

CRAFT

Beer Wine & Spirits

Celebrating A Craft Beer New Year

Page 27

FREE

Locally Owned And
Published In Maine

Solve The Cold-Weather
Drinking Dilemma

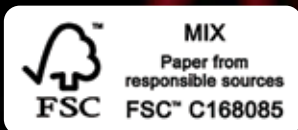
Page 8

Destination Drinking

Page 21

Embracing the
Season..

Page 17



January | February 2025

FEATURES

VOLUME 4 - ISSUE 1 - JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2025

7 Solve the Cold-Weather Drinking Dilemma by Jeff Cutler



12 Two Maine Guys

15 Embracing The Season.. by Beverley Ann Soucy

19 Destination Drinking by Jonathan Strieff

22 Recipes by Jonathan Strieff

27 Celebrating A Craft Beer New Year by Dave Bolton

A PRODUCT OF
Turner Publishing
INCORPORATED

CRAFT

PUBLISHER
Jodi Cornelio

DESIGNER
Brett Bannister

bbannister@turnerpublishing.net

**CONTENT
COORDINATOR**

George McGregor

gmcgregor@turnerpublishing.net

SALES

George McGregor

gmcgregor@turnerpublishing.net

Steve Rudin

srudin@turnerpublishing.net

Kathlene Clarke

kathlene@turnerpublishing.net

Jessica Mason

jess@turnerpublishing.net

**CONTRIBUTING
WRITERS**

Jeff Cutler

Jonathan Strieff

Beverly Ann Soucy

Dave Bolton

Proofreading by: Jared Wood &

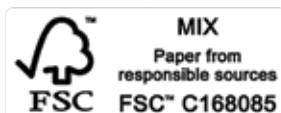
Robin Robertson

Cover Photo by OurWhiskey
Foundation

craftmaine@turnerpublishing.net

craftmainemagazine.com

www.turnerpublishing.net

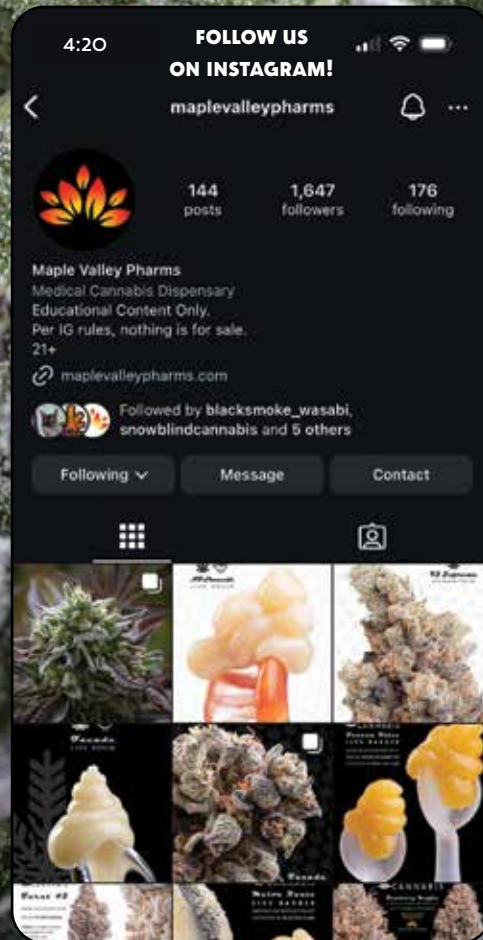


Craft Maine Beer, Wine & Spirits features content about beer, wine, spirits, and alcohol-related products and information. In addition, the magazine features articles, political editorials, legal information, and news relevant to the craft industry. All content within our publication and on our website is for educational and entertainment purposes only and should not be considered personal, legal, or medical advice. Both the printed publication and website are intended for those over the age of 21. In the state of Maine, alcohol is intended for use by those 21 and older. If consuming, please keep out of the reach of children. The Publisher assumes no responsibility for the advertisements within this publication. We strive to ensure the accuracy of the information published. The Publisher cannot be held responsible for any consequences which arise due to errors or omissions. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. All rights reserved.



MAPLE VALLEY
PHARMS
AUTUMN MEANS
Fine Cannabis
IS IN-SEASON

SHOP ONLINE OR
VISIT US IN-STORE!



MAPLEVALLEYPHARMS.COM | 279 MAIN STREET, WATERTOWN, ME 04901 | (207) 859-3038

**AGENCY
LIQUOR STORE**

**THANK YOU
PATRONS!**



TWO UNIQUE STORES CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN THE SAME SHOPPING CENTER

*Your one-stop
shop for all
your needs.*



*The selection
is outta
this world!*

DISCOUNT BEVERAGE STORE

WINE

1,900 choices

LIQUOR

1,800 choices

CRAFT BEER

1000+ choices

HARD CIDER

400 choices



Supermarket Open Daily, 7 a.m.–8 p.m.
U.F.O. Beverage Store Open Daily, 9 a.m.–8 p.m.
Catch our weekly ad on our website!

639 Roosevelt Trail (Rte. 302), Naples, Maine 04055
207-693-3988 • theumbrellafactorysupermarket.com

Locally Owned & Operated by David & Gail Allenson

IT'S ALWAYS WORTH THE TRIP.

Top off your trip at New Hampshire Liquor & Wine Outlet! No matter where in New Hampshire your travels take you, you're never far from our outlet locations.

Take a piece of the Granite State home with you by visiting our NH Made section featuring dozens of products made by local distilleries and wineries. There's something for everyone!



FOLLOW US FOR SAVINGS    [LiquorandWineOutlets.com](https://www.LiquorandWineOutlets.com)

*Some restrictions apply. Exclusive and last chance items not included. Please drink responsibly.



Photo by Anastasia Shuraeva

Solve the Cold-Weather Drinking Dilemma

Written by Jeff Cutler



Photo by Ernie Can Accr

When you're standing in a puddle of beer on a Thursday at midnight, you might start thinking about other jobs.

I'm genetically disposed to be cold. This isn't my attitude, it's my physiology... or my DNA. Essentially, I'm cold because my parents were cold.

These people - mum and dad - would scream for us to put a sweater on when they kept the house at 64° F all winter long. As children, we felt as if we lived in Canada because of the cold. I would use the cold as an excuse for poor grades - brain won't function in the cold.

It felt as if we were on the frontier with ice-cold wind spraying itself invisibly over the plains and right through our bones. Though I didn't have much of an issue with trips to Sunday River or similarly cold mountains every spare minute in the Winter.

Regardless, scant years later the cold bravado wore off for my parents. The tables flipped. Any time I went to visit the house would

be at 78° F. I'd have to remember to bring my pajama shorts if I was staying over.

At that point, I was the one with the interior furnace. I was the Mainer who would stroll downtown in Texas and shorts from the waist down, and a rugby shirt with the sleeves rolled up. It was one of my uniforms. Then the tides changed.

I started to get old and cold. My ability to ward off the cold disappeared when I hit 34, so I took appropriate steps to stay warm.

Best thing I did was start to layer like a maniac. Long underwear now makes an appearance in October and is a part of every wardrobe until April or May.

I also broke down and went all 'tourist' and made an investment in a genuine pair of LL Bean boots. I got the ones with the patchwork insulation inside. They're pretty good right now when it's 35°, but they're going to be perfect for the beach. Perfect for a guy who gets cold.

But I digress... What does any of this have to do with enjoying

Feature Story

beer, wine and mixed drinks in the winter?

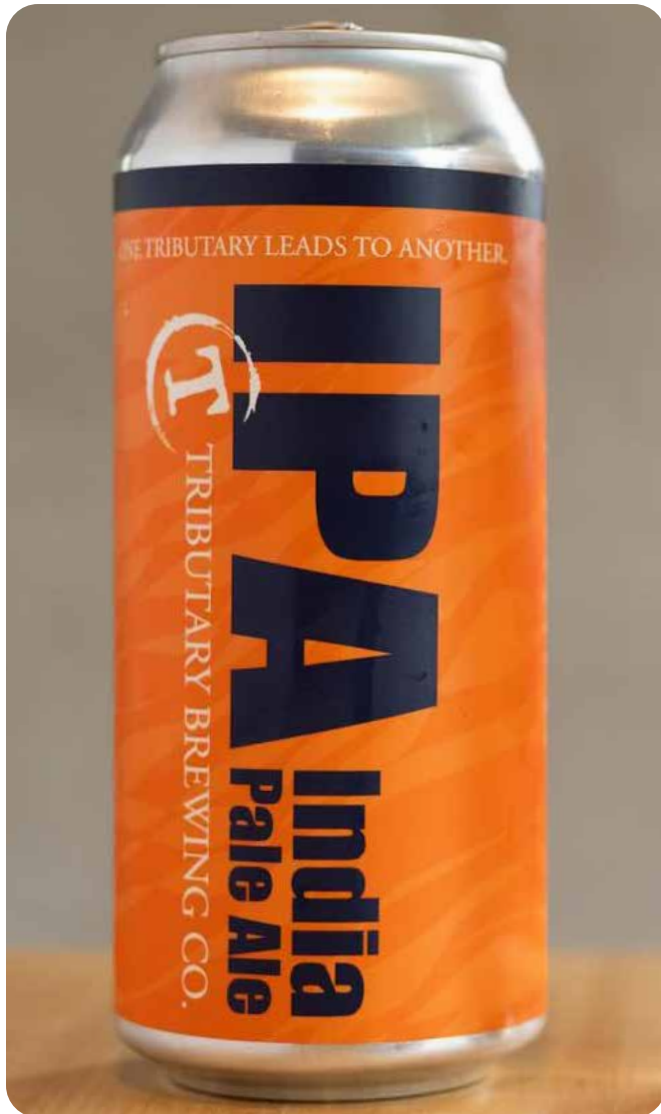
In my case, I like to drink all year long and I like to drink with people. Here in Maine, there are some (ALL OF THEM) people who like being outside in every season. Therefore, if I am to enjoy the company of others while delving into the magic of a cocktail or a fine IPA, I better solve my drinking dilemma.

This strategy has three parts - Drink Choice; Winter Wardrobe Tips; and Special Drinking Gear for the season.

We've agreed that my body is poorly insulated. Ergo, your decision on putting hand-warmers in your undergarments or ordering only Irish Coffee for four months, is solely up to you. Here we go...

Drink Choice

Photo by Tributary Brewing



The goal here is to improve your experience when cold-weather drinking. To that end, you can do a lot for your comfort and attitude if you stick with drinks that match the environment. We're not talking about drinking a frozen mudslide when you're shoveling off the rink or grooming a cross-country ski track. The challenge is to go complementary... find a drink that fits your location and activity.

The old favorites for outdoor activities include schnapps and other high-octane nips; rich coffee or cocoa drinks with a touch of practically any liquor; wine bladders and Camelbaks with a nice pinot or cabernet inside; and the old standby of beer.

In this instance, you might ask if beer a wise choice. This also depends on setting. If you want to stay warm and happy, don't just set your 12-pack on the ice next to your fishing hole. Putting the metal directly on the frozen surface will ensure that for a brief, panicked second during your first sip, your tongue will stick to the icy metal.

Avoid this hazard and keep your beer in a cooler. I still contend cans are better than bottles in many situations. Purists might argue about taste, I argue about safety. Nobody wants broken bottles around snowmobile trails, beaches, campsites or really anywhere. The eventuality is that the snow and ice will melt, and then the glass left behind is a real hazard.

This first factor in staying comfortable is the easy one. I'd say, choose your favorite drink and find a way to enjoy it regardless of the weather. Step three talks about items to keep your beverages insulated and secure.

Winter Wardrobe Tips

Have I written about the completely confusing hoodie I purchased online this year? It's doozy.

Late last summer I was starting to get a chill (see first couple paragraphs). Considering both fashion and function, I jumped online and ended up with neither. This occurred because I didn't completely match the item to my tasks/pastimes.

The order was for a large hooded sweatshirt in Liverpool Football Club red with a logo on the front and a fleecy inside. When the hoodie arrived, it was large. It had the right logo. It was comfy as ever. But there was no front pouch pocket!

Which leads me to ask, "Has anyone in the history of everyone, ever bought a pullover hoodie without a front pouch pocket?"

Feature Story

Photo via LL Bean



It is the absolute worst wardrobe choice for drinking. No place for cold hands. No place for an on-deck beer. No place for your phone. And layered up, all you've done is bulk up without adding usefulness.

You'd be better off wearing three long-john shirts and peeling them off as you got too hot. At least you'd be able to regulate temperature.

And that is the key. Regulate your temp with your wardrobe. Once you've selected the drink, clothing serves to support your choice. Here are some activities and some general clothing suggestions.

- **Snowmobiling** - multi-pocket snow suit works just fine; most ski outfits can be too thin to deflect the windchill when you're on the sled. Get mittens with glove fingers inside. Also check out motorcycle shops for windproof gloves. Lots of sleds have options for storage, but the easiest is insulated backpacks and coolers.

Be sure to bring something as simple as a fold-up rain poncho with you. Depending on what you wore, the poncho can keep you dry when sitting with the group at a food or rest break.

- **Cross-Country Skiing** - a certainly popular activity is cross-country skiing under the full moon at night. This means colder temps than usual and more detail to gearing up. Wear liners in your boots along with socks. The biggest enemy to staying warm is getting wet. So stay dry to stay warm.

Carrying items when you're on skis can be tough. Some belt-style packs are unobtrusive and they can carry a lot. The main benefit of the 'fanny-pack' style is that it affects your balance less than a pack up higher on your body.

Hats and gloves are pretty standard, and there are some winter hats now that feature a 'headlamp' type of light sewn into the fabric. Keeps the trail in sight and ensures you're visible if you veer off trail.

- **Fire-Pit Party** - the most relaxing of all winter recreational events requires specific clothing. Basically, a fire-pit gathering has two activities. Drinking; and finding a place to answer the call of nature.

For drinking, your mittens or gloves must offer enough dexterity to open and consume beverages. As this is critical, look for gloves that are Gore-Tex or similar. These offer wicking properties and won't get soaked if you need to reach into a cooler for a beer.

Additionally, invest in a pair of gloves with a clip so you don't



Photo by Kai Pro

Feature Story



Photo by Kaboompics

leave one behind when you amble off to the bathroom.

Speaking of the bathroom, think about your clothes and the weather. You don't want to be wearing button-fly jeans or any pants with multiple fasteners when it's 20° out. Make sure your pants and tops (wear separates, a snowsuit is unwieldy) are easy to manipulate and fit properly. Nobody ever wants to pee on their clothing, so keep your clothes in control.

Other than that, don't wear a lot of synthetic fibers and try to layer up as much as possible so you can peel off layers when the fire really gets going.

Special Drinking Gear

James Bond always seems to have the proper glassware for his martinis. That's because James Bond is a fictional character and didn't have to deal with mixing a martini on a chairlift at Sunday River. And you can bet he wouldn't be carrying stemware in his tuxedo snowsuit.

There's no substitute for the right tool for the job. So, here's a list of items that are the right tools for your Winter drinking adventures. I've listed them in no particular order - and most are good for any cold-weather activity.

Lastly, the majority of these items can be found at your local hardware or sporting-goods store.

Thermos-style insulated containers (amazing for keeping stuff cold - like mixers)

Leatherman-style tool (knives, openers, and more in a form factor that can attach to a belt)

Paper Towels and tissues (for wiping noses and other areas; weighs nothing; folds flat)

Can Cooler (Yeti and about everyone else now makes these for small and large cans)

Spare Socks (just in case)

Hand Warmers (do not use these against bare skin other than palms of hands or soles of feet; chemical can burn; *You can also now buy rechargeable hand warmers)

Phone Charger (batteries are sluggish in the cold and their charge diminishes; bring a spare battery to keep phone or other gadgets running)

Flask (recognized as the best alcohol transport device ever made)

and finally,

AirTags or similar tracking devices (put one in your backpack or bag; put one in your cooler in a zipper storage bag; put one in the storage area of your snowmobile; and keep one integrated into your wallet or keys.)

Winter in Maine offers so much to do. This year, when you're out enjoying time with friends and family in this great state, remember to be prepared.

When you've got the right clothes; gear and attitude, it can't help but be a great season. Especially now that you've learned how to solve any cold-weather drinking puzzle.

See you outside again in April! 🍀

From dreams to reality: *The story of Two Maine Guys*

What set the stage for the emergence of Two Maine Guys you ask? Two guys with a dream and a passion for cooking!

The duo, Eric Brown and Devan Lemar, met while working at several restaurants under Ralph Smith in Boothbay Harbor. While Devan was attending culinary school, he got a job at McSeagull's and worked his way to becoming head chef of the establishment at the age of 24. This is where Eric and Devan met. Eric had 16 years of cooking experience and technique on Devan, and while Devan achieved a position of head chef at such a young age, he still had a lot to learn and needed all the help he could get! Luckily, McSeagull's had an efficient crew of well-seasoned chefs and cooks that could give Devan the experience he needed.

Eric had a wealth of knowledge for Devan. He put in lots of time in different states under many different chefs, honing his culinary craft. Eric would work for free at various high-end restaurants, absorbing as much as he could and using their reputation to his advantage. Devan thought Eric was a fantastic mentor and would be a great business partner. One day after a shift, Devan mentioned his dream to one day own a food truck, a dream that Eric also shared. It was decided that this dream would come to fruition.

Eric came up with the name "Two Maine Guys" and would often greet Devan with a "Good Morning other Maine Guy." Unfortunately, on May 23rd, 2014, Devan received news that Eric was not coming into work. He passed away at the young age of 41.

In 2015, Devan was able to purchase the truck and open up shop. He kept the name Two Maine Guys for his friend Eric so he could be a part of the dream. He started serving a year later in Fairfield. In 2018, he moved the food truck business to Augusta and was able to get a second truck and opened their restaurant in Augusta in 2020.

Visit Devan and the friendly folks over at Two Maine Guys for some of the best Whole Belly Clams and Poutine in the state! 146 Mount Vernon Ave Augusta, Maine, you will not regret it!

Thank you for being a customer and supporting Two Maine Guys!

Hope to see you soon! 🍀



Photos by Two Maine Guys





207-480-1706 • 146 MOUNT VERNON AVE, AUGUSTA, ME

ORDER TODAY!

FACEBOOK.COM/TWOMAINEGUYSAUGUSTA



Maine's Statewide Beverage Distributor

15 Foss Road • Lewiston • 207.784.4026



Dry January



Photo by Alex Souza

Embracing the Season of Connection, Creativity, and Comfort

Written by Beverly Ann Soucy

For those who call Maine home, winter is a time of enchantment, a season where time slows down to a crawl and a time for real connection. As the last of Fall's warmth dissipates, rural New England becomes silent. With the arrival of the first snow and the anticipation of frozen lakes and mountain scenery, we settle into the rhythms of rural living in wintertime. Out come the shovels along with all the winter gear and the days begin to move a little slower. We find comfort in quiet activities and form a deeper connection to nature, ourselves, and to each other in those snowy months.

With the arrival of cold weather there comes a desire to nest, to cozy-up, to spend time in comfortable clothes, a favorite robe, and flannel sheets on the bed, with a selection of books that have been waiting to be read collecting dusted off for the dark nights ahead. If you are lucky enough to have a fireplace, nights sitting in front of it with friends and family are the most cherished moments of all that winter implies. As Mainers, we know that winter offers up a unique opportunity for creativity and crafts, connection and relaxation. From reading and writing to crafting and cooking there is no shortage of ways to pass the time in true Maine fashion.

Winter in Maine can also be a time for community. From potluck suppers, afternoon wine tastings, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and skiing, or simply experimenting with new recipes. There are countless ways to connect with friends and family, you only have to use your imagination and be dressed for the day. And if your family is anything like mine then looking forward to a day of snowmobiling or ice fishing and ice skating is most definitely on the list of things to-do.

In Maine, these activities are woven into the very fabric of our culture and have been for many generations. Snowshoeing is a great way to get a little exercise, see the scenery, track a few animals and spend time in nature. Ice fishing, another long-standing tradition, gets the entire family out of the house in hopes of pulling up a fish or two or in entering the many ice fishing competitions around the state.

Ice skating on our frozen lakes and ponds is a beloved winter pastime or if you are lucky enough the local fire department floods out the ballfield to create a skating rink complete with a wooden shack for changing boots into skates. The smell of that wood fired skate

shack and the sound of your blades hitting the ice makes for a fun afternoon and one to remember.

One of the very best aspects of winter is the neighborhood gatherings that inevitably take place after a big storm. We come out of our homes to help each other in the clean-up and that usually rolls on over to time spent sharing a meal.

As the colder weather sets in, cooking big hearty meals becomes part of your to-do lists on a regular basis. From a rich clam chowder to a hearty beef stew these recipes passed down from generation to generation not only fill your belly but warm your spirit and conjure up memories of childhood. From early childhood those meals and smells become a permanent part of your heart and recreating them becomes an entire day well-spent. Remember the homemade donuts your grandmother used to make that were put into brown bags filled with sugar for shaking and then eaten in their entirety? Or the homemade red sauce that your dad would spend days cooking, his own secret recipe? There were dozens of meatballs made and homemade sausage all slowly cooked over a two-day period where you couldn't come into the kitchen for a taste until he gave the official word. Or the traditional French meat pies that lined the sideboards, that recipe handed down through the generations from your great grandmother's recipe box. Or those jars of chocolate chip cookies that all our moms made?

And while Sunday afternoons were spent with family all winter long, and maybe a football game, Saturdays were spent in the company of friends.

As the snow comes down, drinking wine and sampling artisanal cheeses and homemade goodies becomes a weekly activity. From rich stews and roasted meats to all the baked goods you can imagine, along with the very best crusty loaves of bread. All of it a proper excuse to get together for a game of cards or for a day spent outdoors that inevitably rolled over to a night of eating and drinking and music making.

If covid taught us anything, it taught us the art of sourdough and of bread making. Whether you are a seasoned bread maker or a novice wine enthusiast the art of sourdough and spirits offers up a world of possibilities for experimenting on your friends and family with no rules.

Feature Story

The simple art of sourdough is a basic mixture of equal parts of water and flour in order to harness the wild yeast and bacteria present in your environment. They grow and thrive and become alive producing the characteristics of sourdough bread for the flavor and texture.

And when those loaves come out of the oven there is nothing better in the dead of winter for the smells and the possibilities.

A simple recipe for creating your own starter:

- Unbleached flour
- Chlorine free or filtered water
- A glass jar
- Wooden spoon.

Day 1: start by combining equal parts of flour and water 1/3 c flour 1/3c water. Store the mixture until it is well blended with the consistency of pancake batter and loosely cover it with either plastic wrap or a kitchen towel. Let sit for 24 hours at room temp. Warmer is better for the fermenting process.

Day 2-7: For the next six days you will need to feed your starter to encourage growth. Each day discard half the starter and then add equal parts of water to flour and stir. Let sit for another 24 hours. Repeat over the course of 6 days. As you continue to feed your starter you will notice changes in the smell and in its appearance. It will be tangy and will start to bubble. Once it bubbles regularly it is ready to use. In order to save it you can store it in your refrigerator to slow down the fermentation. It will then only need to be fed weekly in order to keep it alive. When you are ready to use it, bring it to room temperature after feeding and it is ready to use as your leavening agent in creating a great loaf of sourdough bread. There are many how-to videos online if you get stuck.

But I promise it is an easy process, and the rewards are great when you finally pull your first loaf out of the oven. And because you are now the caretaker of a living entity, giving your starter a name is a rite of passage. This starter will bring new life to your winter meals and gatherings and pair with a variety of wintertime foods: from grandma's chowder to dad's secret spaghetti sauce, or even alone with a slab of butter, a mug of homemade mead and a plate of cheese.

Add a great vintage port accompanied by a charcuterie board of imported meats and cheeses or a board of divine desserts followed by a sparkling champagne and you have the makings of a day well-spent. Wintertime is the perfect time of year to experiment with the heavier red wines the likes of Cabernets aged in old oak barrels or a full bodied and jammy Portuguese wine perfect for a movie night in, with friends, to sip on while indulging in that charcuterie board as well as serving up with any roasted meats. Or, if you prefer something more elusive, a Chilean red wine filled with berry and plum

flavors and aged in French oak might be another great choice. If you want to really wow your friends, bring out the Grand Cru Saint Emilion and stoke the fireplace. It is the perfect wine for sipping in the dead of winter in front of a fire.

This year for my circle of friends it was the art of making mead. For those that are willing to invest the time and patience that is required to craft a decent quality of mead the results can be truly rewarding and a little fun. While the basics of mead-making are relatively simple, the art of high-quality mead becomes an actual craft for understating the dance and intricate relationship between honey and yeast and time. For anyone making mead the maker must possess a certain degree of patience and persistence. The fermentation can take anywhere from several months to several years (but who wants to wait that long?) depending on your experience and the level of complexity as it ages. But despite the challenges and complexity the reward of this ancient craft is worth the effort and can help whittle away the dark days of winter in anticipation of a great end product.

At its core, mead-making is a simple process combining honey with water and yeast to create a fermentable mixture. It all starts with selecting your honey. In Maine there is no shortage of local beekeepers with different varieties of honey from the clover honeys of Springtime to the fall honeys, the likes of buckwheat and goldenrod or pumpkin each lending a unique finish to the final product. Yeast selection also plays a critical role in the final character of your mead. You can choose from a list of yeast strains the likes of champagne yeast, wine yeast, or wild yeast. The art of experimenting is as exciting as the final result. The temperature being the key ingredient for the final flavor ranking from a cool slow fermentation that imparts the more delicate flavors to a warm fast fermentation that can produce bold full-bodied meads.

In the realm of fermented beverages there are few drinks that have a richer history or a more nuanced flavor profile than mead. This ancient elixir hales all the way back to Viking times where casks were staples carried on Viking longships and cracked open during wartime and for all celebrations from weddings to conquering and have been a long-standing staple of human culture for thousands of years. Despite its long history, mead making remains an art form to this day.

It is quite easy to make your own mead. Simply put a half gallon of filtered non-chlorinated water in a large pot on medium heat. When it is warm, not boiling, add in approximately 3 pounds of honey which will give you a sweet mead. Stir it then take it off the heat. You don't want it to boil. While that is cooling a bit, put berries or citrus the likes of sliced oranges and perhaps some cranberries into a gallon jug that has been sanitized. Add a handful of raisins to your mixture as a natural nutrient for the yeast. Then pour the honey water into your jug. This is called "the must."

Feature Story



Photo by Beverly Ann Soutcy

Top the jug off with cool filtered water leaving 2 inches of head space. Then put the lid on the jug and gently mix it around a bit. The next step is to put in your yeast but keep in mind that you want your mixture to be warm but not too hot in order to not kill the yeast or the natural medicinal values of the honey. Give it all a shake to mix in the yeast and put the lid back on tightly and shake it up. You are going to need an airlock for the jug while it is fermenting. You can purchase one online easily.

In a couple of hours, you will start to see bubbles as they begin. Don't panic if it gets foamy; it is a sign that your mead is active. You can remove the airlock every couple of days and give it a rinse before putting it back on.

Keep your jug in a dark place to ferment. Give it 6-8 weeks before bottling. Bam, you now have your first batch of mead. There are many recipes for larger batches and many ingredients you can experiment with from fresh berries to medicinal plants. You are only limited by your imagination. I promise the rewards of this ancient craft are well worth the effort and a fun way to

impress your friends and family and a great project to pass the winter away.

As the winter days blend together, and you are anxiously waiting for the arrival of springtime, there is no shortage of ways to spend those snowy days. From all of the outdoor activities to embracing the quiet beauty of rural New England with a good book. It invites us all to slow down a little to savor all of the moments, to maybe try something new, to eat all the things and to experiment with the things that give pleasure. From the ruby ports to an aged scotch, from mead-making and bread-making, to sitting by a fire with a good brandy, a book or a movie. Whether it is with friends or family or both, the possibilities are endless and will fill your soul in the best possible way.

As the wind howls outside your window and the snow is coming down, you will find peace in the quiet activities that take their time and that come to be right when they are supposed to much like the changing of the seasons...those moments every year bringing us a deeper connection to Mother Nature and to each other. 🌱



Photo by Ibrahim Gunes

Destination Drinking

Written by Jonathan Strieff

The dark and cold of winter in Maine takes a toll on even the heartiest individuals. Between the 3 PM sunsets and the layers of expedition gear required to brave the outdoors, overcoming the impulse to hibernate from New Year's Day through the end of mud season can require almost superhuman effort. However, anyone who has experienced even a mild form of Seasonal Affective Disorder, or seasonal depression, knows that isolation like that only makes things worse.

Fortunately, the superabundance of winter events and activities planned each year across the state acts like a kind of defense mechanism for our collective mental health during the difficult season. Throughout Maine, businesses and municipal groups engage in outright defiance of winter's oppressive qualities by creating opportunities for people to escape our snowed in homes and congregate with others, sometimes over strong drinks, and celebrate the frigid features of where we live.

It might come across as masochistic, but the contrarian spirit to lean into and embrace the worst weather of the year might just be the sanest way to survive it.

Winter Carnival

The unrivaled pinnacle of cold weather celebration is the Winter Carnival in Quebec City. For over 100 years, Canadians have transformed the Plains of Abraham and surrounding areas in the old city into a frozen wonderland of arts, activities, and events during the weeks of the year when feet of snow and subzero degree temperatures (Fahrenheit) make it least probable. Somehow, the community and traditions forged over generations inspired other northern cities to attempt the same thing. Portland has historically attracted residents and visitors with ice skating in Deering Oaks Park and a toboggan chute and ski jump on the West End promenade, and in 2020, launched an official 10-day Carnival in Eastern Promenade Park. The event has changed dramatically from year to year, including being canceled in 2021 due to Covid-19, but has always been a showcase for live music, local food, and the creative ingenuity that severe cabin fever can spawn.

Further north, Main Street Skowhegan and Lake George Regional Park coordinate the Somerset Snowfest over two weekends in February. The celebration of all things winter features food

trucks and live music as well as countless events and activities that can't be found anywhere else. Some highlights from past years have included the kite-flying derby, downhill kayak races, a winter triathlon, ice hole tournament (cornhole on the frozen lake), yeti hunts and snowshoe story walks for kids, and the only equestrian skijoring competition in New England. The novelty of the events promises to be as thrilling for spectators as for the contestants.

Mid-Coast

Folks more inclined to art museums than street fairs will appreciate the creativity on display at the City of Belfast's Annual Ice Festival. Scheduled for the weekend of February 21 and 22, 2025, the Ice Festival transforms downtown Belfast into an al fresco art gallery of ice sculptures and other winter decorations. Besides the art, patrons can enjoy a drink at one of the numerous ice bars installed outside many of the downtown restaurants or participate in winter games and activities. The festival is also host to the State of Maine Ice Carving Championship. Ten teams from around the state will compete with chainsaws and hand tools to shape blocks of ice into works of art before a captivated audience. First, second, and third place winners receive cash prizes, in addition to a year's worth of bragging rights.

Lakes Region

Maine is nationally known as a destination for outdoor recreation. In the summer, it's camping, swimming, and sailing; in the fall, it's leaf peeping and deer hunting; and as soon the ice is thick enough, the smelt camps emerge on every body of water large enough to hold a single fish. Ice fishing in Maine long predates colonial settlers, with the Wabanaki peoples harvesting fish from frozen lakes and rivers since time immemorial. The ice fishing derby, however, is a relatively modern phenomenon.

Across the state, most municipalities with a lake inside its borders will host a Saturday or Sunday of competitive ice fishing in the winter. While warmer winters in recent years have forced many towns to postpone or cancel events, Maine's ice fishing derbies remain a vital cultural milestone of the season. While the official prizes are often negligible and the catches don't always provide much good eating, the communal experience of the derby provides a little light and warmth during some of the harshest weeks

Holiday Drinks

Photo by Kyle Haley



of winter. Besides, there are few places better than an icehouse to enjoy a 7 AM beer or mug of Allen's Coffee Brandy.

Western Mountains

Maine is home to the finest skiing in the East, or so I've been told. Not being a skier myself, I can only judge Maine's ski resorts by the quality of amenities offered off the slopes. Sugarloaf, Sunday River, and Saddleback Mountain all feature luxurious lodging, dining, and entertainment for the downhill-averse guests.

The Igloo at Sunday River offers a unique lounge experience featuring craft cocktails and snacks, music and atmosphere all in a structure made entirely of snow. The Igloo is only accessible by ski or snowboard; there is no parking lot and no walking trails, although guests can ride back from The Igloo with a designated driver in the PistenBully Cabin Cat, the Uber of the ski mountain.

Complimenting the ski runs, Sugarloaf Mountain is making

itself a live music destination with multi-day festivals all winter long. January 10-11 is called Electric Mountain at Sugarloaf, a weekend of DJs and electronic dance music, promising to heat things up through the long, cold nights. January 31-February 2 will be the 6th annual Fire on the Mountain festival, a celebration of all things Grateful Dead and Jerry Garcia, featuring seven bands from Maine and beyond. As the season wanes, April 3-6 will inaugurate the first annual Tall Timber Country and Americana festival and the following weekend marks the 37th annual Reggae Fest at Sugarloaf.

Winter sucks. That first snowfall back in November may be pretty but by January first the cold and darkness can pose a serious risk to just about anyone's mental health. The groups around the state working to bring people together despite the weather are providing an invaluable public service; helping the rest of us maintain our sanity in the face of insane weather conditions. This winter, we should all raise a glass in honor of the creative individuals trying to make winter in Maine feel just a little warmer. 🍷



Photo by Simon Berger

Recipes

Introverts, like me, may need strategies for combating cabin fever that don't involve mingling with dozens or hundreds of anxiety-inducing strangers. If you just can't bring yourself to get out of the house this winter but would like to avoid a months-long descent into madness, the surest approach is to occupy yourself with novel and stimulating projects to keep you busy. If the end result happens to be delicious and inebriating, so much the better.

The following recipe for infused whiskey is adapted from the book *Quench: Handcrafted Beverages to Satisfy Every Taste and Occasion* by Ashley English (Roost Books, 2014). The flavors of the orange peel and cloves used offer a perfect balance to transform cheap whiskey into something delicious and good quality whiskey into something extraordinary, but the basic principles of infusing alcohol are much more widely applicable. Experiment with other spirits and botanicals until you find a recipe that matches your own tastes exactly. 🍋

Ingredients

- 4 whole cloves
- Peel from 1 orange, taking care to avoid the white pith
- 750 ml whiskey

Instructions

1. Place the cloves and orange peel in a clean and dry quart-size mason jar.
2. Cover with the whiskey and secure tightly with lid.
3. Set aside to infuse in a cool, dark place. Begin testing for flavor after 3 days. For a stronger flavor, allow mixture to infuse for up to one week.
4. Strain the liquor into a bowl using cheese cloth or a coffee filter.
5. Use a funnel to transfer the infusion back into the jar.



For certain winter-phobics among us, the best way to deal with the cold weather blues may simply be living in denial. Crank up the heat, turn on some steel drum music, and mix up a batch of these tropical, citrus-forward bourbon sidecars. The recipe makes a perfect spiked lemonade for hot summer days and may just be strong enough to help you forget about the blizzard raging outside.

Bourbon Sidecar

Ingredients

- 2 oz good quality whiskey
- 1 oz triple sec
- Fresh squeezed juice from ½ lemon

Instructions

1. Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker over ice.
2. Shake well.
3. Strain into a rocks glass (parasol optional.)



VISIT BREWERIES, GET REWARDED



THE MAINE BEER TRAIL IS NOW ONLINE AT [BEERTRAIL.ME](https://beertrail.me)

CHECK IN HERE

Visit beertrail.me to start your journey, check into this brewery, and get rewarded for visiting Maine breweries!

The Maine Beer Trail is a digital passport program created by the Maine Brewers' Guild, the nonprofit for Maine's brewers. In 2020, the Guild launched the digital version of the Maine Beer Trail with support from the Maine Office of Tourism. You're invited to join thousands of others who have logged their visits to Maine breweries and submitted their Maine Beer Trails for rewards like a Maine Brewers' Guild, hat, t-shirt, or prize pack. Terms and conditions apply, visit beertrail.me or mainebrewersguild.org to find a map of Maine breweries, plan your route, and for more information about beer events around Maine. There is no cost to participate, must be 21 years old or older.

PENMOR



L I T H O G R A P H E R S



- BOTTLE/CAN LABELS
- COASTERS
- BOTTLE OPENERS
- SIGNS & BANNERS
- WINDOW CLINGS
- MAGNETS
- KEG COLLARS
- STATIONARY
- BUSINESS CARDS
- SALES MATERIALS

CHECK US OUT!

Join us for
**Karaoke
and
Trivia Nights!**



Dine in or take out.

Open year round. Live Entertainment, Multiple TV Screens and Great Food! CLEAN, FRIENDLY, FUN.

Phone 864-5616



Main St., Rangeley

Tully's

• BEER AND WINE •

Agency Liquor Store

We have the
**Best Selection of
Beer, Wine, and Cigars
in THREE States!**



45 Wells Plaza - Wells, ME
207-641-8622 • tullysbeerandwine.com



IRISH AND AMERICAN
*Pub Fare from Burgers & Pizza to
traditional Irish meals*
Serving until 9pm

32 BEERS on Tap

Come Join us on our
4-season deck!



Happy Hour 3-6pm

\$5 Well Drinks

"Talls for Smalls" Beer Specials
& Live Entertainment
on the Weekends

Follow us on Facebook for updates

Hours: Tue-Sat 11am-10pm

207.213.6218



18 Bridge St., Augusta, Maine



Photos by Dave Bolton

Celebrating A Craft Beer New Year...

With Some Familiar Challenges

Written by Dave Bolton

Noted philosopher mid-80s Ferris Bueller famously stated that life moves pretty fast, and that if you don't stop and look around once in a while you could miss it. Bueller may seem to be an unlikely source of inspiration as we close the door on 2024, mentally preparing ourselves for both the next 12 months and the colder weather that arrives with the tedious inevitability of an unloved season, but he is not wrong. I can't be alone in thinking that the last year flew by, and it is hard to believe that we are already back to layering up while putting on shoes that keep the snow out and the frostbite at bay.

A new year focuses our minds on what we did in the previous one, what went right and what can be improved. For many people, this normally entails some sort of list that is, more often than not, a nebulous set of ideas that veer between achievable and impractical. These are rarely set in stone - I would be surprised if they even make it as far as a post-it note - but they can provide some sort of personal roadmap for the weeks and months ahead. Around 66 percent of Americans who make a conscious attempt to save money, exercise more and drink less from January 1 do stick with their resolutions until at least March, according to YouGov research, albeit that the average person is likely to conveniently forget about them as winter turns to spring and summer.

The traditional excesses of the holiday season, which for the majority of us runs from Thanksgiving through Christmas and New Year, are brought into sharp focus once normal life resumes. Taking that into account, it is no coincidence that the concept of a Dry January has gained widespread popularity in recent years.

From a craft beer perspective, the seemingly popular option of drinking less in the first few months of the year is worth thinking about. Type the words "sober curious" into a search engine and you get a plethora of resources instantly, including but not limited to guidance from various health organizations that are encouraging people to be more mindful about their alcohol consumption.

Factor into the equation the rise of non-alcoholic (NA) craft beer alternatives available, and it is no surprise that one of the foremost trends or challenges that the industry faces in 2025 is how to tap (no pun intended) into a market that appears more health conscious. Non-alcoholic beer currently makes up a tiny proportion of national

beer sales, but there are breweries in Maine that exclusively produce alcohol-free beer - Woodland Farms Brewery, Eighteen Twenty Brewing Co., and Kit NA Brewing, for example - while bigger players, such as Allagash, Mast Landing and Bissell Brothers, are either experimenting with versions of NA craft beer or selling cans of "hop water" that fall very firmly into the category of niche beverages.

Abstaining from alcohol in January can reportedly improve sleep, mental clarity and digestive health, but the sober curious movement (yes, it's not just a buzzword but an entire lifestyle choice for, no surprises here, Gen Z and younger Millennials) is dovetailing with a change in overall drinking habits that has seen a year-on-year decline of around 8 percent in total alcohol sales, according to industry research. The term itself is from a book by British journalist Ruby Warrington who wrote "Sober Curious: The Blissful Sleep, Greater Focus, Deep Connection, and Limitless Presence Awaiting Us All on The Other Side of Alcohol" as a nonjudgmental guide to what can be achieved if we move away from a reliance on alcohol and embrace the well-being that comes from not drinking. It will come as no surprise to learn that I have not read this book.

It would be churlish of me to dismiss her lifestyle guidance without actual context but I also want to acknowledge the fact that there are undoubtedly thousands of people who prefer to maintain either a sensible relationship with alcohol or want to abstain altogether. The latter is the reason why not drinking in January has become popular in recent years, and the idea of going dry is certainly an achievable goal, especially when you think that non-alcoholic beer alternatives are no longer limited to O'Doul's or something less appealing.

I am one of those people who drinks less for the buzz and more for the flavor profiles and overall taste of beer. In recent years I have consciously stayed away from high ABV options, actively seeking out session beers or lower-alcohol versions of pale ales, lagers and my beloved IPAs. Which actually makes a NA craft beer January an option for me.

When I talk to friends in the brewing industry, there is a consensus that the challenge of not only producing beer that can be enjoyed responsibly but also tick all the requisite boxes of sales, distribution and, importantly, seasonal variety, is something that keeps them up at night. As I mentioned earlier, there has been a shift in the drink-

Feature Story

ing habits of consumers and the need to both innovate and remain competitive in an increasingly crowded marketplace is a key factor.

In the post-pandemic era, brewers have had to deal with the economic headwinds of inflation, supply chain disruption and labor shortages, all of which have shaped the craft beer industry and highlighted the need to maintain a proactive attitude to what consumers actually want. With that in mind, it is no coincidence that one of the trends identified for 2025 is what is being referred to as “functional beer.”

A recent article published by The Food Institute said that these beverages cater to a different demographic than the traditional craft beer community, namely a drinker that prioritizes health and wellness over the perceived negative effects of high alcohol versions. At the same time, the article said, these consumers want to have the social experience of drinking but without the risk of, say, imbibing a high ABV product that might have all the required flavor profiles but which masks the actual alcohol content. Non-alcoholic craft beers are predicted to grow in popularity - the article cites research by a data insights firm that estimates the overall NA category will be worth \$42.4 billion by 2032 - so there is little doubt that brewers are going to have to adapt to an end drinker landscape that is evolving to meet its own needs or preferences.

Most craft beer drinkers evolve their palate through experimentation. And while the ubiquitous varieties of IPA remain the dominant force, there is evidence that 2025 could be the year that differing styles will become more prevalent. A recent report from Circana said that Gen Z drinkers have a preference for alcohol with sweeter flavors, citing sparkling wines and the growth of ready-to-drink cocktails as evidence, Candy-flavored beers, beer-wine hybrids and even beers that could be considered to be a cocktail will be widely available this year, the report said, and it’s increasingly likely that taprooms will continue to adapt to cater to all palates, as opposed to just the craft beer drinker.

Taking that into account, brewers are reportedly thinking about flavor profiles that tap into the so-called “kidult” market, creating beers that appear whimsical but are actually rooted in nostalgia and a different flavor profile. Lone Pines Brewing, for instance, has two beers on its roster that appear to be marketed directly at Millennials, Juice Punch and Oh-J, albeit that the latter is an American Double IPA with an ABV of 8.1%! Which certainly precludes it from being of interest to the sober curious movement.

And while the average craft beer drinker may not be overly pleased that an already saturated market is going to have more options for the casual consumer, they might be happy to know that British beer styles are also poised for a (long overdue IMHO)



Photos by Dave Bolton



Feature Story



comeback. Milds and bitters, for example, are often shunted into the winter seasonals, but these classic styles offer a break from the norm.

We all know that IPAs are the dominant force in the industry, a status quo that is unlikely to change in the next 12 months, but searching out something different is what sets the craft beer drinker apart. Maine Brewing Company's taproom in Freeport recently had an excellent Special Bitter available, and I am happy to report that it was almost indistinguishable from a Fullers London Pride ... which remains my favorite non-US beer of all time.

Notwithstanding the fact that these UK-inspired styles often have a lower ABV than a can of Budweiser, they can be both a barometer as to how dedicated a brewer is to the craft and an alternative to the never-ending stream of IPAs that have flooded bars, restaurants and taprooms across the region as a whole. Ironically, the humble IPA is actually rooted in British hops and brewing techniques, with the acronym translating to India Pale Ale ... a style that harks back to the time when the country had an empire and brewers added more hops to the beer to help preserve them during their journey from England to more tropical colonial climates.

The good news for the craft beer community and, by association, the Maine-based brands that we constantly seek out is that the ongoing challenges faced by brewers or the end-drinker trends that are floating to the surface are not new. In fact, most of what the industry has faced in recent years have already been factored into business optimization strategies and production schedules for 2025. The food and beverage sector is constantly evolving, tweaking what is currently available to not only deliver experiences that the consumer expects but also which will encourage repeat visits.

For that reason alone, we should look at the start of 2025 as both a fresh slate and an opportunity to experiment. Granted, we will find ourselves drawn back to personal favorites and established brands, but there is no harm in using the first few weeks of the year for personal development, even more so if it meets our goals. For the record, I am dedicating January to non-alcoholic craft beer ... they might not give me a buzz, but I am fine with joining the sober curious community for a month. Normal service can then resume when the weather starts to get better and I can leave my apartment without a winter coat! ●

The Apple Shed

Kitchen and Bakery 🍏

Open Year Round, 7 days a week!



Croissants
Fruit Danishes
Fresh Sourdough
Fruit Pies
To-go Entrees,
Chowder & Soups
Bagels
Local Maine Products



Check our weekly menu special on our website, Facebook or Instagram



📍 1625 Main St.
Kents Hill, ME

OTTO'S ON THE RIVER

CASUAL FINE DINING
Seafood, Italian & Vegan Specialties



At Otto's on the River, we provide our guests with attentive service in a classy, yet comfortable atmosphere. Amazing views of the Kennebec River from the Dining Room.

207-213-4757 • 287 Water St. Augusta
ottosontheriver.com

ALL THE
FLAVOR
NONE OF
THE GUILT



The first and only non-alcoholic beer,
brewed in Maine using Maine-grown ingredients.
Available at fine retailers statewide, or order direct at www.wfbrewery.com



**ACCEPTING
NEW
MEMBERS
NO WAIT LISTS!**

Weekly shop games on Sundays.

Senior Days on Monday and Thursdays
18 holes with cart **ONLY \$55.**

Regular rate for 18/cart is \$72 – **PUBLIC WELCOMED**
Couples league Thursday twilight – **PUBLIC WELCOMED**

ASK ABOUT OUR SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL



CLASSIC PUB FAVORITES AND SPECIALTY COCKTAILS
Featuring Nightly Food and Drink Specials

HAPPY HOUR IS MONDAY - FRIDAY 4 TO 6
25% OFF ALCOHOL AND APPETIZERS!

CALL FOR INFORMATION ON TRIVIA NIGHTS

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - RELAXED ENVIRONMENT

Open Monday - Saturday 11am-9pm • Sunday 11am-8pm

OFFERING DINE IN & TAKE OUT

10 HIGHLAND AVE., TURNER, ME | 224-7090

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK @thehighlandgrille



*1052 Minot Avenue, Auburn
783-6885*

***AUBURN'S FINEST
STEAK HOUSE
FOR 20+ YEARS!***



***It's where
you come to
eat and
stay to visit!***

Open 7 Days a Week 11:30am to close





**COLD
BEER
WARM
FIRE**

RoopersBeverage.com

The Party Starts at Roopers!

545 Minot Ave., Auburn | 783.2047
980 Main St., Oxford | 539.6072

794 Sabattus St., Lewiston | 783.6353
686 Main St., Lewiston | 344.1200
1420 Lisbon St., Lewiston | 333.3095