



# SPRING FOR BC BEER & CIDER

In summer, beer lovers seek light, crisp lagers or refreshing, golden ales to enjoy in the sunshine. Come fall, tastes turn to Oktoberfest lagers, fresh-hopped IPAs and harvest-themed pumpkin beers. And nothing will warm you up better in the cold, wet winter months than a heavy, dark porter or stout.

So what about spring? As seasons go, spring is all about awakening from the cold, dark months of winter, and transitioning from dormancy back to life. Although it does not mark the start of the new year, spring does signify a fresh start.

With that in mind, spring is a good time to look for beers that are a transition between dark and light, or between heavier and lighter styles: amber ales, rye-infused IPAs, dark lagers, and caramel-coloured *Dunkelweizen* (dark wheat beer). It is also a good time for something fresh and new, perhaps



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Joe Wiebe is the Thirsty Writer. Look for *Craft Beer Revolution*, his guidebook to BC's craft breweries, in bookstores now ([www.craftbeerrevolution.ca](http://www.craftbeerrevolution.ca)). Follow along on Twitter @ThirstyWriter and @CraftBeerRevolu.

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a style you've never tried before.

In Germany, there is a long tradition of brewing stronger, sweeter lagers called *Bocks* throughout winter and spring. In the coldest months, darker *Doppelbocks* are brewed as strong as 10 to 13 percent ABV, but as spring approaches, and the weather warms enough to rekindle memories of outside *Biergartens*, brewers make *Maibocks*, named for the month of May. These are lighter in colour and alcohol strength, though still stronger (six to seven percent ABV) than a summertime *Helles* lager.

Other springtime brewing traditions in Europe originated before mechanized refrigeration, when beer made in the summer would spoil quickly, so brewers had to stop brewing in spring and wait until fall before they could start again. As a result, Bavarian brewers would make a lot of *Märzen* beer in early spring – literally, in March – and store it away

in caves and cellars until fall. They would then celebrate the harvest season and the return to brewing with a giant party called Oktoberfest.

Nowadays, *Märzen* can be made at any time of year, but some North American brewers like to brew it in March and release it in the spring. As styles go, it is slightly stronger and darker than typical German lager, so it fits the spring season well.

Similarly, in Belgium, farmers would make big batches of Farmhouse Ales in the spring to sustain their *Saisoniers*, or seasonal workers, during the harvest at the end of summer. These beers came to be called *Saisons*, and many craft brewers have been experimenting in recent years with this delicious, refreshing style. A great example is Driftwood Brewery's Farmhand Saison. Also, look for a new Saison from Central City Brewers & Distillers this spring.

A hybrid style known as Belgian

IPA or White IPA has also emerged in recent years. This beer is made with a Belgian-style yeast, but with the malts and hops usually used in North American IPAs. The result is a spicy, fruity, lighter-bodied IPA with a dry and hoppy finish – perfect for spring. Deschutes' Chainbreaker White IPA is a great example, and here in BC, several breweries make them, too, including Parallel 49 Brewing's hilariously named Toques of Hazzard Imperial White IPA and Tin Whistle Brewing's Osprey Pear White IPA, and Steamworks is adding one to their seasonal Mash Up Mix Pack.

How about some gluten-free options for spring?

If you are one of many British Columbians who have adopted a gluten-free lifestyle, whether by choice or necessity, you will be happy to hear that a BC brewery has finally produced a truly gluten-free beer: Whistler Brewing launched

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its Forager Gluten Free lager late in 2014 – and it actually tastes like beer!

Looking beyond beer, why not try some BC-made cider? There are some great options available in BC Liquor Stores, including Rock Creek, Duke’s and Lonetree. And look for a new one called Broken Ladder, coming out this spring from the BC Tree Fruits Cider Company. It’s got a great story behind it: the BC Tree Fruits Cooperative, which has been around for 80 years and represents more than 500 farmers, has opened its own cidery right next to its packing house in Kelowna. This is its first release.

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**WARDS PICKER'S HUT PREMIUM CIDER**

Canada **\$4.99** 749143 650 ml  
 Actually made by The View Winery in Kelowna, this cider is produced from a blend of several European cider apple varieties. On the sweeter side, though not overly so, it has a big, robust apple aroma and flavour with a crisp finish.



**WHISTLER BREWING FORAGER GLUTEN FREE LAGER**

Canada **\$12.99** 430652 6 x 330 ml  
 BC's first truly gluten-free beer. Forager is made from sorghum and rice instead of traditional brewing grains such as barley and wheat. Unlike many of the gluten-free beers on the market, this one really tastes like beer. It is light and refreshing, slightly hoppy, with a medium body and a dry, bitter finish.



**DRIFTWOOD WHITE BARK WITBIER**

Canada **\$4.59** 186718 650 ml  
 Victoria's Driftwood Brewery has been brewing this slightly cloudy Belgian Witbier (wheat ale) since it opened in 2008. Made with freshly ground coriander and Curaçao orange peel, it is delicious and refreshing.



**HOWE SOUND SUPER JUPITER GRAPEFRUIT ISA**

Canada **\$7.69** 385898 1 L  
 In a previous incarnation, Super Jupiter was a Grapefruit IPA, but Howe Sound Brewing has re-released it as a session IPA or "ISA." It is light in body and alcohol (only 4.5% ABV), but has a big hop presence (45 IBUs), with a refreshing burst of citrus thanks to grapefruit peel added during the brewing process.



**STEAMWORKS MASH UP MIX PACK WHITE ANGEL IPA**

Canada **\$20.39** 540526 12 x 355 ml  
 Fruity, spicy and refreshing with big citrus aromas from a combination of Cascade, Centennial and Galaxy hops, the Pilsner and wheat malts used provide a silky smooth background for the complexity of the Belgian yeast along with a dash of coriander and orange peel. Find it in their seasonal Mash Up Mix Pack. See stores for availability.



**BROKEN LADDER**

Canada **\$10.39** 889782 4 x 473 ml  
 Broken Ladder is a brand new cider made from a secret blend of six different apple varieties, all grown by Okanagan farmers who are members of the BC Tree Fruits Cooperative. It is made with no added sugar or additives, just apple juice, resulting in a golden-coloured cider that is crisp and balanced. See stores for availability.