



## unity brew { by Mike Tessier }

This past fall an interesting project took place in Alberta. A special beer was brewed for charity, and instead of it being brewed by just one brewery, this "Unity Brew" was a joint effort by a cross-section of the Alberta brewing community.

Whereas neighbouring British Columbia, and close-by Washington and Oregon all have strong brewers associations, Alberta does not, so it is nice to see a sense of community developing in Alberta's emerging craft beer scene. This adventurous brew and sense of community was instigated by the globe-trotting Grizzly Paw head brewer, Michelle Lowney.

This "unity" beer was brewed at the Grizzly Paw Brewpub in Canmore with number of brewers from Alley Kat, Big Rock, Brew Brothers, Drummond, Grizzly Paw, Jasper Brewpub, Wild Rose and Wildwood in attendance for the brew day.

Congratulations to Lowney for initiating this event and here's hoping for more growth and an increased sense of collaboration among all our Alberta brewers. There are plans to make this an annual event, with Edmonton's Alley Kat hosting next year. ●

## hopscotch

{ by Sheila Whittaker }

The Foodconnect.com Hopscotch Festival recently leaped into its 13th year of showcasing scotch, whisky and premium beer. The afternoon trade event and two evenings of public tastings at Vancouver's Rocky Mountaineer Station allowed guests to sample some 250 products from 100 companies.

Familiar names like Johnnie Walker were on hand and pouring their best: the intense and bold Johnnie Walker Blue is a blend of rare, aged reserve whiskies. Highland Park gave tasters the opportunity to sample their single malt, aged 12, 15, 18, 25 or 30 years.

For something different, Penderyn Single Malt Welsh Whisky offered smoky samples from the only distiller in Wales. From the land of the great Himalayas, Amrut poured their Fusion Indian Single Malt Whisky – a fruity, peaty sipper.

The festival expanded this year to include vodka, tequila, gin, rum and liqueurs. Six free educational seminars were held during the Grand Tasting Hall. Speakers included retired Master Distiller Michael Nicolson of Lagavulin and other notable distilleries.

The sold-out festival hosted more than 3,500 people at diverse events around Vancouver over the course of the week. Satellite events included brewery tours, educational seminars and dinners.

Festival producer Adam Bloch says that Hopscotch will continue next year. His advice for enthusiasts is "join the mailing list – half the events sell out before they even go on sale to the public via that list." You can access the mailing list online at [www.hopscotchfestival.com](http://www.hopscotchfestival.com). ●

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