

FALL 2010

TAPS

THE BEER MAGAZINE



Icon to Icon

Rick Mercer and Beer

Perfect Pair

premier chefs challenged
by TAPS

Les Trois Musketeers

swashbuckling beyond
La Belle Province



As the Publisher of TAPS magazine, I have the privilege of attending a fair number of beer events in Canada. Whenever I travel, I am drawn to the same beer Meccas that most of our readers are drawn to. This summer was a particularly fruitful one for me as I was fortunate enough to attend several notable beer festivals across Canada. Rather than running through them chronologically (too confusing) I think I'll take the geographic approach.

Coast To Coast **FEST SEASON** | pour it and they will come...

Starting in the Maritimes, I attended the Halifax Seaport festival which was a sheer delight for both the venue and the available quaff. Beers from the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and New England were showcased in an indoor/outdoor Seaside venue that was both elegant and eclectic. The organizers were clever to limit the sessions to three hours and all you could sample. A great selection of complementary gourmet food offerings made this festival my favourite this season. Efficient and benevolent security kept the event incident free. Where else can you see local constabulary offering to snap attendees group photos?! I saw it and was impressed... but then, that's just down east hospitality, ain't it?

Then there was the storied Mondial de la Bière in Montreal. A must do for any self-respecting beer geek, the Mondial is lovingly and expertly organized by Jainine Marois And Marie-Josée Lefebvre, two of Canada's most passionate beer mavens. They have created one of Canada's 'must attend' beer events that showcases the artistry of Quebec's brewing community. There is something magical and other-worldly about the Mondial, particularly for this Ontario boy (hey I was born in Montreal!). Quebec is widely regarded as the 'Belgium' of North America in brewing circles and a trip to the Mondial is cheaper than the journey to Brugges, with many similar rewards. Vive la Difference... Vive la Bière!

There were two quality festivals of note that I was able to attend in Ontario... The Hart House CraftBeer Festival and the Muskoka Beer Festival. Two very different settings... but both with great craft beer and inquisitive, passionate attendees. Both of these events proved that beer festivals can be enchanted opportunities to enjoy a great beer. Good venue plus great craft brewers equals quality event.

I finished off the summer on Canada's spectacular West coast at the Great Canadian Beer Festival in Victoria, BC. The longest running beer event in Canada did not disappoint. For all of our West Coast readers who have attended this great event over the years, you know what a great festival this is. For all our other readers, I would heartily encourage you to put this one on your Beer Bucket List. It is a truly well run festival with great West Coast (Canadian and US) beers and a spirited and diverse group of attendees. A word to the wise though... book early... this year's event sold out within hours of tickets being released online.

While not all of you may be able to attend this volume and variety of Canadian beer events, wherever possible, I encourage you to get out there and celebrate and support local craft beer at festivals, large and small, across this great country. Don't have a beer festival in your neck of the woods? Well, why not organize one? One last question... why do we only have beer festivals in the summer? Fall is good... winter is, well, long, and could definitely use a beer festival. I guess the bottom line is to celebrate beer wherever and whenever you can, because life is too short to drink bad beer!

Rob Engman



Fest photos by Mary Jefferson



Halifax Seaport Beerfest

Beer on the Pier!

Brian Titus had a busy summer. Not only is he the president and founder of Halifax's Garrison Brewing Co., which has had a record breaking summer in terms of sales, he is also the co-founder of the Halifax Seaport Beerfest, which took place over two sun filled days in August.

"We put a ton of hard work into this year's event", Titus told TAPS during the 4th annual festival. "We wanted to get beers from Quebec, grow our Maine and Ontario booths, and attract more breweries from other maritime provinces ... I think we've done a great job."

Great indeed, as Titus and Bruce Mansour (the other co-founder) managed to secure over 175 different beers and over 70 breweries, making it the largest beer festival in Atlantic Canada.

A new addition to the festival was the Ladies VIP Brew Tour hosted by Toronto beer educator and TAPS contributor, Mirella Amato. Structured solely for women, each tour began with a 30-minute discussion, followed by a sampling of beers available at the festival. Amato discussed the history of women in brewing, tasting profiles, the health benefits of beer as well as beer and food pairings.

Another new feature of the festival was the addition of Quebec beers. With the exception of the McAuslan brewery (who have attended the festival in the past) no other Quebec product has ever been available. This year however, you could sample beers from Microbrasserie Charlevoix, La Barberie, Micro-brasserie du Lievre, Le Trou du Diable, Bilboquet Microbrasserie, and Montreal's Bierbrier as well. Nova Scotians have always had a great relationship with beer and it was evident as the festival sold out again this year. After a brief rest, Titus and Mansour are back at the drawing board making plans for an even bigger and better 5th installment for next summer. It will be exciting to see what they come up with!

www.seaportbeerfest.com/



Halifax
seaport
BEERFEST

