

True Brews

OUR SECOND ANNUAL BEER AWARDS TELLS YOU WHAT—
AND WHERE—YOU SHOULD BE DRINKING RIGHT NOW

BY KENDALL JONES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX CROOK
AND HAYLEY YOUNG

WASHINGTON IS NOW HOME to nearly 400 breweries. The Washington Beer Commission says that over the past year about 1.2 new breweries opened each month, so it seemed reasonable to confine our search for the tastiest beers to just those brewed in the Evergreen State.

Local brewers continue to flex their creative muscle, introducing new, bold flavors, never shying away from big, potent beers, such as stouts and porters, but these days, more breweries are also producing excellent lighter, more nuanced beers, like refreshing, crisp pilsners. Brewing these lighter-bodied beers well requires finesse and precision, because the flavors are more delicate and refined. Their emergence is a sign that the local brewing industry has matured and that local beer connoisseurs have learned to appreciate subtle, less aggressive flavors.

For our second annual Best of Beer Awards, we expanded the field to include nine style categories. Among the additions: New England-style IPA, also known as hazy IPA. The “haze craze,” as it is often called, does not show any signs of going flat, and around Seattle right now you will have no trouble finding examples of this style; just ask your “beer-tender” for a hazy IPA. Then, enjoy the moment, knowing we’re in the midst of a Seattle beer scene that has never been better.

RAISING THE BAR

A plate of legendary herb-seasoned fries from Best Brew Pub winner Elliott Bay Brewing begs for a pint of their Alembic Pale



BEST PILSNER

POLARIS PILSNER

CHAINLINE BREWING

5.1 percent alcohol by volume

THE CZECHS INVENTED this style of beer nearly two centuries ago, and Chainline’s version is true to its Bohemian roots: light golden in color, with crisp and refreshing flavor. The riff on Old World tradition comes from the use of a New World hop variety (Polaris hops), which contributes a mild, pleasant, minty bitterness. This draft-only beer is occasionally available at better beer bars around the area, but you can always get it at the brewery’s all-ages, beer-only taproom in Kirkland (growlers and crowlers to go). *Kirkland, 503 Sixth St. S; 425.242.0923; chainlinebrewing.com*

BEST PILSNER FINALISTS:

Sumerian Brewing **Lucidity Pilsner** (Woodinville)
Airways Brewing **Pre Flight Pilsner** (Kent)
Cloudburst Brewing **Happy Little Clouds Pilsner** (downtown Seattle)
Georgetown Brewing **Roger’s Pilsner** (Georgetown)

BEST AMBER/RED ALE

DIRTYFACE AMBER

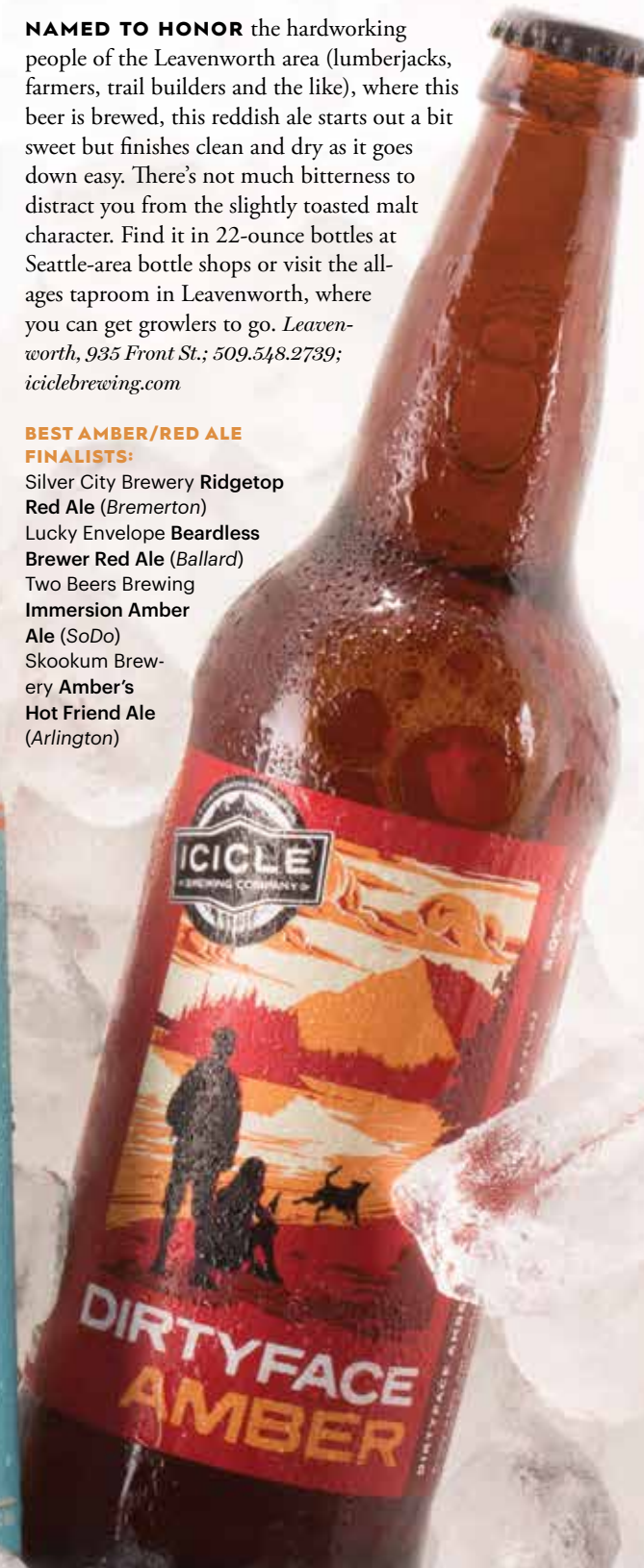
ICICLE BREWING

5 percent alcohol by volume

NAMED TO HONOR the hardworking people of the Leavenworth area (lumberjacks, farmers, trail builders and the like), where this beer is brewed, this reddish ale starts out a bit sweet but finishes clean and dry as it goes down easy. There’s not much bitterness to distract you from the slightly toasted malt character. Find it in 22-ounce bottles at Seattle-area bottle shops or visit the all-ages taproom in Leavenworth, where you can get growlers to go. *Leavenworth, 935 Front St.; 509.548.2739; iciclebrewing.com*

BEST AMBER/RED ALE FINALISTS:

Silver City Brewery **Ridgetop Red Ale** (Bremerton)
Lucky Envelope **Beardless Brewer Red Ale** (Ballard)
Two Beers Brewing **Immersion Amber Ale** (SoDo)
Skookum Brewery **Amber’s Hot Friend Ale** (Arlington)





LAGER THAN LIFE
Elliott Bay Brewing has three pub locations, but our favorite is still the West Seattle original

BEST BREW PUB

A RESTAURANT OR PUB WITH ITS OWN BREWERY ON SITE

Elliott Bay Brewery and Pub

WHILE THE COMPANY'S OTHER, newer locations in Burien (est. 2007) and Lake City (est. 2012) are lovely in their own right, the original West Seattle brewery and pub is as comfortable as your oldest flannel shirt, the one you've had since 1997, when this brewpub opened. Cozy and aged to perfection, the long and narrow space is filled with oak furnishings and self-fashioned, dark-stained plywood booths. Classic pub fare, such as burgers, sandwiches and fish and chips, exceed expectations, while less common fare, such as jambalaya and ahi tacos, invites you to try something more imaginative.

Consider pairing the Luna Weizen (a Hefeweizen) with the Hawaii Five-O burger, which features teriyaki sauce, Swiss cheese and grilled pineapple. Order like a pro and ask for "crack sauce" (chipotle aioli) to accompany your herb-seasoned french fries.

West Seattle, 4720 California Ave. SW; 206.932.8695; elliottbaybrewing.com; all ages

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS:

- 1. Naked City Brewery and Taphouse:** Greenwood, 8564 Greenwood Ave. N; 206.838.6299; drink.nakedcity.beer; all ages
- 2. Pike Brewing Company:** Downtown, 1415 First Ave.; 206.622.6044; pikebrewing.com; all ages
- 3. Redhook Brewlab:** Capitol Hill, 714 E Pike St.; 206.823.3026; redhook.com/breweries-pubs/capitol-hill; all ages

**HOPS, SKIP AND A JUMP**

Old Stove's stunning new taproom, in Pike Place Market's MarketFront expansion, overlooks Elliott Bay

BEST BREWERY TAPROOM

BREWERY WITH A TAPROOM SERVING TASTERS AND PINTS, BUT NOT A BREWPUB OR RESTAURANT

Old Stove Brewing

WHEN UNCLE FRED and Aunt Margaret come to visit from Topeka, you will probably take them to Pike Place Market. While you're at it, give them an even more authentic taste of Seattle at Old Stove Brewing's new MarketFront taproom, which is located in the MarketFront addition that was completed last summer. This spacious taproom features polished concrete floors, big communal tables, exposed wood beams, and floor-to-ceiling, west-facing windows that overlook Elliott Bay. When weather allows, the windows roll up and the taproom sprawls onto the patio.

While Old Stove Brewing's MarketFront location is open as a taproom, final construction is finishing up, and it will soon become a full-service brewpub. All ages are welcome, but only grownups can enjoy the Two-Pronged Crown IPA, my personal favorite from its lineup and a consistent crowd-pleaser.

Pike Place Market Waterfront, 1901 Western Ave., Suite A; 206.602.6120; oldstove.com; all ages

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS:

- 1. Reuben's Brews:** Ballard, 5010 14th Ave. NW; 206.784.2859; reubensbrews.com; all ages
- 2. Holy Mountain Brewing:** Interbay, 1421 Elliott Ave. W; holymountainbrewing.com; 21 and older only
- 3. Fremont Brewing:** Fremont, 1050 N 34th St.; 206.420.2407; fremontbrewing.com; all ages

BEST SAISON

WILD WAREHOUSE FARMHOUSE ALE

WANDER BREWING

6.8 percent alcohol by volume

THIS BEER BEGINS LIFE as a regular saison (aka farmhouse ale), a traditional Belgian-style beer originally produced in farmhouses and served to farm workers, before spending about nine months in repurposed Chardonnay barrels from Woodinville's Chatter Creek Winery, which is how this brew gains its unique character. Yellowish-orange in the glass, the ale presents myriad flavors, including green apple and pear, along with a faint lemony tartness. It's something of a rare brew, released annually in about February in 750-milliliter bottles. It is easy to find for the first couple of months, a bit rarer thereafter. Look for it at local bottle shops or visit the brewery's all-ages taproom in Bellingham. *Bellingham, 807 Dean Ave.; 360.647.6152; wanderbrewing.com*

BEST SAISON FINALISTS:

- Holy Mountain Brewing **The Ox Saison** (Interbay)
Atwood Ales **Mo's Saison** (Blaine)
Urban Family Brewing **Saison Magnolia** (Magnolia)
Cloudburst Brewing **Market Fresh Saison** (downtown)

BEST PALE ALE

MOSAIC PALE ALE

SEAPINE BREWING

5.4 percent alcohol by volume

THIS LIGHT-BODIED, golden-orange ale, which offers gobs of fruity, aromatic hop character, showcases one highly polarizing hop variety: Mosaic. Some people adore this hop's intense, dank, resinous citrus character, while others abhor those same qualities, but everyone should try it and decide for themselves. Always on tap at the brewery's all-ages taproom, where you can get growlers to go, and occasionally in the rotation at better beer bars around the area. *SoDo, 2959 Utah Ave. S; 206.682.7985; seapinebrewing.com*

BEST PALE ALE FINALISTS:

- Aslan Brewing **Dawn Patrol Pale Ale** (Bellingham)
Bale Breaker Brewing **Field 41 Pale Ale** (Yakima)
Fremont Brewing **Universale Pale Ale** (Fremont)
Georgetown Brewing **Manny's Pale Ale** (Georgetown)



BEST PLACES TO
**Experience
Beer**

BEST BEER-FOCUSED RESTAURANT

A RESTAURANT OR PUB WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON BEER

The Pine Box

THIS ESTABLISHMENT is located in a historic funeral home, through which many notable Seattleites have passed on their way to the pearly gates, including actor and martial arts master Bruce Lee (a picture on the wall proves it). Now enjoying a less somber second life, the old chapel serves as a restaurant and bar with 30 beers on tap. The room is softly lit by tall, arching windows with small, frosted panes, and the original, ornate moldings on the ceiling date back to 1923. A balcony at the back of the room, now used for restaurant seating, presumably accommodated overflow mourners or perhaps a choir.

The menu offers a range of salads, sandwiches, burgers and pizzas. Order the chicken and broccoli pizza—a white-sauce pizza with mozzarella, red onion and thyme—and ask one of the beer-savvy bartenders for a pairing recommendation.

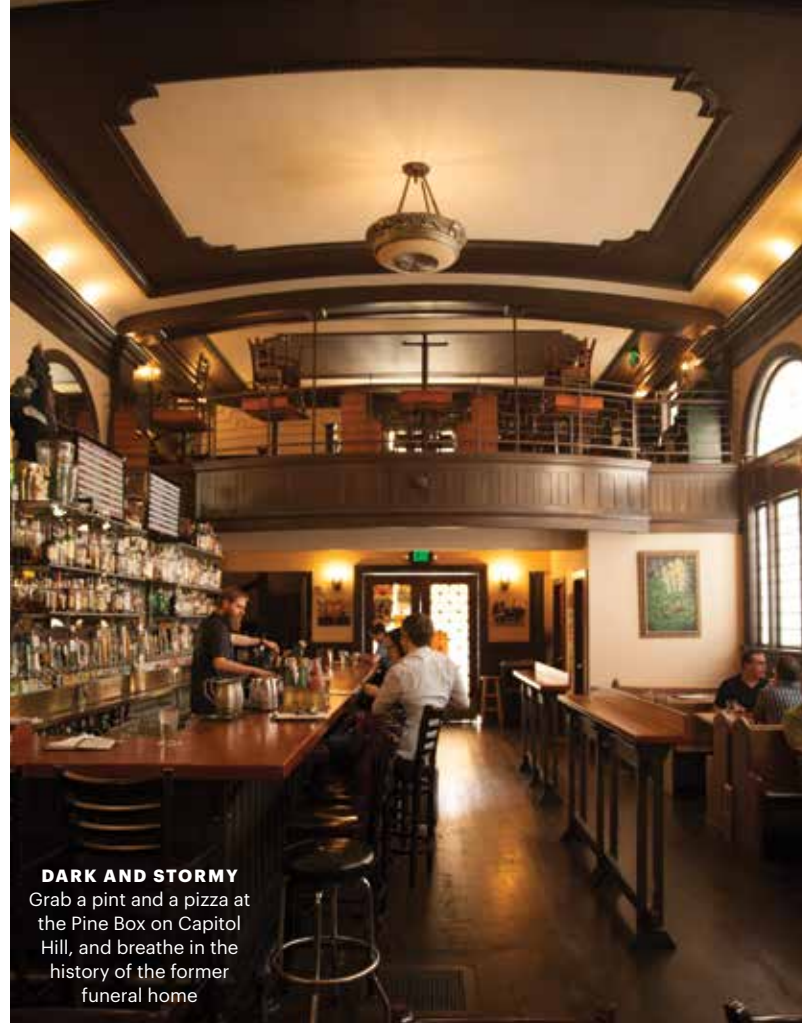
Capitol Hill, 1600 Melrose Ave.; 206.588.0375; pineboxbar.com; 21 and older only

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS:

1. Brouwer's Café: Fremont, 400 N 35th St.; 206.267.2437; brouwerscafe.com; 21 and older only

2. The Pine Box

3. Latona Pub: Green Lake, 6423 Latona Ave. NE; 206.525.2238; latonapub.com; 21 and older only



DARK AND STORMY

Grab a pint and a pizza at the Pine Box on Capitol Hill, and breathe in the history of the former funeral home



BEST STOUT

MURDER OF CROWS STOUT

SKOOKUM BREWERY

9.0 percent alcohol by volume

INSTEAD OF AGING THIS BEER IN BARRELS, as brewers often do with their finest stouts, Skookum adds cubes of whiskey-laden oak to the conditioning tanks, giving you the same effect: caramel sweetness, alcohol heat and a hint of smokiness. Those flavors characterize a rich, slightly fruity, bitter, chocolatey beer that pours ink black and sports a light brown, thick head. If you're lucky, you'll find it in 12-ounce bottles at the local bottle shop or at the brewery's all-ages taproom in Arlington, but rarely do kegs of this beloved brew make it away from the brewery.

BEST STOUT FINALISTS:

Fremont Brewing **Dark Star Imperial Oatmeal Stout** (Fremont)

No-Li Brewhouse **Wrecking Ball Imperial Stout** (Spokane)

Pike Brewing **XXXXX Stout** (downtown)

Reuben's Brews **Breakfast Stout** (Ballard)

BEST PORTER

ROBUST PORTER

STOUP BREWING

6.2 percent alcohol by volume

BLACK AS NIGHT, with a rich beige head, this Ballard-born brew, which has won many medals at many beer competitions, is rich with flavors of chocolate, coffee, a hint of vanilla and just a wee bit of smokiness. All of this comes from a recipe that includes, among other things, chocolate malted barley, roasted rye and roasted wheat. Always on tap at Stoup's all-ages taproom, it might make an occasional appearance at your favorite pub.

BEST PORTER FINALISTS:

Reuben's Brews **Robust Porter** (Ballard)

Wingman Brewers **P-51 Porter** (Tacoma)

Georgetown Brewing **9lb Porter** (Georgetown)

Counterbalance Brewing **Verboten Porter** (Georgetown)



BROWSING FOR BREWS

Is it a bottle shop or is it a bar? Chuck's Hop Shop in the Central District blurs the line in the best way (and there's ice cream to boot)



BEST BEER RETAILER

SAVOR A PINT OR TAKE SOME GROWLERS TO GO

**Chuck's Hop Shop
Central District**

THE SECOND of Chuck Shinn's hop shops (the original is in Greenwood), this newfangled kind of beer retailer, like the original, blurs the line between bottle shop and bar, with the perimeter of the room lined with reach-in refrigerators full of beer, and the middle of the room crowded with tables and chairs full of the neighborhood's beer lovers.

Commonly referred to as Chuck's CD, this bottle shop has hundreds of beers in bottles and cans as well as 50 beers on tap. So grab a pint while you shop or maybe hunker down for a couple of hours with the family in tow. Usually you'll find a food truck out front in the parking lot, where you'll also see more bikes and baby carriages than cars. You're also welcome to bring in your own food, and the shop sells Full Tilt ice cream by the scoop, along with bags of chips and some other snack items.

Central District, 2001 E Union St.; 206.538.0743; chuckscd.wordpress.com; all ages; dog-friendly

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS:

1. Chuck's Hop Shop: Greenwood, 656 NW 85th St.; 206.297.6212; chuckscd85th.wordpress.com; all ages

2. The Beer Junction: West Seattle, 4511 California Ave. SW; 206.938.2337; thebeerjunction.com; 21 and older only

3. Chuck's Hop Shop Central District

photographs by HAYLEY YOUNG



photograph by ALEX CROOK



BEST NORTHEASTERN IPA

ALL FLUFF IPA

MATCHLESS BREWING
6.4 percent alcohol by volume

MANGO, PEACH, CANTALOUPE and pineapple are among the many descriptors that apply to the overall character of this beer. The color is a hazy, murky gold; the aroma is intense and overripe; and the fluffy fruit flavors disguise the alcohol so well that you'll wonder if this beer could be accidentally served in a sippy cup or juice box. Among the Tumwater brewery's ever-rotating lineup of IPAs, All Fluff is brewed periodically on no set schedule, but when it's around, you can find it at the brewery's all-ages taproom and at local bottle shops in 16-ounce cans. *Tumwater, 8036 River Drive SE, No. 208; 360.584.9234; matchlessbrewing.com*

BEST NORTHEASTERN IPA FINALISTS:

- Reuben's Brews **Crush IPA** (Ballard)
- Aslan Brewing **Batch 15 IPA** (Bellingham)
- Silver City Brewery **Tropic Haze IPA** (Bremerton)
- Airways Brewing **Jumbo Juice IPA** (Kent)

CRAZY FOR THE HAZY

IF YOU'VE PAID ANY ATTENTION to beer over the past year, you've probably noticed the skyrocketing popularity of Northeastern IPA, which is sometime referred to as New England IPA, so named because of the region where it first gained popularity. It's the

hottest trend to hit the beer scene in more than a decade. This newfangled version of India pale ale typically features very little bitterness and is bursting with tropical fruit flavor derived from the use of an extraordinary amount of hops. Visually, these beers are noticeably and intentionally hazy, with an almost murky, juice-like appearance.

BEST IPA

LUSH IPA

FREMONT BREWING
7.0 percent alcohol by volume

DRINKING THIS APTLY NAMED beer is like laying down on a pillowy bed of fresh tropical fruit and drifting off into dreamland. It's sparkling gold in the glass, powerfully ripe on the nose and offers just enough bitterness to tame the sweetness. The unapologetic use of an absurd amount of hops provides a powerful burst of melon and tropical fruit flavors that will make your eyes bulge with delight. Find it on tap at the brewery's all-ages taproom or get it in 12-ounce cans and 22-ounce bottles at any grocery store with a good beer selection. *Fremont, 1050 N 34th St.; 206.420.2407; fremontbrewing.com*

BEST IPA FINALISTS:

- Georgetown Brewing **Bodhizafa IPA** (Georgetown)
- Reuben's Brews **Crikey IPA** (Ballard)
- Bale Breaker Brewing **Topcutter IPA** (Yakima)

BEST IMPERIAL IPA

DOUBLE RAINBOW SUSPENDERS IPA

SEAPINE BREWING
8.7 percent alcohol by volume

THINK OF IT AS the bigger brother of the beer that won in our Pale Ale category. Much of its flavor comes from the same hop variety, Mosaic, but it features more malty backbone and hence more alcohol. Hazy, golden amber, with lots of resinous pine and melon-like flavors, the ale has a slight sweetness on the finish that makes it go down deceptively easy for a beer of its strength. This draft-only beer—dubbed an “imperial” IPA because it is higher in alcohol content than regular IPA—may occasionally make the rotation at your favorite pub, but you'll always find it on tap at the brewery's all-ages taproom. *SoDo, 2959 Utah Ave. S; 206.682.7985; seapinebrewing.com*

BEST IMPERIAL IPA FINALISTS:

- Bale Breaker Brewing **Bottomcutter IIPA** (Yakima)
- Skookum Brewery **Mammoth Jack IPA** (Arlington)
- Black Raven Brewing **Wisdom Seeker Double IPA** (Redmond)



Hopped Up

PAINTING FLAVORS WITH HOPS

Although hops are just one of beer's essential ingredients (others are water, grains and yeast), brewers use them like winemakers use grapes. There are dozens of varieties of hops, and each brings its own character to beer, especially IPAs, so when brewers formulate recipes, they use one or more hop variety to achieve the flavor profile they want. The amount of hops and the way in which they are used also varies, allowing a brewer to paint a beer's flavor with a virtually limitless number of colors.



BEST PLACES TO
**Experience
Beer**

BEER-FOCUSED BAR

AT LEAST 12 BEERS ON TAP, ROTATING REGULARLY; BAR ONLY, NO FOOD

Beer Star

IF A LONG-TROUBLED BUSINESS DISTRICT is going to realize the promise of gentrification, establishing a good, upscale beer joint, especially one that welcomes kids as well as their thirsty parents, is a good start. And thus, Beer Star fell from the heavens and landed in the heart of White Center in May 2017. When techies, hipsters and young families flee the oppressive housing prices in other parts of Seattle, this expansive beer hall is waiting with 48 beers on tap, a huge bar for grown-ups only, tons of tables for groups and even a play area for the kiddos. Scattered flat-screen TVs, high ceilings, exposed beams and large, west-facing windows define the space.

Next door, two restaurants offer easy access to carryout fare: Chinese Takeout (CTO) and Li'l Woody's. If fried rice and hamburgers don't sound good, you're welcome to bring in food from any of the neighborhood's other restaurants, such as Proletariat Pizza or Bok a Bok Fried Chicken and Biscuits.

White Center, 9801 16th Ave. SW; 206.453.3088; beerstarusa.com; all ages; dog-friendly

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS:

- 1. Chuck's Hop Shop:** Greenwood 656 NW 85th St.; 206.297.6212; chuck-s85th.wordpress.com; all ages
- 2. The Beer Junction:** West Seattle, 4511 California Ave. SW; 206.938.2337; thebeerjunction.com; 21 and older only
- 3. Beveridge Place Pub:** West Seattle, 6413 California Ave. SW; 206.932.9906; beveridgeplacepub.com; 21 and older only



REC ROOM
Beer Star has something for everyone: beer, snacks, TVs and even a kiddie play area



BROTHERS IN BREW
Owners and brewers Drew Colpitts (left) and Mike Hutson, at the bar of their winning brewery, Seapine, in SoDo



LIVING LEGENDS
Rose Ann and Charles Finkel of Pike Brewing Company in Pike Place Market were building a beer empire long before it was cool

MOST ICONIC WASHINGTON BEER BRAND
THE PIONEERS

Pike Brewing Company

IN A CITY WHERE EVERYTHING seems shiny and new, and very little of our local culture predates grunge, Pike Brewing tirelessly persists as one of Seattle's oldest and best breweries. Because of its proximity to Pike Place Market, this brewery and pub is all that many visitors see of the local beer culture; we could not ask for better ambassadors. Charles and Rose Ann Finkel, who founded the brewery in 1989, remain omnipresent on the local beer scene, and if we ever erect a Seattle Beer Pantheon, theirs will be among the very first names chiseled in stone at the shrine.

In 2012, when the Space Needle celebrated its 50th anniversary, Pike Brewing was selected to create a beer to commemorate the milestone, an obvious and appropriate choice. Like the brewery itself, that beer endures and is widely available in 12-ounce cans, but do yourself a favor and get a pint of Space Needle Golden IPA at the source by visiting the brewery and pub.

Pike Place Market, 1415 First Ave.; 206.622.6044; pikebrewing.com; all ages

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS:

- 1. Rainier Beer** Now owned by Pabst Brewing Company and brewed in California
- 2. Georgetown Brewing Company Georgetown,** 5200 Denver Ave. S; 206.766.8055; georgetownbeer.com; all ages
- 3. Pike Brewing Company**

photographs by HAYLEY YOUNG

BREWERY OF THE YEAR
NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Seapine Brewing Company

TOPPING TWO OF OUR BEST OF BEER CATEGORIES IS NO SMALL FEAT, but those winning brews represent just a small part of Seapine Brewing's award-winning beer arsenal. In large part, that's why I dubbed it our Brewery of the Year.

On weekdays, the after-work crowd packs the always-busy, beer-only taproom to sip away the troubles of the day, proving that Starbucks employees slurp something other than lattes and macchiatos (the corporate headquarters is just two blocks away). On weekends, you'll share space at the large communal tables with fellow beer pilgrims, who come to worship the beers and perhaps enjoy a Seattle Dog (grilled onions, jalapeños and cream cheese) from Chavoya's Hot Dogs, which often has its cart parked out front.

Owner/brewmaster Drew Colpitts studied brewing sciences at University of California Davis and spent time working for Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurant, among other breweries, before opening Seapine Brewing in 2012. Today you may spot him at the brewery hoisting a pint of his beloved Positron IPA, or perhaps one of his experimental creations.

You can find the beers on tap at various beer-focused restaurants and bars around the area, but a trip to the brewery and taproom in SoDo guarantees you a wide selection of beers, including our Best of Beer winners Mosaic Pale Ale and Rainbow Suspenders Double IPA.

SoDo, 2959 Utah Ave. S; 206.682.7985; seapinebrewing.com; all ages



OVER THE BARREL
At Fremont Brewing, brewers use old bourbon barrels to give these beers character

BEST OF BARREL-AGED BEER

Fremont Brewing

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE of local breweries offering barrel-aged beers these days, as beer lovers increasingly clamor for these hefty and potent brews. In recent years, our local brewers have upped their games, getting better and better at using repurposed booze and wine barrels to add character to their beers. Yet Seattle's Fremont Brewing has proven itself a leader in this particular style, especially if you want to savor a beer that's spent time in a bourbon barrel.

Perhaps the most popular of these rare delights is the B-bomb (the B stands for bourbon or barrel, you decide), a bourbon-barrel-aged winter beer released annually on B-Bomb Friday, the day after Thanksgiving. Local beer nerds also clamor for the Bourbon Barrel-Aged Dark Star Oatmeal Stout (B-BADS), which Fremont Brewing releases on or around October 1 each year.

When they're available, during the fall and winter, get these beers on tap or in bottles at Fremont Brewing's taproom, select local bars, or local bottle shops. As with most barrel-aged beers, supplies are limited, but if you follow Fremont Brewing on social media, it keeps you informed about both beers' availability. In each of these beers, expect to encounter flavors such as chocolate, caramel and coffee, along with some sweet, boozy alcohol burn, but know that every year, both of them are unique creations. **5**

SEATTLE MAGAZINE BEER AWARDS TASTING PANELISTS

Karrie Stewart (owner, Teku Tavern, Queen Anne, tekutavern.beer)

Marley Rall (owner, The Brewmaster's Taproom, Renton, thebrewmasterstaproom.com)

Jon Olken (owner, Full Throttle Bottles, Georgetown, fullthrottlebottles.com)

Mark Krukar (organizer, Phinney Neighborhood Association beer events, nationally accredited beer judge)

Paul Orchard (beer blogger, Northwest Beer Guide, northwestbeerguide.com, and a

nationally accredited beer judge)

Michael Dieterle (beer blogger, Craft Beer Monger, craftbeermonger.com)

Tommy Brooks (beverage director, Zeeks Pizza)

Brooks Riendl (beer research coordinator, Zeeks Pizza, multiple locations, zeekspizza.com)

Ellen Kelly (owner, The Noble Fir, Ballard, thenoblefir.com)

Annie Johnson (master brewer, PicoBrew, Wallingford, picobrew.com)

Methodology

WE STARTED THE QUEST for the best beers by asking a group of 40 local beer experts—bar owners, bottle shop owners, nationally accredited beer judges, beer writers and so on—to anonymously nominate three beers in each of nine different style categories: pilsner, amber, saison, pale ale, IPA, Imperial IPA, Northeast IPA, porter and stout. We only considered reasonably obtainable beers brewed in Washington, to avoid directing readers to one-off, small-batch or otherwise unobtainable beers. In each of the nine categories, the most highly nominated beers advanced to the finals.

On March 5, at the Beveridge Place Pub in West Seattle, we assembled a group of 10 beer experts to taste all of the finalists. (A thankless job, but someone had to do it.) The judges scored the beers blindly, without knowing which beers they were drinking, based on criteria such as aroma, appearance, flavor and overall impression, with each beer earning a total possible score of 20 points from each judge. Those scores were tallied, and we crowned the highest-scoring beer in each category as the champion. The nominees and winners are independent of whether they advertise with *Seattle* magazine or the *Washington Beer Blog*.

Brewery of the Year winner was selected by beer expert and story writer Kendall Jones, also author of the *Washington Beer Blog* (washingtonbeerblog.com). His selection was based on the brewery's performance in this year's Best of Beer judging, overall consistency and quality of beer, popularity and reputation. He also oversaw the entire beer judging process but his opinions had no bearing on the nominations or the final results.

For the beer experience categories, the editor's pick winners were also selected by Jones. For Readers' Choice winners, suggested beer establishments were nominated by a panel of local professionals from various corners of the beer business. Readers chose from that list and could also write in their own nomination within each category through March 20. The top three readers' choice categories with the most votes were selected as finalists.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FREMONT BREWING

