



The Frothiest Beer Capitals in the USA

By Shane Boocock

It's hard to believe but I thought the biggest selling beer in the world was Budweiser, but I was wrong. The beer brand that is sold almost exclusively in China, Snow Beer is the #1 selling beer! In fact four of the top 10 best selling beers in the world are brewed and sold in China, with Budweiser placed at #4 and Bud Light at #3.

However it is the rise in craft beer that has changed the landscape in the USA, and with that comes the beer tipping title of 'The Best of the Best'. So we thought it would be a good idea to showcase some of the frothiest locations that, in our opinion, rank above many others that the USA has to offer.

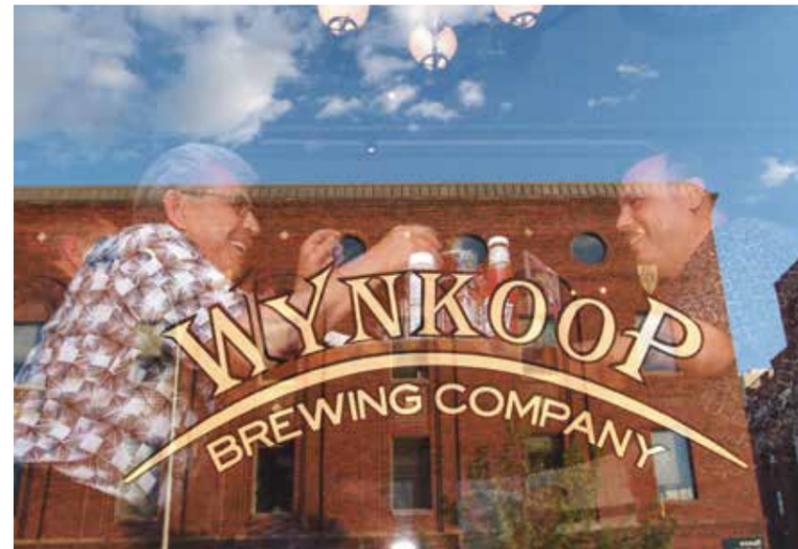
1 Portland, Oregon can rightly claim to be rich in 'Liquid Assets' as it is often at the head of the USA's frothiest beer lists, but then within the city limits (not including the suburbs) it does boast over 65 craft breweries, so it isn't surprising really. It was also one of the first USA cities to legalise brewpubs (1983), long before the phrase 'brewpub' or the words 'craft beer' became part of the lexicon. Since then, small brewing has become big all over Oregon. In fact, four of the country's largest operating craft breweries are based in Oregon -Widmer/Craft Brewers Alliance, Deschutes, Full Sail and BridgePort.

Operating longer than any other brewery in Oregon, BridgePort Brewing opened its Pearl District facility in 1984, carving a retrofitted brewpub out of a late 19th-century factory, and pouring many an IPA (for the uninitiated IPA stands for India Pale Ale) along the way. Widmer Brothers Brewing (the state's largest brewer) also tapped the first kegs of their lauded Hefeweizen that same year, and opened its Gasthaus Pub in North Portland 12 years later.

Breweries of note include the well named, Hair of the Dog, Cascade, Imperial Bottle Shop, Hopworks Urban Brewery, APEX, Laurelwood and the Breakside Brewery. Putting a twist on traditional ales, lagers and stouts, another wave of brewers opened shop in Portland in the 1990s.

Veteran microbreweries like Lompoc Brewing, Lucky Labrador Brewing Company and Laurelwood Brewing not only have many taps to their brewpubs, but also operate multiple locations around the city.

New breweries continue to open all the time, such as Hair of the Dog, which has earned high regard with beer lovers for its unusual beer styles. The patio at Cascade Brewing Barrel House is frequently full of beer drinkers enjoying distinctively sour, hoppy pints. Hopworks Urban Brewery, with two eco-friendly locations, crafts only organic beers. Upright Brewing, meanwhile, attracts discerning palates with an emphasis on barrel-aging and farmhouse-style beers.



Discussing the city's best breweries is a subject of fierce debate as every local has their personal favorites. Some standouts worth visiting include The Commons, Gigantic and Base Camp.

2 Denver, Colorado promotes craft beer as an integral part of the Denver lifestyle. There are now more than 70 breweries in the city, and well over 100 in the metro area; and beer-centric events draw sizeable crowds to The Mile High City. Denver and beer go back a long way – right back to the city's founding in 1859. The miners and pioneers who flocked to the new city after gold was discovered in the Platte River were a thirsty bunch – Denver's downtown was thick with saloons and bar rooms. The hub of most all activity was Larimer Square. In fact, the first city government was formed, where else, in a saloon called the Apollo Hall in Larimer Square, which you can check out for yourself at 1425 Larimer Street. Denver's early residents might have been a little too thirsty in those days – one of the first laws enacted by that city government was an ordinance prohibiting the selling of liquor on the streets or from wagons or tents.

Strange Craft was the first small taproom brewery to open in Denver. With an inviting bar made of reclaimed wood, a spacious outdoor seating area with yard games, rotating food trucks, live



The Thirsty Lion, Denver

music on Saturdays and 12 taps of award-winning beers, there's plenty to enjoy.

Tivoli is Colorado's oldest, most historic brewery. It originally opened in 1859 and supplied beer to the gold rush pioneers.

Perhaps it was inevitable that Denver's long beer history would give rise to a population filled with beer lovers - including some who would even begin brewing and selling their own beverages. As a result, there was a microbrewery explosion, Denver has become known as the 'Napa Valley of Beer' - on any given day, more beer is brewed in Denver than in any other city in the U.S. today. There are 15 brewpubs and microbreweries in downtown Denver including two of the largest in the nation: the Wynkoop Brewing Company and the Rock Bottom Brewery. With so many unique and tasty brews to try it's no wonder Denver has become the go-to metropolis for beer connoisseurs all over the globe.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, there is no other place on earth where a beer aficionado can find more beers on tap than the Great American Beer Festival, held each fall in The Mile High City for more than 30 years. Over the course of three days close to 50,000 beer-lovers tour America's brewing landscape, by sampling more than 3,000 different beers from more than 600 of the nation's finest breweries. The annual festival is held in Denver's Convention Centre, arranged geographically on the festival floor. Coinciding with the festival is the annual Denver Beer Fest, a citywide celebration of beer, with tastings, parties, rare beer tastings and more.

3 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has always been a beer city. It was in Philadelphia taverns that the American Revolution took hold, and 100 years ago, Philadelphia was known as the greatest brewing city in the Western Hemisphere, or the 'Cradle of American Libation'. In the mid-19th through the early 20th centuries, more than 90 breweries operated in Philadelphia proper, and another 100 operated in the surrounding areas.



Hopworks Urban Brewery, Portland, Oregon



Philadelphia

But Prohibition in 1920 brought the brewery boom to an end, and the decline – and near demise – of virtually all of Philadelphia's beer producers all the way into the 1980s.

Things couldn't be more different today. Philadelphia, experiencing the same craft beer boom that has thrived in the U.S. since the late 1980s, has regained its reputation as one of the pre-eminent beer cities in the country and around the world. Philadelphia has won a slew of beer-related accolades, being recognised as one of The 5 Best Beer Cities in America by GQ Magazine.

Helping set the local craft beer scene apart, Philadelphia breweries range widely in size and scope. There are the major craft breweries like Victory, Sly Fox and Yards, which produce and distribute some of

Philadelphia's most well known and widely accessible craft beers. Then there are the mainstay brewpubs like Dock Street and Manayunk Brewing that have been around for years, putting out consistently great craft beer. And in recent years, they've been joined by even newer microbreweries and brewpubs like Tired Hands, Forest & Main and Round Guys, who are garnering ever more accolades and buzz for the region's beer scene. Many of these breweries have tours and/or tastings at their facilities, and a number of local groups – including Philly Brew Tours, the Philly On Tap tour from Urban Adventures and Liberty Brew Tours – offer comprehensive tours of multiple breweries while covering the breadth of Philadelphia's beer history.

4 **Portland, Maine** is a bit off the beaten track, but it is well known for its craft beer either down on the waterfront, or in a local pub in downtown Portland's famous Old Port which is full of pubs, microbreweries and taverns. The love of beer in Maine dates to before it was even a state. In nearby Freeport, secessionists plotted Maine's emancipation from Massachusetts over beers at the Jameson Tavern, and they've been knocking pints back ever since.

Greater Portland enjoys such a wealth of choices for beer lovers that experiencing them all is an adventure in itself. Visitors can start by taking a Maine Beer Tour, or a Maine Brew Bus Tour to explore Portland area breweries, or opt for a Bike and Brew Tour where participants survey the region's microbrews by bicycle. Getting a taste of Maine's rich beer history couldn't be easier, thanks to the local breweries and their taps.

The Portland area boasts hundreds of places to find local spirits, and some of the best can be enjoyed in the same spot where they are made...at local breweries. Many out of town travellers come



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to the city expressly to get behind the scenes of their favourite locally-brewed brand.

Taking a tour of area breweries is a way to enjoy a taste of local brews, seasonal favourites, and the state's characteristic flavours and ingredients, all while getting the backstory on how these award-winning, hand-crafted beers are made. Touring a Belgian-style brewery is an option, as is visiting one of the largest craft breweries in the country, right on the city's waterfront. Visitors can also sample small-batch artisanal ales in local tasting rooms around the region.

Every conversation about Portland's beer scene rightfully starts at Allagash, one of the best purveyors of Belgian-style beer in the country (Belgians even like it!). Meanwhile, smaller breweries are making a name for themselves, among them Liquid Riot, Austin Street Brewery and Bissell Brothers. Other better known brands include the Maine Beer Company, Bunker Brewing and finally the Shipyard.

All that research has made me a tad thirsty...I guess it's time to knock the froth off a pint! ■



Portland, Maine.



DENVER, COLORADO

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