

Virginia Brews Up Interactive Beer Map

Brian Heaton | July 30, 2012

LOVE ON TAP
August is Virginia Craft Beer Month

Virginia will be serving up love on tap for the first-ever Virginia Craft Beer Month this August. For beer lovers this means August is a great time to visit Virginia for true local flavor at more than 40 craft breweries and restaurants and bars who have local love on tap. The month-long celebration culminates with the first ever [Craft Brew Festival](#) August 25 at Devils Backbone Brewery in Nelson County.

Enter a location to find a brewery near you:

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- [New Beer Release at Wild Wolf Brewing](#) - Aug 1
- [Steal the Glass at Blue Mountain Brewery](#) - Aug 2
- [Sunday Brunch at Blue Mountain Brewery](#) - Aug 5, 12, 19, 26
- [Sunday Brunch at Devils Backbone Brewery](#) - Aug 5, 12, 19, 26
- [Craft Beer Dinner at Wild Wolf Brewing Company](#) - Aug 28
- [Take the Pint at Wild Wolf Brewing Company](#) Mon & Tues in August
- [More Wine and Beer Events](#)

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Beer connoisseurs eager to try the latest microbrews in Virginia now have an interactive way to get information on the state's various craft breweries.

The Virginia Tourism Corp. launched an [online map](#) of restaurants and locations serving local craft beer on tap. Each brewery on the map is represented by a beer mug icon. As visitors click on each location, it provides the address, website, contact information and description of each brewery and the beer it serves.

Dave Neudeck, director of electronic marketing for the Virginia Tourism Corp. — the state's tourism office — said the application is part of the state's first-ever Craft Beer Month this August. The month culminates with a Virginia Craft Brew Festival on Aug. 25 at Devils Backbone Brewery in Nelson County.

The idea behind the interactive map was to encourage residents and visitors to get out and see what vacation amenities Virginia provides.

“With a map, it gives them a sense of a place to start a weekend getaway, or a mid-week vacation with a brewery being one of the key focal points,” Neudeck said. “From there ... they can drill into different areas they are interested in, access a specific

brewery and then find things nearby to enhance or extend that stay. That's big for us, getting people to vacation in Virginia.”

The site — www.virginia.org/craftbeer — also features special events and Virginia craft beer travel packages throughout August, according a statement from Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell's office.

The map was built by in-house personnel using Google's standard API, according to Tom Kirk, multimedia specialist with the Virginia Tourism Corp. He said the state has been using Google-based maps for a while now, including a similar interactive map built for [wineries](#).

To get a brewery or winery placed on their respective maps, tourism-related businesses must register an account with Virginia.org. Once approved, the registrant can add its content to the application.

Although the craft breweries map was recently launched, based on past experience with the wine map, Neudeck expects an uptick in the number of visits and use of the craft brewery map. Kirk agreed. He explained that they had so many wineries sign up to use the map that they had to “cluster” the number of wineries into larger icons. Once clicked, then the cluster icon expands into the individual locations in a region.

Enhancements On Tap

While the craft [beer](#) interactive map is fully functional, some changes may be made down the road. Neudeck said one of the next steps is to optimize the maps for mobile devices. While the maps show up just fine on Android devices and iPhones, they display using standard Web formats.

The state's tourism arm is in the midst of relaunching its mobile site, but mobile changes to the map applications won't be a part of it yet. Neudeck said that would be considered for a second phase of changes at some point down the line.

Another future project would be incorporating the site's trip planner better into the map itself. Instead of the functions being separate, the applications would work together. So while perusing the craft brewery map, a visitor can plug whatever breweries he or she wants to visit right into the trip planner application and organize them.

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