

IPA hops to it with aromatic recipes

COLIN JACK - India Pale Ale is a style of beer first brewed with higher hop and alcohol content - both natural preservatives - to survive the long voyage by ship from Britain to India during the early days of the British Empire.

Today India Pale Ale is increasingly popular among people of the Pacific Northwest.

We demand more flavour from the floral hops grown in our region and also eat strong-flavoured foods that can stand up to the bitterness in the beer.

Experiment - try cooking your next curry dinner with a hint of beer.

Brown your beef, chicken or lamb slightly and add some beer instead of water. The beer will help tenderize the meat and also add texture to the sauce.

Surprisingly, beer acts as a thickener when your sauce is wispy.

India Pale Ale also pairs nicely with traditional Indian spices like cumin, tumeric and coriander.

Pick of the week - Russell Brewing IP'eh - 2010 World Cup of Beer bronze medal winner!

COLIN JACK IS AN OFFICIAL BEER AFICANADO. CHECK OUT HIS WEBSITE JUSTHEREFORTHEBEER.COM. SEND QUESTIONS TO COLIN@JUSTHEREFORTHEBEER.COM



WINE

Tips to survive the wine festival

DHARM MAKWANA - A trip around the wine world starts with a comfortable pair of shoes.

So says Michaela Morris and Michelle Bouffard, two vinophiles who have travelled to places as near as the Okanagan and as far as Tuscany in search of the perfect glass of wine.

Now those wineries, renowned for producing captivating cabernets and voluptuous valpolicellas, are coming to town for the Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival.

For three nights of the week-long event, wine lovers will mix and mingle at Vancouver Convention Centre West where 197 wineries from 14 countries will offer 761 wines for tasting.

Morris and Bouffard have the inside scoop on how to survive a festival tasting:

- Wear dark colours - in case you haven't heard, red wine has a tendency to stain



Michelle Bouffard (left) and Michaela Morris demonstrate that perfume should be left at home for wine tasting. People want the aroma of wine, not the stench of cologne.

when spilled on a lovely white dress.

- Wear comfortable shoes - walking for three hours can be tough on your tootsies.

- Don't wear fragrances - visitors are attending to smell the wine, not your perfume or cologne.

- Have a plan - knowing which wines you want to taste is one way of control-

ling the amount of wine consumed.

- Spit - social conventions say spitting is a faux pas, but wine is to be appreciated for its aroma and flavour not its intoxicating effects.

- Plan a ride home - with Waterfront Station steps away, rapid transit can take you home on the cheap.

The Vancouver Play-

house International Wine Festival tasting floor happens April 22-24

Morris and Bouffard host two seminars: Tiki Tour of New Zealand is sold out but tickets are available for Get the Dirt on New Zealand Terroir on April 25 at VCC West.

For information visit www.playhousewinefest.com.

Plenty of healthy veggies in spicy miso ramen

Ramen Quest, Episode 6 - Pièce de résistance

RAJ TANEJA - A hand-scrawled note recently landed on my desk indicating that I was to then meet an unnamed informant at a new ramen shop on Denman Street. A new Ramen Quest feature, I thought, and I was up to the challenge!

I was greeted by two relatively sharp looking secret agent types dressed completely in black including black berets. I'm thinking to myself, "Uh oh - MI6 or Mossad or hired assassins?!"

Thankfully, they were brandishing gyoza, not guns and I was immediately put at ease when they showed me to a well-lit table in the centre of the restaurant. Seated there was a man known only as Taku-san and it became immediately clear that he was willing to answer any question I put forth.

As we chatted, I learned that although Motomachi Shokudo and sister restaurant Kintaro share ingredients from time to time, Taku-san's people pride themselves on serving up ramen with a



Spicy Miso Ramen

smooth chicken soup base composed of mostly organic ingredients. The original Tokyo-style ramen, he proclaimed. It's lighter and not as rich as the popular pork soup based ramen that are de rigueur at other shops.

Upon concluding our discussion, the meal they served

to me was something else - Butchigiri Gyoza which was a winner by a long shot and the Spicy (Kara) Miso Ramen served with a ton of vegetables for good health which proved to be the pièce de résistance.

With fond memories of this meal and other previous quests, I thought to myself, "Another meal enjoyed - another quest done, and so far no price on my head. A good day indeed."

RAJ TANEJA RUNS URBANMIXER.COM AND CAN BE FOUND ON TWITTER WITH THE USERNAME "TINHEAD."

top 5

places to party on the patio

There's no better way to enjoy the warmer weather than by dining al fresco. Here are the top five Vancouver patios:

JOE FORTES

777 Thurlow St.

What do you get when you combine stunning city views with scrumptious seafood? A winning combination of course. Located in the hustle and bustle of downtown, this rooftop garden still produces a cozy vibe.

THE SANDBAR

1535 Johnston St.

Nestled just below the Granville Street Bridge, the patio offers breathtaking views of False Creek as well as a lively outdoor bar. Bonus: It's a covered patio with heaters.

KEG STEAKHOUSE AND BAR (YALETOWN)

1011 Mainland St.

Garnering rave reviews since it opened last year, this hip patio has become a local favourite. One of the few that boasts big-screen TVs (so you won't miss the playoff action).

BOATHOUSE RESTAURANT

Various locations

Each and every patio offered by this local restaurant chain has amazing waterfront views - from Port Moody to English Bay to White Rock.

CHILL WINSTON

3 Alexander St.

This chic gem encapsulates all of Gastown's charms. Surrounded by the historic cobblestone roads, it's a romantic spot in the evening.

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE

VILLAGE PUB Newly Renovated Hidden Jewel

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