

# Cowtown awash in new beers

Calgary's beer makers continue to brew creatively ▶ DON TSE

IT HAS ALREADY been a year of unbridled creativity for Calgary brewers, with new, limited edition or seasonal brews (and a new brewing company) hitting shelves and taps seemingly every week. But this year of beer is not over yet. Here is a round up of the latest in Calgary suds.

**Big Rock Brewery** has an unprecedented four new beers currently available. In addition to Anthea Wet Hopped Ale, which was the subject of a previous article, Big Rock's Life of Chai, Gerstemeister Marzen and Monkey's Fist are keeping curious taste buds happy.

Life of Chai is brewed with chai and nine spices. While many spiced beers taste of nothing but spice, with Life of Chai, the spices merely enhance, rather than overpower, the beer's flavour. The beer itself is sufficiently malty to balance the dryness of the spices.

Gerstemeister Marzen and Monkey's Fist Royal IPA are available only in Big Rock's "Family Jewels" mixed 12-pack, along with Big Rock classics Traditional and Scottish Heavy. Marzen, also known as Oktoberfest, is the perfect style of beer for this time of year. Big Rock's Gerstemeister Marzen is an amber, malty lager with light notes of toast. It has been aging since it was brewed in March, so it's also incredibly smooth. Meanwhile, Monkey's Fist is an IPA, but unlike the piny, resinous IPAs that are ubiquitous in the beer aisles right now, Monkey's Fist is made with British hops, giving the beer a softer fruitiness — it's a rounder, more quaffable IPA.

White Shadow by **Wild Rose Brewery** is a white IPA, a currently popular hybrid of white beer (like Hoegaarden) and IPA. The initial yeast flavours, including notes of cloves, will have you thinking white beer, but the wonderful, fruity hop flavours of IPA emerge an instant later. A subtle note of camomile makes this beer different from other white IPAs. White Shadow is almost sold out, but don't despair, Wild Rose will soon be re-releasing its ever-popular Cherry Porter, which marries the flavour of both sweet and sour cherries with the malty chocolate notes of porter.

**Brewsters Brewing Company** will release almost 20 different beers this year. Thankfully, the annual Blue Monk Barley Wine is back, perhaps the best barley wine brewed in Canada. Blue Monk features a gentle sweetness with notes of toast and coffee balanced against a strong hop bitterness.

**Village Brewery** released its last seasonal, a farmhouse-style saison made with cucumber called the Village Farmer, during the summer. If you are lucky, you may still be able to find a growler of it at your local liquor store. It's a highly refreshing beer with nice yeast notes and a touch of cucumber. In addition to Farmer, Village has plans to release a mixed 12-pack featuring a return of the spiced Village Monk, alongside its regular Blonde, Blacksmith and Wit.

This year has been incredible for Calgary beer fans. But it's not over yet. We still have a couple of months to see what our brewmasters can wrangle up. ▶▶

## BLUE MONK



BOOZE

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