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The 50 Best Craft Breweries in America

You told us, we listened: the who's who of craft beer in 2014

July 21, 2014 | 05:46 PM By [Jess Novak](#), Special Contributor

There are just so many good beers to choose among.

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Last year, we rounded up the [25 Best Craft Breweries in America](#), and while that list remains solid in 2014 — and several of last year's winners are featured again this year — we decided to expand and develop our list of all-star U.S. breweries. What better way to begin than by doubling the list (more of a good thing being, of course, excellent), and taking into account the year's most interesting craft beer trends? So go ahead, crack one (or two, if they're **session beers**!) open and enjoy.

[The 50 Best Craft Breweries in America \(Slideshow\)](#)

So what's changed this year that we should consider when determining the best craft breweries of 2014? Well, for starters, those aforementioned sessions beers have made a major impact this year: low-alcohol brews designed for people who love to drink beer — and keep sipping it all day long with impunity. The beers are also an interesting

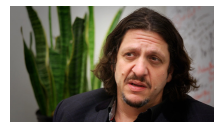
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brewing challenge: creating a beer that maintains the intensity of the main style's flavor with a lower alcohol content is quite difficult, and we've been excited about the number of impressive successes that have come out in the past year.

The relatively new [Citra](#) and [Mosaic](#) hops have made a big splash, as breweries across the board have been discovering these varieties and featuring them in more and more beers, especially IPAs.

Another pleasant shift in the [craft-beer](#) zeitgeist has been a new focus on collaborations: many breweries have begun collaborating with other breweries or homebrewers, often resulting in some fantastic, specialty one-off beers. Stone Brewery, for instance, launched [WootStout 2.0](#) this month, a collaboration with Drew Curtis of [Fark.com](#), Wil Wheaton, and Aisha Tyler. It doesn't get much more fun than that.

So how does one go about actually determining which breweries are the best in the U.S.? While this is an admittedly subjective subject — and one that our readers appear have some very strong opinions on, we might add — we started the process as impartially as possible: by asking our [panel of craft beer experts](#) to nominate breweries they believed in. They chose from among new breweries that have really started to make a name for themselves, as well as older standbys that continue to brew excellent, consistent beer year after year. In the end, we tried to focus on craft breweries that offer a range of great brews, rather than those that offer one particularly stand-out beer. [slideshow:

Once the nominations were in (all 118 of them), we asked you, dear readers, to weigh in on which breweries deserved to be recognized. And you responded with a deluge of your well-researched opinions: we received over 13,000 votes, and many write-in opinions: Left Hand, Hailstorm, and Port City Brewing Company, for instance, all received multiple shout-outs from [craft beer](#) aficionados who felt they should have been nominated (and we listened: next year, we promise you, they're a lock for round one).

While we're proud of our list, and while we believe that it represents some of the best craft breweries in America, we also know that it's truly impossible to narrow down all of the great options to the absolute best brewery in the U.S. So much depends on personal taste, regionality, and your own associations. We're lucky that the craft beer scene has grown exponentially in recent years, and that these days, there are great local craft beers to enjoy everywhere in the United States.

#50 Devils Backbone Brewing Company — Roseland, Virginia

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10 Things You Didn't
Know About Chili's



This 15,000-square-foot brewery located in the lush, mountainous heart of central Virginia should be on every beer lover's watch list. In the six short years they've been in operation, the pub has won seventeen medals at the Great American Beer Festival. Their Gold Leaf Lager, a hoppy, Bavarian-style beer, is an annual favorite, bringing home three of the company's GABF awards. Additionally, **Devils Backbone** was named Small Brewer of the Year for two consecutive years in 2012 and 2013.

#49 Cascade Brewing Company — Portland, Oregon



Brewmaster Ron Gansberg got his start making wine in the Pacific Northwest, but his attention eventually shifted to the growing microbrew movement, particularly sour brews, which rely on yeast and barrel aging instead of hops to produce flavor. These days, Gansberg's risk has paid off. The New York Times recently named **Cascade's** Krie the best sour beer in America. Beer Advocate also rates the beer "Outstanding," praising the tart/sweet flavor of the red ale, which is barrel-aged eight months with fresh Bing and sour pie cherries.

Read more about The 50 Best Craft Breweries in America

Did your favorite brewery make this year's list? Tweet us @TheDailyMeal using the hashtag #craftbeer2014



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What's This?

Jess Novak is the Drink Editor of The Daily Meal. Follow her on Twitter [@jessthenovak](#)

With research and reporting from Emily Alford and Marcy Franklin

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