, and poured through clean lines. There are lots of great beers, but beer is fragile, and if it is not cared for properly, the best beer can be a disappointment.

Bottled Canadian beer: Again, there are lots of great beers. Sometimes I am looking for a hop bomb, other days a hefe or a sulphur laden lager. The diversity of beer makes it impossible to choose a favourite, but it helps if it is in a dark bottle and the date code indicates that it is fresh!

Imported beer: Some of the most interesting imported beers that I have had in bottles don't seem to make the crossing very well. The ones that seem to deal best with the crossing are usually a bit bigger in alcohol, and to my taste, brewed with a quirky Belgian abbey yeast.

Chris Gress, CRAIG ST. BREWPUB, Duncan

Draught beer: I love bocks, so I'd pick Sean Hoyne's Copper Bock at Canoe Brewpub.

Bottled Canadian beer: Big Rock Traditional, especially if in Alberta. It appears to have a rounder, more robust flavour there.

Imported beer: a tie between the very complex Wychwood Hobgoblin, and Innes and Gunn (Edinburgh) , an oak aged beer that I've got something different out of each time I've tried it.

Murray Hunter – GULF ISLANDS BREWING, Salt Spring Island

Draught beer: whatever's local. Freshness is the key. Vancouver Island Brewery's Hermanns Dark Lager, if it's fresh.

Bottled Canadian beer: Alley Kat Full Moon Pale Ale – fantastic.

Imported beer: usually Pilsner Urquell or something along that line.

Gary Lohin – CENTRAL CITY BREWING, Surrey

Draught beer: I can't really pick one because I'll drink locally wherever I am. My favourite style though is IPA. When I'm at a local watering hole, I'll always check to see what micro-brewed beers are on tap and if it's available, go with an IPA. The hoppier the better. One of my favourites in this style is made by Boundary Bay Brewing in Bellingham, Washington.

Bottled Canadian beer: I've always admired the beers from Unibroue, and consider them world class. If I'm out camping and selection is an issue I'll try to find Tree Brewing's Hophead, beers from Phillips Brewing, or cans from Fernie Brewing.

Imported beer: My choice would be some of the Micro's from the States, but if we're talking what's available in B.C. stores, I enjoy the tall cans from Warsteiner, Pilsner Urquell, and some of the bottle-conditioned Belgian products.

R&B BREWING, Vancouver, decided to split the questions between their three brewers:
Rick Dellows - *Draught beer*: Steamworks NNW Pale Ale – it's the perfect balance of malt, hops aroma, and reminds me of the best British beers.

Allyson Tomlin – *Bottled Canadian beer*: – Phillips Oatmeal Stout, because she's a huge fan of Matt Phillips' beers.

Ben Van Hee - *Imported beer*: Fullers London Porter – a real quality beer, a fine example of the style.

Andrew Harris – RUSSELL BREWING, Surrey

Draught beer: I recently visited Montreal and discovered an affinity for the St-Amboise Pale Ale. This is a super amber pale ale, hoppy and full flavoured with a very clean mouth feel.

Bottled Canadian beer: Amsterdam Brewery's Blonde Lager (Toronto) – an un-pasteurized, lightly hopped, easy drinking lager without a bitter finish.

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquell – I enjoy the crisp clean finish, in my opinion this pilsner has the perfect ratio of bitterness and hop. Delicious.

Bart Larsen – MT. BEGBIE BREWING, Revelstoke

Draught beer: Guinness because it is dark, smooth, and is nicely hopped.

Bottled Canadian beer: I only drink ours!

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquell as it is a flavourful lager with good bittering hops.

Benjamin Schottle – HUGO's BREWPUB, Victoria

Draught beer: Phillips Brewing Co. IPA. The head on this beer is just ferocious - thick and creamy and then some! A very welcome and respectable IPA in a land where hoppy beers are not always easy to find.

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue's Trois Pistoles (La Fin Du Monde, eau Benite, and Terrible are all neck and neck for the number one position). I applaud their dedication to producing authentic Belgian beerstyles. Flavours of dark fruit/plum/candy/esters in big bodied, bottle conditioned ales really turn my crank.

Imported beer: Rochefort 8. Trappist ales are the pinnacle of quality in my opinion. If a beer is made by monks, chances are, I'm going to love it. This one reminds me of a very pleasant springtime afternoon spent on a patio in the rustic, cozy town of Rochefort, Belgium.

Neil Herbst - ALLEY KAT BREWING, Edmonton

Draught beer: Hm. tough one. On reflection I would have to say Brewsters' Pilsner. It is a really nice, hoppy, Czech style pilsner. I've even been known to have it on draught at home!

Bottled Canadian beer: I really don't drink a lot of Canadian bottled beer, but when I do it is usually on the coast in your lovely province and I usually try to drink from the local brewery. In the Victoria area I usually drink Lighthouse Amber or pale ale.

Imported beer: recently had a chocolate stout from Brooklyn Brewing that was absolutely delightful. It got its dark chocolate flavours entirely from black malts.

Paul Hoyne - LIGHTHOUSE BREWERY, Victoria

Draught beer: Dix IPA brewed by Tony Dewald. This is a wonderful fresh draught beer...beautiful malt character and balance...grapefruit, mandarin and a hint of pine are the dominate flavours.

Bottled Canadian beer: La Fin du Monde by Unibroue. This is a very good Canadian version of a Belgian Triple...spicy and citrus flavours.

Imported beer: Schneider Aventinus, a great example of how tasty weizenbock beer can be. A warming finish that is creamy and smooth that leaves you wanting more!

Ralf Pittroff – VANCOUVER ISLAND BREWERY, Victoria

Draught beer: Sleemans Honey Brown Lager.

Bottled Canadian beer: Big Rock Pale Ale

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquell.

Vern Lambourne - GRANVILLE ISLAND BREWING, Vancouver

Your questions are probably some of the hardest I've had in a while. I honestly can't say that I have a favourite beer, but if pushed here are three answers for beers that have impressed me lately.

Draught beer: ESB at High Mountain in Whistler. It is a very well balanced bitter, and went well with a rainy afternoon in the pub.

Bottled Canadian beer: Phillips Black Toque India Dark Ale. I had this just before Christmas and was really impressed with the bitterness and the dark malt and hop flavours.

Imported beer: a tie between Fullers London Pride and Coniston's Bluebird Bitter. Why? They're both delicious.

Dave Fenn - HOWE SOUND BREWING, Squamish

Draught beer: Lighthouse IPA. It's refreshing to get some great flavour in a draught product, in a market dominated by mild ales and lagers.

Bottled Canadian beer: Phillips IPA. A great beer that gives people a surprised look that beer can be this flavourful.

Imported beer: Grolsch. Although I prefer not to buy imported products, I like this Dutch beer for its clean finish.

Tim Brown – MISSION SPRINGS BREWING, Mission

Draught beer: Dix BBQ and Brewery IPA.

Bottled Canadian beer: Phillips Longboat Double Chocolate Porter.

Imported beer: Chimay Grande Reserve.

Tony DeWalt – DIX BBQ & BREWERY, Vancouver

Draught beer: Central City's IPA. It has loads of bitterness and the abundant hops are well balanced with malt.

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue Noir de Chambly with its unique flavour of roast malt and anise.

Imported beer: I've always been particular to Duvel but now I'm asking friends to bring back Stone Ruination from the US. This is as intense as it gets, especially when fresh.

Larry Caza - OLD YALE BREWING, Chilliwack

Draught beer: Boundary Bay IPA.

Bottled Canadian beer: Mt Begbie Brewing's High Country Kolsch.

Imported beer: Pilsner Urquel.

And the team from CRANNOG ALES, Sorrento, agreed to differ:

Brian MacIassac:

Draught beer: Longwood Brewpub's Imperial Stout. Intense, true to style, lots of great roast character and the alcohol level to match it.

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue Raftman: Intense flavour, massive body, bottle-conditioned.

Imported beer: Fraoch, from Scotland. This beer has a unique malt profile, delicate heather notes; it is subtle and very pleasant.

Rebecca Kneen:

Draught beer: Hurricane IPA by Storm Brewing. Very complex, lots of lovely hops and plenty of alcohol to lift them to your palate, plus it's a bit different every time (this is a good thing).

Bottled Canadian beer: Unibroue Maudite - because if you have to have bottled beer, bottle-conditioned is the only way to go. All the Unibroue beers are massive, even the lighter ones, with complexity and balance. Magic.

Imported beer: Stone Brewing's IPA (California), because it's the best IPA I've ever tasted, seconded by Pelican Brewpub's IPA (Oregon). Unbelievably hoppy, but it carries it off well, with enough alcohol to balance the bitterness and a nice malt profile.

And, we'll leave the last words to Rebecca & Brian: "That's a fun little exercise!"

The Craft Brewers Association of British Columbia (CBABC) recently announced the appointment of Gerry Hieter as Executive Director of the association. Matt Phillips, Chairman of the CBABC, said “The Association is really delighted. This appointment will allow us to better represent the excellent craft beers of British Columbia to consumers”.

Gerry Hieter is excited over the prospects of the job. “I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities of working with diverse elements of the CBABC”, he said, He has considerable expertise in the craft brewing industry in British Columbia. He was the first President of Whistler Brewing in 1989, and of Lighthouse Brewing in 1999, and has represented Shaftebury Brewing, Spinnakers Brewpub, and the Sleeman’s group. He is also the Chairman of the Great Canadian Beer Festival.



I'VE JUST COME DOWN FROM THE ISLE OF SKYE

I've just come down from the Isle of Skye,
I'm no very big an' I'm awfy shy,
And the lassies shout when I go by
"Hey Donald, whaur's yer troosers?"

While it's certainly true that we did see kilts on Skye, we also drank some great beer and tasted some lovely single malt. The visit to Skye was a bit of a nostalgia trip for me and a new destination for my wife, Carol. We drove all day from Cambridge to Carlisle to stay a couple of nights. My dear cousin David had bought a wide selection of craft beers from the Lake District so we set about tasting them. Lovely beers, many of them bottle conditioned. Over the last few years we've noticed changes in British beers. They are becoming slightly more bitter, and brewers are occasionally using non-traditional ingredients (such as Saaz hops in an ale). David and his wife took us out for dinner at a charming pub in a tiny village: the Pheasant Inn at Cumwhitton. This pub was voted pub of the year by the Solway branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). It was Quiz Night, and, we enjoyed great company, good food, and local cask-conditioned beers. My favourite was a guest beer, Elgood's Cambridge Bitter, a well balanced malty beer with a long bitter finish.

Next stop in our 600 mile journey was Glasgow (a real swinging beer destination). We started the weekend here with a bit of culture (the Burrell Collection Museum is outstanding). We then checked out the local bars. We had the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and tried several. The star has to be Babbity Bowster, which we found near our hotel, on the edge of the refurbished Merchant City area. This was the original hub of Glasgow. In the 18th century the city's Tobacco Lords constructed their mansions and warehouses here. Recently it has been undergoing urban renewal and is one of the most dynamic areas of the city. Babbity Bowster is a gem with friendly staff and good beers. The pub, built in the 18th century, is named after a Scottish dance popular at that time. Babbity means 'bob at the' and Bowster 'a large pillow'. We leave you to figure out who was performing a bobbing dance at the edge of the bed and why! The beer selection was quite eclectic, ranging from many Scottish beers to draught Budvar. The two local guest beers were Kelburn Brewing's Misty Law and Millstone's Tiger Rut. The latter was lovely and bitter, but we preferred the misty Law, a very fruity hoppy amber ale. Out on the patio the pre-theatre crowd was gathering and we found the local Glaswegians fun to be with. The menu uses all local ingredients, and we enjoyed excellent smoked Scottish salmon.

The next day we traveled to Inveraray and toured the castle (home of the Duke of Argyle). We stayed at the George Hotel built in 1770. The present owners took over in 1860 and the seventh generation is currently running the hotel. Across the road is Loch Fyne Whiskies, a marvelous shop with over 400 single malts on the shelves (www.lfw.co.uk and they will ship anywhere). We tasted a special

blend, and the Loch Fyne liqueur, made from 12 year old Scotch, tangerine, orange and chocolate. We repaired to the bar at the George and had a pint of locally brewed Fyne Ales Maverick, a smooth fruity ale with plenty of body.

Another long day of driving brought us to the ferry from Mallaig to Ardrossan on the Isle of Skye. Once off the ferry we turned sharp left out of the line of traffic into Ardvassar. The Advassar Hotel where I had stayed at in the 1960's with my fellow geology students was still there. We then drove to Broadford, and the village hall where we went to several ceildhl dances was still there too. Some things just don't change in this part of the world. Our hotel in Portree faced the harbour and we were thoroughly entertained by the coming and goings of the local fishermen. History is everywhere here. The Royal Hotel up the road is where Bonnie Prince Charlie bade farewell to Flora Macdonald who had smuggled him 'Over the Sea to Skye'. We set out to explore the island. The scenery defies description. The sky was clear enough that we could see the mainland mountains to the east and the Outer Hebrides to the west. We stop at waterfalls, cliffs, and rocky beaches.

We could not go to Skye without visiting the Talisker distillery. On the banks of Loch Harcourt the road winds down to the shore where the white buildings of the distillery snuggle. It costs £5.00 for a tour and that includes a generous dram of their 10 year old. The whiskey is intense; smoky peatiness with a host of other flavours – sweet, peppery, you name it! We are told that the 18 year old Talisker has just been given the 2007 award for Whiskey Magazine's World's Best Single Malt. Diageo now owns the distillery and most of the production is shipped out to use in blended whiskeys. This is by their standards a small distillery – it only produces 44,000 litres a week! And that's in only 14 mashes. Incidentally, it was Talisker that was used in the original Drambuie recipe.

Just down the road from the distillery is the Sligachan Hotel, a remote building at a junction on the main road. In September 2003, Eric Jones and Steve Bailey started the Cuillin Brewery in the former bar of the hotel. The bar was rebuilt next door and is a very popular spot. The brewery can only just keep up with production. Eric, the head brewer, explained that the beer is also popular with other hotels and bars. "The only problem is that with only four conditioning tanks I'm very limited to what we can sell to other bars. If we sell too much, the hotel has to buy beer from other breweries!" The brewery came from a brewpub, the Physician and Firkin, in Edinburgh. It is a 5-barrel brew plant and generally about 2 brews a week are made in the summer. The hotel closes from October to March as many of its visitors are hikers and climbers who have come to visit the nearby Cuillin Hills. These are the rugged mountains (gabbro and granite!) that are the backdrop to the hotel. Eric buys the malt ready crushed from Charles Farham in Kent who batch ship it with the brewery's hop order, thus eliminating the need for a grain mill. Four beers are made. Pinnacle was our favourite, a fairly dry full-bodied ale at 4.7% ABV. Eagle Ale is a scaled down version of Pinnacle and a bit sweeter (3.8%). Skye Ale is full of flavour at 4.1%. Black Face

(named after the sheep seen on every Skye hillside) made with chocolate malt and roast barley is near a stout (4.3%). Occasionally blends are made for local events and weddings at the hotel. Eric showed how it is possible to take a digital photo of the happy couple, whip it into the office, and have a pump clip made. It can then be onto the Wedding Ale pump handle before the guests come in for the reception.

In the northwest of Skye is the Stein Inn, the oldest on the island, dating from the 18th century. This is at Waternish a remote settlement on Loch Bay. This is a welcoming hotel with a very good reputation among tourists and yachtsmen alike for the high quality restaurant. It has a traditional highland bar with local beers and offering 100 malt whiskies.

Also in the north end of Skye at Uig is Isle of Skye Brewing. When this brewery started in 1995 it was the first commercial brewery in the Hebrides. It was originally a partnership between two high school teachers. Currently the brewery is owned by Angus MacRuary, one of the original partners. The brewing is done by head brewer, Pam Jones (Scotland's only female brewer), and Norrie MacLeod, both of whom are ex-chefs. In 2004 capacity was doubled with the installation of a 22 barrel brew house. Fermentation tank restrictions keep Pam to just four brews a week. The brewery kettle is real copper and is heated with very large steam coils. It was custom made for the brewery by Macmillans, makers of stills for distilleries. Pam uses malts from Muntons and from Fawcetts, and the hops come from Kent. Several varieties are used: Challenger, Cascade, Fuggles, Goldings and Hersbrucker. The original yeast is from a brewery that is now closed. Of the seven beers regularly made, Black Cuillin has won the most awards, having been runner up five times to the Champion Beer of Scotland. It is a marvelously dark ale made with rolled oats and Scottish heather honey (4.5% ABV). Red Cuillin is very smooth, Young Pretender is quite light and is the hoppiest, Blaven is quite strong and Cuillin Beast a dangerous 7% ABV. The original partners planned to limit distribution to Skye. However, word of mouth, particularly after some spectacular competition awards, has expanded sales far beyond the island. Three quarters of production is now sold on the mainland. We found their bottled beers in Cambridge, over 500 miles away.

The Isle of Skye is rugged and intense, the landscape raw and severe at times, and life in the crofts can be hard. But there is something there that has inspired brewers and distillers to produce magnificent beers and whiskies. (Maybe it's in the water.)

The Pheasant Inn, Cumwhitton
Brampton, Cumbria, England
Tel: +44 (0)1228 560102
www.thepheasantinncumwhitton.co.uk/index.php

Babbity Bowster, 16-18 Blackfriars Street,

Glasgow, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0)141 552 5055

The George Hotel, Main St East
Inveraray, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0)1499 302111
www.thegeorgehotel.co.uk

Talisker Distillery, Carbost,
Isle of Skye, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0)1478 614308
www.scotchwhisky.net/distilleries/talisker.htm

Cuillin Brewery Ltd, Sligachan,
Isle of Skye, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0)1478 650204
www.cuillinbrewery.co.uk

Stein Inn, Waternish,
Isle of Skye, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0)1470-592362
www.stein-inn.co.uk

The Isle of Skye Brewing Company
The Pier, Uig, Isle of Skye, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0) 1470 542477
www.skyebrewery.co.uk/skye.htm

John and Carol Rowling travel to the remotest locations to bring CBN readers the latest in the world of beers (and whiskeys, too). However, the next column really will be news of Pubbing Around BC.





Fuse Update

In May, my wife, Carol, and I celebrated my birthday in style with dinner at Fuse Waterfront Grill. This westcoast restaurant at Coopers Cove was taken over in January by our friends Lon and Samantha Ladell. The location is fabulous, a kayakers paradise. Coopers Cove is in the Sooke Basin, Canada's southernmost harbour, and as the tourist office says, this is "where the Rainforest meets the Sea". Located 30 minutes west of Victoria, it is on the way to the West Coast Trail, a 4-day hike that will test the best. Lon and Sam, together with chef, Matt McGinn, have upgraded and updated this popular eating spot into a great destination restaurant. As Lon says, their philosophy is to serve "wholesome food in good size portions prepared by a master chef". Certainly the Sooke trout that I had was delicious. Lon and Sam aim to make this a place to bring friends, or in our case, to have a birthday party! The food really is fabulous (especially the desserts). There is nothing pretentious about Fuse, and the waitresses are down home friendly.

Although the emphasis is on good food, the beer selection is what really makes this place worth finding. Lon's expertise as former head brewer at Spinnakers shows in both the choice and condition of the beers. Phillips Brewing's beers are the house draught beers with a guest tap (when we were there it was Howe Sound Brewing's Hangdog Hefewiezen – tasting very fresh). The range of Canadian and Belgian bottled beers is impressive. Carol had her favourite: Chimay Blue. Add the food and the beer to the setting and this definitely is a "can't miss" spot.

Fuse Waterfront Grill

5449 Sooke Road
Sooke, B.C. V0S 1N0
250-642-0011

www.fusewaterfrontgrill.com



Lon and Sam at Fuse Waterfront Grill, Sooke









TALISKER
DISTILLERY

Chefs were Ed Walker and Ron Rosentreter, both instructors at Thompson Rivers University Culinary Arts department. The courses are on the left, paired liquor on the right. The Cherry Irish Ale (our Red Branch with added cherries), the White Currant Brown Ale and the Blackcurrant Stout were all cask-conditioned.

Hundred Foot Feast July 21, 2007

B b

Ravioli of Icelandic Lamb Shoulder and Aged Smoked Gorts Gouda, with Rosemary Jus & Pear Butter

Bogtrotter Brown Ale

Green Pea and Roasted Garlic Soup with Crème Fraiche
From Gort's Gouda, Wildflight Farm & Left Fields

Red Branch Irish Ale

Seasonal Greens
from Notch Hill Organics & Left Fields

Cherry Irish Ale

Crannóg Ales' Cherry Bounce and Mead Grenache

Two-Year Old Organic Mead

Braised Rabbit with Rhubarb, Thyme & Backhand of God Stout, Roasted Root Vegetables and Minted New Potatoes

from Tappen Valley Growers, Notch Hill Organics, Left Fields & Wildflight Farm

Backhand of God Stout

Local Cheese Selection:

Maasdammer

Smoked Gouda

Extra Aged Gouda

Chèvre

Mild Gouda

Morag's Cream Cheese

from Gort's Gouda, Happy Days Goat Dairy & Left Fields

Breads: made on farm

Brewery Bread with spent grain

Herb Slabs

Columbia French Bread

Hell's Kitchen Immigrant Ale

Left Fields Fresh Fruits Glazed with Red Ale & Raspberry Sabayon

White Currant Brown Ale with Smoked Mead

Blackcurrant Stout

Moroccan Mint Tea

Ethiopian Harrar Organic & Fair Trade Coffee

from Shuswap Coffee Co.

Brought to you by: Crannóg Ales, Stellar Seeds, Left Fields

NEWS RELEASE

For Additional Information Contact:

Rick Dellow and Barry Benson
R&B Brewing Company
604 874 2537 office
604 874 2517 fax
ales@r-and-b.com

R&B Brewing Company Adds a Black Sheep to its Family of Beer ***Vancouver Micro Brewery, R&B Launches Dark Star Oatmeal Stout***

Vancouver, BC, September 11, 2007 – Appealing to craft beer lovers, the brewers at R&B Brewing Company are launching their first stout, Dark Star Oatmeal Stout, September 18, 2007. “Dark Star is a complement to the R&B Family of beers, rounding out our collection while providing more variety in the craft beer industry,” said R&B Brewing Co-owner and Operator, Barry Benson.

Available on tap in select restaurants and in 650ml bottles at BC Liquor Distributors and private beer stores in Vancouver September 18, 2007. The Dark Star Oatmeal Stout is a combination of rolled oats, roast barley and a variety of malts including; chocolate, pale, Munich and crystal. Dark Star boasts a cappuccino-coloured head, on a ruby-black body with roast coffee aroma, followed by a complex chocolatey, malty bitterness and a long dry finish.

R&B Brewing Co. owners Rick Dellow, Barry Benson and Head Brewer Aly Tomlin will launch the Dark Star Oatmeal Stout along with a 10th Anniversary Ale at a private, by invitation only VIP tasting and celebration at 2:30pm, September 18th at Hamilton Street Grill. Following the VIP reception the public is invited to join the festivities with a Beer and BBQ tasting starting at 6:30pm, Tickets are \$80.00 per person, reservations available by credit card at 604-331-1511 or hamiltonstreetgrill@telus.net.

-more-

Dark Star Stout is dedicated to the memory of R&B Employee, James Judson Kelly, who passed away in late December 2006. Due to Jamie's passion for the Stout, R&B Brewing Co. owners Rick Dellow, Barry Benson and brewers Aly Tomlin and Ben VanHee are honouring his memory by releasing his favorite brew.

#

About R&B Brewing Co.

R&B Brewing (derived from a clever organization of the two founding partners' names) is the combined hard work and lifelong goal of Rick Dellow and Barry Benson who share more than 55 years experience in the international and local brewing industry. After spending many years installing microbreweries and brewpubs and training brewers all over the world they decided to bring their wealth of knowledge and experience home to Vancouver. R&B Brewing produces award winning, consistent, high quality, hand crafted ales such as Red Devil Pale Ale, Raven Cream Ale, Sun God Wheat Ale and the Hop Goblin India Pale Ale. For more information please contact R&B Brewing Co. at 54 East 4th Ave. Vancouver BC, Canada V5T 1E8, call (604) 874-2537, email ales@r-and-b.com or visit www.r-and-b.com

NEWS RELEASE

For Additional Information Contact:

Rick Dellow and Barry Benson
R&B Brewing Company
604 874 2537 office
604 874 2517 fax
ales@r-and-b.com

R&B Brewing Company Celebrates Ten Years with a Bang and a Brew *Vancouver Micro Brewery, R&B Launches 10th Anniversary Ale*

Vancouver, BC, September 11, 2007 – R&B Brewing Company commemorates their tenth anniversary with the release of a limited edition Belgian ale and a private VIP tasting and celebration, followed by a public Beer and BBQ dinner at Hamilton Street Grill.

The 10th Anniversary Ale is bottle-conditioned and is a strong, deep-red, abbey-style ale, which exudes bubble gum and cotton candy aromas. It has a powerful, intensely appetizing robust body, with a clean crisp alcoholic finish. "The general public's knowledge of beer is increasing and their palates are evolving." said Rick Dellow, Co-Owner and Operator of R&B Brewing Co, "It seems appropriate that we celebrate ten years with a sophisticated beer that will pair well with food and be appreciated by those who love beer."

R&B Brewing Co. owners Rick Dellow, Barry Benson and Head Brewer Aly Tomlin will launch the 10th Anniversary Ale with a private, by invitation only VIP tasting and celebration at 2:30pm, September 18th at Hamilton Street Grill. Following the VIP reception the public is invited to join the festivities with a Beer and BBQ tasting starting at 6:30pm, Tickets are \$80.00 per person, reservations available by credit card at 604-331-1511 or hamiltonstreetgrill@telus.net.

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R&B Brewing (derived from a clever organization of the two founding partners' names) is the combined hard work and lifelong goal of Rick Dellow and Barry Benson who share more than 55 years experience in the international and local brewing industry. After spending many years installing microbreweries and brewpubs and training brewers all over the world they decided to bring their wealth of knowledge and experience home to Vancouver. R&B Brewing produces award winning, consistent, high quality, hand crafted ales such as Red Devil Pale Ale, Raven Cream Ale, Sun God Wheat Ale and the Hop Goblin India Pale Ale. For more information please contact R&B Brewing Co. at 54 East 4th Ave. Vancouver BC, Canada V5T 1E8, call (604) 874-2537, email ales@r-and-b.com or visit www.r-and-b.com

Destination Pub: Dockside Brewing Company

One of the most popular beers at the Great Canadian Beer Festival in September was Peter Hauptenthal's Jamaican Lager. This light (4.7 percent alcohol by volume) 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. And, not wanting to neglect the ale drinkers, he also brews a pale ale and a stout. In addition to the regular selection of great beers, there are also seasonal specialties from the brewery. Currently on tap, there is a Christmas Bock, a healthy (7.5 percent ABV) way to celebrate the festive season.

The Granville Island Hotel has a magnificent view out over False Creek. There are three separate spots to drink in the hotel. The pub is a sports bar with a fireplace, pool tables and TV's. There is a D.J. Friday & Saturday Night. On Tuesday nights all of the in-house brewed beers are \$2.95 a pint, and on Wednesdays pitchers are \$9.95. 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. At the back is the kitchen open to the room so that guests can watch the chefs work their magic. While the restaurant specializes in seafood there are several other entrees including excellent steaks.

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.

(Dockside Brewing, 1253 Johnston Street, Granville Island, Vancouver. The pub is open from 5:00 pm nightly. 604-685-7070 www.docksidebrewing.com)

BC Beer News

The fourth annual cask festival, **Caskival 4** (“Bung Love”) was held at Dix in Vancouver’s Yaletown on August 4th. 27 Casks were available from British Columbia breweries and brewpubs. Crannôg’s Three Finger Cherry Ale was a crowd favourite. It was made with the addition of red currants and smoked mead (made at Crannôg and flavoured by being transferred over smoked peat). Yaletown’s head brewer Iain Hill brought a Darjeeling IPA. Iain described it as “Granny’s tea coming right through”.

Among the big beers at Caskival 4, Longwood’s Imperial Stout (8.5% ABV) was dry and full-bodied. It went very well with a plate of Quesadilla with a chipotle dipping sauce. Central City IPA is a well known North American classic IPA made with a mountain of hops and is well balanced with plenty of malt. Gary Lohin is officially debuting his Central City Imperial IPA at the Great Canadian Beer Festival but had a pre-view cask at Dix. It is made entirely with Maris Otter malt and finishes at 100 IBU’s. It was huge! One of my favourites was the Dix Simcoe IPA. A Seville orange marmalade flavour leads the way in this yummy beer.

There were some interesting unconventional beers too. Taylors Crossing Mole Stout was a taste challenge for some of the attendees! Iain Hill also brought a cask of Brett Brown Ale (5%), a Belgian style Brown Ale made without normal yeast. Brettanomyces is the wild yeast found in the Senne valley near Brussels. It gives the beer very complex sour barnyard flavours. Big Ridge Candy Apricot Ale was a hefeweizen with local apricots candied by brewer Derek Franche. It was an interesting combination of banana and apricots. My favourite was Spinnakers Scottish and Scotch Ale. Brewer Rob Monk had added over half a bottle of 18-year old Talisker to the cask. It finished up near 10% ABV and had a wonderful smoky taste.

Phillips Brewing had their knuckles rapped this summer by the lawyers from Vancouver’s Mark James Group. Apparently they did not like Matt Phillips naming his Pale Ale after his (retired) Blue Chevy delivery truck. They felt that the punters might be confusing it with their Avalon Red Truck beers. (I wonder whether they are also planning to go after California’s Red Truck Wines!)

British Columbia’s **Russell Brewing** has merged with **Fort Gary Brewing** of Winnipeg. Last year Russell was the fastest growing brewing company in B.C. Russell is buying all of the shares of Fort Gary Brewing Company, which is Manitoba’s largest craft brewing company.

All change at **Dix/Big Ridge**. This summer, Tony DeWalt, longtime brewer at Dix Barbecue and Brewery, bought a 50-acre “raspberry” farm at Aldergrove, up the Fraser Valley, not far from Big Ridge Brewing in Surrey. Dix and Big Ridge are part of the Mark James Group, a stable of brewpubs and night clubs. Derrick

Franché, Big Ridge's brewer, lives within walking distance of Dix, in Vancouver's Yaletown district. Logic prevailed, and the two brewers have switched jobs. Tony is eagerly anticipating using some of his home-grown fruit in future brews. Derek is a bit nervous about following in Tony's footsteps. "Dix has a reputation as a cask-conditioned beer destination, and Tony has set the bar high", he admitted. One regular customer's reaction to the news was typical: "whatever you do don't change the IPA recipe"! Derek says that while there won't be any immediate changes he feels that "B.C. is poised, ready to become part of the NW brewing picture. The gastro-beer scene is big in Vancouver." Derek has plans to eventually hold a dinner with a wine and beer pairing for each course to see which goes best.

Nelson Brewing Company news: all of their beers have been Certified Organic since November of 2006.

Mt Begbie Brewing has a great new beer for the summer. Attila the Honey was first brewed to celebrate their 10th Anniversary last year. (Bart and Tracey Larsen escaped the corporate world and started the brewery in Revelstoke in 1997). The beer proved so popular that it has been brought back and has a much wider distribution. Tracey says the malts are Pale and Munich together with "a whopping amount of real honey". The honey comes from the Okanagan. She says that "the local apiary cannot produce the volume we need for the whole summer season due to the late start of our 'bee season'". The hops are Northern Brewer and Crystal. The truly cool labels are a real eye catcher. Bart and Tracey will not be at the GCBF this year as they have moved into new space, about three times the old brewery size. Plans include a brewery shop and a tasting room.

You've heard of environmentally friendly chefs promoting the 100-mile cuisine: everything on the menu is purchased within 100-mile radius. The folks at **Crannôg Ales** have gone one step further: the 100-foot Feast. Rebecca Kneen and Brian McIsaac, owners of Crannôg in Sorrento, B.C., recently held a multi-course banquet where everything served was grown on their organic farm. And the beers, of course, were brewed within 100 feet of the feast, too! Besides the brewery's regular beers there were specialty cask-conditioned ales: the Cherry Irish Ale (Crannôg's Red Branch Irish Ale with added cherries), the White Currant Brown Ale and the Blackcurrant Stout. Chefs Ed Walker and Ron Rosentreter, of Thompson Rivers University Culinary Arts department, came up with some innovative dishes: braised rabbit with rhubarb, thyme & Backhand of God Stout, paired with the stout; ravioli of Icelandic lamb shoulder and aged smoked Gorts Gouda, with rosemary jus & pear butter served with Bogtrotter Brown Ale; and Crannôg Ales' Cherry Bounce and Mead Grenache paired with Two-Year Old Organic Mead.

CASKIVAL 4: “Bung Love”

The fourth annual cask festival, **Caskival 4** (“Bung Love”) was held at Dix in Vancouver’s Yaletown on August 4th. 27 Casks were available from XX British Columbia breweries and brewpubs. Crannog’s Three Finger Cherry Ale was

Michael Jackson

Michael Jackson was a quiet man and a gentleman. At same time he was very generous especially when it came to his passion: beer. He was signing books at Liberty Malt Supply in Seattle in 1993 when I first met him. I think we were all in awe of him in those days. To my complete astonishment he agreed to come to Victoria to address a CAMRA Victoria meeting later that year. Spinnakers put on a beer banquet and Michael sparkled. He stumbled when comparing beer drinkers to wine drinkers who, he said, consider themselves to be so “sophisikated”. There was a giggle in the room, but he rose to the occasion. “Yes. I slurred’, he said, “but I’ve tasted 29 beers so far today, all different.” He looked around the room, “you should be proud of living here in a city with such a diverse range of beers.” He then went on to explain how the breweries in most European cities only brew two or three local styles. “But North America is where the most exciting things are happening in the beer world. The brewers here are not bound by tradition and are making all kinds of fascinating beers.”

The Truck turns into a Buck!

Matt Phillips turned a sow's ear into a silk purse this summer. As mentioned in the last issue of CBN, lawyers from Vancouver's Mark James Group threatened legal action if **Phillips Brewing** did not cease and desist from using the name Blue Truck for the Phillips Pale Ale. They felt that there might be confusion with Red Truck Beer Company brands. Matt decided he would rather spend his money on buying new tanks than going to court. Using the local media he was able to get word of his dilemma to all his loyal fans. Realizing that this was his most popular beer, he recruited Blue Truck drinkers to suggest a new name for their favourite. Out of the overwhelming response came the new name which was announced at the Great Canadian Beer Festival. Lo and behold, the Blue Truck had morphed into the Blue Buck! Matt has very graciously not mentioned anything about the name change on the Blue Buck label. As he says, "like the legend for which it is named, Blue Buck is a beer worth searching for". Totally unrelated, of course, is Phillips Accusation Ale. This is a rather bitter Extra Special Bitter. The label reads: "Sometimes bitterness comes from frivolous trademark disputes. Sometimes it comes from a generous hop schedule. Either way we hope you enjoy this classic".

PHOTO: BLUE BUCK 0003

Also new at Phillips is Crooked Tooth Pumpkin Ale, an exceptionally smooth version of this style. It has a lot of real pumpkin in the beer along with traditional pumpkin pie spices. Also just released is the seasonal Dirty Squirrel Hazelnut Brown. Returning in time for Christmas will be the Instigator Doppel Bock (8.5% ABV), a beer brewed with lots of Munich and German malts making it a rich, malty favourite. Also to watch for is the annual barley wine, which has yet to be named. This is a special celebratory beer: it is Phillips' 1000th batch which is pretty good for only being in existence for six years. The beer was given a much longer boil and finished, appropriately, at 1.100 O.G.

Three thousand miles away, Carol and I discovered the joys of the Quebec beer scene. We took a week in September to visit Montreal and Quebec City. Fortunately for us fellow CBN writer Stephen Beaumont was able to give us lots of hints about where to find the local hopspots. Most of the brewpubs we visited have a basic foursome: a blonde, an amber or red ale, a noire (usually a stout), and a wit or a Hefeweizen.

In Quebec City we visited the Pub Saint-Alexandre with 200 beers and 24 taps, of which we tried the Griffon Rouse and St Amboise Stout. It was the first time we had the stout on tap, and it was so smooth with an almost overwhelming chocolate taste. L'Inox ("stainless") was opened 20 years ago by three home brewers whose friends liked their beers. Pierre Turgeon explained that the

license came available and that he and his partners were crazy enough to take the risk. The focus in this brewpub is on the beer as there is no kitchen. Food is prepared at the bar and consists of hot dogs (delicious!) and local bread and cheeses. The beers were very good and included an excellent IPA and Scotch Ale. Our favourite pub in Quebec City was Le Pub Thomas Dunn. This is a friendly local near the railway station with entertaining staff and over a 100 beers to choose from. The food specialty is tartines, all the rage in Europe. These are open faced sandwiches beautifully presented on a wooden platter. There are a dozen different types to choose from, each with a generous serving of salad on the side.

PHOTO: Nadia at L'Inox

The oldest brewpub in Montreal, Le Cheval Blanc, became a brewpub in 1987. It had been a pub for a long time before that, and it was a squeeze to fit the brewery in to the cellar. Times have changed, customers want to see the brewery and it needs to expand keep pace with off-sales. There are plans to expand into next door and put the brewery on display at street level. Their beer was very good. We tasted a full bodied IPA with a very citrusy finish, a lovely chocolate stout, both the Ambrée (5% amber ale), and the unfiltered Ambrée Petit Cru (6%) which was very smooth and had a surprisingly long finish. Perhaps our favourite brewpub in Montreal was the 10 year old L'Amère a Boire. The name comes from the expression, "la mere a boire" (the sea to drink) slang for "it's not a big thing". L'Amère means bitter, so the name is a kind of beer/brewing pun. This pub had two cask beers on Angram hand pumps: the Pale Ale and Boucanier Porter. The latter was a great creamy chocolaty 5% porter brewed with English yeast and Fuggle and Golding hops. To our amazement there was a second porter on tap, the Odense Porter. This style is a specialty of the Danish coast near Odense and is a relic of the time when there was extensive trading from there to England. It has pale, caramunch and carafa malts, and is hopped with Hallertau Mittelfruh. We also sampled the 5% Oktoberfest, sweetish and malty with hints of caramel and a long spicy finish. There were six other taps including an excellent Czech style pilsner. The food was great, the music eclectic, and bartender Phillippe, a tap dancer, was good company. We finished the evening with a 7.5% Imperial Stout, a rich deep complex beer with coffee and raisin flavours. This was our last beer in Quebec and it was definitely a beer to make you roll home with a big smile on your face.

PHOTO: Phillippe at L'Amère a Boire

Twenty years ago this summer, Carol and I moved to Victoria. Recently we invited our family and neighbours for a salmon BBQ (what else?) and celebrated

20 years of friendship and mutual beer discovery. Together we have participated in beer tastings and festivals and have travelled extensively chasing beers and pubs. To celebrate we opened some special beers, starting with Howe Sound Brewing's Rail Ale (a Brown Ale). We followed with a U-brewed Faversham (i.e. Kent style) Porter. After that we launched into a couple of big beers: Extra IPA and Scotch Ale from Swans. Then a souvenir of a trip to England, a Vintage 2000 Suffolk Strong Ale from Greene King Brewery. Dessert was a chocolate Bavarian cream cake, which we accompanied with a 1992 Thomas Hardy Ale (a match made in heaven). Later we finished the evening with a 2002 Phillips Big Bad Johns Barley Wine. None of the B.C. beers were available 20 years ago. It will be interesting to see what the next 20 years bring.

Le Pub Thomas Dunn,
369, rue Saint-Paul, Québec City
Tel: 418 692-4693

L'Inox,
37, quai Saint-André,
Vieux-Port de Québec
Tel: 418 692-2877

Pub Sainte-Alexandre,
1087, rue St-Jean, Vieux-Québec
Tel: 418 694-0015

Le Cheval Blanc
809, rue Ontario Est, Montreal
Tel: 514 522-0211

L'Amère a Boire
2049 rue Saint-Denis, Montreal
Tel: 514 282-7448