



What's on tap?

Writer Julie Lemerond set out on a Milwaukee pub crawl to find the city's best beers — and learn more about the microbreweries that call Brew City home

chlemiel, Schlimazel, Hasenpfeffer Incorporated!

Read these words, and chances are the next lines of the theme song from “Laverne and Shirley” will pop into your ad. Images of beer bottles lined up and swiftly moving through an assembly line are sure to follow, along with thoughts of 1950s factory workers toiling away on beer production lines. But we’ve come a long way from mass-marketing classic Milwaukee favorites such as Schlitz or Pabst. The sight of old breweries still dots our downtown landscape, but newer microbreweries are becoming widely popular in our city with a rich history of beer brewing ... and drinking. It’s no secret that Milwaukee is known for our beer — and our beer consumption. But our palates have become accus-

tomed to a greater variety of local brews, be they the Ale House’s Pull Chain Pale Ale to seasonal favorites, such as Rock Bottom’s Razzberry Wheat during the summer months. Descriptive words such as rich, malty, smooth, creamy and complex fall out of brewmasters’ mouths when describing their frothy concoctions.

Many of our local microbreweries boast impressive entrances with huge brass and metal casks holding the desired brew, as they welcome you into the setting. Rich amber tones and wooden furniture remind one of a modern rendition of old European brew pubs and taverns. These microbreweries often have a fun and casual feel, and talkative and friendly bartenders only add to the open ambiance.



LAKEFRONT BREWERY/ LAKEFRONT PALM GARDEN

1872 N. Commerce St. (414) 372-8377

Year-Round Beers:

Riverwest Stein
Eastside Dark
Klisch Pilsner
Cattail Ale
White Beer

Seasonals:

Big Easy
Snake Chaser
Bock Lager
Cherry Lager
Oktoberfest Lager
Pumpkin Lager
Holiday Spice Lager
Barley Wine
India Pale Ale
(available at Comet Café)
Biere de Gaarde
(available at Coquette Café)
Fat Abbey
(available at Trocadero
and Nomad)

"Here's to drinking on a Friday in the middle of the day!" toasts Christian Dory, Lakefront Brewery's tour guide, while raising his glass. "Here, here!" the group responds, and we all hold up our glasses before taking a sip.

For a mere five-spot, Lakefront Brewery hosts two daily tours of their facility. The price also includes a pint glass with the brewery's logo on the side, and four wooden nickels — each to be traded in for a 6-ounce pour of some of the most popular brews. The tour is unique because you are invited — and encouraged — to drink before, during and after the tour, versus just being offered samples after the tour is finished. The mood is fun and flirtatious, while still being informative.

"Barley is to beer as grapes are to wine," Dory tells, while describing the old Bavarian style of 1516 that the brewery employs for production. Barley, water, hops and yeast are the main ingredients used in creating the Lakefront's unique brews.

"Last year, we brewed 6,127 barrels of beer, which still makes us a small company. In comparison, Anheuser-Busch spills more barrels of beer in an eight-hour shift than we produced last year," he says.

He continues, with a smirk, "But, of course, it is Budweiser, so no one is missing it too much."

Kick back and relax this month with owner Russ Klisch's November brew pick, Riverwest Stein, at Lakefront Brewery. It's the perfect fish fry side dish.



MILWAUKEE ALE HOUSE

233 N. Water St. (414) 226-23

Year-Round Beers:

Downtown Lites Honey Ale
Solomon Juneau Ale
Pull Chain Pail Ale
Louie's Demise
Sheepshead Stout

Seasonals:

Penny Pickart Porter
J.P. McCabe's Irish Red Ale
Schatzi's Orange Blossom Cream Ale
Ale House Weiss
Belgian Wit
Punt Pass & Pour Honey Pale ale
Rye I Oughta

According to a flowing theme at the Milwaukee Ale House, "Ale's what cures ya. Each beer that the Milwaukee Ale House brews is not only rich with flavor, but history, too. Louie's Demise is a malty and flavorful ale named after Great Great Uncle Louie, who was killed in Sheboygan circa 1886 via a beer glass to the head. Rumor has it that this is one of the biggest unsolved crimes in Wisconsin tavern history, though Louie lives on at the Ale House.

"Live beer and fresh music," is how co-owner and general manager John McCade describes goings on at the Ale House, which is the first locally owned, all-grain brew pub in the city. "Nine years ago, we saw an opportunity to provide Milwaukeeans and visitors to the city with a brew pub in the Historic Third Ward. At the time it was an up-and-coming area that



offered us a downtown setting on the Milwaukee River, where we could share great pub food, live music and fresh beer to our patrons."

STONEFLY BREWING CO.

35 E. Center St. (414) 264-3630

Year-Round Beers:

- Moustache Ride Pale Ale**
- Sixfinger IPA**
- Merce Street Porter**
- War Destroyer Imperial Stout**
- Buzard's Bitter Ale**
- Bottom Bracket Brown**
- Mon Bagley Stout**
- Light Ale**
- Oatmeal Stout**

Seasonal beers

Stonefly has a distinctly Riverwest feel, and

between the Johnny Cash playing on the stereo and the coolers stocked full with Pabst Blue Ribbon, Schlitz and Blatz, you know you are in Milwaukee. The real gems, however, are found on tap here, with creative names and distinctive tastes. Even the tap handles are pieces of artwork; wrought-iron twisted pieces handmade by one of the bartenders, they are reminiscent of the days of the Renaissance. Live music is played most weekends on a stage opposite the bar, and theme nights abound during the week, from Trivia Tuesdays to Reggae Wednesdays.

Brewmaster Jacob Sutrick is working on an upcoming Bourbon Oatmeal Stout, which is sure to hit the drafts soon. "We use an old wooden bourbon barrel from Kentucky to brew this batch," he explains. "It gives the beer a distinct bourbon flavor, and it ups the alcohol content a bit."



Moustache Ride Pale Ale, Sixfinger IPA and Bottom Bracket Brown are a few beers created by Stonefly Brewmaster Jacob Sutrick.

WATER STREET BREWERY

101 N. Water St. (414) 272-1195

Year-round Beers:

- Honey Lager Light**
- Swissman Weiss**
- Trinich Lager**
- Water Street Amber**
- Light Ale**
- Mad World**
- Boberfest**
- Cherry Weiss**

Seasonals:

- Irish Stout**
- Doppelbock**
- Scottish Brown**
- Belgian Wit**
- Black Lager**
- Russian Imperial Stout**
- Cream Ale**
- Porter**
- Dunkle Weiss**

Since 1987, Water Street Brewery has been a staple on Water Street for brews and grub. The 100-year-old cream city brick set by light-colored tiles gives the space a bright and airy feel. The beer and food menu is created inside a newspaper titled *The Water Street Journal*, a throwback to the old *Milwaukee Journal*, complete with a green tint. Beer facts, beer trivia and a description of their brewing process is included, along with descriptions of the memorabilia available for purchase, which includes anything from beer chains to T-shirts.

Brewmaster George Bluvas III has created a plethora of recipes, with many seasonal brews featured throughout the year. The popularity of the brewery led to the 2000 opening of a second location in Delafield. Water Street Brewery beers can be found at other local establishments, including Louise's, Pinner Hall, Brew City Barbecue, Oakland Toria and Rudy's Mexican Restaurant.

ROCK BOTTOM BREWERY

740 N. Plankinton Ave. (414) 276-3030

Year-Round Beers:

- Greenfield**
- American Light**
- Honey Creek Pale Ale**
- Raccoon Red**
- Naughty Scot**
- Scotch Ale**

Seasonals:

- Razzberry Wheat**
- German-style Hefeweizen**
- Dunkleweizen**
- American-style Wheat**
- Weizenbock**
- Belgian-style Wit**
- Irish Stout**
- Oatmeal Stout**
- Imperial Stout**
- Porter**
- Black Lager**
- Brewmaster's Choice (rotating)**

"Serious about our food. Crazy about our beer," is how the menu describes the chain joint. Walk past huge copper casks upon entering Rock Bottom, and once inside, warm woods and earth tones make you feel at home. Riverfront patio dining in the heart of Milwaukee's Riverwalk is an option for the summer months, while a cozy booth might be a better option for the winter.

"The reason that our beers are not bottled and sold at stores is because our brewmasters have creativity in the brewing process," general manager Ryan Hartman explains. "The beers are different at each location, and their names are, too. For example, here in Milwaukee, we offer Greenfield American Light, while there may be a similar beer at a Rock Bottom in Illinois with a different name." 

