

# Got Beer? April Shower May Bring Beer! New brews and events to celebrate spring



A coupla months back, we shared the scoop *re* **Community Bruin**, Rhode Island's newest brewery, which is now open in West Greenwich (74 Nooseneck Hill Rd). Carl Mattson boasts that his operation is "the smallest nano-brewery in the smallest state in the US," with a half-barrel setup. His initial offerings have included Chamomile Blonde, a pilsner with chamomile, honey and vanilla flavors; Pizza II, a pilsner and maize base with Italian seasonings; Wild Bore, an amber clone from Bermuda, malty and with mild hops; and Munich SMaSH, made with Munich malt and Columbus hops; there were two beers on deck: St. Joseph, a copper-colored clone from Italy, to honor the Saint; Gingerbread Cookie, a brown ale with ginger spice; and Honor Flight IPA, a session-style brew with chinook hops. CB is open on Saturdays from 1 - 4pm (with Friday hours on the horizon) and is currently offering samplers (four 4-ounce tastings) and bombers-to-go; keep track of further developments at [communitybruin.com](http://communitybruin.com)

**Cinco de Mayo** is on Sunday, May ... oh yeah, 5. But the Cinco de Madness will be happening all weekend at 401 breweries. Three of 'em have concocted Mexican-style lagers to power the festivities: **Ragged Island** in Portsmouth has Donde Esta La Biblioteca on tap (and will be opening its outdoor seating area, weather-permitting); **Smug Brewing** in Pawtucket has El Gringo, which they note "will not dropkick you out of the ring; instead it will let you go a few rounds" (thanks to its 4.9% ABV); and **Shaidzon Beer Company** is serving Cancun Dave, and will raise the roof of their West Kingston HQ with music by Dudemanbro on May 3 and the Naticks on May 4. And here's a bit o' Cinco de Trivia you can share whilst toasting the holiday (which celebrates the date of the Mexican army's 1862 victory

over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War - but you knew *that*, right?): our pals at CraftBeer.com note that Mexican lagers' "roots actually lie in Austria, and brewer Anton Dreher, who created the Vienna-style lager in 1836. The style was then brought to Mexico by Austrian brewers in the late 1800s, where it has continued to thrive."

Speaking of CraftBeer.com, the site is the creative offshoot of the Brewers Association, the alliance of "small and independent" beermakers, and it's banging the drum for the 14th annual **American Craft Beer Week**, which runs May 13 - 19. The campaign had more oomph when it kicked off in 2006, in the dark and primitive days when there wasn't a brewery 'round every corner. But there will likely be some tap takeovers and special releases and other events 'round here; we'll post 'em at the blog listed at the bottom of this column if we can scare up the intel.

Speaking of the Brewers Association, it just released its State Craft Beer Sales & Production Statistics for 2018. Here are the Rhode Island numbers: The state had 26 craft breweries during the reporting period, which ranks 46th in the US and equals 3.2 breweries per capita (per 100,000 21-plus adults); the beermakers produced 35,398 barrels of beer (1.3 gallons per 21-plus adults), and the economic impact was \$152 million (that figure is from 2016; the revenue reports are in the slow lane). Hit [brewersassociation.org](http://brewersassociation.org) for a deep dive on the methodology and footnotes and fine print.

And here's a great way to celebrate craft beer in Rhode Island year-round: the **Rhode Island Brewers Guild** is offering an Enthusiast Membership, which includes a swag bag, early VIP entry into the Ocean State Beer Fest in September, early bird ticket access to the 2020 Newport Craft Beer Fest, membership beverages at participating breweries and more! Go to [ribrewersguild.org](http://ribrewersguild.org) and/or drop a note to [gary@ribrewersguild.org](mailto:gary@ribrewersguild.org) to sign up.

*For more beer news, check Lou's blog, [bottlescansclaphands.wordpress.com](http://bottlescansclaphands.wordpress.com), or follow @BottlesCansRI.*