

Ten years of beers

Calgary International BeerFest
celebrates anniversary ▶ DON TSE

ATTENDEES OF THE very first Calgary International BeerFest will remember a small affair on the SAIT campus with a dozen or so breweries and a couple of hundred diehard beer fans. That event, now in its 10th year, has grown to be Alberta's largest beer festival, with more than 700 beers spread over 150,000 square feet of space at the BMO Centre, and thousands of people expected to show up to taste them on May 2 and 3.

For \$19 in advance, or \$25 at the door, beer lovers and learners gain access to the best beers available in the province, Brewmasters Seminars where they can learn the story behind their favourite brews, and Cooking with Beer demonstrations, including famed chef Paul McGreevy of Craft Beer Market. VIP passes, which provide early access before the crowds arrive, are available for an additional fee.

BeerFest is now big enough to require some strategy; there's no way attendees can hit all of the booths and try all of the beers. Here are some highlights to focus your attention on:

• **Big Rock Brewery** — Big Rock is the father of craft beer in Calgary, but it makes much more than the ubiquitous Grasshopper and Traditional. The brewery will release over a dozen new beers this year, some of which will be available for sampling at BeerFest.

• **Last Best Brewing** — A new brewery has begun operations in Calgary using the equipment formerly owned by Brew Brothers Brewing Company. Last Best Brewing beers have just started to trickle into the Calgary market, but BeerFest will be your first opportunity to try all four beers from Calgary's newest brewery.

• **Olds College Brewery** — Just north of Calgary is Western Canada's only professional brewing school. Taste the creations of Canada's youngest and most enthusiastic brewers at the Olds College Brewery booth. And maybe get an autograph — there could be a future brewing superstar in their midst.

• **Fallentimber Meadery** — This local meadery is doing amazing things. Dry, sweet, oaked, fruited and spiced meads are all within its repertoire. If you don't know much about mead, prepare to have your taste-buds blown away by Fallentimber's amazing products.

• **Tool Shed Brewing** — The guys behind Tool Shed epitomize the term "geek." Stop by their booth to try some fantastic beer and to ask about the system they invented that brews coffee using beer instead of water.

• **Federation of Beer** — Speaking of geeks, what do you get when you combine beer geeks and Star Trek geeks? Federation of Beer makes Vulcan Ale and Klingon Warnog, two beers that boldly go where no beer has gone before.

• **Green Flash Brewing** — The hottest market in craft beer today is San Diego. Green Flash was an early mover in that market, having opened its doors in 2002. Since then, it's been brewing award-winning, mouth-pleasing beer that has gained an international reputation.

Whether you're a novice or fanatic, Calgary International BeerFest will whet your appetite for beer (calgarybeerfest.com). ▶

▶ CALGARY INTERNATIONAL BEERFEST runs May 2 and 3 at BMO Centre (Stampede Park).



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