

# DREAMSCAPES

TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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CARIBBEAN  
PLEASURES

KOREAN  
CELEBRATIONS

ADVENTURES IN  
PERU

FASCINATING  
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BACKCOUNTRY  
POWDER

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ARUBA



## THE BREW NORTH, STRONG AND FREE: A TALE OF CANADIAN CRAFT BREWING

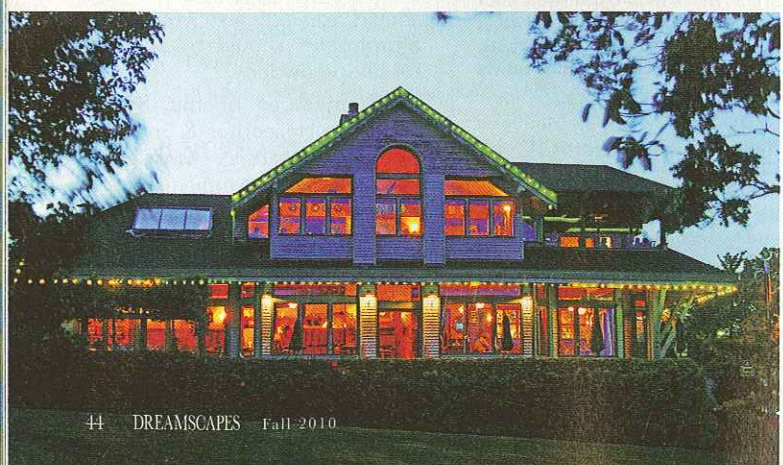
THE TALE OF CANADIAN CRAFT BREWING—WHAT WE USED TO CALL “MICROBREWING”—BEGINS IN 1982 AT THE HORSESHOE BAY BREWING COMPANY, THE FIRST BREWPUB OF THE MODERN CANADIAN AGE.

**I**t would make sense, then, to begin any tour of Canadian beer at this bar and brewery near the Vancouver–Nanaimo ferry docks, except that it no longer exists, having long since succumbed to ownership disputes and economic pressures. Better, then, to start at its spiritual descendent, Victoria’s Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub and Guest Houses ([spinnakers.com](http://spinnakers.com)).

### B.C. FAVOURITES

Born as a British-style brewpub in the spring of 1984, Spinnakers had among its owners John Mitchell, one of the three founders of the Horseshoe Bay brewery, and Paul Hadfield, who continues to operate the business today. The vision the two men shared, of a British-inspired pub brewery on a magnificent hill overlooking Victoria Harbour, has been met and well surpassed by the Spinnakers of today, which features sophisticated, locally-sourced cuisine served on two floors, 10 guest rooms and suites, a store selling all that’s necessary for a quick breakfast or leisurely picnic lunch and, of course, such brilliantly flavourful brews as the gently fruity and floral Mitchell’s Extra Special Bitter and the faintly chocolaty Jameson’s Scottish Ale.

Over on the mainland, the most buzz-worthy brewery these days is the tiny Central City Brewing Company ([centralcitybrewing.com](http://centralcitybrewing.com)), located in the southern Vancouver suburb of Surrey. Helmed by Gary Lohin, who enjoys near-iconic status among B.C.’s beer cognoscenti, Central City combines a coffee shop, restaurant, expansive liquor store and, of course, brewpub in a complex that is already a



top: Located in Calgary, Alberta, the Wild Rose Brewery makes some of the “wildest” beers in Canada. Wild Rose Brewery

left: Overlooking Victoria’s scenic inner harbour, the main floor of the Gastro Brewpub houses Spinnakers Restaurant. Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub & Guest Houses

landmark in the region. Still, there is no need to fear if transportation is a problem, since most of Central City's Red Racer line of beers, including the dryly bitter, multi-award-winning India Pale Ale and pale and citrusy Wheat Ale, are sold in cans at B.C. Liquor Stores and frequently on tap at select Vancouver locations, such as the craft beer oasis, the Alibi Room (alibi.ca).

## MIDWEST PLEASERS

Across the Rockies, central Canada is in the midst of a mini-boom in craft brewing, with veterans and newcomers alike slaking thirsts from Calgary to Winnipeg and as far north as Whitehorse, where the nation's only Territory brewery, Yukon Brewing (yukonbeer.com), keeps residents warm with the berry-ish and softly spicy Yukon Red and the rich, raisiny winter brew, Lead Dog Ale.

Back south, Wild Rose Brewery (wildrosebrewery.com) both pleases the palates and serves the social needs of Calgarians through their Taproom near the local Farmers Market and ales like their faintly coffee-ish Brown Ale and light and summery WRaspberry Ale, made with bucketloads of whole Alberta raspberries. Heading eastward, prairie denizens have been flocking to Regina's Bushwakker Brewpub (bushwakker.com) for two decades, dining on pizzas and burgers and washing it down with pints of such tremendous beers as the roasty Palliser Porter and the off-dry, quenching Stubblejumper Pilsener.

Winnipeggers sometimes need to be resourceful if they want to avail themselves of the joys of Half Pints Brewing's wares, even lining up at the brewery for special releases, but visitors can be confident of catching this fine brewery's beers on tap at a handful of local establishments, including the Yellow Dog Tavern (yellowdogtavern.ca), a bare boards blues bar and ale house, and the multi-tiered King's Head Pub (kingshead.ca), where the mocha-ish Stir Stick Stout and toasty Bulldog Amber are a treat.

## CENTRAL TOP DRAWS

In Toronto, local beers like the faintly buttery King Pilsner, the clovey, fruity Denison's Weissebier, and the quaffably citrusy, custom-brewed Al's Cask Ale rule the 35 taps of the pioneering, 22-year-old basement beer bar, C'est What (cestwhat.com). For brewery tours, however, the place downtowners turn to is Steam Whistle Brewing (steamwhistle.ca), a rambling, modern craft brewery located in the historic Roundhouse, rail building situated in the shadow of the CN Tower, where the lone brand produced is the German-inspired, faintly lemony



and thoroughly refreshing Steam Whistle Pilsner.

Montréal has long been a destination for brewpub aficionados and, not to discount the efforts of its stellar bottling breweries, the city's broad tapestry of brewpubs remains its top draw. The downtown Le Cheval Blanc (lechevalblanc.ca), Montréal's original brewpub and still one of the best, stands ever-strong with a rotating lineup of brews from tart fruit beers like their summer Cassis to a creamy and roasty Stout, while around the corner l'Amère à Boire (amereaboire.com) offers a tiny streetside terrace and stand-out lagers like the toasty dark brew, Drak, and the lighter, more bitter Cerná Hora.

The more beer-obsessed in the city will likely reference a single brewpub, though, the nearly famous Dieu du Ciel (dieuduciel.com). Really little more than a neighbourhood corner bar with a brewery attached, Dieu du Ciel made an early splash on the city's beerscape and never looked back, charming tastebuds with exotic beers like the vanilla- and cocoa-infused l'Aphrodisiaque and the potent and intense, coffee-flavoured Pêché Mortel.

## EAST COAST CONCOCTIONS

Finally on the east coast, Halifax may be best known as the birthplace of the ubiquitous Alexander Keith's India Pale Ale, but it's also the heartland of Maritime craft brewing. The Nova Scotian capital boasts one of the country's earliest brewpubs, the Granite Brewery (granitebreweryhalifax.ca), which has now evolved into a production brewery, as well as a host of younger operations, such as the recently opened Hart & Thistle (hartandthistle.com), where peripatetic brewer Greg Nash concocts a bevy of formidable brews, including the utterly unconventional Thaiphooon Hammer, a German wheat beer flavoured with ginger and lemongrass, and monstrously hoppy, yet sweetly balanced Kryptonite.

All evidence that not only is Canadian craft brewing alive and well, but also vibrant coast to coast to coast. All that's needed to enjoy it, as they say, is to get out there! ■

**top:** When in Halifax, pair a brew with fresh, mouth-watering seafood at the Hart & Thistle Gastropub & Brewery at the Historic Properties on Upper Water Street. Hart & Thistle Gastropub & Brewery

**left:** The Good Beer Folks are the guardians of your Steam Whistle experience. Steam Whistle Brewing

