



## Ontario's Craft Brewing Tradition

From its inception, the foundation of the Ontario economy was built on the supply and demand of a few basic commodities: fur, lumber and beer.

Ontario's early beer industry started with small brewers-craftsmen who applied their Old World skills to brewing unique, personal beers. It was a regional business, producing regional beers to satisfy regional tastes.

With the arrival of the 20th century, Prohibition, the Depression and two world wars, many small brewers were forced to close down or consolidate. The number of breweries was reduced to an all-time low. Advanced technology gave rise to large breweries and mass production.

In the 1980's, after decades of flat sales, a resurgence of Canadian independent brewing began. The passion, commitment and entrepreneurial spirit of the small, independent brewers helped expand the beer market. This 'flavour revolution' created a renewed interest in beer among a new generation of consumers.

In 1984, Jim Brickman became the first craft brewer to start up in Ontario and is now credited with pioneering the present day craft-brewing renaissance in Canada. Soon after, several other independent breweries joined the movement with a focus on handcrafted beers. These brewers were determined to prove that Canadian beer drinkers were ready for something that had been missing for over 60 years: better taste and variety.

Three years ago, 30 of the new-generation brewers joined forces under the name "Ontario Craft Brewers." The formation of this group heralded a rebirth of Ontario's regional brewing heritage.

Today, 29 member breweries brew more than 120 handcrafted, premium beers, in a wide range of famous international styles as well as innovative, personal recipes.

As they did in colonial days, Ontario's craft brewers play a key role in the local economy through their community involvement. In the next decade, the growth of small breweries will have close to a \$400 million economic impact on the provincial economy in both a direct and indirect way.

According to respected beer historian, Oliver Dawson: "The so-called 'Renaissance of craft-brewing' has spawned a concentration of small breweries rivalling some of the great brewing areas of Europe!" Today, as the OCB enters its third year of the five year plan, it is poised to become North America's centre of brewing excellence.

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