

LIQUORRETAILER

Keeping the Industry Informed

FEATURING

*Family-Owned
Liquor Stores*

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Summer 2017

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF



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Liquor Retailer is published quarterly by:



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Publisher & Editor - Joyce Hayne

Copy Editor - Debbie Minke

Design & Layout - Krysta Furioso

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40026059. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE
CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO CIRCULATION DEPT EMC PUBLICATIONS
19073 63 AVE. SURREY BC V3S 8G7 email: info@emcmarketing.com

The statements, opinions, and points of view expressed in published articles are not necessarily those of ALSA.



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EDITOR'S NOTES

by Joyce Hayne



Separation distances between liquor stores are becoming an increasingly important issue, particularly in cities that have no distance criteria such as Spruce Grove, Sherwood Park and St. Albert. The proliferation of stores in these cities is driving some small establishments to close as they can't compete in a market that is saturated with liquor retailers.

In these markets, it's more important than ever to create a unique competitive advantage to distinguish your store from an average convenience store. Whether it's selecting a specific product line like local spirits or craft beer and having the best selection in the area, or adding a growler bar (read the article in this issue), you need to have a reason for people to shop in your store. Train your staff so you have the friendliest and most knowledgeable employees and customers will go out of their way to visit you.

All provinces are actively looking at distribution models for cannabis, so now is the time to position liquor stores as the best option for distributing recreational marijuana. Liquor stores already have human resource practices and training in place to ensure minors don't get access to the product, and municipalities have also reviewed locations to ensure they are not close to schools. Further to the federal government's mandate, it's also difficult for organized crime to get into a liquor store model.

Talk to policy makers at both the provincial and municipal levels and promote our industry's reputation as responsible retailers of a controlled substance.

Joyce

UPCOMING EVENTS

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www.albertabeerfestivals.com/events-services/calgary-oktoberfest

Sept 29-30 Edmonton Oktoberfest Expo Centre at Northlands
www.albertabeerfestivals.com/events-services/edmonton-oktoberfest

October 13-14 Calgary Rocky Mountain Wine & Food Festival Stampede Park BMO Centre
www.rockymountainwine.com/calgary.html

October 16-17 Alberta Liquor Industry Conference Calgary Airport Marriott
www.albertaliquorconference.ca

ALSA'S MESSAGE

by Ivonne Martinez



I often get asked this question: "Why should my store become a member of the Alberta Liquor Store Association (ALSA)?" My answer is the same every time: It is the membership of the association that dictates the direction we take with government and identifies the industry issues we need to focus on. In other words, we need to have all liquor stores' voices at the table.

ALSA was formed in 1994 to advocate for our members and speak with one voice to government and regulators. One voice. One collective voice that allows government to deal with one stakeholder instead of many. With almost 1,500 liquor stores throughout the province, ALSA plays an important role in communicating with government on behalf of our industry. After all, liquor retailing in Alberta—although a privatized system—is still a regulated system.

In the last few weeks ALSA has consulted with our members to ensure our association can accurately respond to requests from government. We reached out to discuss, amongst other things, change in LTOs driven by agents, employment standards, labour code changes, and minimum case orders.

ALSA represents our industry in multiple councils and committees that assist the Alberta government in collecting feedback from stakeholders and making decisions. ALSA meets with government officials, elected members of the legislature and regulators on a regular basis to communicate the success story that is the Alberta Model.

In short, by joining ALSA, every member receives committed and ongoing representation with government stakeholders. ALSA represents the views of every member and that is why it is important to have every point of view at the table. For less than a \$1 a month every member has access to the association's resources, advice, industry savings, and ALSA's representation at the government level.

To hear more about our member benefits and how to join, contact our member services managers: Howard Riddel at memberservices@alsaweb.ca or Lovedeep Kaler at memberservicesouth@alsaweb.ca or reach out to me at ivonnem@alsaweb.ca. Join today!

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CHALLENGES & TRENDS

WHAT DOES 2017 HOLD FOR ALBERTA?

by Mark Glenning

Following a punishing recession, the signs that Alberta's economy is stabilizing are beginning to appear. However, our economy still presents challenges for liquor retailers, which means that we must consider all opportunities to succeed. What can you do to make the most of emerging retail trends?

Rising Gas Prices, Falling Incomes

One of the biggest challenges faced by retailers is that the income for many Albertans has fallen. The average weekly wage fell from \$1,176.40 to \$1,122.30 from December 2014 to January 2017.

Thankfully, there are tentative signs that the economic freefall seems to be slowing. In ATB Financial's latest outlook, Alberta's GDP is expected to grow by 2.2% this year. Although welcome news, it doesn't make up for 2016's contraction of 2.7%.

The price of gas has a direct effect on the liquor sector's transport and fulfillment costs, and the carbon tax could increase these. Coming into law in July of 2017, Alberta opted to implement a tax of \$20 per tonne of carbon dioxide, rising to \$30 in 2018. The costs incurred by the wholesale and retail trades will need to be passed along to the consumer.

Necessity is the Mother of Inventory

Managing inventory has always been a major part of liquor retailing, but getting granular with the details can yield some highly useful information. It all starts with making sure that an established inventory tracking process is in place. This doesn't just apply to the POS system; each staff member should be aware of the importance of tracking inventory, including missing or damaged stock, and be fully trained in any procedures that are in place.

Devoting time to researching the best-selling SKUs is a smart way of getting the most out of inventory management, as it's not unusual to see 80% of customer demand coming from 20% of your inventory. Ordering the popular items ensures high turnover, and gives you some breathing space to figure out the best way to sell the products that are gathering dust. Staying abreast of the top-selling SKUs can also give you the edge on seasonal purchasing trends. Keeping a close eye on not only what is selling, but also when means that you can anticipate demand or special requests.



An important area of inventory management that is often overlooked is data security. Although your inventory data may be in a format that allows easy analysis and auditing, it counts for nothing if it's lost. Your inventory data is as precious as gold dust—make sure that it's backed up.

Stock Up on Craft

On the positive side, Alberta's beleaguered economy has proven to be the spark for a new wave of entrepreneurship that capitalizes on the popularity of artisanal beverages. The number of craft breweries in Alberta increased more than two-fold from 2014 to 2016, and the trend is set to continue with an estimated 20 breweries opening in Alberta in 2017.

Artisanal distillers are also beginning to enjoy some recognition. Thanks to the provincial government scrapping the red tape surrounding minimum production levels, local distilleries are beginning to punch their weight. For example, the Eau Claire Distillery

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in Turner Valley has won awards across the globe for its Parlour Gin.

In fact, craft beers and spirits are one of the main elements of the Alberta government's plan to help lift the province out of the recession. Its aim is to inject \$20 million per year in grants to supercharge the microbrewed beers and spirits trend, and set it snapping at the heels of BC's artisanal market.

Passing the Taste Test

Providing a wider choice of beverages to customers is necessary in a market where customers like to try new products, but craft beers and spirits can be a little bewildering. With colourful names and detailed tasting notes, it's no wonder that the average consumer may be a little unsure of where to start. Tasting sessions are an ideal way to introduce curious customers to the best products hitting the shelves and to demonstrate the passion and attention to detail that Alberta shows in its local beers and spirits. It also shows that as a retailer, you are aware of consumer demand for local, organically-produced product.

What about Technology?

Tastes may be trending towards more traditional brewing methods, but the way consumers purchase them is as forward-looking as ever. Waving your iPhone over a contactless reader to pay for your morning coffee is now commonplace, and one of the basic rules of online and mobile sales involves making sure that your website is optimized for it. It's what consumers have come to expect, and it's a chance for retailers to be innovative. Kyle Tomlin, Senior Director of Education and Events at the Retail Council of Canada thinks that retailers who feature overall convenience and swiftness as part of their fulfillment models will have the edge. He says, "Whether it's click and collect, click and deliver, ultra-fast premium delivery, reserve in-store, or bricks and mortar check out, retailers who offer the highest level of cross-channel convenience will continue to gain market share."

"Ultra-fast premium delivery" is a challenge for retailers without the resources of a company like Amazon. A sky buzzing with squadrons

of drones delivering packages may still be some time off, but there are alternatives for liquor retailers. The emerging "gig economy", along with transport company Uber and fast food delivery services such as Skip the Dishes may have an answer.

The Gig Economy

Alberta's workforce is increasingly mobile thanks to digital technology. This offers the option of freelance work for many, and for employers, it means a saving on resources for benefits, office space and training. Importantly, it means that the customer demand for super-fast deliveries can be met. Online orders can be fulfilled swiftly by a network of freelance delivery drivers, reflecting the immediacy of making a purchase using an app.

RETAILERS WHO OFFER THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CROSS-CHANNEL CONVENIENCE WILL CONTINUE TO GAIN MARKET SHARE.

Although super-fast delivery services are beginning to fill a gap in the market, a critical density of potential customers is needed in order for the service to be viable, so for now services are confined to a handful of locations. For example, Skip the Dishes delivers in Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, the Edmonton Capital Region, and Calgary CMA, with some limited options in Red Deer. Liquor Depot uses Drizly and small independent stores handle delivery in-house within a small radius of their store. Canada Post and taxis are also used.

This may be viewed as the growing pains of an emerging business model, however. It's reasonable to expect that these services will expand, so now may be the ideal time for retailers to explore the possibilities it offers.

Liquor retailers who keep their eyes on the trends and explore the emerging opportunities will rise to the top. 🍷

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Courtesy of The Beer Shak

TAPPING INTO GROWLERS

A HOT NEW TREND

by Cheryl Rhodes

Have you thought about installing a growler filling station in your liquor store? With a growler bar, you're providing a product on tap that clients want, especially when it's a beer that's only available in kegs. The first time a customer buys and fills up a growler (64 ounces) the cost is about the same price as a 6-pack of beer—between \$5/litre up to \$13/litre for more expensive brews. Refills become cheaper once customers have their own growler and aren't paying recycling fees.

Set Up and Operation

"When a liquor store owner decides to set up a growler bar, there are no minimum requirements based on a town's population, nor are there any government or public health standards to adhere to," explains Chad Newton of Canadian Growler. "All a store owner needs is a power outlet. Setting up a growler bar is as easy as wheeling the growler filling station into the store and plugging it in."

"Make sure you have the room for it," advises Angus McKenzie, owner of The Beer Shak, who set aside 14 feet to accommodate a 116" growler bar with eight kegs. Smaller filling stations measuring 68" and 92" are also available as well as training videos on operating and maintaining the equipment.

A growler filling station uses CO² to prevent air from getting into the bottle, and that helps the beer stay fresher longer—about three or four weeks if unopened. There's a learning curve to operating a growler system due to the technicality of purging and pouring different types of beers. For example, lagers and darker beers foam more and take longer to pour. It takes between one and three minutes to fill a growler, depending on the foam, and if the keg is new and shaken up it can also add to the filling time. McKenzie says most of his staff found it easy to learn the growler bar and can operate it efficiently. To discourage over-eager customers with a DIY flair, The Beer Shak has put up a big sign: NO SELF SERVE.

McKenzie recommends using the smaller 20 or 30 litre kegs over 50 or 60 litre kegs. The product stays fresher and there's less wastage in case it's a slow-selling beer. One time he had a third of a keg of leftover green beer that was brought in for a fundraiser. Instead of throwing it out, he put it on sale for \$1/litre and then it sold out fast.

Maintenance Considerations

Jeff Baker, owner of Petris Liquor, admits the biggest disadvantage to owning a growler bar is that the maintenance has been more time-consuming than he anticipated. The maintenance and cleanliness of the draft lines is critical, and if not done correctly can cause unpleasant flavours. Purging the lines and wiping down counters and taps is part of the daily cleaning ritual, and every two weeks a cleaning solution and sanitizer is circulated through the lines and then rinsed. The faucets

also have to be disassembled and cleaned, and the couplers scrubbed. The process takes about four hours. A thorough cleaning is recommended quarterly, with an acid line cleaner for descaling and detail cleaning of the couplers. Outside companies can be hired to do the quarterly cleaning for around \$120.

Niche Appeal

The Beer Shak in Spruce Grove has a challenging market since there are too many liquor stores per capita, about 17 liquor stores serving around 30,000 residents. Angus and Chantal McKenzie were brainstorming to find a niche to attract more customers in this limited market. Installing a growler bar into their boutique liquor store seemed like a great way to give them an edge. They installed their growler bar over a year ago, and although it was slow at the beginning, once word got out, business picked up at a good rate. With eight kegs on their growler bar, they always have one set aside for cider, a big seller, especially as the weather gets hotter.

"Ciders are always a big hit in the summer," says Baker. As far as growlers go, Newton confirms that cider is the most consumed product on tap.



Lethbridge's Petris Liquor sells a lot of growlers to middle-aged and older customers, since that's their demographic. Baker suggests that liquor stores near university and college campuses should seriously consider setting up a growler bar, to appeal to the younger clientele who are especially interested in exploring new brews and using growlers to do so.

Worth the Investment?

Does the cost of installing a growler bar outweigh the benefits of attracting new customers? Growlers can be filled from any draught tap, and a simple, single tap set-up without CO² purging could cost as little as \$200, but the beer quality would quickly degrade. A multi-tap system with CO² purging



can cost thousands of dollars. A liquor store owner should keep in mind their current level of beer sales and profit margin before deciding to invest in a growler bar.

INSTALLING A GROWLER BAR INTO THEIR BOUTIQUE LIQUOR STORE SEEMED LIKE A GREAT WAY TO GIVE THEM AN EDGE.

Advantages of a growler filling station:

1. A growler bar gives a store a more boutique feel.
2. Patrons prefer customer service over in-and-out purchases.
3. While the growler is being filled, customers can walk around the store and keep shopping.
4. Customers have to bring a clean growler back for a refill, and this is an opportunity to sell growler cleaners to customers who want to ensure they're sanitized well.
5. A fun advantage to having a growler bar is the customer interaction. A staff member must fill the growlers, and this is an excellent opportunity to engage the customer, chat about the products, and find out if the customer would like to see a specific beer on the line up.
6. A growler bar brings people in to buy other products.

Every beer geek should own a growler, and as growlers continue to become popular with beer drinkers, liquor retailers that install growler filling stations have the potential to maximize this lucrative selling opportunity. 🍷

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Beer Notes

ADDING LACTOSE TO BEER

by Jan Zeschky

Milk and sugar? They're ingredients you'd expect to add to tea, not beer.

However, many brewers are doing just that, by supplementing their beer's body and sweetness with lactose, a complex sugar found in milk.

Adding lactose is far from the latest way for craft brewers to push the boundaries of beer. In fact, brewers in Britain have been doing it for at least a century.

There's even evidence before then that milk was mixed with dark beer, such as stout, to create a fortifying lunchtime drink for workers. Thankfully, these likely-curdled cocktails were put to rest when lactose was isolated and added to stout recipes instead.

These "milk" or "cream" stouts were typically low in alcohol—as little as 2% ABV—yet rich and sweet from the lactose and low hop additions. As such, they were even deemed a healthy drink for breastfeeding mothers.

Like many beer styles, milk stout fell out of favour when lager began to dominate global sales, but was then picked up again by the growing legion of 21st-century craft brewers—particularly over the past five years or so.

First came the craft milk stouts, higher in alcohol (typically 4-6% ABV) with more malt roastiness balancing out the sweetness; the overall effect can taste a lot like coffee and cream. It's a hearty, almost decadent beer to take your time over on a cool evening, and despite its lower alcohol level, can pair nicely with fruity desserts. If you don't think you like dark beers, a milk stout will likely convert you.

Of course, it wasn't long before brewers thought about adding lactose to other styles—and so, one of the latest trends in craft beer was born: the milkshake IPA.

Thankfully, it's not a return to those milk/beer cocktails. These opaque orange ales are brewed with bags full of hop varieties such as Citra, Galaxy and Mosaic that are known for their citrus- and tropical-fruit characteristics. The hops are added late in the boil to preserve their aromatic qualities and keep bitterness to a minimum. They're usually also steeped in the beer during fermentation (a process



known as dry-hopping) for even more fruity hop presence.

What really sets milkshake IPAs apart though is the inclusion of lactose, which lends the beer a creamy quality and lingering sweetness. Often, oats are also added to lend a silkiness to the mouthfeel, while some of these beers even contain vanilla to enhance the cream soda-style effect.

Taken all together, the creamy fruitiness can be discombobulating. The traditional American IPA has a reputation for being crisp, dry and bitter, but milkshake IPAs are the direct opposite: rich, full-bodied and sweet. Along with the recent trend for "juicy" IPAs, which also have a reduced bitterness, ample body and full fruitiness, milkshake IPAs have been described as a new entry point into the craft market for drinkers who may not necessarily like the bitter bite that's found so often in craft beer.

So, as per the milk stouts, if you don't think you like IPAs, a milkshake IPA could well convert you.

Beer purists may frown at this perceived

dumbing down of the American IPA, which is now effectively regarded as a classic style. But let's be honest, adding lactose to IPA isn't that far removed from adding it to a stout.

It should also be mentioned that it's not just the brewers of Britain who have a history of modifying their beer with sugar. The Belgians, regarded by many as the original craft brewers due to their disdain for set styles, have long used simple, fermentable sugars in their recipes to lighten body and dry out a beer's finish.

Lactose, again deals in the opposite. This complex sugar can't be fermented by beer yeast, and so any beer in which it resides will retain its richness and sweetness.

As with all beer, balance is vital. Too much lactose and the beer will become thick and cloying. However, when used sparingly, lactose sugar lends a lightly sweet, almost nourishing-tasting boost to these beers.

It's yet another example of craft brewers pushing the envelope; but this time, using an ingredient that has a long-standing tradition in brewing.

WHAT'S *New?*

by Marina Lecian

Wine

Vina Santiago Tempranillo 2015 This Spanish red wine is dark cherry red with purple hues. With an expressive nose of red berries, it is medium bodied with soft fruit character. 750ml \$6.99 whsl +783021

Barokes Bubbly Rosé is a fine rosé with medium texture and flavour. It delivers a fruity mouth sweetness and character with a nose of currants and flowers. Case of 24. 250ml \$3.89 whsl +790292

Barokes Moscato Bubbly This sparkling wine has a crisp, fresh, fruity aroma. Its sweetness is well balanced with crisp acidity and lingering citrus. Case of 24. 250ml \$3.89 whsl +790293

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Peppercorn Gin Alberta grown rye sets the stage for RAW Peppercorn Gin lending an earthy spiciness that complements the rich, deep flavour of the Tellicherry peppercorns. Like an aged wine, fresh Tellicherry's display complex notes of citrus and fruit, medium heat, with a balanced finish. 750ml \$34.88 whsl +789678

Slaughter House Whiskey is a highly sought after whiskey made with corn, rye, wheat and malt barley. This Best in Class gold medal winner is mellowed in "experienced" French oak Cabernet Sauvignon barrels. Matured 9 years, 88 Proof. Allocated 6-pack. 750ml \$54.45 whsl +790394

Straight Edge Bourbon With oak and vanilla on the nose, it is remarkably soft on the palate; moderately sweet, but backed by enough proof to provide a long, honeyed finish. This is a blend of 5, 7, and 8-year Bourbon from Kentucky & Tennessee, tamed with spring water from Alexander Valley. 84 Proof. Allocated 6-pack. 750ml \$61.26 whsl +790393

Beer

Erdinger Sommerweisse Delicately fruity hop flavours with citrus notes make this beer a fresh-hop pleasure. Master brewers went for a select mixture of hops and the art of dry hopping – a process which brings out the flavour and mildly aromatic bitterness, for this new wheat beer. 6x330ml \$12.99 whsl +791439

Canmore Brewing are launching four new beers: **Georgetown Brown Ale** +792566, **Mineside Stout** +792568, **Railway Avenue Rye IPA** +792565, and **Ten Peaks Pale Ale** +792567. 4x473ml \$11.44 whsl

RTD

SunRype Cider is a deliciously crisp and dry cider with the signature SunRype apple taste. It's made from 100% BC apples, is gluten-free and premium-crafted in small batches. 4x473ml \$11.25 whsl +790751

Fresita Blueberry & Raspberry has elegant blueberry and raspberry aromas with subtle notes of citrus. In the mouth, it has a fresh, young and smooth flavour with a light, delicate sweetness, emphasized by the effervescence of its fine, persistent bubbles. 6x750ml \$12.99 whsl +788628

Other

Mobile Wine Merchandiser has a durable steel tube construction, which allows you to maximize merchandising capabilities in a small amount of space. www.actionretailoutfitters.ca

Feature Wine Tasting Station This mobile fixture features a tabletop ideal for sampling products in high impact areas. Angled wire shelves support additional stock while providing an eye-catching display opportunity. www.actionretailoutfitters.ca

The Bank of Canada unveiled a commemorative \$10 bank note to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation. The Canada **150 bank note** celebrates Confederation with a unique design depicting our history, our culture and our land. This commemorative note has some new security features and others that are the same as the current polymer series notes. These features make the note easy to check and difficult to counterfeit. Retailers should contact their equipment supplier or manufacturer with any questions about machine compatibility.

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THE RENAISSANCE OF MEAD

REDISCOVER THIS FAST-GROWING CATEGORY

by Nathan Ryan

If you've read *Game of Thrones* or *Harry Potter* or watched *Robin Hood*, you've probably heard of mead. Although it receives many references in literature and medieval entertainment, the description of what mead can be is quite vague, except for the pigeonholed view of it being suited best in antiquity. Mead certainly does have an extensive history and an impressive spread throughout many cultures in that history. Not without coincidence, between 400 and 500 years ago, mead began to fade away. As other sugar sources were developed and became more accessible, the cost of honey became unappealing as an ingredient in the production of alcohol.

Today, mead is back on the rise. The price of honey is no longer a concern when there are anything from \$10 - \$300 bottles of wine on retail shelves. Like in the world of craft beer and spirits, mead makers are excited to show people the wide range of possibilities within their craft.



Courtesy of Fallentimber Meadery.

Simply put, mead is any alcoholic beverage made primarily from the fermentation of honey. More vividly expressed by gotmead.com, (likely the Internet's most dedicated resource to mead); "Mead can be as sweet as your first kiss, and as dry as an economics lecture. It can be still or sparkling, have fruit, spices, and even vegetables in it to create a beverage that has more varieties than leaves on a tree." Like wine or beer, mead cannot be judged on a single product, as it is more diverse than those two categories put together. Mead should be explored as its own category to find which variety and/or style is best suited to each individual taste.

There is beginning to be more mead in the market to discover. A significant number of new mead-focused companies have emerged in the past 7-10 years with 496 meaderies in the US, and 39 now operating in Canada, with 5 of those in Alberta. That is up from just about 40 in all of North America in 2008. "Mead represents the fastest growing segment of the alcohol industry [in the US]," according to Michael Fairbrother, president of the American Mead Makers Association.

As climate and geography has established dominant wine regions in the world, Alberta is in a unique position when it comes to mead. Our province is one of the most honey-dense regions in the entire world, producing 50% of Canada's honey, in a country that ranks in the top 10 honey producers in the world. The honey here is not just plentiful—it is world famous—and it seems fitting that we follow the unique opportunities that come along with it. Alberta currently has 5 operating meaderies (with others in planning stages) and over 25 unique meads are being produced and offered in the province. These are crafted with top quality honey from all over Alberta.

Mead producers in Alberta hope to carve out their own well-defined home in retail stores in the coming years. Currently, the category of mead does not often have its own space on store shelves. This is understandable, as it can be hard to categorize such a wide spread of product styles. Trend spotting retailers have seen great success with small displays of mead in the cooler, between beer and cider, and out on the floor with mead-specific space amongst Canadian wines.

In a climate where grape production is not possible and fruit production is limited, mead can offer taste of the land and terroir like wine—as well as greatly complimenting the Albertan craft beers and spirits our liquor market is starting to strongly support and seek out. ■

Nathan Ryan is co-chair of Alberta Estate Winery & Meadery Association.

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- 778175 - bRum - Sugar Beet Rum - \$43.02
- 778374 - Saskatoon Vodka - \$43.02

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Family-Owned Liquor Stores

They may be outnumbered by the chains, but some of the most memorable liquor stores in Alberta are the family-run, mom and pop shops.

by Mel Priestley

Olympia Liquor Creekside, Calgary

Most family-run establishments have just a single storefront, but not always: the Olympia Liquor chain proves that a multi-store business can also be family-run.

"We had no plans of starting a chain or anything," says Sukh Boparai, president of Olympia Liquor. "But it just happened to be a working formula for us, so we said, 'Why not open more stores?'"

Boparai's family opened their first store in December 1993. At the time they had a few outside partners in addition to some family members. When that partnership dissolved in 1997, Boparai and his family founded the Olympia Liquor brand. They currently own 12 liquor stores in Calgary, including the Creekside location of Olympia Liquor, which Boparai describes as their flagship location. They aren't stopping there, either. The family has plans to expand to 40 stores in the next five years.

"Our number one priority is the honest price," Boparai describes. "If we get a deal, we pass it on to consumers. And we have consistent marketing. People know us; people know our brand; people know what they're going to get from Olympia—and they're coming back."

The biggest advantage of being a family-run operation is reliable staff, according to Boparai. Being family-run also allows them to be in full control of all decisions made and offer great prices as well as customer service and selection.

Shopping at a family-run store is different than shopping at a big chain store. The product selection, ambiance, price and people set them apart from the rest. They are often the stores that consumers remember the most—and the ones that people often make a point of returning to.



Sukh Boparai, Olympia Liquor Creekside

Spirits West, Bragg Creek

Fred Konopaki, owner of Spirits West in Bragg Creek, echoes these sentiments. "I have a real tough time with the commodification of liquor," he shares. "I come from 25 years in the restaurant business, so for me, ambiance is incredibly important—but nowhere near as important as something like service. For me, most liquor stores are just homogenous. Everything's the same; they all look the same. The only thing that can set you apart is your service and your look, your experience."

To that end, after Konopaki purchased Spirits West in January 2014, he transformed the store into a veritable treasure trove of craft liquor and interesting antiques. Between the carefully curated selection of products, you'll also see everything from antique champagne crates and vintage photos of Bragg Creek, to taxidermy and even a pinball machine.

"It keeps people engaged," Konopaki explains. "It keeps people in the store—you know the longer you can keep people in the store, the better it is. We're in a pretty touristy location so people come in to our store just to look. We've created an impression and whether they buy or not, it's really not important as long as you get that first impression going."

Part of the reason for this is their selection—when you shop at a family-run store, you'll often find interesting and unique products that aren't commonly found elsewhere.



Adam Koziak, Chateau Louis Liquor Store



Fred Konopaki, Spirits West

Chateau Louis Liquor Store, Edmonton

Adam Koziak, manager of Chateau Louis Liquor Store in Edmonton, says a unique selection of products is the driving force behind his family's store. From day one, when the store opened after the privatization of Alberta's liquor industry in 1994, Chateau Louis has focused on being Edmonton's premiere destination for scotch, cognac and all other types of spirits. After Koziak took over managing the store five years ago, he continued to build upon their portfolio of unique products.

"I don't have to deal with a head office like some of these big chains—I have the ability to direct the store in whichever way I want," Koziak explains. "I just have to justify to the family and myself if I'm bringing in certain things, why I'm bringing them in, and why I'm not bringing other things in."

Their staff also sets Chateau Louis apart from other stores, according to Koziak. Having knowledgeable, friendly staff allows them to build engagement with the community, whether through formal tastings or just spending extra time helping each customer track down exactly what they need.

"I try to treat my staff with a lot of respect and I've had a lot of staff stay around for quite a long time," Koziak says. "I want to educate myself and I want our staff to help educate our consumers as to what they're buying." ■



INTERNATIONAL BEER STYLES

YEARS OF BREWING TRADITION YIELD DELICIOUS IMPORTS

by Jan Zeschky

The exploratory beer drinker has so many local options in the stores these days that it's easy to overlook the dozens of delicious imported brews that are still regularly shipped to Alberta from Europe.

It's also easy for the modern craft beer drinker to forget the debt of gratitude he or she should pay to traditional brewing nations such as Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. The styles of beer brewed in those countries—often for centuries—laid the foundation for most of the craft beer styles we see today.

IPA and Other English Ales

This is probably most evident in the case of India Pale Ale (IPA), the flagship style of North America's craft beer revolution. Yet, the style is very much English. IPA first appeared around the turn of the 19th century, designed as a highly-hopped, higher-alcohol pale ale to survive the long sea journey from England to India, where colonists were thirsty for ale.

Thanks to IPA's late-1980's reinvention in North America, the traditional English style is receiving more attention and is still exported across the world. It's interesting to try a traditional IPA alongside its modern, aggressively-hopped descendant: the English style has more malt character, with caramel and toast aspects, while the hop profile is more floral and spicy. It's a delicious alternative.

There's a variety of other English ales in the Alberta Market, from classic, easy-to-drink, malt-forward pub bitters to dark-brown porters. This latter style is all about the grain as well, and features roasted malts that can impart chocolate and coffee flavours. Porter is the forefather of stout (originally called "stout porter") but is lighter in body and less roasty.

Golden ale is a more modern British style that's making more of an appearance on these shores. Designed to compete with the popularity of lagers, they are more hop-forward in character—often with floral, herbal or citrus notes—and fall somewhere between North American blonde ales and pale ales. Again, the use of more traditional English hops can make them quite distinctive.

Pilsners

For the country that's had the most far-reaching impact on brewing, look no further than Germany. The pilsner may have been invented in the Czech Republic (then Bohemia), but it was German immigrants who took the style to the world along with their exacting brewing traditions. Sadly, the quality of the style declined due to the effects of Prohibition, World Wars and the consolidation of breweries, thus today's globally-marketed pilsners are pale shadows of their ancestors.

It's worthwhile trying some imported German pilsner to see what it should really taste like: dry and quite bitter, with a distinct spicy or herbal hop note. There are few styles more refreshing. If you want to go right back to the source, several Czech pilsners are imported to



Alberta as well. These are softer and slightly maltier yet retain a distinctive spicy hop character.

Bocks and other German Styles

Importers are realizing that there's much more to German beer than pilsner. On the heftier side, there's the family of bocks. The

GOLDEN ALE IS A MODERN BRITISH STYLE THAT'S MAKING MORE OF AN APPEARANCE ON THESE SHORES.

first bocks were actually brewed by monks to sustain them during Lent. When you taste the rich, bready, fruity flavours of a darker bock, you can almost see why; though you might wonder how those monks did anything but sleep during days of drinking 6-7% ABV beer. Doppelbocks are stronger and richer still, a winter favourite in Germany, while maibocks were traditionally brewed to celebrate the arrival of spring. They're pale, grainy and toasty, sometimes with a herbal and spicy hop profile.

Hefeweizen is deservedly enjoying more popularity outside of its native Bavaria. It's a wonderfully refreshing beer style, highly carbonated, cloudy and with yeast-derived aromas and flavours of fruit (banana, orange, lemon) and spice (clove, white pepper). There are variants, including the darker, breadier dunkelweizen and the clear, arguably even more refreshing kristallweizen.

These German styles haven't changed too much over the decades and centuries, thanks in part to the federal Reinheitsgebot, the purity law that allows only water, grain, hops and yeast as the ingredients for beer. Comparatively, neighbouring Belgium is the Wild West of European brewing, where additional fruit, herbs, spices and sugars are regularly added to recipes.

Belgian Ales and Saison

Happily, a good range of Belgian ales are imported into Alberta, from light, fragrant witbiers to dark, powerful Trappist brews. Almost all Belgian styles make great play of their distinctive yeasts, which can create aromas and flavours of citrus and stone fruit, peppery and earthy spice, and in more extreme cases, surprisingly pleasant farmyard aromas.

Saison, another hugely refreshing style, is a great place to start exploring Belgian beer. Generally, saisons are pale, highly carbonated (pour carefully!) and very dry, with flavours of citrus fruit and pepper being common. It's very versatile for food pairing and will match almost anything savoury.



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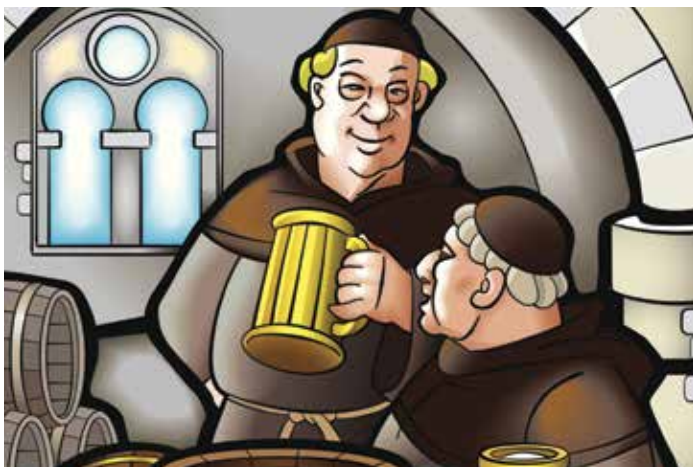
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Belgian Trappist Brews

The Trappist beers are probably the most famous of Belgian ales. "Trappist" is a special appellation that decrees that the beer must be made in a monastery by monks and not for profit. There are currently only 12 Trappist breweries in the world; half are in Belgium. While some make unique products, Trappist breweries have given rise to three distinct styles: dubbel, tripel and quadrupel.

Dubbels generally have caramel malt and dried fruit flavours, along with a distinct spiciness, and can hit up to 7.5% ABV; tripels, by contrast, are pale, citrusy, grainy-sweet, spicy and floral and can pack a punch at up to 9.5% ABV; quadrupels tip the scale at up to 12% ABV, and are rich, dark, complex ales full of bready and toffee malt and dark-fruit flavours such as raisin, plum, cherry and figs. You'll want to experiment pairing these mighty ales with a variety of cheeses.

More Belgian Styles

Although more rarely exported, some classic examples of Belgian sour styles are beginning to appear in Alberta as well. These beers are soured by bacteria that are deliberately allowed to infect the beer during fermentation. The resulting tartness can be pronounced, but is most often balanced by sweet malt, bittering hops or yeast character.

Sour styles to look out for are wine-like Flanders red ales, malty "oud bruin" brown ales and gueuze, a complex and effervescent blend of the wild-fermented wheat ales known as lambics. Lambic and gueuze are also commonly fermented with fruit, giving rise to delicious specialties such as kriel (cherries) and framboise (raspberries).

The Belgian brewing tradition has been a huge inspiration on the modern craft beer industry in terms of its diversity, ingenuity and desire to experiment. Belgians really were the first craft brewers, so it's more than worthwhile taking the time to explore their original craft beers. ■

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NAMES IN THE NEWS

by Marina Lecian

New ALSA Members

ALSA welcomes the following new members:

Spirits West, Bragg Creek

Cyrion's Liquor, Red Deer

Rayon's Liquor Ltd., Turner Valley

Allan's Wine & Spirits, Edmonton

The Dunvegan Inn & Suites, Fairview

Awards

2017 Canadian Brewing Awards

Brewery of the Year - **Mt Begbie Brewing Company**

Beer of the Year - **Indie Ale House, Spadina Monkey**

Canadian International Beer Awards

(formerly known as the Calgary International Beerfest Awards)

Best of Alberta:

Gold - **Willie the Wit**, Grain Bin Brewing Company

Silver - **Hazy Horizon Hefeweizen**, Caravel Craft Brewery Inc.

Bronze - **Fahr Away**, Brauerei Fahr

Other Alberta award winners include:

Ribstone Creek, Silver - **Ribstone Creek Lager**

Last Best Brewing & Distilling, Gold - **Phil-sner**

Czech Pilsner Big Rock Brewery, Bronze - **Pilsner**

Banff Ave Brewing, Silver - **Lower Bankhead Black Pilsner**

Alley Kat Brewing Company, Gold - **Scona Gold Kolsch**

Brewsters Brewing Company, Gold - **Hammerhead Red Ale**

Common Crown Brewing Company, Bronze - **The Eddie ESB**

Village Brewery, Gold - **Village Blacksmith**

Blindman Brewing, Silver - **Blindman Brewing Session Ale**

Couleer Brew Company, Bronze - **Range Road Cream Ale**

Independent Distillers won Gold for Best of the Rest of the World with **NZ Pure Lager**.

Metro People's Choice Awards went to:

Gold - **Tool Shed Brewing Company**

Silver - **Village Brewery**

Bronze - **Fernie Brewing Company**

Edmonton Craft Beer Festival

Metro People's Choice Awards went to:

Gold - **Alley Kat Brewing Company**

Silver - **Mad Jack Premium Apple Lager**

Bronze - **Steamwhistle Brewing Company**

2017 San Francisco World Spirit Competition

Highlights from Best of Class winners include:

Best Gin - **Tarquin's The Sea Dog Navy Strength Gin**, Southwestern Distillery Limited

Best Vodka - **Vodka Vodka**, Edgewater Spirits LLC

Best Tequila - **Nosotros Blanco Tequila**, Nosotros Life and Spirits LLC

Best Over-Proof Rum - **Barrell Batch 001 Cask Strength Rum**, Barrell Craft Spirits

Best Other Whisky - **Paul John Bold Indian Single Malt**, Domaine Select Wine & Spirits

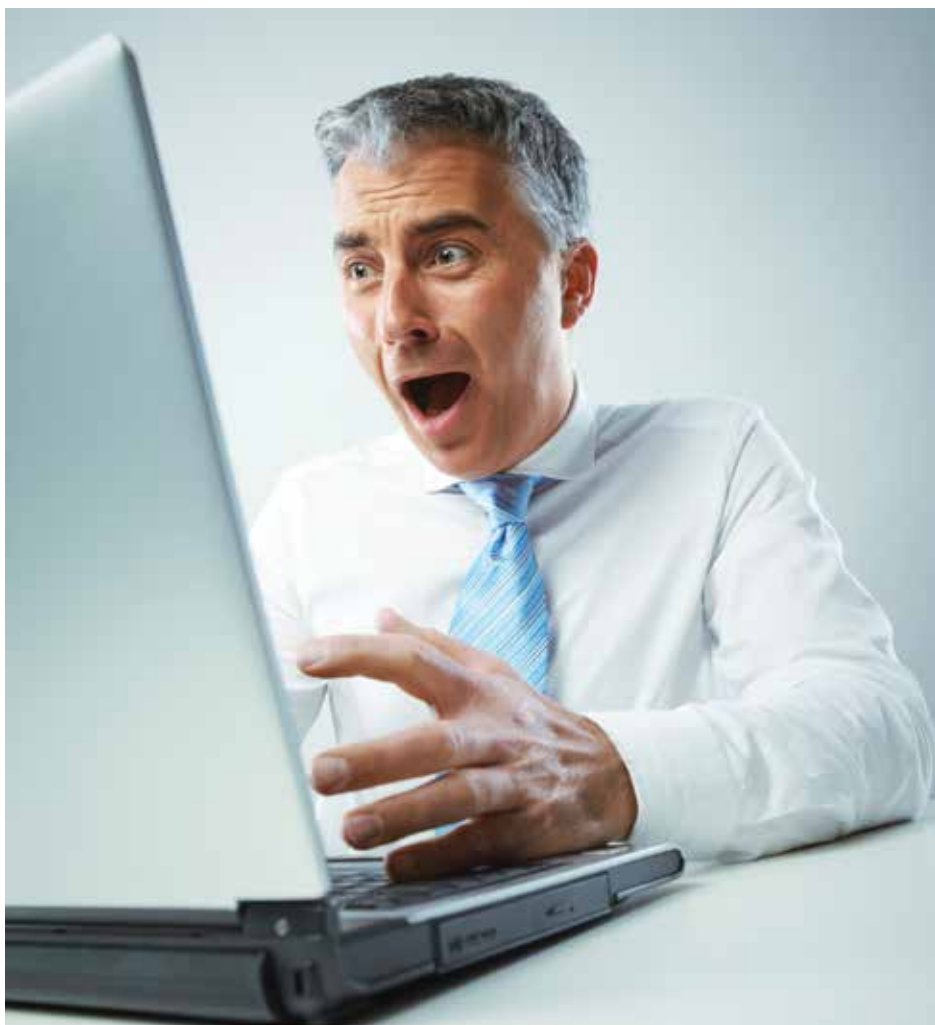
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) and **Gordon Food Service Canada Ltd.** have been selected as two of Alberta's Top 70 Employers 2017.

Anniversaries

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the **Calgary International Beer Festival** in which festival goers were taken around the world with over 700 different types of beer from every corner of the globe. New this year was the addition of the Social Media Lounge, which gave patrons the ability to connect with each other using the hashtag #YYCBeerfest. It also allowed event organizers and participants to communicate with their audience directly by giving everyone a look behind the scenes, and answer questions during key moments of the festival.

Happy 150th Anniversary **Canada!**





WHEN GOOD BUZZ GOES BAD ONLINE

USE THE SWARM TECHNIQUE

by Tod Maffin

At some point, it's going to happen. You're going to wake up and find your store trending on Twitter. And not in a good way.

There is a right way and a wrong way to respond to negative comments you receive in social media. At my digital marketing agency, engageQ, we've perfected the right way.

The model we've developed is SWARM, and here are the steps.

S – Speak Like a Human

Organizations have a bad habit of communicating with people as if they were, well, organizations. They speak in grand tones of “we” and “us”—trying very hard to avoid admitting that an actual human being (“I” and “me”) wrote the text. Words like “we” and “us” serve only to distance yourself from your correspondent and, in a crisis situation, this is the last thing you want to do. Rather, you want people to identify with you and feel like you're both “in it together”.

Speaking like a human is all about tone. Remember, these are social networks so your tone should be social in nature.

W – Win/Win

People will complain on your store's social media channels because they want something to change—better quality service on their next visit, a cheaper price, and so on. One way to help knock down an angry swarm is to give them something more than just a response.

So give them a “win”.

You don't need to overthink this. Wins can be simple—a promise to check back with them to see if something they were complaining about has improved.

A – Avoid a Public Fight

Perhaps the biggest mistake I see organizations make online is they engage in a conversation about an issue in the public channel—whether that's a blog, Facebook Page, Twitter account, or somewhere else.

Once you identify an issue and reach out to the combatant (for lack of a better term), you should take the issue "offline".

There are lots of ways to do this, but the simplest is to ask the person to email you the details privately.

If the issue shows up on Twitter, ask them to follow your brand account so you can direct message them your email address, then continue the conversation there.

If the issue shows up on Facebook, ask them to send you a private message to your brand page, then continue the conversation there.

If the issue shows up on your blog, ask them

to send you an email, then continue the conversation there.

R – Right the Wrongs

You may find that in the heat of the moment, people exaggerate the issue. Suddenly, a simple dispute over what they were charged becomes, in their mind, a criminal action where they were billed thousands of dollars.

It's important that you correct the record. Remember, Google has an elephant's memory. If someone posted that your store has no craft spirits, and that's simply not true, you need to have the accurate information attached to this post. Correcting that right on that Facebook page as a comment is critical, because if you don't, everyone else who reads it will assume it's true.

M – Make Friends

The final, and perhaps most important, part of the SWARM Methodology is to turn your combatants into advocates.

Once the issue is resolved, ask if you can follow up in a few months to see if things have improved. You can invite them to be part of a customer advisory board, or give them a coupon code to try a different item.

It's simple to do—you don't need special mailing list software or web-based bulletin boards. Just create a folder in your email program for each issue and store your new friends' emails there! ■

You can read an expanded version of this article, with real-world case studies, at <http://www.todmaffin.com/swarm>.

Tod Maffin is president of engageQ digital.

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USING YOUR DATA

MAKE INSIGHTFUL DECISIONS

by Tim Shein

"The goal is to turn data into information, and information into insight."

Carly Fiorina, former CEO of HP

Your point-of-sale (POS) system is collecting data every day, but what are you doing with that information? Some people think that collecting and analyzing big data is reserved for large corporations that can afford marketing departments and analysts, however, small businesses can benefit just as much.

The data you collect can be used to do a great deal of significant, proactive and impactful actions for your business' future survival. You can improve your cash flow, increase profits, manage your front end better with staffing decisions, focus on important metrics to improve operations, and increase focused marketing. These are just a few of the significant key performance indicators for your business to grow.

A Case Study

Let's meet Lee, one of your loyal and regular customers! You and your staff know him by first name. You recognize his needs and have a sense of what he is looking for by engaging and interacting with him.

Lee has been frequenting your store for years, and by listening to his requests and watching his purchases and interactions, you bring in his favourite products, knowing he will buy from you because you listened. Lee feels that he is relevant to your business. However, Lee has a busy lifestyle, so how do you make his life easier and more convenient while making your business more relevant to him? Letting him know when you have a new scotch for him to try, or a special promotion on one of his favourite products will make him even more loyal.

Using Point-of-Sale-Records

Analyze the answers to these questions: How big is your average sale? (You may be missing opportunities for upselling.) What products are moving slower than others? Why? (You can look for creative ways to sell slow-moving inventory and ensure you don't buy more of those products.) When are your busy times during the day or week? What times of the week are slower? (You can improve your cash flow by managing the hours the store is staffed during consistently slow periods and improve customer service by adding staff during peak times.)

Managing Inventory

Having control over the tracking of your inventory allows you to make informed and intelligent decisions on just-in-time inventory or buffer stock. Do you know how long the supply chain takes to fulfill your stock? Tracking your inventory allows you to better control it.

Promoting Loyalty

Let's look at Lee again. Anticipating Lee's purchases and the timing of his needs will make him feel special, relevant, engaged, and invested in your business. A loyalty program will not only give you great information, it will reward your loyal customers.

Analyzing Social Media and your Website

How can you survive a day without hearing about Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, or Instagram? Social media and your website are critical to your brand and the future of your business. Analytics show the demographics of your audience so you can market to more people within a particular demographic.

Examine what people are saying about you or your establishment and be sure to reply to both positive and negative reviews. Follow your customers, like their comments to show them you're paying attention to them, and make note of concerns to improve your service and selection.



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Developing Marketing Strategies

Data reports bring you information allowing you to gain insight to deliver timely and powerful marketing messages. As you're finding out more about your customers, divide your database into the types of products each customer likes and the types of events that interest them, so that when a new product comes in you can instantly let your customers know about it. For example, those customers that enjoy wine tasting events can be delivered a personalized invitation to a special vintner's event. You can create a feeling of adventure, curiosity and a sense of discovery!

HAVING CONTROL OVER THE TRACKING OF YOUR INVENTORY ALLOWS YOU TO MAKE INFORMED AND INTELLIGENT DECISIONS.

Be sure all of your marketing materials, including e-news flyers, reflect your brand and corporate identity.

Improving your Bottom Line

When you capture and analyze your data you can increase sales, manage your team, control expenses, manage prices, service existing customers and attract new customers. Talk to your service provider and find out the best way to capture the relevant data to achieve your goals. ■

Tim Shein is Principal, King Business Services Corp. Helping customers with peace of mind for their POS needs and preparing them for their future growth!

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142,431	→	Beer*	-13.68
109,904	→	Wine	-0.17
61,546	→	Coolers	-7.67
16,489	→	Cider	-6.17
2,144	→	Gin	9.04
12,351	→	Rum	5.45
21,546	→	Vodka	2.85
16,853	→	Whisky	4.43

Source: Connect Logistics

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WINE REPORT

by William Bincoletto

Discovering Bubbles!

Bubbles are always a great way to start dinner, an afternoon, or simply great conversation. However, as we all know, there is a grand spectrum of quality, from the lowest grade to the finest. Most elegant and delicate bubbles will lift your spirits and at times allow you to remember that moment forever.

An Accident Creates a New Product

First we need to understand the different ways bubbles are created. As with other things in life, it might be through mistakes that we realize that the end product is better than the original design. Bubbles in wine, which we love today, were originally considered a fault in early winemaking.

Wine, as we know it, goes through an alcoholic fermentation (the action of yeast on sugar) thus creating alcohol and CO² with other smaller by-products. This CO² (our bubbles) needs a natural escape in order to create a still wine or the end product will contain some effervescence.

Climatic conditions are a prime factor for completing fermentation. In warmer countries or regions, it is rather easy for the alcoholic fermentation to complete itself, but in cooler or colder climates, this can be a major concern.

Let's take the champagne region as an example. Before the time of Dom Perignon, grapes were harvested, crushed and pressed, in matter of speaking, and fermentation began. However, with the cold weather quickly approaching and without natural heating options available, some yeasts that were still in barrels would simply become inactive (fall asleep), and fermentation would stop until spring when the warmth outside would reactivate the remaining yeasts. These in turn would start to eat the remaining sugars, thereby creating alcohol and our CO². The final product would be effervescent and when tasted, the monks would be totally disappointed and usually dump this "low grade wine". One of the first monks who saw the potential of this "original" product was Dom Perignon, and today, because of his efforts and the efforts of

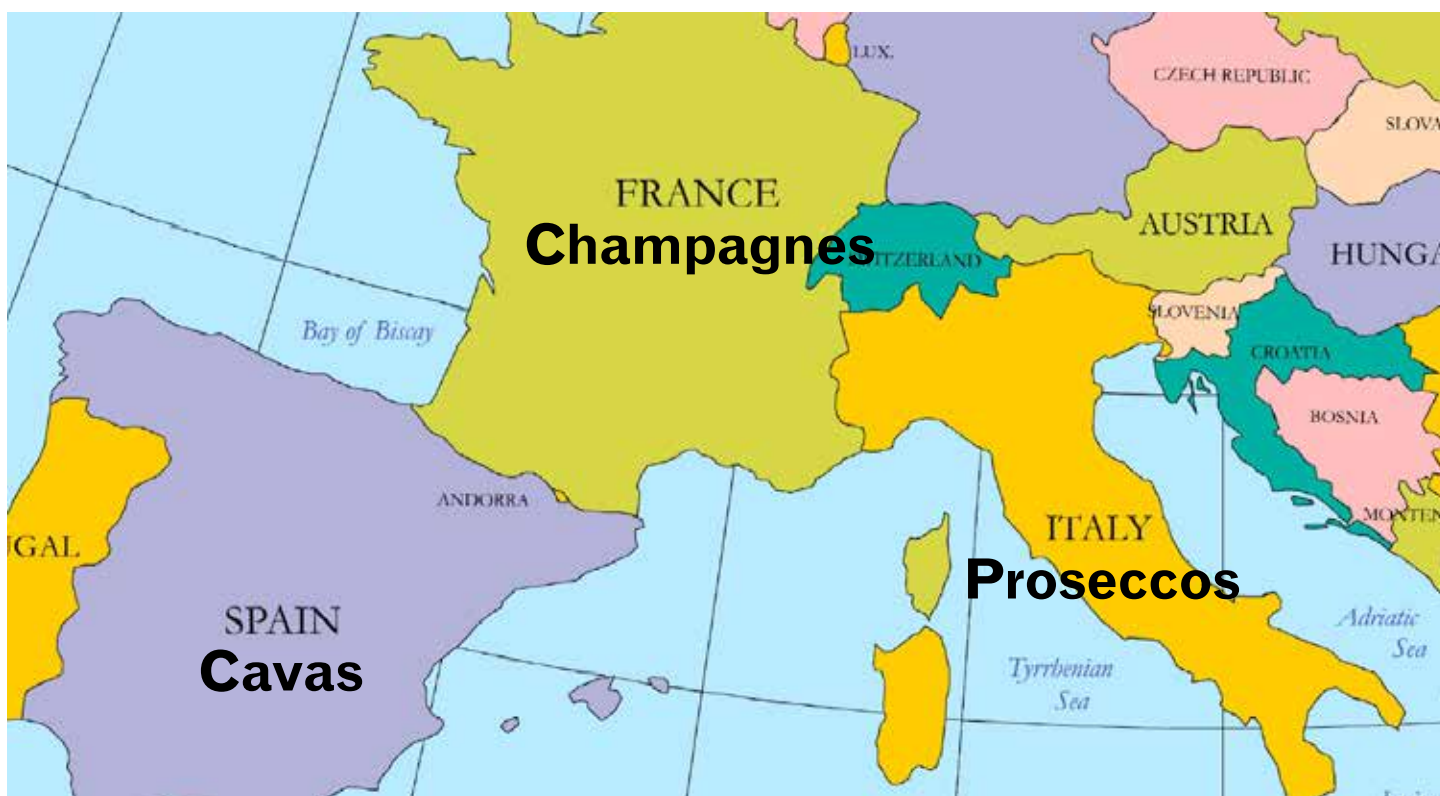
others, Champagne is regarded as the most prestigious example of the sparkling category.

While wine geeks, sommeliers, Master Sommeliers, and Masters of Wines all know about the official seven methods recognized by the sparkling industry (Traditional, Transfer, Ancestral, Dioise or Asti Spumante, Charmat or Closed Tank, Continuous or Russian, and Carbonation) the two most recognized are the Traditional and the Charmat. These create familiar sparklers such as Spanish Cavas, Italian Proseccos, and of course French Champagnes.

Traditional Method

The most refined, elaborate, and prestigious method is known as Méthode Traditionnelle or Traditional Method (previously known as Méthode Champenoise).

This method is designated by the term "Cava" in Spain, by "Metodo Classico" in Italy, "Cap Classique" in South Africa, and of course "Champagne" in France.



To begin, you need to make the base wines. At this point local regulations police all the type of grapes permitted, harvesting techniques, and pressing methods. The different press fractions (the different grapes allowed and the different plots used) are individually separated as a function of quality.

Once alcoholic fermentation (either in stainless steel tanks, in wood barrels or both) is completed, then “assemblage” takes place. This is a very complicated process in which the cellar master will create the “house style” of his sparkling wine(s). This blending process can be a combination of over 100 separate batches consisting of different grapes and plots.

Transforming Base Wines into Bubbles

The magic now enters the stage: transforming the still base wines into beautiful, delicious bubbles. This complete transformation occurs “in this bottle” (a term specific to the Traditional Method), meaning that the entire process is done in the same bottle, from “tirage”, “prise de mousse”, “sur lattes”, “remuage”, “degorgement” and finally “dosage”, a process that can last several years before the finished product reaches our shelves.

To choose only some examples would be an offence to all those wondrous examples from around the globe that abound our shelves in Alberta. Just make sure you see the term “Méthode Traditionelle”. I am always excited to see new versions arriving in Alberta, from traditional regions such as California and Canada to new countries such as Luxembourg and hopefully in the near future, England.

Charmat Method

The other very popular method is the Charmat or Closed Tank Method. The basic difference is that this process replaces the bottle with a pressure-resistant steel tank. This tank is—in effect—one gigantic bottle containing several thousand litres of wine, creating bubbles much faster and cheaper.

But let’s be honest. Even as a professional sommelier with over 40 years of experience, I cannot always afford to buy French Champagne, so this category easily fills a good section of my ever-expanding wine cellar. And as a Venetian, you can certainly understand my love for Prosecco, which has now easily become Italy’s most favourite sparkler.

One thing to always keep in mind: Choose wisely and then enjoy!

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SPIRIT *Spotlight*

by Margaux Burgess

Gin Styles & Cocktails

Has there ever been a better time to be a gin drinker? A gin renaissance has unfolded over the past few years and in Alberta we are truly reaping the benefits. Thanks to our privatized market with no barriers to entry, we have access to many examples of this unique and distinctive spirit. On liquorconnect.com there are currently 132 types of gin available – including over a dozen homegrown options distilled in Alberta. Taking advantage of this growth and introducing your customers to new gins is an excellent way to add value to your customer experience.

A Brief History

Gin was first crafted in the Netherlands, and its name is derived from the Dutch word *jenever*, meaning juniper, which is this spirit's distinguishing ingredient and flavour. Gin's success in England started with the Thirty Years' War in 1618, when soldiers were given a measure of "Dutch Courage" to see them through the campaign, and it became a popular choice in the country after the succession of William of Orange to the throne in 1689. However, it was shortly to become the scourge of London, since by 1720, 12 million litres were distilled in a city of 600,000 people. That's more than half a litre per week for every man, woman and child! It was famously immortalized in William Hogarth's "Gin Lane" print of 1751. Fortunately, consumption was curbed after the Gin Act of the same year, and today gin is an entirely different story, with fantastic examples produced in every corner of the globe.

Styles of Gin

In the simplest sense, gin is nothing more than flavoured vodka. Technically, gin is defined as an alcoholic beverage of at least 40% abv that possesses the signature flavour of juniper berries. While the juniper character predominates, there is a wide range of additional botanicals and flavourings used to add complexity to the product – such as coriander, citrus peel, orris root, angelica, licorice and dozens more. The lowest quality is known as gin or compound gin, where flavours are simply added to the neutral spirit. If the base spirit is redistilled with botanicals and juniper, then it is known as a distilled gin. London Dry is an example of a distilled gin that utilizes natural plant and botanical ingredients

with no sweeteners or colourants. The base spirit can come from a range of sources; barley, corn, potato, grapes and molasses are all commonly used.

These relatively loose parameters mean that there is quite a lot of room for experimentation, and the gin category is one of the most diverse of all spirits. We are fortunate to have access to many excellent gins distilled right here in Alberta in addition to gins from across the country and around the world.

There are classic London dry styles, homegrown from local Alberta grain and redistilled with a range of sometimes secret botanicals. Exotic spices, floral notes and local fruit and botanicals, such as rosehip and Saskatoon berries, complement gin's classic juniper characteristics. The crisp and precise flavour profile of a London dry gin helps it to work well in cocktails and makes for an ideal base spirit. While it is not always ideal to use the sweeter gins in more delicate cocktails, London dry styles do not overpower the complexity of many cocktail ingredients.

Sweeter style gins, which are by no means sweet like port or sweet vermouth, have a weight and richness that make them ideal for aperitifs or a simple and refreshing cocktail. Elderflower is often infused into these sweeter gins.

A rapidly growing style that we are now seeing frequently is barrel-aged gin. After the gin is made, it is placed in charred oak barrels—often American ex-bourbon barrels—to add richness, roundness and finesse. The oak flavours are not obvious or dominant, but rather distinctive with baking spice characteristics. There are a number of these gins produced by distilleries across the province. They add extra complexity and intensity to cocktails like negronis.

Another showcase for the vast variety of gin styles is the very unique apple cider gin made from water recovered from the production of iced apple cider. This apple water gives the product an unusually delicate fruitiness with white spruce and lichen. There is a lot of room for experimentation with this gin, and it would add extra complexity to a number of cocktails!

Gin is one of the most classic spirits, and most customers will have a specific idea of what they are looking for. Here is a great opportunity to introduce them to the breadth of styles now available and guide them to find a new favourite alternative while still staying true to the spirit of gin!

COCKTAIL IDEAS



Wishbone's Beautiful British Columbia

Find this new classic at Wishbone restaurant in Edmonton or recreate it yourself at home. While this utilizes Okanagan Valley sparkling wine, any dry bubbly would work with the delicate flavours of this classic London dry style gin made for cocktails!

1.5 oz Victoria Gin
.75 oz Salt Spring Island Lavender Syrup
.5 Fresh Lime Juice
3oz Haywire's "The Bub"
Ice & Lime Wheel Garnish



Fiore Negroni

Vivo Ristorante Downtown in Edmonton has a bright and light negroni with local Alberta gin distilled from wild seaberry.

1 oz Strathcona Gin
3/4 oz Aperol
3/4 oz Lillet
Squeeze from 1/4 grapefruit

Stir all ingredients in a shaker with ice. Strain into rocks glass with large ice cube. Garnish with grapefruit twist (grapefruit peel rose optional).

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