



There's more than one way to quench your thirst after a long day on the trade-show floor. Denver Beer Co. has brews for days.

Quenching A Mile-High Thirst

A Guide To Denver's Breweries

By Michael Sudmeier

If you head to SIA, you're going to get thirsty. Between the arid climate inside the Colorado Convention Center and drooling over next year's gear, you'll need to wet your whistle. And although doctors and a handful of pro riders suggest doing this with water, you might want to quench your thirst at some of Denver's signature breweries instead.

Among those who ply their trade with water, hops, barley, and yeast, there's a common refrain: Colorado's Front Range is the Napa Valley of craft beers. "Colorado has a certain frontier, do-it-yourself mentality that certainly extends to the popularity of craft beer," Hanna Laney of Great Divide Brewing Company explains. In a state filled with opportunities for outdoor adventures, Laney notes, "It seems fitting that the population would appreciate a product that is handcrafted, rugged, and a labor of love."

The same environment that affords an abundance of recre-

ational opportunities also provides the ingredients essential for quality beer. "First and foremost, it's the water. Denver—and Colorado—is blessed with phenomenal water for brewing. Beer is up to 97 percent water, so the best way to make truly great beer is to start with truly great water," Strange Brewing Company Head Brewer Tim Myers offers. "Living in a state where you can grow all the ingredients in beer definitely helps propagate industry appreciation," Laney adds. "If you're buying your malt, hops, and other ingredients from Colorado sources, I think there is sort of a hometown pride aspect."

Across America, people are embracing a proliferation of breweries with open arms and open mouths. To a degree, they have Colorado to thank. The state has served as both a catalyst and



After a late night at these breweries, all you need to remember is the number 3 or 7. The two most plentiful cab companies are Yellow at (303) 777-7777 and Metro at (303) 333-3333.

SWIPE DOWN TO CONTINUE ▼

blueprint for this growth. “Our ‘religion’ started here, so the area is filled with believers who support craft beer,” Marty Jones of Wynkoop Brewery says. Michelle DeLange, co-founder of Dry Dock Brewing, adds that Colorado is home to “a lot of great breweries that started in the ‘90s and paved the way for those of us who started our breweries in the last five to 10 years.” Jones also credits Boulder resident Charlie Papazian for fueling the growth of breweries and the appreciation for them. Originally a nuclear engineer, Papazian wrote the seminal text for home brewers, *The Complete Joy of Homebrewing*. “Charlie doubles as the Moses of the movement, thanks to the book,” Jones states. Papazian also founded the Association of Brewers (now part of the Brewers Association) and The Great American Beer Festival. Hosted by the Brewers Association, the annual three-day festival brings together visitors from around the world to sample more than 2,000 American beers.

The history behind Colorado’s breweries is rich, but so too is the taste. When you ask brewers to describe what’s on tap, be prepared to salivate over the adjectives and ingredients—not to mention the beer. At Great Divide, “Our flagship is our Titan IPA—a piney, citrusy, balanced India pale ale that clocks in around seven percent ABV [alcohol by volume],” Laney states. For Strange Brewing Company, Cherry Kriek is one of its most popular beers. “We like to say this beer has so many Montmorency pie cherries in it, even its foamy head is red.” At the Denver Beer Co., you’re likely to find visitors nursing pints of Graham Cracker Porter.

For Denver’s brewers, their work is rewarding. “We get to

engage people’s senses through sight, smell, touch, and taste,” Branden Miller, co-founder of Black Shirt Brewing Co., explains. “I am not aware of another art form that allows for such interaction.” Miller and his brother and sister-in-law spent two years building their brewery by hand before opening it this fall. They spent even longer perfecting their Red Ale, the brewery’s specialty.

Brewers are quick to offer suggestions for getting the most out of a visit. At Strange Brewing Company, Myers suggests, “Start with a taster flight so you can explore each of the 10 craft brews we have on tap. If you find a favorite, order a pint, then ask the bartender for a tour of the brewhouse.” DeLange also encourages Dry Dock’s visitors to start with a sampler. “Experiment. Try something that you may not normally think you would like, because you never know, you might enjoy it.”

Like those from a number of breweries in Denver, a sampler at Dry Dock tends to be loaded with an abundance of award-winning beer.

Patrick Crawford, co-founder of the Denver Beer Co., also recommends taking advantage of seasonal beers. In addition to Graham Cracker Porter, the brewery showcases a number of stouts and other porters in January. As Crawford notes, “Winter’s a good time to sit by a fire and sip on a high-alcohol beer.” When the snow starts to fall, the brewery often throws parties in its beer garden. “If it’s snowing, we offer discounted beers if you drink them outside in your ski and snowboard gear.” There’s never been a better time to pray for snow.

Featured Breweries



**GREAT DIVIDE
BREWING COMPANY**
2201 Arapahoe Street
Denver, CO 80205
greatdivide.com
(303) 296-9460

Sip On This:
TITAN IPA

**BLACK SHIRT
BREWING CO.**
3719 Walnut Street
Denver, CO 80205
blackshirtbrewingco.com
(303) 993-2799

Sip On This:
RED ALE

DENVER BEER CO.
1695 Platte Street
Denver, CO 80202
denverbeerco.com
(303) 433-2739

Sip On This:
**GRAHAM CRACKER
PORTER**

**STRANGE BREWING
COMPANY**
1330 Zuni Street
Denver, CO 80204
strangebrewingco.com
(720) 985-2337

Sip On This:
**LE BRUIT DU DIABLE
FARMHOUSE ALE**

DRY DOCK BREWING
15120 East Hampden
Avenue
Aurora, CO 80014
drydockbrewing.com
(303) 400-5606

Sip On This:
**BELGIAN STYLE
TRIPLE**

WYNKOOP BREWERY
1634 18th Street
Denver, CO 80202
wynkoop.com
(303) 297-2700

Sip On This:
RAIL YARD ALE