



Story Starters

New York's Craft Beer History

New York has played an important role in beer making throughout history, starting as one of the earliest states to brew beer. The oldest known commercial brewery in the country dates back to 1621 on the southern tip of New Amsterdam (the Dutch settlement to later become part of New York City). Fast forward to the late 1800s when the fertile soils of Central New York produced 90% of the nation's hops, and the state was the number one beer producer in the country. New York remains a leader in the craft beer industry, releasing the first state-wide craft beer app and ranking as 4th in the country for economic impact.

Women of Craft Beer

Meet the women across New York State that are making waves in the once male-dominated craft beer industry. Home to the birthplace of the women's rights movement, New York has always been at the forefront of equal rights. In addition to seeing an increase of women craft beer drinkers, the New York beer industry continues to embrace female founders, owners, CEOs, and brewers. Individual breweries in New York State have hosted events specifically for women in the industry to connect. The New York State Brewers Association (NYSBA) seeks female representation across their initiatives – with women panelists speaking at their annual Craft Brewers Conference and acting on the 2019 board of directors. More so, two out of NYSBA's three staff members are women.

As Seen on the Screen

Taste the beers that have been inspired by pop culture. Prison City Pub & Brewery plays into film favorites with beers named "Shawdank Redemption," "Cherry Poppins," and "Cool Hand Cuke." Brewery Ommegang has collaborated with HBO to produce their "Game of Thrones" limited-edition brews, including the most recent "For the Throne" co-fermentation beer. Seven Story Brewing identifies the seven distinct plotlines of every story, and names each beer in honor of a story that falls within that archetype. Although subtle, craft beer (and movie) enthusiasts will recognize lines from movies such as "There's a Chance" or "Looking good, Billy Ray."

Range of Beer Across Regions

New York State, the fourth most populous state in the country, is divided into eleven different regions. Pair that with the state's diverse geography – the Catskill and Adirondack Mountains, lowlands, eleven finger lakes, and borders of two great lakes – and one can understand the variety of brewing styles across New York. Dig deep into the reasons for the range of beers – from access to different ingredients to the distinct personalities and attitudes of each location. New York State – Beer as diverse as the state they are brewed in!

Community Collaborations

As a supportive group, the craft beer industry is no stranger to collaborations. Learn how New York State breweries support their neighborhoods and special causes through partnerships with local organizations and community events. Taste the beers brewed collaboratively with other breweries and nearby businesses – such as the collaborations many New York State breweries are creating to support both professional and minor league sports teams.

Economic Importance of Tap Rooms

Breweries and tap rooms have an economic influence on communities, towns, and cities, especially those in rural areas. The impact begins with laborers retrofitting spaces and installing equipment in a new site, to breweries hiring production, sales, marketing, and tap room employees. Acting as community hubs, gathering places, and event spaces, tap rooms exude economic development into their neighborhoods. With breweries attracting local customers and tourists from far and wide, additional business open in the area, and other shops and restaurants extend their hours. Breweries help build or rebuild communities with many examples to point to throughout the state.

Themed Tap Rooms & Unique Buildings

Beer trails, passport programs, and the NYSBA New York Craft Beer app encourage consumers to try out new breweries and tap rooms. This shift leads craft beer enthusiasts to view breweries and tap rooms as individual destinations, with a memorable experience at each one. To set the stage, some New York State brewers turn to adaptive reuse – transforming old fire stations, warehouses, rustic barns, and even department stores into tap rooms. Others play into a theme across names and décor, such as the mug shot for each mug club member of Prison City Pub & Brewery.

Breweries Celebrating Local History

Beer has been fostering communities since its beginning, so it's no surprise that New York craft breweries choose to embrace local history. Big Ditch Brewing in Buffalo celebrates the Erie Canal, which was sarcastically referred to as "Clinton's Big Ditch" in the early 1800s, and embodies the spirit of those who dug the canal with their bare hands. They honor the importance of the Erie Canal to the City of Buffalo through beer names like "Low Bridge" and

“Excavator” and their iconic shovel tap handles. Big Ditch is one of many breweries along the Erie Canal honoring this true American transportation game changer. Eli Fish Brewing Company, the first commercial brewery in Batavia in 100 years, is named after a business man known for bringing hope and productivity to Batavia. Eli Fish Brewing continues producing beer out of respect for the hard work of Eli Fish and his contemporaries.

Conservation & Sustainability in Breweries

Learn how New York State breweries are limiting their impact on the local environment and utilizing sustainable business practices. For example, The Catskill Brewery’s facility uses the most environmentally-friendly building technologies including a geothermal system to heat and cool. Empire Brewing Company has created a waste minimization program for their food preparation and sends spent grains from their brewing process to a local livestock company.

Team Building in Breweries and Corporate Board Rooms

As social and community hubs, breweries and tap rooms are turning into team-building spaces. See how neighboring businesses celebrate successes over a craft beer, or sales teams build relationships through competitive cornhole at a nearby tap room. The New York State Brewers Association launched a Master Tasting Experience designed for large groups to learn about craft beer’s vibrant past while tasting varieties of local craft beer.

Beer-Infused Foodie Favorites

Craft beer consumers are turning towards brewpubs to get their fix of not only favorite brews – but also beer-infused foods. Ithaca Beer Co. serves a Cheddar Ale Soup made with their Brew York Pale Ale and NY cheddar cheese. Another fan favorite, Southern Tier Brewing makes a pulled pork sandwich that is topped with NY State cheddar cheese and IPA-battered onion straws.

Retired Military Members and the NYS Brewing Scene

Our military service members sacrifice for our country every day, but when they retire or leave the military, where do they end up? The answer in New York State is the growing brewing industry. There are many examples of brewers, owners and brewery employees who served our country, and even two breweries named in honor of service members, Boots Brewing and the soon to open Heroes Brewing.