

# [BETTER] BEER

GO BEYOND BUD WITH  
A SIX-PACK OF NEW ENGLAND  
CRAFT BEERS.

BY COURTNEY HOLLANDS

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEL BENJAMIN

**T**he business of artisan-made small-batch beer, known as craft beer, is booming. There are close to 1,500 craft breweries in the country, with 108 in New England that meet the National Brewers Association's definition: independent owners producing less than 2 million barrels annually. Even in a recession (perhaps because of it?) sales are growing, according to association numbers. At Downtown Wine and Spirits in Somerville's Davis Square, manager Dan Parsons says that the popularity of hand-crafted brews has two things driving it. "It's not just demand from customers," he says, "it's an increase in people brewing the beer."

This region has a history with craft breweries, says Paul Gatza, director of the National Brewers Association. In the 1980s, breweries like Samuel Adams and Geary's paved the way. There's also an element of regional independent spirit, he says. In other parts of the country, breweries are clustered around urban centers, but here they're tucked in out-of-the-way places. "People aren't afraid of making their barns into breweries," Gatza says.

You could spend weeks sampling every beer made in New England, from Vermont's Magic Hat Circus Boy to Rhode Island's Newport Storm Hurricane Amber Ale. Here's a six-pack to get you started: unique local brews that are delicious right now.

*Courtney Hollands, a senior producer at boston.com, served craft beer at her wedding this weekend. Send comments to magazine@globe.com.*

**A NOTE ON BAR AND SHOP PICKS** • Taps rotate and stocks run out, so call ahead if you're looking for something specific.

ALLAGASH TRIPEL  
[ BREWED SINCE 1999 ]



**BREWER** • Allagash Brewing Company, Portland, Maine **TASTE** • The big character of this award-winning Belgian Tripel-style beer comes in part from the yeast strain. "It's a strong beer, but really palatable," brewer Jason Perkins says. There's an herbal, orangey flavor and smell. This dangerously smooth sipper hides its high alcohol content well. Drink it from a beer chalice. **ON TAP** • The Publick House, Brookline; Sunset Grill, Allston; The Armsby Abbey, Worcester **IN BOTTLES** • about \$10 for a 750-milliliter bottle or \$12 for a four-pack of 12-ounce bottles at Blanchard's Liquors, Allston; Publick House Provisions, Brookline; Marty's Liquors, Newton

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