

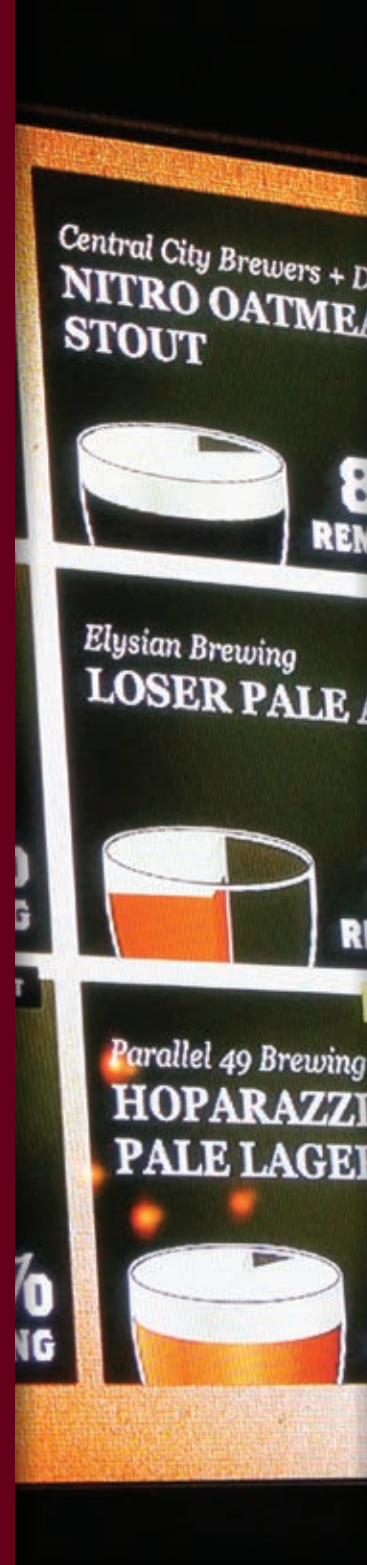
WHEAT

TOOTH

BOON

Vancouver's
Craft Beer
Scene Explodes

BY KENDALL JONES



“Support for craft beer has definitely reached the tipping point in Vancouver,” says Ryan Mackey of Vancouver Brewery Tours.



Storm Brewing

One of the first modern microbreweries in North America opened in 1982 in West Vancouver. Since then, crickets. Vancouver, British Columbia slept through the 80s and 90s, while craft beer spread like wildfire in Portland and Seattle. Sure, there were a few exceptions, but Vancouver's hardcore beer lovers are the first to admit that their local craft beer culture staggered out of the gate.

Today the city is making up for lost time and finds itself completely mad for craft beer. At least 10 breweries have opened in the Vancouver area in the past year, new beer-focused restaurants and bars are popping up like mushrooms, and a company now offers guided brewery tours. Today the city itself is home to 20 breweries and brewpubs and the tally is rising fast. Suddenly, Vancouver is starting to feel more like Seattle and Portland when it comes to beer.

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

“Support for craft beer has definitely reached the tipping point in Vancouver,” says Ryan Mackey, who operates **VANCOUVER BREWERY TOURS**, the sole beer-only tour in town. “Since we started offering tours in the summer of 2013, there’s been at least eight new breweries open in the Vancouver area and many more are on the way. It’s a very exciting time to be a craft beer lover in Vancouver.”

According to Mackey, the local market for craft beer is growing at an astonishing rate of about 20 percent per year. It is a province-wide trend, but Vancouver is definitely leading the way.

Some people say an insurgence of imported craft beer from south of the border ignited this fire. There’s even a bar, which opened in Vancouver two years ago, called Portland Craft, where the primary focus is on—you guessed it—craft beer from Portland.

“We had an explosion of imports from the states,” says Graham With, head brewer at **PARALLEL 49 BREWING** in Vancouver, which opened about two years ago. “It got everyone excited about craft beer.”



Beer being ran through a Randall filter at Parallel 49 Brewing

LOCAL NOTABLES

Parallel 49 Brewing (P49, in the local vernacular) is just one of the new breweries attracting thirsty crowds around town. The brewery and taproom is located in the East Vancouver neighborhood, which is also home to **BOMBER BREWING**, **POWELL STREET BREWING** and **STORM BREWING**. On a Friday afternoon, the P49 taproom teems with people filling growlers and slurping pints of Toques of Hazzard Imperial White IPA, Black Hops Cascadian Dark Lager and many others. A Randall, a flavor-enhancing filter, is built into the bar and infuses a select beer with a rotating variety of ingredients. When I was there, the beer of the day was Pilsner infused with ginger and peach.



Parallel 49 Brewing

UNIQUELY BREWED

JAMES WALTON

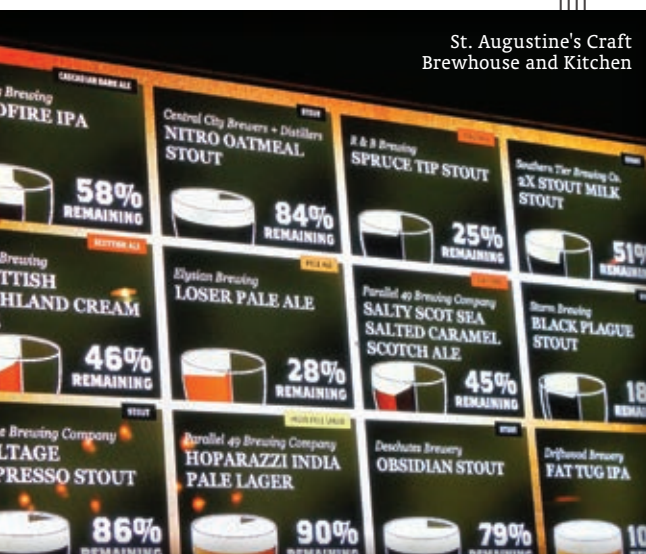
The word unique is inadequate to describe James Walton. He opened Storm Brewing in 1995 because he wanted to drink the kind of beer he couldn’t find locally—the kind of beers that so many American brewers were already producing. When he became weary of drinking beers that he considered over-filtered and flavorless, Walton decided to turn his homebrewing hobby into a career. Storm Brewing created some of Vancouver’s first proudly cloudy, unfiltered beers.

Storm Brewing looks more like an automotive repair shop than it does a brewery and Walton looks nothing like the stereotypical brewer, if there is such a thing. It’s been said that he is a man possessing the mindset of a mad scientist and aspiring porn star. He looks every bit the part. Always smiling, he looks like a reluctantly aging punk rocker with short, spikey, bleach blond hair. In dirty black jeans, a ray-gun belt buckle and high-heel platform boots that look like something David Bowie would have worn during his Ziggy Stardust phase, Walton is dressed for work and not for clubbing.

Don’t let appearances fool you; this brewery cranks out some of Vancouver’s most highly coveted beers. Local beer nerds rave about Walton’s sour beers, like the Imperial Flanders Red and the legendary Black Currant Lambic.



Storm Brewing

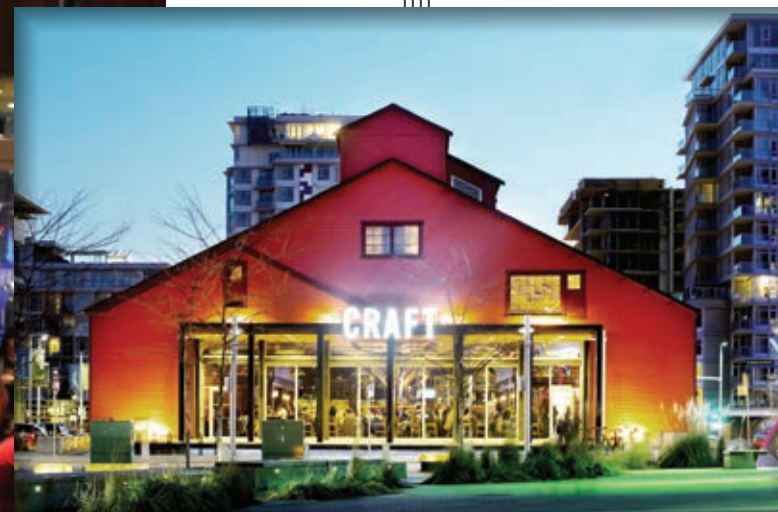


St. Augustine's Craft Brewhouse and Kitchen

Vancouver's atmosphere is invigorating and it is easy to be swept away by the incoming tide of great beer.



CRAFT Beer Market



Nigel Springthorpe

NIGEL SPRINGTHORPE

He considers himself 100-percent Canadian, but speaks with the fading remains of a British accent. Nigel Springthorpe is the co-owner of the city's most-beloved beer bar, the Alibi Room, and co-owner of one of the city's most-ballyhooed new breweries, Brassneck Brewery. As such, Springthorpe reigns as Vancouver's leading beer impresario and many call him the founding father of the Vancouver craft beer scene. You would never guess it from talking to him. He is modest and seems entirely unaware of his star power. He would rather talk about beer than himself.

For years, Springthorpe has been introducing bland-beer drinkers to the wonders of craft beer, something that he finds particularly satisfying. In 2006, he transitioned from employee to owner of the Alibi Room. That's about the same time he discovered his passion for great beer and began transforming the Alibi Room into what it is today.

As his bar emerged as the city's top craft beer destination, local brewers fought to earn a coveted spot in the beer lineup. In that regard, Springthorpe created a craft beer arena, challenging the local breweries to step up their game and start making more interesting and flavorful beers. And voilà, that's what they're doing today.

ADVOCATES FOR THE CAUSE

Vancouver's breweries are not alone in feeling the boom. Located in Gastown, the **ALIBI ROOM** is the city's original craft beer bar, offering a rotating selection of 50 beers on tap, many of them from local brewers. The dark, comfortable, laid-back atmosphere feels familiar to beer travelers visiting from Seattle and Portland. And yes, at one time Vancouver's Alibi Room was related to the Alibi Room in Seattle. In 2006, a change of ownership in Vancouver shifted the focus from cosmos to craft beer and the tap list began evolving into what it is today.

Another great beer stop is **ST. AUGUSTINE'S CRAFT BREW HOUSE AND KITCHEN**. Located in the vibrant Commercial Drive district, also known as The Drive, it enjoys plenty of foot traffic from the bustling neighborhood and nearby SkyTrain station. A portion of the folk who own Parallel 49 Brewing operate St. Augustine's, though you'd hardly guess it when you gaze at the diverse list of 60 draft beer options, which are prominently displayed on flat-screen monitors. Other flat-screens invite you to

hunker down and enjoy a Canucks game with the locals.

Across town in the False Creek neighborhood, **CRAFT BEER MARKET** is a massive monument to the current state of beer in Vancouver. In October, this beer-focused restaurant opened in a remodeled salt factory in the heart of the Olympic Village community. This is no timid display of beer love: 140 beers on tap, 14,000 square feet, 400 seats, and a glass-walled keg room that houses 450 kegs. The restaurant even employs a fulltime certified technician to maintain the draft lines.

If CRAFT Beer Market sounds crazy, that's because it is crazy. It's a testament to what's happening all over Vancouver right now. The giddy excitement is hard to describe, but it is infectious. For those of us from south of the border, where such unbridled enthusiasm has started to wane, the atmosphere is invigorating and it is easy to be swept away by the incoming tide of great beer. ●



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WELCOME
TO THE
BOOMTOWN

**BEER BEYOND
THE CITY LIMITS**

Today, more than a dozen breweries speckle the greater Vancouver area outside of the city itself. Here are three that we recommend stepping out for.

DEEP COVE BREWERS AND DISTILLERS || It's true—in British Columbia a brewery can also be a distillery. Deep Cove Brewers and Distillers opened just last summer but already excels at both crafts. The tasting room in North Vancouver pours great beers, like Sun Kissed Saison and Star Struck Rye IPA, but don't skip the vodka, which is equally well-crafted. || deepcovecraft.com

CENTRAL CITY BREWERS AND DISTILLERS || Since opening in 2003, Central City has grown to become one of the province's largest and most-decorated craft breweries. It recently opened a 65,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art production facility in Surrey where the taproom offers tasters, growler fills, packaged beer and plenty of Red Racer swag, the brewery's flagship brand. Known as Red Betty in the U.S. because of trademark concerns, Red Racer IPA is recognized as the first real Northwest-style IPA brewed on the British Columbia mainland. || centralcitybrewing.com

FOUR WINDS BREWING || Located in Delta, this brewery opened in June of 2013. The diminutive taproom offers a selection of four fulltime, regular beers, another four special-release beers, growler fills and packaged beer. The Four Winds Saison has captured the affection of local beer lovers, as has the Saison Brett, if you're lucky enough to get it. || fourwindsbrewing.ca

BOOMTOWN BREWERIES

VANCOUVER BREWERY TOURS
#425 - 2008 Pine St.
Vancouver, BC, V6J 0B8, Canada
(604) 318-2280
vancouverbrewerytours.com

PARALLEL 49 BREWING
1946 Triumph St.
Vancouver, BC, V5L 1K5, Canada
(604) 558-2739
parallel49brewing.com

POWELL STREET CRAFT BREWING
1830 Powell St.
Vancouver, BC V5L 1H9, Canada
(604) 558-2537
powellbeer.com

STORM BREWING
310 Commercial Dr.
Vancouver, BC, V5L 3V6, Canada
(604) 255-9119
stormbrewing.org

BRASSNECK BREWERY
2148 Main St.
Vancouver, BC, V5T 3C5, Canada
(604) 259-7686
brassneck.ca

33 ACRES BREWING
15 West 8th Ave.
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1M8, Canada
(604) 620-4589
33acresbrewing.com

R & B BREWING
54 4 Ave. East
Vancouver, BC, Canada
(604) 874-2537
r-and-b.com

THE ALIBI ROOM
157 Alexander St.
Vancouver, BC, V6A 1B8, Canada
(604) 623-3383
alibi.ca

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CRAFT BREW HOUSE + KITCHEN
2360 Commercial Dr.
Vancouver, BC, V5N 4B7, Canada
(604) 569-1911
staugustinesvancouver.com

CRAFT BEER MARKET
85 West 1st Ave.
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 3K8, Canada
(604) 709-2337
craftbeermarket.ca

DEEP COVE BREWERS AND DISTILLERS
Unit 170 - 2270 Dollarton Hwy.
North Vancouver, BC, V7H 1A8, Canada
(604) 770-1136
deepcovecraft.com

CENTRAL CITY BREWERS + DISTILLERS
11411 Bridgeview Dr.
Surrey, BC, V3R 0C2, Canada
(604) 588-2337
centralcitybrewing.com

FOUR WINDS BREWING
7355 72 St.
Delta, BC V4G 1L5, Canada
(604) 940-9949
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