

Heady menu for Edinburgh craft beer festival

Scotland's largest celebration of craft beer returns to Edinburgh on May 24 and 25 at the Biscuit Factory with a special foodie focus, top-class music acts and a huge selection of craft beers from some of the world's most innovative brewers.

Ahead of the festival the team from We Are Beer, the organisers behind the event, look at some of the trends they expect to see on tap this year.

Daniel Sylvester, We Are Beer, co-founder, said: "Looking at trade-based events and having attended exhibitions across the country, I've noticed the sharp rise of low-ABV beers and a huge growth in alcohol-free drinks as a whole.

"Within beer, we've seen the foundation laid by the likes of BrewDog and Mikkeller, and now breweries like Big Drop are expanding the offering and upping the low-ABV game.

"As greater health consciousness progresses across our industry, I predict a greater focus on lower-strength beer—without compromising on flavour."

Low ABV beers you can try at Edinburgh Craft Beer Festival:

Black Isle Brewery – Goldfinch, 3.5%

This refreshingly hopped IPA is a zingy and citrusy little number, with the added bonus of being gluten free as well as low ABV.

Big Drop Brewing Co. – Lager, 0.5%

Big Drop specialise in making the finest alcohol free beer and will be bringing their range to Edinburgh in May, including their crisp and balanced Lager with notes of honey and pepper.

Festival breweries which are smashing it with their core

range:

Pilot, Edinburgh: Pilot has made a name for itself for its straight talking online, and it's an approach which is reflected in the brewery itself; with a solid core line up of beers which are becoming mainstays in the bars of Edinburgh.

Tempest Brew Co., Galashiels: Certainly not shy of a seasonal brew or limited edition, but Tempest's core range proves it can weather any storm with pride of place at many a bar.

Lily White, head of contenty, said: "With more breweries thinking further outside of the proverbial box, and breweries such as Harbour, Wild, Burning Sky, and Mills simultaneously producing excellent wild and mixed-fermentation beers and growing interest in them, one area, I'm keeping a beady eye on is fermentation.

"With fermented beverages such as kombucha and kefir entering the mainstream more of late, and breweries across the world experimenting with the likes of Kveik yeasts last year, I think we'll see a rise in interest in less conventional fermentation methods—not only from breweries, but the consumer base too."

Fantastic ferments pouring at Edinburgh Craft Beer Festival:

Vault City Brewing – Mandarin Mandarin, 7.7%

One of the capital's youngest breweries but already competing with the big guns, Vault City won a place at the festival at the annual Raise The Bar competition. This one is a juicy, hoppy delight.

Vault City Brewing – Strawberry Skies, 8.5%

Another one from the Raise The Bar winners; fresh strawberries blended with Madagascan vanilla and lemony-tart hibiscus.

Greg Wells, co-founder, said: "We all know beer and food is a match made in heaven, if done right. Craft beer as part of the street food and casual dining sector has been a major part of 'going out' for the last four or five years.

“However, this will be the year we see it fully-established into the higher end of food—seeing great sharing bottles alongside wonderful lagers and pilsners in the very best restaurants is so exciting.

“Hats off to places like Timberyard in Edinburgh, or Smoking Goat in London for really pushing the agenda forward. Ultimately fermentation is the wonderful alchemy that connects the very best chefs and brewers together in an appreciation of flavour – and I think that’ll grow ever stronger in 2019.”

Food at the festival:

Aizle, Edinburgh

A first for one of Edinburgh’s most popular restaurants and the festival , this collaboration elevates the food offering to a new culinary level as Aizle presents its inaugural festival menu, bringing its innovative seasonal flavour to the Edinburgh Craft Beer Festival.

Harajuku Kitchen, Edinburgh: Harajuku Kitchen fuses traditional family recipes & fresh Asian ingredients with AA rosette level flair to create the best Japanese food in Edinburgh. We are excited to be able to pair beers to these flavours

Tickets for Edinburgh Craft Beer Festival are priced from £45 and include entry, all your beer, a special festival beer glass and magazine, and access to the festival’s pop-up kitchens and music acts.

Opening Night: Friday 24th May, 6pm – 11pm, £45 standard / £65 VIP

Saturday Social: Saturday 25th May, 11.30am – 4.30pm, £45 standard / £65 VIP

Big Night Out: Saturday 25th May, 6pm – 11pm, £45 standard / £65 VIP

The Beer Geek Weekender: Friday 24th May – Saturday 25th May (all sessions), £100

Purchase your ticket now at edinburghcraftbeerfestival.co.uk

Breweries confirmed: 6° North (Aberdeen), 71 Brewing (Dundee), Amundsen (Oslo), Basqueland Brewing Project (St Sebastian, Spain), Beerbliotek (Gothenburg, Sweden), Black Isle (Munlochy), Brew Dog (Aberdeen), Burnt Mill (Suffolk), Cloudwater (Manchester), Collective Arts (Hamilton, Ontario), Cromarty (Cromarty), Dead End Brew Machine (Glasgow), Dig Brew Co. (Birmingham), Fierce Beer (Dyce), Firestone Walker (California), Gipsy Hill Brewing Company (London), Hawkes (London), Lervig (Stravanger, Norway), Marble (Manchester), Mikkeller (Copenhagen, Denmark), Mothership (London), Northern Monk Brew Co (Leeds), Overtone (Glasgow), Partizan (London), Pilot (Edinburgh), Stone & Wood (Byron bay, Australia), Stone Berlin (Germany), Tempest Brew Co (Galashiels), The Kernel (London), The White Hag (Co. Sligo, Ireland), Thornbridge (Edinburgh), To Øl (Denmark), Track (Manchester), Turning Point (York), Vault City (Edinburgh), Whiplash (Kildare, Ireland), Wild Beer Co (Mallet, England) and Wylam (Newcastle Upon Tyne).