

CUTTING THE TIE - WHO GAINS?

A poorly publicized move to revamp B.C.'s Tied House regulations nearly slipped by unnoticed, but it came to the attention of intrepid Vancouver member J. Random literally two days before the closing date on the government's public consultation website.

Tied Houses are those licensed premises that has a deal with a supplier to sell that company's products only. It has long been the bane of Real Ale drinkers in the UK and CAMRA members there have fought a long battle to break its hold. The danger is that the supplier, who offers incentives to pubs for their exclusivity, tend to be the well-heeled, big brewers. That means that no matter how hard you drop hints to get craft beer into your local, you're never going to see it.



Sure there's a choice; We have cola, too.

We're told it may never come to that and that the move is only to make the BCLDB's job easier in policing the situation. Remove the need to enforce the regulation and the branch complies with government's latest push to cut red tape. However, if we want to be certain we continue to have access to craft beer in as many pubs as possible, we need to speak up.

In February, Vancouver president Martin Williams [drafted this letter](#) expressing

CAMRA's concerns. Following a brief back and forth around the executive the letter was sent to the BCLDB and they have confirmed it is under consideration. So far so good.

The craft brewers of British Columbia are, by definition, small scale, local enterprises that don't have deep pockets to secure 'incentives' for their customers. Guess who does? Big Brewers. The same companies that spend more on advertising than they do on ingredients. Although to be fair they wouldn't want to talk about their beer. These are the breweries that ply their wares with patriotic bully or hairy cryptids with legions of adoring young women partying in the mountains. Hopping is by bunnies.

As Martin says, the exclusive agreements already in existence at Roger's Arena and BC Place Stadium indicate that such deals limit choice, and devalue the existence of a vibrant, consumer driven market. Why should we not have more choice when it comes to the beer we wish to drink, rather than less? Stay tuned, we await developments. §

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We sincerely thank our valued **Corporate Members**. To join these professional beer lovers, (and first-time members get a free 1/4 page ad!) Contact **CAMRA BC** today: **250 388 9769** or camrabc@shaw.ca

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Campaign for Real Ale British Columbia

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CAMRA BC

Web sites

CAMRA BC: <http://www.camrabc.ca>

CAMRA Fraser Valley: <http://www.camrafraservalley.ca>

CAMRA Vancouver: <http://www.camravancouver.ca>

CAMRA Victoria: <http://www.camra.ca>

E-mail camrabc@shaw.ca

CAMRA BC: to join discussion group send request to:

CAMRA_BC_Discussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

to post a message to the list, send to:

CAMRA_BC_Discussion@yahoogroups.com

SPRING IN THE AIR ...

... spring in the step, and so much going on right now. CAMRA BC has sent a letter to the Ministry of Attorney General expressing interest in the BCLDB's plans to ease the branch's workload by declaring the tied houses ban null and void. Sort of like decriminalizing the crime to make the crime rate plummet. We don't like it, tied houses allow those with deep pockets to offer incentives if licensed premises carry their brand only. How many craft brewers do you reckon could compete with MolBatts?

We're also hoping to persuade the Lieutenant-Governor to proclaim a 'B.C. Craft Beer Month' so we can promote the cause and help get the word out there. Hopefully the craft brewers will take advantage and we can all enjoy some

creative showcasing of what wonderful beer British Columbia has to offer. Time to show a little pride in our beer of choice rather than constantly having to defend what is, after all, the beverage of moderation.

You'll notice longer than usual articles in this issue; a side benefit of going all-electronic is that we are no longer restricted by space. The more verbose of you may now write to your heart's content (I'll still knife away as usual if you wander off on a babbling tangent of course ;o)

Phil Atkinson

HOWE SOUND BREWING
Ales for Change
Howe Sound Brewing has a new program where our beers will assist fundraising activities in different communities.
ROCKFISH RED ALE is the second in our series where \$1 from the sale of this ale supports the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Protecting Canada's wild. Help CPAWS keep Canada wild. www.cpawsbc.org

DEAR MANAGER OR BEER ADVOCATE
This product is now available for distribution through **THE HOWE SOUND BREWING COMPANY**. For more information regarding this product please call the brewery customer service desk at **1-800-919-ALES**

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION
A red malty ale with a pleasant citrus note brewed with Chinook, Cascade & Mt. Hood hops with Munich, caramalt, chocolate & roasted barley. A local ale artisan-brewed with the wild in mind.
An ale for the Wild at Heart!
30 IBUs PLATO 12.8°

Product Name: **ROCKFISH RED ALE**
UPC: 8 55287 00131 4
SKU: 193888 Pack Size: 12x 1L
Distribution: BCLDB

MADE IN CANADA, EH!

Rockfish Red RED ALE
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1L ALE/ALE 5.3% alc./vol.

For Vancouver & Lower Mainland Sales:
Call Nathan Rayment 778 385 2181
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www.howesound.com

The Brewerianists are Coming!

Collectors and preservers of brewery advertising and artefacts are holding their 32nd annual convention in Victoria this year from August 3rd to 6th, 2011. For the first time on the West Coast, 50 to 100 members from across the country, the US, and even Europe will converge on Victoria to sample the local beers, visit micro breweries and brewpubs, and exchange brewery history items they have collected over the year. From beer cans to bar signs, serving trays to tap handles, tip trays to table tents, or bottle caps to business cards, these guys collect anything beer.

The convention culminates in a buy, sell, and trade event at the Harbour Towers Hotel on Saturday, August 6th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Convention members and the Victoria public are all welcome to attend the buy, sell, and trade if they are looking to add brewery collectibles to their own collections, have items to sell or trade, or just want to talk about brewery history and the wonderful commercial art associated with the craft. You can even bring a piece of obscure “breweriana” from your basement or attic and have it valued by an expert. Sort of an antique roadshow for beer lovers!

There is no charge to take part in the buy, sell, and trade event and no need to register, but if you want to set up a table to display a collection or sell some brewery items please contact convention organizer, Jim McIndoe, at jimmcindoe@shaw.ca. Tables are \$20.00 for the day.

So, if you love beer, brewing and brewery history and appreciate the commercial design work that goes into marketing them, don't miss this event. §



Parksville Untapped Beer Festival

This first Parksville beer event was held at Tigh-Na-Mara resort on a snowy, freezing winter evening. About 170 people attended to sample craft beers from Cannery, Lighthouse, Phillips, Surgenor, Longwood, Vancouver Island, Wolf, Driftwood, R and B, Howe Sound, Sleeman, and cider from Merridale and Sea Cider. The fine craft beverages crossed a wide spectrum of flavour profiles. Gourmet regional food pairings went hand in hand with each company's offerings. The food was evenly dispersed throughout the venue, presented with white linen and silver service, and was by far the best I've seen at any beer event in 20 years. Attentive hotel stewards and chefs were constantly on the move providing service on every level.

CAMRA's beer historian, Greg Evans, gave a half-hour presentation on the history of beer on Vancouver

Island, followed by a presentation by Bruce Jordan of Sea Cider. The live music performance by local artist Melissa Hill was a perfect fit for the event.

The crowd was a well-heeled group, asking interesting questions regarding things beer and cider. The owners of many of the companies were present and agreed it was a top notch event. For Wolf brewing it was their first public event. Management of the resort went above and beyond on every aspect, and left no detail unattended. Organizer Daniel Jordi and his staff showed why this resort has won so many awards and accolades for service. The consensus by presenters and attendees was a rave review. After the end of the event all the brew and cider crews got together in the resort lounge for a wind down social session. As always, it was great to see everyone in the industry and share the camaraderie that is inherent in the business. CAMRA folk would do well to look for this event next year. You won't be disappointed.

Scottie What's Brewing



Howe Sound owner Leslie Fenn and Scottie McLellan present Rockfish red ale to guests

below: Driftwood lights up Untapped with smiles smiles from Gary Lindsay and Lindsey Ward



above: The always-entertaining Greg Evans talks about the brewing heritage of Vancouver Island and its colourful characters

Food & Beer Pairing

Don't be Bitter

BY IAN LLOYD

I think the English style bitter is the most under-rated style of beer around. It provides what every beer lover desires: a strong malty backbone and a nice hop snap. What is not to love? The flavours are not overly challenging to the palate. When available in their true form, they are excellent session beers: low in alcohol but high in flavour. The best part about a bitter is that food pairing is so easy; they go well with almost everything.

At the last Epic beer dinner, Andrew from Swans/Buckerfields kindly provided some of their extra special bitter (ESB). It has a lovely caramel and fruit malt base upon which is stacked the right amount of hops. Hops you say: imagine light resin, floral and earthy. If you stretch it you can pick out a bit of toasted nuts. These flavours scream out for one kind of food: grilled meat!

Our pairing of choice was a Welsh rarebit with Branson pickles. The grilled cheese, toast and vinegary maltiness of the pickles were a perfect match. This is a dish that is easily prepared and perfect for an appetizer. Recipes for this delicious dish can be found online. A big thank you goes out to Simon for freshly preparing this Welch standard for the dinner.

If meat is your thing, then try it with lighter grilled fair. This is not the beer for a peppercorn, sirloin steak – try a bock or robust porter. Think more along the lines of seared tuna, smoked fish, pulled pork and duck. The ultimate pairing is fish and chips; deep fried foods really enhance the caramel flavours and bitterness can calm all that fatty goodness. I mean good for the soul and not the arteries. For something on the lighter side, turn to grilled veggies. A mixed veggie skewer on the barbecue would go great with a bitter.

For true decadence, it is hard to beat beer with breakfast. How about bangers and mash with a pint for breakfast – after 11am of course. Grilled sausage

and caramelized onions with mashed potatoes almost call out for a pint of bitter from Victoria brewpub Moon Under Water. This beer sits at only 3.8% abv and with all that caramel and herbal hops, how can you go wrong.



If you are looking to match this versatile beer with a cheese plate, stick with fatty, milder cheeses. Brie, Colby, smoked Gouda and even Feta pair well with this beer. Beer with dessert: that is a tough one. Not impossible though: an oatmeal-raisin cookie with walnuts and a glass of Phillips Accusation ale does sound appealing. Caramel malts and raisin sweetness sounds good together, as does roasted barley and fatty toasted nuts. Perhaps a deep fried banana would go well with a bitter. Hopefully, I will be able to test my theory one day.

Try your own beer pairing diner with the great English bitters B.C. has to offer. Remember they work best with light and roasted fair. They can also hold their own against milder fatty cheeses, but for this English styles are best. Really with this very drinkable style of beer, you can't go wrong. §

Out and About with Scottie in the Caribbean



I recently had the trip of a lifetime to Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines. Beer is part of the tropical islands lifestyle consumed everywhere in a variety of places from 5-star hotels to the local bars called rum shops.

Barbados is definitely a rum-based society, where Banks beer goes hand in hand with dozens of rums lined up on shelves behind the bar. The rum shops; sometimes no more than shacks, others more elaborate and well appointed, can be attached to homes as an extra income, or stand alone buildings on their own. They are always sponsored by a brewery or rum company, brightly painted in the company logo, where mostly men spend their days in chatter consuming their favourite rum and beer.

I did get right into it getting known in the local closest to me on the ocean. It was plain inside with a loo, a small bar; wide open spaces

with beer advertising on the walls. The whole front was open. Almost everyone sits outside. Starting midday 'till late night it was full of action and conversation. Beer choices were Banks, Guinness, Heineken, Piton, Mackeson, Carib. If you go to any of the web sites www.caribbrewery.com, www.banksbeer.com, www.pitonbeer.com, you'll get the lowdown on who brews the beer and all the brands and etc.

When the humidity is making you drip in sweat; a breeze from the ocean and a bottle of lager is just the trick. Of course in this weather its never just one. I tried every beer I could fine and definitely was inclined near the end to Piton over Banks; a sin to be sure. Loyalty to Banks beer is almost a given nationwide. Heineken was nothing like we know it here.

The village of Oistins' fish market has a famous cultural tradition called the Friday night fish fry. It's a carnival atmosphere along the oceanfront with local fish cafes offering their specialities, rum shacks and shops doing a roaring trade, and music pulsating and blaring to a high pitched energy. Rum and beer is consumed by the locals on a huge scale, and we had fresh caught shrimp and accompaniments macaroni pie, rice and beans; enjoyed outside, with smells of cooking, the sounds of loud music and the sights of locals and tourists gathered for the

event. Every kind of local fish is offered and it is the locals who will give you the lead on which to try. Also available in the mix are the flavours of curry in many of dishes. With such a diverse history its all a new and an exciting, exhilarating experience. Visit www.barbados.org.

St Lawrence Gap is the bar and restaurant hub and we visited a couple of times, enjoying the ambience and of course the slightly higher than local rum shop prices for the above noted beer. Ah but what the heck; sitting on the beach in paradise is worth the extra tourist hit. To be fair many places offer happy hour; two for one beers; so if the timing is right. Almost all beer is served cold in the bottle. We had beer in an upscale bar on the beach in the resort Southern Palms www.southernpalms.net. The barman, used to upscale tourists was telling me how Banks was the best beer on the planet and that draught was usually in a very few select top end properties. He did pour my bottled beer into a glass; a first the whole time in the Caribbean. Another good spot where we had lunch and beers right on the beach was The Almond Tree Restaurant right on the strip. For me there was something deeply connecting from a beer point of view; enjoying ice cold lagers in the cool shade, looking out on a turquoise sea watching palms waving in the breeze.

Close to where we stayed in Inch Marlo, Christ Church, South Point; all describing the region, was

Silver Point Resort, a luxury property for the well heeled surfers and kite boarders and the like. The resort was top end, fashionably decorated, with lovely well presented food and a couple of types of cold lagers, and excellent rum punch. We went there on two separate occasions. The food is superb and atmosphere truly luxurious. Visit www.silverpointhotel.com At this south point of the island; its more agricultural than the tourist strips and it keeps away people who don't have the adventuresome spirit to ride the local buses into the towns and centers and hubs of activity. I loved being there; walking on pristine beaches with cold beer in hand, simple pleasures.

I haven't delved into rum. The oldest rum works in the whole Caribbean is Mount Gay (1703) on Barbados employing the same method of production for over 300 years. Rum punch is ubiquitous for punters. Locals usually have rum and a mixer. Where we stayed a rum rep came to do a tasting of his rums and rum products. His name was Shane Thomas of R.L. Seale est. 1926. I learned a great deal especially about where the locals drink, what they drink and the history of the island in general. There is a small description of them and their products on the web through google.

One day we took the larger local bus from Oistins through Bridgetown up the spectacular coast, to the historic city Speightstown. The bus trip took you through the heart of Bridgetown and past the scores of rum shops all filled with local men having their favourite dram or beer. Traveling this way is an eye opener and lesson in life. On this trip you roll through the richer areas including Holetown, past the extreme high end hotels, homes and resorts where the wealthy have their residences and winter addresses.

The local pub on the ocean was called the Fisherman's pub which offered a glass enclosed steam table of daily local Bajan fare. The seating area was open to the ocean in the cool shade and breeze. On this day the menu included fried flying fish, baked lamb chops, fried chicken, steamed okra, plantain, cous-cous, macaroni and cheese pie, curried rice, creole green bananas, kidney beans and rice, and

creole green banana again with salt fish and gravy. You make your selection then go to the bar for your beer and sit by the turquoise ocean. The town is quaint and you can take your time enjoying the historic British architecture, the sights and sounds while you meander in the streets. The local rum shops on the ocean were full at lunch and the local men were jammed in with the sounds of laughter and bravado echoing onto the streets. Because this end of the island is close to all the posh hotels you have some well heeled tourists around and thus some higher end restaurants and galleries as well.



Speightstown Barbados

I was in Barbados on both ends of the trip and could easily have taken another month here at least.

St Vincent and the Grenadines

We flew to St Vincent and had planned a night at Beachcomber outside Kingstown. It was sweltering and frequently interrupted by quick and powerful tropical rains. It was outside the historic seaport city; Kingstown, and had a nice restaurant bar on the ocean where you walked down the steps to the local beach. The local beer in this country is Hairoun brewed in Kingstown. It said all natural ingredients and was very, very cold and tasty served in green bottles with the chill all over them. We enjoyed a few beers, a short walk on the beachfront, happy hour; then a meal; retiring to our air conditioned room. The next day was a plan to catch the local ferry to the island of Bequia. Driving in the cab through Kingstown to the harbour; you notice the city is busy, an active



hive of markets, and shops in buildings dating back centuries. Local ferries carry everything; people cars, provisions, the works. Its an hour crossing.

Again we arrived unbooked and had a bit of trouble finding the right place; but fate always intervenes and found a fabulous place to stay, owned by a Canadian artist which was decorated

out of a style and flair you'd see in a fashion magazine, filled with her art and sculpture in iron. Lovely gardens, wrought-iron gates and super paintings. View of the harbour and breezes and memories to last a lifetime. Words don't say it. Immediately she offered up proudly cold Hairoun.

Bequia, capital Port Elizabeth, total population 5000, is a yachter's stop over for provisions and at any given time 100 yachts bob in the turquoise harbour of Admiralty Bay. You find out right away beer and rum is served everywhere: brightly painted rum shops, restaurants and the one grand hotel. Rich boaters stroll along the walkway, dollies laden with beer, wine, cheeses and various other provisions. Local hawkers gather in the harbour selling fruit, veggies, trinkets, art, and the like. Music blares continuously and cooking smells fill the air.

There's a walkway along the harbour named Belmont Walkway dotted with a number of restaurants, shops and hotels. We ate in many places and each does a different specialty, has entertainment on varying nights and offers great ice cold Hairoun, whose marketing slogan is Hold Your Own, plus Heinekens, Guinness and rum punches; emphasis on punch. Never had a bad meal. Favourites include: Green Boley, a rum shop serving the best roti; Captain Mack's bar; upstairs with a breeze from the bay, serves a delicious lobster salad prepared fresh from the harbour, Mac's Pizza, Coco's which does Sunday

West Indian buffet lunches including local fish and curries; Frangipani Hotel for a BBQ buffet and steel band entertainment; Tommy Catina, nice curries; to name just some. I never stopped believing I was in paradise.

Local buses take you to outlying beaches, Princess Margaret Beach, a great swim, and cold beer and rum punches on the ocean at swanky Jack's Bar. One beach over is Lower Bay--superb swimming--with Keegan's and De Reef, which serves a tasty lobster sandwich washed down with Hairoun of course.

Everything is closed Sundays so we took the bus across the island to Friendship Bay where you find luxury resort Bequia Beach Hotel. The management was kind enough to let us enjoy the pool for our patronage of the bar; we lounged in glorious sun, shade and breeze enjoying ice cold Hairouns, delicious rum punches, and taking in a local string quartet doing island favourites. We strolled the almost deserted beach and drank in the flavour of this paradise on earth. Local lads were having a very serious soccer match on the beach with spectators and beers flowing freely.

Bequia: I have to say is the most beautiful of places I've ever been and I've seen a few places. Beer and food culture exists as part of the fabric and you never go too far without finding good nosh and a nice cold beer to help forget the back home winter blues for a while. §

Scottie



Almond Tree in the shade - St Lawrence Gap, Barbados

Ullage and Spillage

BY J. RANDOM

Why has my ideal pub not yet been created in Vancouver? Admittedly there are neighbourhood pubs with parameters rigidly controlled by government legislation, but there are no establishments truly reminiscent of the great pubs of Britain. Of course, things could be worse, a phrase I commonly use to ease my frustration when progress is slower than I would like. Before 1974 there was no such thing as a neighbourhood pub. Before my time in B.C., but I gather there were mostly dark, dingy saloons, some still sporting separate entrances for Men, and Ladies with Escorts. At the other end of

the scale there were hotel bars with all the negative attributes of hotel bars the world over and a few British-themed restaurants. The Dover Arms on Davie Street was the first neighbourhood pub to open in Vancouver in March of '74. They had more relaxed liquor laws, and served food but they still had no windows just in case passers by saw people having fun, and were tempted inside. For the same reason there was no outdoor seating; that only changed with Expo '86. The no windows law also seems to have changed at some point and places like Darby's on West 4th are now much more welcoming. Nevertheless, most of Vancouver's British-style pubs would stick out like a sore thumb if you dug them up and set them down anywhere in Britain, with the possible exception of

Milton Keynes (Anybody know if the concrete cows are still in that field beside the M1?).

Whenever this topic of conversation comes up in, and I regularly bring it up, most people that have been to Great Britain generally agree with me. After some thought they will inevitably mention the Rose and Thorne (the RAT) on Robson St near Georgia. Don't bother going to look for it. It's long gone. When we first moved here in '86, it was one of the places recommended to us by those who knew of our liking for beer. Its choice of beer in those days was not great but the place had real atmosphere.



Crow & Gate, Cedar, Vancouver Island

Sadly it closed some time in the '90s while I was not paying enough attention.

It is widely recognized that Vancouver Island has a goodly collection of reasonable facsimiles of British pubs which are not out of place in the

pastoral scenery. The Crow and Gate in Cedar on Vancouver Island was the first neighbourhood pub in BC. It certainly has a somewhat authentic look with mock Tudor construction, black post and beam with plaster or brick between, though I am guessing this is decorative and not structural. Inside it has several cosy rooms with stone fireplaces, rustic wood tables and memorabilia imported from England. There's the rub. It is somebody else's memory they have biliaed. Not quite as egregious as the plastic paddy kit that most of the "Irish pubs" in Vancouver have purchased but not authentically of the local region.

Despite looking slightly artificial to the knowledgeable eye, the Crow and Gate is one of the closest to a British pub that you will find this side of the Rockies. Not that you are going to find anything closer just the other side of the Rockies. Indeed, you would have to go a long way before reaching the great pubs of Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. Toronto tries hard. It really does. Many of their pubs have several of the key characteristics but none, I fear, have the complete set (apologies to Nicholas Pashley, author of Notes on a Beermat).

"So what are the key characteristics?" I hear you ask. Oh. You didn't ask? Well, unless you stop reading now I am going to tell you what I think they are; why they matter and why it is difficult for Vancouver's neighbourhood pubs to secure them.

Locally Relevant Names

Having a British town in the pub name does not make it a British pub. The names of British pubs typically have some history and local relevance, fostering a sense of community. One of my favorites is the Leg o' Mutton and Cauliflower in Ashted. The current name was previously its nickname resulting from a badly painted Star and Garter (on a leg). This probably related back to the local earl or



Rusty Gull, North Vancouver

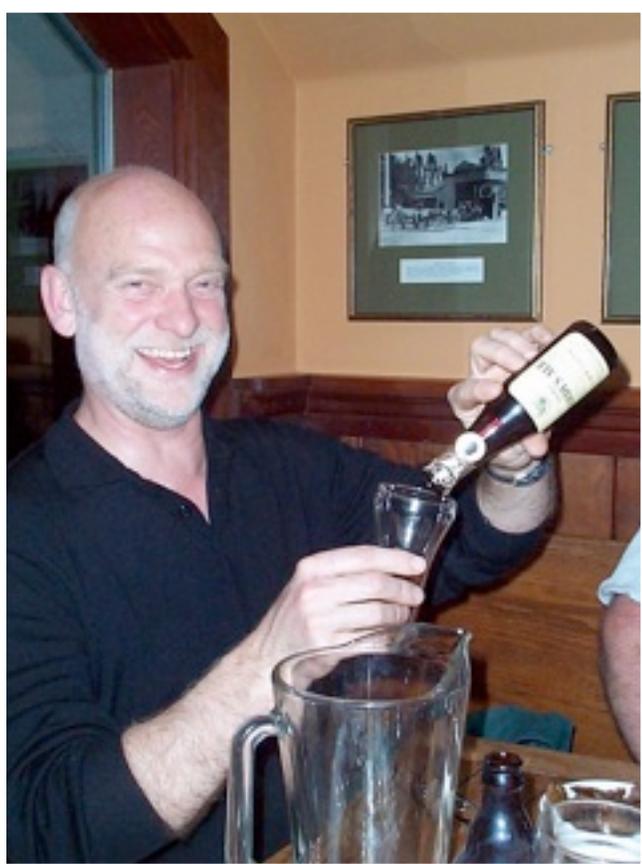
the publican's former commanding officer being a member of the order of the garter. Some good community pubs in the Lower Mainland with locally relevant names are The Raven and the Rusty Gull, both in North Vancouver, Mission Springs in Mission, the Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Company in Squamish, Jerry's Cove and Darby's on 4th Avenue in Vancouver.

Cosy Interiors

One should feel at home in a pub and it is tough for most of us to feel at home in a barn, though some people I know were clearly born in one. Subdivision into multiple rooms is part of it. Creation of subdivisions within the space can be a substitute. More importantly, I'm sorry but the word cosy can't be applied to any room with a ceiling height greater than 10 ft. The reason most British pubs have low ceilings is they evolved from British houses. The public house was originally the home of the guy, or more likely woman, who made the best beer in the village. Eventually everybody else gave up making beer and went over to the pub. Some pubs evolved from coaching inns and some from gin palaces, but people were shorter in those days so even these types of pubs are not cavernous. Also, few homes I know feature exposed air conditioning conduits, sprinkler systems or other industrial-looking pipework hanging

from the ceiling. One reason why many of Vancouver's neighbourhood pubs feel like converted warehouses is because they are converted warehouses. In seeking that elusive sense of history, those who want to start up a pub have typically turned to the old commercial/warehouse districts of Gastown, Yaletown etc. Taprooms in the city of Vancouver with ceilings meeting my exacting standards include The Railway Club and used to include the Irish Heather until it moved across the street.

A Publican



Spinnakers' Paul Hadfield: a publican

One thing that makes you feel at home in a great British pub is the presence and attitude of the publican, normally the owner or simply a caring pub manager. The publican will recognize his regulars, make newcomers feel welcome and create a sense of family among the clientele. The bigger the pub, the larger the clientele, the more difficult this is to do.

Many neighbourhood pubs in Vancouver are simply too large to make this possible. If you are looking for a model publican, look no further than Nigel Springthorpe of The Alibi Room, which is ironically, a restaurant, not a neighbourhood pub.

Primarily Bar Service

Bumping into people you know and meeting new people is one of the best reasons for going down the pub. That is not so easy when are sitting at one table all the time. Somehow striking up a conversation in a toilet, just does not feel right. Hopefully this is a sign that I have retained some social conditioning as I get older and my toilet visits increase in frequency. Table service and no standing while drinking are hold-overs from older liquor licensing requirements. Going to the bar every time you need a drink or something to eat creates circulation and chances to meet people. Of course, this means you have to have plenty of good bartenders (see below) and there should always, repeat always be somebody behind that bar. One area where DIX sometimes fell down was that one could stand for several minutes with an empty glass at the bar with no bartender along the entire length. One type of good pub has a long bar with plenty of stools and the staff do not get uptight if you stand around in groups drinking. DIX was like that. The Railway Club still is. The relatively new London Pub on Main and East Georgia has some of the same feel. Pubs with small bars should have tall tables and shelves designed as focus points for standing drinkers.

Dedicated Bar Staff

Bar staff with a good work ethic, good drinks knowledge, a memory for names and faces, the ability to recall the order at which people arrive to order and, ideally, eyes in the back of their head, are very hard to find. DIX had several of them. One has to wonder at the hiring processes of some of our local establishments. Big hearted blowsy British barmaids developed their assets through years of

pulling handpumps, not through cosmetic surgery. Again it is that sense of family that good bar staff create, even if you are the new boyfriend being brought to Sunday dinner for the first time.

Ambiance

This is a tricky one, mainly because it is very difficult to analyze and means different things to different people (see below). About all I can do

is name a few things that I believe detract from the quality of ambiance I am looking for. The first is music so loud you can't have a conversation. The best British pubs are just buzzing with loud conversation and it is only the subdivisions within the building (see below) and the noise absorbing furnishings that permit all those conversations to go on at the same time. The reason you can't hear yourself think in many of Vancouver's neighbourhood pubs is that their marketing experts have determined that people drink more as the noise level goes up. An abundance of hard surfaces does not help. The second jarring note for me is the inability to find a seat where I am not confronted by a TV. St Augustines is a sports bar with a fantastic beer selection because that is what the owners designed it to be. I have no beef with that. I found one spot not facing a TV but I made the mistake of writing about it in this highly influential publication and they plugged the gap. The Alibi Room on the contrary, has no TVs (provided you don't count the pile of non working TVs high up on a shelf in the corner) and also has a fantastic beer selection. However it is a restaurant. The Whip has one TV, easily avoided, but essential in case the Canucks are in game 7 of the Stanley Cup final on a cask night. Décor has something to do with a true pub ambiance. Natural materials



*“Not turning taps but pulling pumps
Gives barmaids splendid busts and rumps.” - anon*

including lots of wood and stone are a must. The furniture should also have character. Here too, wood is good (but then I have to admit to some bias on that front). The accumulated bric-a-brac also contributes (see below).

I definitely do not expect to have somebody at the door to seat me when I enter a pub. I want to chose where to sit and in a good pub I will have a favourite spot (see below).

Two or More Bars With Different Style

Because different people are looking for different things in a pub, it really helps to have more than one room style and a bar in each. In Great Britain, this used to be partly a means of class separation but these days it is more about separating the various functions of the home away from home. The great British pub would have at minimum a public bar for the rowdies and a lounge bar, or equivalent, for the romantic couple or the business meeting. It might also have a snug or vault for the crumbles to tell their stories to each other. When converting a cavernous space, this requires creative construction of subdivisions. Having a pub side and a restaurant side goes some way to achieving this objective but then one is obliged to eat in the restaurant side.

There are a few places where I do have my favourite corners. These include Steamworks, Mission Springs and The Whip. An innovative approach is illustrated by Habit Lounge and the Cascade room, adjacent establishments on Main St. with different styles under a single management.

History and Local Memorabilia

Hundreds of years of history are impossible to replicate in a city only 125 years old. Setting up in a building built before 1940 can supply sufficient

historical effect but, as noted above, warehouse conversions take a lot of work to get right. The memorabilia collection is the difficult part. While I may get a twinge of nostalgia seeing an old bar mirror advertising Tetley Bitter, the same cannot be said for a plastic plaque that says Tetley's English Ale. When it comes down to it, locally relevant bric-a-brac is more authentic than things and stuff imported from demolished British Pubs. The two places that have the best collections from local sources are Mission Springs and The Railway Club. The latter has something of an advantage having evolved from a private club for railway workers. History oozes out of posters for gigs by now famous rock stars. Or maybe that's not history. It could be hygroscopic beer residue.

Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Company has taken a different tack by raising to the rafters a range of outdoor gear including snowshoes, skis, kayak, mountain bike, climbing gear and windsurfer. One huge chunk of wall is taken up with a painting of the Squamish Chief with climbing routes. None of that stuff is old, but all of it reeks of local relevance. Or maybe that is sweat.

Liquor Primary

The laws that govern licensed premises in BC make it necessary to have a Liquor Primary license to run something approaching a pub. <http://>

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/docs-forms/guide-liquor-primary.pdf (Note in this document that 20 oz pints are not illegal as some establishments selling 16 oz and smaller "pints" would like us to believe.) There are several restaurants in the Vancouver area that are more pub-like than many neighbourhood pubs. However, just when you are getting into the mental zone, some issue will come up that reminds you that you are in a restaurant. Unless you want to lose that establishment altogether, you have to help them comply with BC's licensing laws. Two pub-like



restaurants that immediately come to mind are The Alibi Room and The Whip Gallery and Restaurant.

Good beer

By good beer, of course I mean craft beer, ideally cask conditioned and served at the appropriate temperature, in a perfect world - through a beer

engine. However, it also needs to be served through clean lines into clean glasses, free of cleanser. Casks should be set up, spiled and tapped sufficiently far in advance to be served bright and fully carbonated. Each keg or cask should be emptied before it begins to show its age. This is relatively easy to do in a brewpub, but less easy to do when relying on outside suppliers where a cask might end up being rolled in (yes rolled) half an hour before it is due to be served. Consequently is it unfortunate that many of our brewpubs do not feel the need to serve cask conditioned beer on a regular basis. Virtually every brewpub I go into in the USA does.

Regulars

The ideal pub has regulars. You can go in there any day of the week and bump into somebody you know and would enjoy having a beer with. DIX was like that. Though it was 45 minutes walk away, it was my local. Nowhere else has yet stepped up to take its place. Other bars may well have regulars but I have not spent enough time in any of them to find out, probably because there are so many places with good beer these days. Pubs attract regulars if they have most, if not all of the above attributes.

The Ideal Pub

The avid reader of this column (and one day I hope to meet him/her) knows that I do not hanker after the old country especially with pubs shutting down, breweries merging and limited development in beer styles compared to North America. My ideal Vancouver pub would have all the attributes of a British pub, but in a Canadian style.

George Orwell described his ideal pub in an essay that I had heard of, but never read, titled *The Moon Under Water*. I decided not to read it before writing this article, but after completing the above, I did look it up. He mentioned three important factors that I had not thought to include: located on a side street, two minutes from a bus stop and with outside seating (he said a garden). The Whip has all three, but again, it is a restaurant, not a pub. Having finally read Orwell's essay, I am looking forward to visiting the pub of that name when we are in Victoria for the GCBF in September (provided Vancouver gets allocated enough tickets this year). If somebody decides to create the ideal pub in Vancouver please let me know. If somebody has already done it without me noticing, for goodness sake tell me.

Cheers! §



*Class pub bric-a-brac:
Windsurfer suspended from
the rafters at Howe Sound
Inn and Brewing
Company ... one way to give
the impression of a lower
ceiling.*

*The Wind Surf Board was
donated by Rob Mulder, the
owner/ operator of Roberts
Boards in North Vancouver.
This board set the 1993
speed record of 82.96 km/h
(48.8 mph)*

Calendar

- Sat. March 19 - 11:15 am - 8 pm 'Spring Expedition,' a members-only bus trip to the Howe Sound Inn and BrewHouse At Whistler. This is a day not to be missed, and space is limited. Ticket cost: \$60 per person, includes return bus transportation, six tastings each at both Howe Sound and BrewHouse and sharing platters at BrewHouse.
- Sunday, March 27 - Kingfishers Waterfront Bar & Grill, 23840 River Road, Maple Ridge ([map](#)) The newly-formed CAMRA Fraser Valley is hosting its first event! There will be a cask and two taps from Driftwood.
- Wed. March 30 - 7:30 pm Lighthouse Brewing Company, 2-836 Devonshire Rd - Esquimalt **Note** - this is a Wednesday evening, rather than the usual Tuesday. Please join your colleagues and come see and hear what's new at Lighthouse.
- Tuesday, April 12 - 7:30 pm - The Lounge, Archie Browning Sports Centre (2nd Floor), 1151 Esquimalt Rd - Esquimalt. Our special guest speaker will be Ken Grossman, co-founder of Sierra Nevada Brewing, Chico, California.
- Saturday April 16 - **CAMRA Vancouver** Fest of Ale Spring Sessional – All day event. London Pub, 700 Main St. Full details soon.
- Details on Vancouver area events at <http://camravancouver.ca/>
- Details on Victoria area events at <http://camra.ca>

CAMRA BC Membership Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail _____

Enclosed is my cheque for: Individual \$25.00 _____
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