

Stop at These Six Fantastic Breweries During Seattle Beer Week

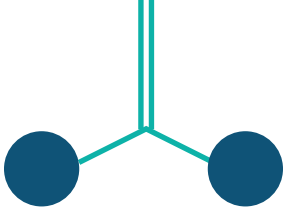
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The Stranger
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Seattle Beer Week is officially upon us (May 4–14), and there will be beer everywhere. Probably even on your shoes, depending on how hard you lean into the festivities. While there are plenty of events both wacky and wonderful held during the 11-day stretch, it's primarily about the beer. Thus, I offer you a list of recommended stops based principally on the quality of their offerings. Cheers!

Schooner EXACT Brewing Company

Full disclosure: I used to sling pints for these folks. But aside from that fact, they make great beers and they do it with remarkable consistency; I worked there for nearly two years, and not once did I try a beer that was bad. Some are exceptional (their Hopvine IPA won best in show at the prestigious Brussels Beer Challenge), some are not my jam, but absolutely none are unpalatable. That's no small feat in craft brewing. I'm particularly fond of their hoppy American-style saison. Also, the menu by chef Martin Conquest is one of Sodo's best-kept secrets. Or was, I guess. Whoops. (3901 First Ave S)





Seapine Brewing Company

Working at Schooner burned me out on IPA. All of Schooner's beer is good, but much of it is hoppy as hell, and my time there gave me a serious overdose of that aromatic flower. Seapine's light-bodied, slightly citrusy IPA—seemingly always on tap at Hooverville, my subsequent bar gig—is the beer that brought me back into the Northwest IPA fold. My neighborhood bar always seems to have Seapine's Ur-Pils on hand, too, and I've even experimented with their Mosaic Pale. So far, I'm stoked on all of it. Their owner is also one of the most uncannily positive people I've ever met, so go grab a pint and soak up some of that sunny energy. (2959 Utah Ave S)

Cloudburst Brewing

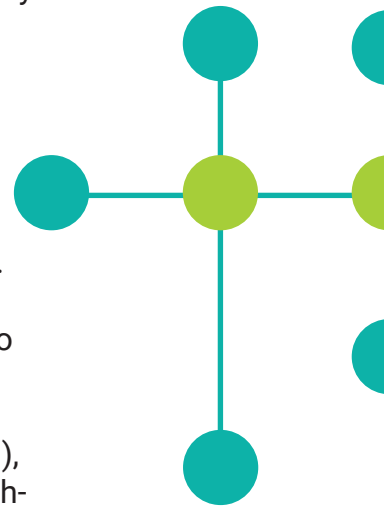
Steve Luke, Cloudburst's founder/owner, is the former head brewer at Elysian Fields, and he left to start Cloudburst shortly after Elysian sold to AB InBev. The rumor mill would love to say he quit in protest, but it sounds like he just wanted to make his own magic. Considering he's the dude who conjured up the ever-popular Space Dust IPA and ran Elysian's sour/natural ferment program, it's safe to say he's got a few delicious tricks up his sleeve. Beer-wise, how can you not go with the Wu-Tang-referencing citra/simcoe DIPA Deadly Melody? Wu-Tang Forever was an instant classic and so is Cloudburst. (2116 Western Ave)

Holy Mountain Brewing

Holy Mountain will challenge your palate in the best way possible. You will not find a standard-issue Northwest IPA, or anything resembling an IPA, really. You will, however, find explorations into the far side of fermentation (lots of *brettanomyces* action!) that will force you to drink outside of your comfort zone, and you will love it. They're also super into metal (the music, not the material), which makes for some fun beer names. I'm a big fan of the Witchfinder, a funky brett saison that always gets Witchfinder General's "Friends of Hell" stuck in my head. Perhaps that's not inappropriate, as Holy Mountain also made a beer called Satan Is Real. (1421 Elliott Ave W)

Stoup Brewing

Stoup bills its offerings as "the art and science of beer." It is both, being a partnership between a food-and-beer-loving scientist, his similarly gastronomically-and-scientifically-inclined wife, and a biology teacher/cicerone friend of theirs. There are lots of great breweries in Ballard (it was hard to leave out Reuben's Brews!), but Stoup's beer sets it apart. Their Robust Porter, for example, is like



the dark-beer-loving Emperor Palpatine to my pilsner-snob Anakin Skywalker: It converts me to the dark side every time. You've also gotta love the adroitly named T2R Haymaker—the T2R is our tongue's bitterness receptor, and the beer is a self-described "hop bomb," brewed to play well with its namesake taste bud. (1108 NW 52nd St)

Flying Bike Brewery

Flying Bike is Seattle's first and only cooperative brewery, meaning that the members own it, run it, and decide on what beer it will brew. It's a pretty rad concept, and it looks to be leading to some pretty innovative beers, like their special brew from last month, the Rill Dill IPA. It's dry-hopped with the already dilly Sorachi Ace hop, then infused with fresh dill, garlic cloves, dried chili, and pickles. "This is certainly the weirdest, highest-risk infusion we've done at Flying Bike," they say. "But with great risk, comes great reward!" May fortune favor the bold! (8570 Greenwood Ave N)

