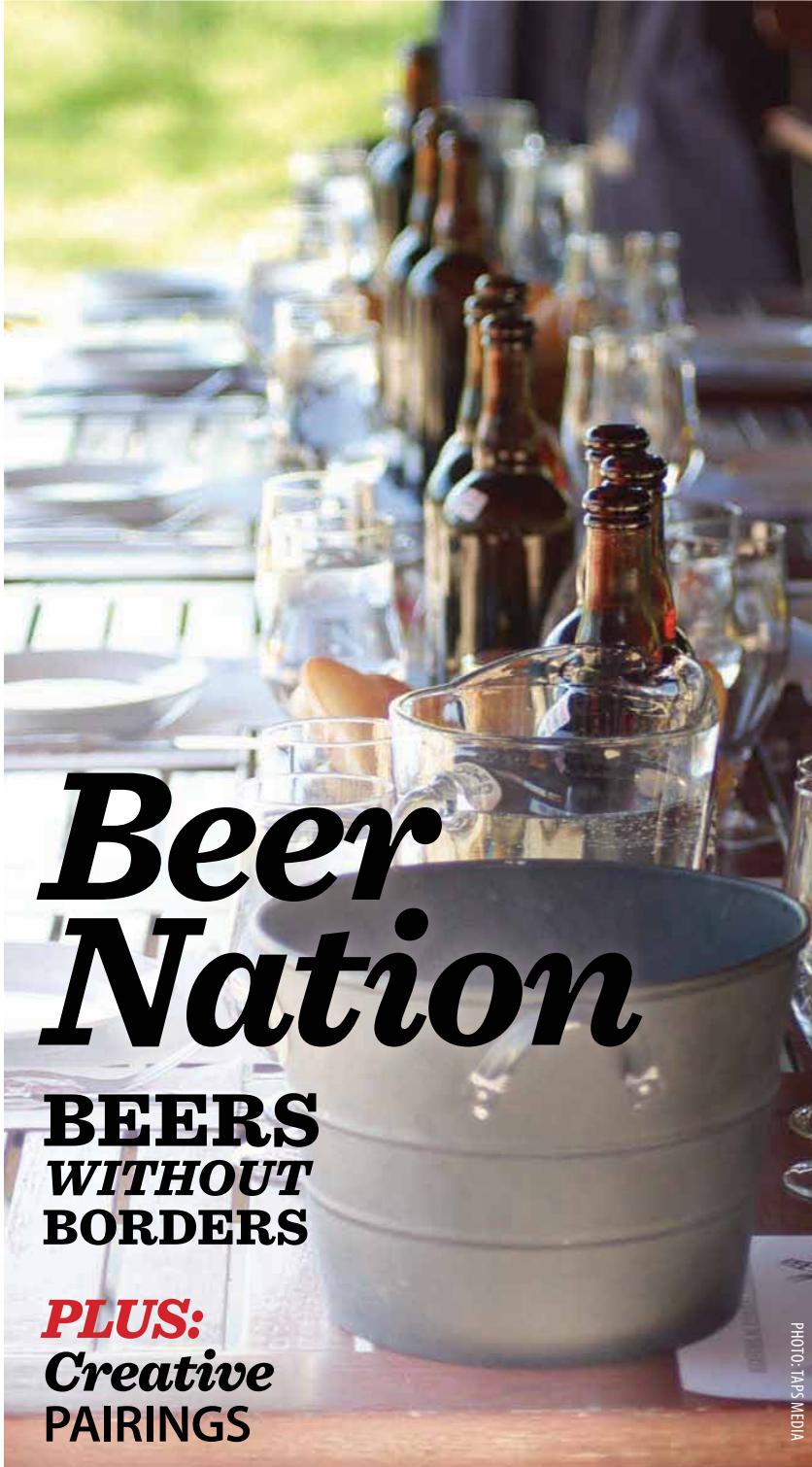


M LIVING

Special Interest Feature



Beer Nation

**BEERS
WITHOUT
BORDERS**

**PLUS:
Creative
PAIRINGS**

PHOTO: TAPS MEDIA

Between 2000 and 2011, consumer beer budgets ballooned from \$47 to \$320 per person, yet the market share of beer sales in Canada fell by seven percent during the same period, reports Statistics Canada. So, we're not drinking more brews; we're just paying more for the ones we choose. To satisfy maturing tastes, Canadians are straying from their trusted and familiar favourites, in search of more premium options and exotic concoctions, from as far away as Japan and Sri Lanka.

But perhaps the most fascinating catalyst for change has stemmed from the local food movement. Undeniably, Canadians are making an effort to buy their food from the people who produce it. In response, neighbourhood breweries are popping up in cities and small towns, creating drinks – and jobs – for their communities. These craft breweries represent the fastest growing segment of the beer industry in Canada. And in some provinces, like Ontario, many craft breweries are experiencing a 50 percent growth, year over year. “There’s a human scale to microbrewing that resonates with people. It’s also a return to how things used to be in Canada in the late 1800s, when towns and villages had each their own breweries,” says Joel Manning, brewmaster at Mill Street Brewery in Toronto. To help stand out, smaller breweries are taking risks, creating European-style offerings (like bocks, porters, pilsners and wheats) and trendy alternatives (like organic and gluten-free choices) that allow people to discover beers with flavours like chocolate, caramel, nutmeg, sweet black cherry and banana.

“The more you explore the world of beer, the more confident and willing to experiment you become,” says Ed Miziolek, brewmaster and innovation manager at Labatt Breweries of Canada. “Canadians are trying new types of beer, and that will help familiarize them with the creativity brewing can offer.”

As seen in the July 9, 2012 issue of *Maclean's*



BEERS WITHOUT BORDERS

In the past decade alone, the demand for varieties in flavour, aroma and texture has grown rapidly. Imports have increased to command 14 percent of the Canadian market, while local breweries are capitalizing on this adventurous spirit by creating their own versions of classic brews.

This summer, start your beer adventure by trying a mix of homegrown winners from this year's Canadian Brewing Awards (CBA), and international favourites recommended by Robert Medal, the operating partner of the Bier Markt, a group of Belgian-style brasseries that offer over 150 brands of beer from over 30 countries.

STYLE	PROFILE	INTERNATIONAL CHOICE	HOMEGROWN FLAVOUR <i>(a selection of 2012 CBA Winners)</i>
Pilsner	Pilsners are a light lager with a firm head and pale yellow colour. They have a distinct earthy or grassy aroma, with a balance of either sweetness or bitterness, and a finish that is crisp and clean.	Hertog Jan Pilsener <i>(Netherlands)</i> Slightly sweet and malty, and finishes with a bit of bitterness.	Steam Whistle Pilsner <i>(Gold medal winner for European Style Lager)</i> A classic Czech-style pilsner that embodies a gentle straw-like character and finishes with a crisp, spicy bite.
Wheat beer (Weissbier)	Brewed with a portion of wheat instead of barley, wheat beers are ales with a light, cloudy appearance (caused by the proteins in wheat), and citrusy flavour (such as lemon), balanced by spice notes (such as clove).	Erdinger Dunkel Weissbier <i>(Germany)</i> Contains malt notes of dark breads, chocolate, flavours of banana, clove, caramel, and a little bitterness.	Sungod Wheat Ale <i>(Gold medal winner for Wheat Beer – North American Style)</i> Creates a chewy feel on the palate, with juicy, spicy notes of banana and clove.
Lager	Typically, lagers have a smooth, clean and crisp taste, with yellow colour that can range from straw to golden.	Singha Lager <i>(Thailand)</i> Very crisp, refreshing and light, with a breadly taste and powerful bitter finish.	Brewhouse Pilsener <i>(Gold medal winner for North American Style Lager)</i> A light malt character with a slightly bitter finish.
Stout	Made with roasted malt or barley, this strong, dark ale can feature diverse tastes ranging from coffee to smoky. It's rich in colour, often with a thick, creamy head.	Sinha Stout <i>(Sri Lanka)</i> Very aromatic, with lots of chocolate, coffee, dark fruit and toffee flavours, with a tangy finish.	St. Ambroise Oatmeal Stout <i>(Gold medal winner for Stout)</i> Roasted malt aromas with sweet flavours of chocolate and coffee, and roasted with a silky smooth feel and a jet-black colour.
Trappist	Brewed by monks adhering to strict rules. For example, the beer must be prepared within the walls of a Trappist monastery and profits donated to charity. Generally, these brews have strong malt flavours with dark-fruit character. Their colours range from yellow to red, depending on the strength.	Rochefort 8 Trappist Ale <i>(Belgium)</i> A rich and complex ale with sweet tea and fig notes, and a deep red-brown colour with a compact head.	Don Juan <i>(Gold medal winner for Belgian Style Abbey Ale)</i> Comes in a sweet, complex malt body with caramel and roasted notes, and bold flavours of anise and coriander.



PHOTO: TAPS MEDIA

CANADIAN BREWING AWARDS (CBA)

Now in its 10th year, the CBA is a national competition where breweries of all sizes compete in a blind tasting to decide who brews the best beer. “It’s kind of like the Academy Awards of brewing in Canada,” says Rob Engman, president of TAPS Media, the organization behind the Canadian Brewing Awards Conference. This year, a panel of 37 Canadian Certified Beer Judges (BJCP) spent four days tasting 559 entries in 37 categories. They considered five criteria when identifying a winner: aroma, appearance, flavour, mouth-feel, and overall impression.

For a full list of 2012 winners, visit canadianbrewingawards.com



CREATIVE PAIRINGS

As the less intimidating and more approachable brother to wine, beer is actually easier to pair with food. “The main thing to keep in mind is to match the intensity of your beer with the intensity of your food,” says Mirella Amato, the Toronto-based certified cicerone (the beer version of a sommelier) behind Beerology.ca. “For example, you don’t want to

Higher alcohol levels,
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all cut through rich dishes.

pair a 12 percent, roasty Russian Imperial Stout with a light salad, or a gentle lager with a rich lamb stew.” Also, flavours of beer and food should mirror each other. An earthy malt tone will pair well with roasted vegetables. Higher alcohol levels, carbon dioxide and hops all cut through rich dishes, while heavily hopped (or bitter) beer will stand up to spicy selections.



American Classic:
Lamb burger

Recommended pairing:
~ Belgian Dubbel ~

Belgian Dubbel is a strong, dark beer with a higher carbonation and a toasted caramel malt character that enhances the gamey and earthy qualities of the lamb. Dried cherry and plum notes balance it out, and a range of spicy tastes (like clove or pepper) will match those used in preparing the lamb. The high carbonation and moderately high alcohol content will cut through the richness of the meat and cheese, and the caramel notes will play off the sharpness of the cheese.



French Classic:
Duck confit

Recommended pairing:
~ Doppelbock ~

The fattiness of duck confit requires a beer with higher alcohol content, to cut through it. A **Doppelbock** is a strong beer with malt flavours that complement the richness of the dish, and with a smoothness that balances the dish’s saltiness. Subtle fruit notes (of raisin and roasted fig) also draw out similar understated tastes in the meat, while enhancing any garlic or spices used to prepare it.



Thai Classic:
Green curry

Recommended pairing:
~ Weissbeer ~

Hot Thai curries are best cut and complemented with a refreshing zing. A **Weissbeer** is fruity and spicy, with lemon-like notes, and flavours such as banana, vanilla, clove and nutmeg that mirror ingredients in the dish. The wheat used to brew a **Weissbeer** also creates a silky texture that offsets the heat in the dish.

Note: when pairing beers with hot foods, go for varieties with a lower alcohol content, to avoid aggravating the warm sensation of the dish.



Italian Classic:
Fried calamari

Recommended pairing:
~ Pilsner ~

The crisp flavour of a **Pilsner** prepares your palate for the subtle seafood flavours in calamari. The bitterness and high carbonation cuts the deep-fried batter without overpowering the delicateness of the dish. The beer’s light body and low alcohol content also provide a nice textural contrast to the crunchiness of the calamari.

- Leigh Doyle