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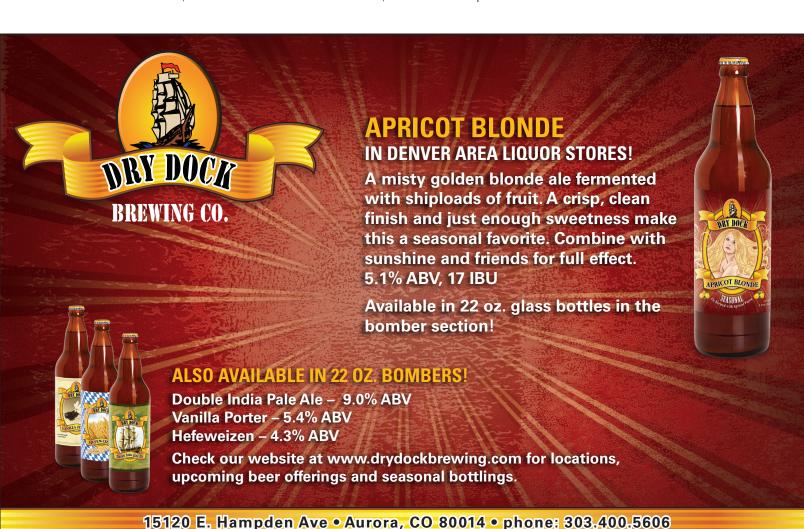


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BREWERIES

GREAT DIVIDE A DENVER BEER STALWART







By Steve Raabe, The Denver Post

From the outside, it's hard to miss Great Divide Brewing Co. Eighteen towering stainless-steel fermenters are gleaming beacons of craft-brewing prowess on the outskirts of downtown Denver.

From the inside, it's hard to miss the fact that this is one popular destination. By 3 p.m. on a recent weekday, patrons already are three deep around the tap-room bar.

The din of conversation contains its share of social minutiae, but much of it is beer-centric questioning from customer to brewery staffer: What's the IBU count in this IPA? What kind of malt is used in the stout? Where can I buy this retail?

Catering to the craft-beer cognoscenti brings pleasure to owner Brian Dunn. He started Great Divide as a one-man operation in

1994. Today, the brewer employs 48 and will produce 40,000 barrels this year, making

it one of Denver's largest craft operations.

Dunn grew up in a household where tastings of beer, wine and spirits were a daily occurrence. He was a home brewer long before the hobby became trendy.

"I was a beer dork," he said. "In college, I always knew more about beer than anyone else."



That passion has led Dunn and his staff to be innovators in brewing styles.

Flagship brands include the aggressively hopped Titan IPA and Yeti Imperial Stout. The stout has evolved into several different styles, including an oak-aged version containing cocoa nibs and cayenne pepper.

Great Divide is housed in the former Sinton's Dairy building at 22nd and Arapahoe streets in the Ballpark neighborhood, a few blocks uptown from Coors Field.

Tap room clientele skews young and enthusiastic. The brewery conducts, on average, 350 small-group tours per week.

Samples used to be free. Now Great Divide charges \$3 for three, 3-ounce tastes. All sample proceeds are donated to local charities — raising \$73,000 last year.

Great Divide Brewing Co.

Address: 2201 Arapahoe St., Denver Hours: Sunday- Tuesday, noon to 8 p.m. Wednesday - Saturday, noon to 10 p.m.

Website: www.greatdivide.com

Phone: 303-296-9460

Flagship products: IPA, imperial stout, rye lager,

Scotch ale, Belgian ale, pale ale, pilsner

First published on The Denver Post Beer Guide eBook. To download your free copy visit DenverPost.com/beerguide



Next-generation stainless growlers have arrived

By Eric Gorski

The glass growler is an economical if imperfect vessel.

As long as you don't have a case of the dropsies (or are overly obsessive about freshness), it's a relatively inexpensive and easy way to cart 64 ounces of beer home or to a party.

While a number of breweries shifted to amber glass to better block out light and a few now offer smaller growlers to cater to solo drinkers (including Odell Brewing and TRVE Brewing in Colorado), the growler has not changed much over the years.

Only now are the seeds of a growler revolution being sown.

A growing number of Colorado breweries — including Great Divide, Oskar Blues and Upslope on the Front Range — are experimenting with next-generation stainless



Drinkers steel themselves for the next big thing in growlers.

steel growlers, trying out products being produced by a small but competitive field of firms betting consumers will be willing to pay more for a sturdier container that could, with some innovation, eventually keep beer fresher longer.

In the fall of 2012, Great Divide in Denver received a shipment of 144 stainless steel growlers from the Portland, Ore.-based Zythos Project LLC. The company's cleverly named product, The Brauler, is available at 26-plus breweries.

One big difference is cost. Glass growlers go for as little as \$5. The Brauler's suggested retail price is \$59.95.

Some breweries, however, stubbornly refuse to sell their draft beer to-go.

"If someone takes home a growler and tosses it in the fridge, the beer is not the same beer anymore within about 2 hours - especially IPAs and hop-forward beers," said Joe Osborne, marketing director for Boulder-based Avery Brewing.

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OUR FAVORITE BEERS

It's an amazing time to be drinking beer in Colorado.

From the continued excellence of established brewers to the maturation of more recent arrivals and impressive 2013 debuts, the state of craft beer is something to behold.

Below, we've listed our favorites from 2013. We couldn't make it everywhere and try everything so there are no doubt misses here. But the following 30-plus beers from Colorado really stuck out in our minds:

AC Golden's India Pale Lager: If only MillerCoors would package it. Some scoff at beers embracing this name but you can't argue this marriage of hops and lager yeast results in one highly quaffable beer.



Avery Brewing's Uncle Jacob's Stout: The second release of the huge 17.42 percent imperial stout named for Adam Avery's great grand uncle the distiller. Our taste came right out of the bourbon barrel at GABF and was poured by Adam himself.

Big Choice Brewing's Disconnected Red: An amber ale hopped like an IPA. Coppery color. Malty but also hoppy. The beer has gotten good ratings after the Broomfield brewery began canning the beer. The ABV is about 6.7 percent.



Black Shirt Brewing's Red Evelyn: The brothers Miller heed no style definitions, and all the power to them when the result is this: an imperial red rye IPA brewed in honor of their grandmother. Brewed with

rye, Belgian candi syrup, Colorado wildflower honey, and hopped heavily with Simcoe, Citra, Willamette, Zythos and Centennial hops.

Breckenridge Brewery's 471 Small Batch IPA: A deep orange, piney go-to double IPA from a bedrock Colorado brewery poised to enter a new era with a farm-style brewery coming to Littleton (9.2 percent ABV, 70 IBU).





Copper Kettle Brewing Snowed In: The debut beer in Copper Kettle's barrel-aging series is a keeper. Snowed In has a lot going on but pulls it off. The imperial oatmeal stout is brewed with roasted coffee from Pablo's Coffee in Denver and dark

chocolate, and then aged in Breckenridge Distillery bourbon barrels for several months.

Crooked Stave St. Bretta (summer batch): Crooked Stave had an amazing 2013 with the opening of The Source. This is an accessible, delicious Belgian witbier with a twist – subtle citrus notes and an unmistakable but not overpowering Brett funk. Aged in oak foudres.



Denver Beer Co. Graham Cracker Porter: Denver Beer Co. doesn't like to brew the same beer twice but knows when it has a winner (as

Favorite Beers continued from Page 6

in a GABF medal winner, 2011). This staple will become "campfire in a can" when Denver Beer Co.'s production brewery in north Denver comes online and starts cranking out cans.

Dry Dock Brewing Hop Abomination: There are so many great Colorado IPAs, and Kevin Delange and the crew at Dry Dock have come up with a great addition to the canon with this hazy, copper-colored, piney IPA (6.5 percent ABV, 70 IBU)



Elevation Beer Co. First Cast IPA: An easy-drinking 6.5 percent alcohol-by-volume IPA with Chinook, Summit and Zythos hops. Also notable for the package – pint bottles available in four packs.

FATE Brewing Watermelon Kolsch: From the brewpub that opened in Boulder this year, a sublime summertime beer with a hint of watermelon infused in the crisp German-style ale. The sweetness of the melon provides a perfect compliment to the malt and hops for a nice sessionable ale at 5.0 ABV.



Funkwerks Saison: Why mess with a good thing? This style is gaining in popularity both standing alone and paired with food, and no one makes a better classic saison in Colorado than Funkwerks in Fort Collins. We'd love to see them brew and package a low-ABV saison in four or six packs.

Great Divide Claymore Scotch Ale: A classic Wee Heavy. Malty, red, with a taste of caramel (7.7 percent ABV). One of the brewery's big sellers. We'll all be watching Great Divide's plans for a huge new brewery in River North.



Hogshead Brewery Gilpin Black Gold: Yum ... an English-style porter with hints of chocolate and roasted nut with a single addition Fuggles hop. Lots of love for Hogshead this year from brewers in the know. Get the cask version, of course.



Left Hand Brewing Nitro Milk Stout: "America's great milk stout," indeed. This sweet stout is one of our go-to bottled six packs. Pour hard. The Longmont brewery had an interesting fall, winning three gold medals (Milk Stout, Sawtooth Ale and Fade to Black Vol. 1) at the Great American Beer Fest.

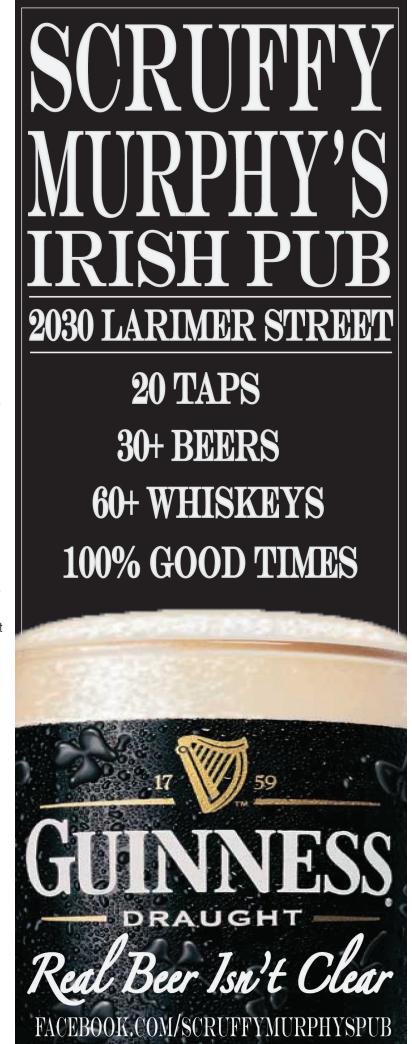
New Belgium Brewing Accumulation: The Fort Collins giant of craft brewing likes to rotate its seasonals and this white IPA is new this winter. It's a home run. Brewed with Target and Centennial hops, and dry-hopped with Mosaic and Amarillo.





Odell Brewing Friek: This Lambic-style Kriek-Framboise features three different beers aged in barrels and blended by the purveyors of understated excellence in Fort Collins. Tart and delicious. One of our favorite fruit-based beers – again.

continues on Page 7



Favorite Beers continued from Page 7

Oskar Blues Dale's Pale Ale: The crazy fast growing Longmont brewery was at the forefront of Colorado flood relief with its Can'd Aid Foundation. We raise a can of Dale's – the can't miss, pioneering bordering-on-IPA pale ale.



Prost Brewing's Dunkel Bier: Prost's revival of a dark amber lager beauty from the very brewery that once owned the copper brewing equipment that now resides at Prost – Hümmer Brauerei in Breitengüßbach, Germany. (5.2 percent ABV, 25 IBUs).

River North Brewery Whiskey-Barrel Quandary:

Matt Hess's Belgian-inspired brewery is only building momentum from its impressive opening last year. This outstanding Belgian-style quad was aged in rye whiskey barrels (9.6 percent ABV).





ODELL BREWING CO.

Ska Brewing Modus Hoperandi: This IPA probably does not get enough credit on the Front Range. It's one of the best – anywhere. Hazy, hoppy – and now available in bottles!

Strange Brewing Cherry Kriek: That Brewery on Zuni finally has reached a settlement with a crotchety homebrew shop on the East Coast that will allow Strange to remain



Strange (still awaiting the final details to be made public). This kriek goes great with dessert, by itself or (oh yeah) blended with Epic's Big Bad Baptist.



TRVE Brewing Manannan: This just-released sour brown ale was our best-in-show winner at the recent Denver Beer Festivus staged by Denver Off the Wagon and Co. Fermented

in whiskey barrels with two strains of Brettanomyces yeast and soured with lactobacillus. This bodes very well for TRVE'S new barrel program helmed by former Big Choice brewer Zach Coleman.

Verboten Brewing Angry Banjo: There are only two beer styles indigenous to the U.S. – the California Common and the Kentucky Common. Loveland-based Verboten has come up with a revival of the latter style, which uses the spent grain and sour mash from distilleries. Chocolate caramel and a hint of sour.

Wynkoop Brewing's The Chancellor: This big, rich barleywine was a hit at Avery's Strong Ale Fest and other rare beer events. Here's hoping it returns in 2014. The Wynkoop's geekier offerings will get its own space next year with a new barrel room and tasting room in the basement space formerly occupied by an improv comedy club.

Yak and Yeti Chai Milk Stout: A traditional English-style milk stout (5.2 percent ABV, 26 IBU) sweetened with lactose with a blend of top-secret spices at the brewpub won silver in the ultra-competitive herb and spice beer category at GABF 2013.

This list was a collaboration between Denver Post First Drafts contributors Eric Gorski and Jeremy P. Meyer. Visit blogs.denverpost.com/beer



Come visit with us and enjoy limited release pilot brews, live music on Wednesdays, and check out what's brewing on our daily tours.



ODELL BREWING CO.

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GRUB AND PUB

FRESHCRAFT HELPS PATRONS CHEW ON THE BREWS THAT GO BEST WITH THE GRUB

By Douglas Brown, The Denver Post

The Front Range gets called the Napa Valley of beer for good reason — the long stretch of mountainside prairie supports more than 100 breweries and brewpubs.

Naturally, restaurants and bars that don't turn grain into suds have noticed. Step into nearly any mildly ambitious saloon or cafe and witness the taps that venture at least a few steps beyond the pale stuff from Milwaukee, St. Louis and, yes, Golden.

Some joints take many steps — as in, epic treks.

One of them, Freshcraft, should wow any beer lover. Not only does the pleasingly dark-and-cozy spot host 20 handles pouring interesting beers from around Colorado — with a few cool brews tossed in from around the world — one of the handles is dedicated to Belgians. Not only does the bottle list inch over the 100 mark, but the menu is designed to pair with the beer — a rarity among restaurants.

And we aren't talking merely the lineup of usual suspects: the sausage platter, the wings bucket, the slab of ribs. Freshcraft offers interesting variations on all of the above, but the joint also serves things such as berry-glazed lamb ribs, coconut-crusted yellowtail and crimini-mushroom tacos.

"Jason (Forgy) thinks of ideas for the draft selection each season and we talk about what to put on the menu, about what pairs best with the beers," said Lucas Forgy, Jason's brother. A trio of 30-something Forgy brothers from lowa moved to Denver three years ago to open Freshcraft. Lucas runs the kitchen, Jason is the beer guy and Aaron handles the cocktail program.

What would Lucas drink with the barbecue crepe dish on the menu?

"We smoke the beef, make the crepes fresh and use a green-chile marmalade in the dish," he said. "A Scotch ale would be a complementary pairing; an IPA would be a contrasting pairing."

The Scotch ale works by melding with the natural sweetness in the dish, he said, while the bitter IPA would cut through the fat in the preparation.

These are the kinds of conversations the Forgy brothers have every day, between one another and with customers. Nice gigs, guys.

Sometimes, the grub side of the beer experience calls for nothing more than a great pretzel. That alone is worth trumpeting. Other times, the beer, or just the mood, demands something else.

That's when you might sidle up to the bar, or nab a table, in Freshcraft and begin peppering one of the Forgys about what small plate you should eat with that pint of maibock.

Freshcraft

Address: 1530 Blake St., Denver Hours: Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to midnight

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First published on The Denver Post Beer Guide eBook. To download your free copy visit DenverPost.com/beerguide









PAIRINGS

What whets your palate?

Whether you are out quaffing a few beers with friends or at a more buttoned-down business dinner, matching the meal with the right beer takes a bit of awareness. Here are some suggestions for beer/food pairings that can't miss.



Pale ale: English cheese, grilled hamburger



India pale ale: strong, spicy food, including anything with curry

Hefeweizen: salads, seafood, sushi





Brown ale: roast pork, smoked sausage, grilled salmon

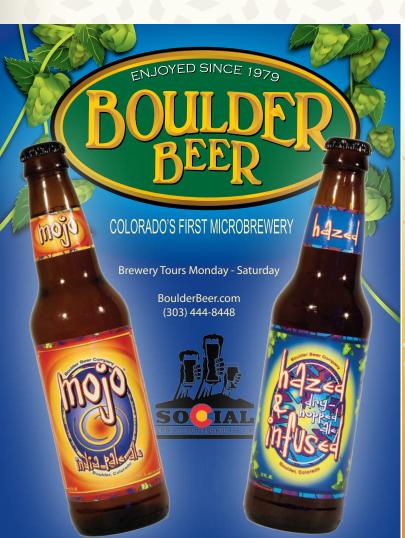


Imperial stout: hearty fare, e.g. elk with cream sauce





Source: Brewers Association





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80204 720-401-4089 Renegadebrewing.com

River North Brewing

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Rock Bottom Denver

1001 16th St. Denver 303-534-7616 Rockbottom.com

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