

Size matters

Big bottles of beer — BOOZE perfect for sharing

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At the pub or bar, beer is the most social of beverages — people like to get together with friends to chat over a pint; sharing a pitcher of beer reinforces bonds of friendship and the beer itself lubricates conversation.

Away from such places, wine has the advantage — a standard-sized bottle of vino is perfect for sharing,

while a bottle of beer is usually a solo endeavour. At a party or reception, a bottle of wine can be taken around by the host to top up guests' glasses, enhancing mingling and conversation. Rarely is this done with beer.

But, bottles of beers that can (and must) be shared do exist. Indeed, these double magnums (three-litre bottles) and jeroboams (six-litre bottles) are conversation pieces in and of themselves, while the beer fulfills its usual function — promoting good cheer. Next time you host a party or bring a beverage to a gathering, pick up one of these giant bottles from one of Calgary's finer beer retailers:


• **Chimay Blue** — Brewed by Trappist monks and sold only in enough quantity to support the monastery and its charitable works, Chimay's beers are identified by the colour of their labels. And Blue — at nine per cent — is made for sharing. What could be more brotherly than that? Double magnums are available for approximately \$115.

• **Duvel** — "Duvel" is Flemish for "devil." Originally named Victory, legend has it that an early fan of the beer referred to it as "a real devil of

a beer" and the name was changed. At 8.5 per cent, *you'll* be dancing with the devil if you don't share this bottle. Double magnums are approximately \$115.

• **Schloss Eggenberg Samichlaus** — At 14 per cent, the brewery claims this is the highest-alcohol content lager in the world and, for a time, was the highest-alcohol content beer of any kind. Brewed only once per year on December 6, on the anniversary of the feast day of St. Nicholas, this beer has celebration and good tidings written all over it. Double magnums with resealable flip-top caps are available for approximately \$145. Interestingly, jeroboams are also available, for approximately \$250, but are not resealable.

• **Gouden Carolus Cuvee van de Keizer** — Brewed only once per year on February 24, the birthday of Charles V — this beer is named after the 16th century Holy Roman emperor. Apparently Charles V preferred beer to wine; "Gouden Carolus" means Golden Charlie. That's a good enough reason for me. Double magnums of this 11 per cent beer are available for approximately \$120.

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