

THE BEER ENTHUSIAST'S

DRAFT

LIFE ON TAP

IPA
13 WAYS

NEW YEAR,
NEW BEER:
CRAZY
BEER
SERIES

AMERICA'S 100★BEST BEER BARS

REVIEWS:
WOOD-AGED
BEERS
IMPERIAL IPAS
STRONG
SCOTCH ALES
WHEAT WINES
SMOKED
PORTERS
AMERICAN
AMBERS
BLACK IPAS

WHERE TO DRINK NEXT:
3 EMERGING BEER TOWNS
TRAVERSE CITY, ST. LOUIS,
OKLAHOMA CITY

BEER LOVER'S
BREAKFAST
BEER PANCAKES
PERFECT BLOODY MARY



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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012



St. Elmo (left) is an Indy institution. But after winning a record eight medals at this year's GABF, Sun King Brewing (below) is, too.

BEERTOWN, U.S.A.: INDIANAPOLIS

With a booming slate of micro-breweries, a diverse restaurant scene and its own distinctive brand of Hoosier hospitality, Naptown is anything but sleepy. Indianapolis proves its mettle this month by playing host to Super Bowl XLVI.

BY AMY LYNCH

BREWERIES

A microbrewing renaissance is underway in Indy, heralded by a handful of new operations within the past two years and more on deck. In July 2009, fun-loving **Sun King Brewing** (*Downtown, sunkingbrewing.com*) became the city's first full-scale production brewery to open since Indianapolis Brewing closed in 1948. Creative quaffs like Crab Apple Wit and 2011 GABF medalist Popcorn Pilsner made from locally sourced ingredients keep fans coming back. Rob Caputo, head brewer at **Flat12 Bierwerks** (*Downtown, flat12.me*), has a penchant for porters, so his beer lineup revolves around his smooth Pogue's Run incarnation. Seasonal variations infuse the flavors of tangerine, black-rum-soaked oak chips and glazed ham spices. **Bier Brewery** (*Binford Corridor, bierbrewery.com*) beat out more than 1,000 entries from throughout the country to win the coveted 2011 Indiana State Fair Brewer's Cup. This sophisticated nanobrewery cranks out small batches each week for sampling and growler fills; the crisp kölsch and

Belgian wit are standouts. Laid-back **Thr3e Wise Men Brewing** (*Broad Ripple, thr3ewise men.com*) concocts classic American-style beers for Scotty's Brewhouse locations around the state. The Two Lucy's Blackberry Wheat, made with Oregon-grown fruit and Cluster hops, packs a tangy punch. A 20-year-old mainstay, the **Broad Ripple Brewpub** (*Broad Ripple, broadripplebrewpub.com*) claims the title of Indiana's oldest operating brewpub. Its ambiance calls to mind a traditional English pub, but caters to non-meat-eaters with a full menu heavy on vegetarian fare that complements the Lawn Mower Pale Ale and a balanced ESB. New kid on the block **Triton Brewing** (*Fort Benjamin Harrison, tritonbrewing.com*) cuts a dashing figure in a renovated 1920s brick barn on the grounds of a former military base; ask for an impromptu tour when you arrive. The family-friendly tasting room offers pours of reverse-osmosis-crafted beers including the citrusy Railsplitter IPA. Headquartered in Bloomington, **Upland Brewing** (*South Broad Ripple, uplandbeer.com*) manages a popular outpost in Indianapolis where sippers can test-drive the wares, including the seasonal and superbly caramelly Ard Ri Irish red, within a cozy coffee-shop-style tasting room.

BARS

Tomlinson Tap Room (*Downtown, tomlinson taproom.com*) commandeers a sunny mezzanine corner of the historic City Market building to serve a rotating selection of Indiana-made microbrews. Selections change weekly, making





Thr3e Wise Men Brewing (top) makes innovative beer in modern digs, while Tomlinson Tap Room (center) serves only local brew inside the historic City Market.



this a great place to sample some of the best beers the state has to offer. During warm-weather months, the huge outdoor *biergarten* at the **Rathskeller** (*Downtown, rathskeller.com*) is a popular backdrop for live music; this time of year, stay inside the Bavarian-esque beer hall (one of many rooms in the 19th-century Athenaeum building) where patrons down German food and a vast beer selection. Opened last year, **The Sinking Ship** (*South Broad Ripple, thesinkingship.com*) has quickly gained a following for its slightly raucous vibe, chatty servers and draft beer (including pours from local newbie **Fountain Square**) served in old-school Mason jars. A few blocks north, **Twenty Tap** (*South Broad Ripple, twentytap.com*) offers, yes, 20 taps of regional craft beers, along with a noteworthy Cuban sandwich.

DINE

Although Indianapolis is home to an array of spectacular ethnic eateries, some of the best restaurants excel at putting modern spins on good old Midwestern comfort food. No Indy

visit is complete without a stop at **St. Elmo Steak House** (*Downtown, stelmos.com*), a local landmark since 1902 famous for its sinus-searing spicy shrimp cocktail. The new St. Elmo 1933 Lounge provides a speakeasy-style perch for a pre- or post-dinner cocktail. Across downtown, industrial-chic **Black Market** (*Mass Ave., blackmarketindy.net*) proffers a well-edited beer list and terrific gastropub grub; don't miss the unusually addictive house pickle plate with crunchy peanut butter for dipping. Diners never know what to expect at **Recess** (*South Broad Ripple, recessindy.com*), and that's the main attraction: Chef Greg Hardesty changes up his four-course prix-fixe menu daily to

showcase seasonal ingredients. *Bon Appetit* named the Batali sandwich at **Goose the Market** (*Fall Creek Place, goosethemarket.com*) one of the best in the country, but there's also a deli counter packed with house-cured meats, cheeses and gelato to consider. Go online to track down **Duos** food truck (*duosindy.com*) for a short menu of hyperfresh organic sandwiches, soups, salads and desserts that changes each week. **Café Patachou** (*various locations, cafepatachou.com*) bills itself a "student union for adults," where diners are encouraged to help themselves to gourmet coffee while they wait for a table. The broken-yolk egg sandwiches and the "Hippie with a Benz" omelet are satisfying choices for breakfast, lunch or brunch.

SLEEP

Thirty-three floors earn the **J.W. Marriott** (*Downtown, marriott.com*) bragging rights as the tallest hotel in the state. This massive metallic blue monolith is positioned for prime access to White River State Park attractions, Circle Centre Mall and trendy downtown restaurants. Need pampering? **The Conrad** (*Downtown, conradindianapolis.com*) delivers with an on-site luxury spa/salon, Tastings wine bar and the splurge-worthy Capital Grille. Fresh off an \$8 million renovation, the **Omni Severin** (*Wholesale District, omnihotels.com*) digs feature breathtaking views; request a room with a balcony, then pick up a growler to enjoy al fresco. ●

PASS ME A WARM ONE

Heading up to Indy for the Super Bowl? Better stock up on beer before the game. On Sundays, Indiana forbids selling beer in retail spots (bars and restaurants only), and every other day of the week, suds can only be sold at room temperature at most retailers. And because drinkers will cross state lines to buy booze, that means a loss of about \$9 to \$12 million in tax revenue for the state: Hoosiers for Beverage Choices is working to change Indiana's beverage laws; contribute to the cause at ChangeIndiana.org.