

LISTINGS! LOCAL SKI HILLS AND WHERE TO STOCK UP • P. 30

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A MAGAZINE WITH REFINED TASTE / MAINE

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HARD TALK

RENÉE COOLBRITH ON MUSIC, SATIVAS,
AND PEOPLE WHO ARE WRONG

+CBD MAKEUP

WELLNESS NEVER
LOOKED SO GOOD

+ROAD TRIP

HEAD TO NORTH HAMPTON
FOR A THROWBACK

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INSIDE

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WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?



I'M REALLY TIRED OF LOOKING AT SCREENS. IT GIVES ME A HEADACHE. JUST THE ACT OF READING SOMETHING ON A SCREEN PUTS THAT INFORMATION AT A DISADVANTAGE. I AM LIKELY TO BE IN A BAD MOOD WHILE I AM READING IT.

This magazine, though, should be a pleasure. It should give you information you want in a way that is enjoyable, interesting, entertaining, and inviting. It shouldn't try to trick you into finding your way here, or beg for your attention. It's fun to make useful and elegant magazines, and beer and weed are an interesting lens through which to look at the world.

It's the first issue, so I hope you'll indulge me:

In Burlington, VT, in 1995, we got a bunch of magazines at our apartment. Harper's, for sure, which I still admire, but don't get anymore. Discover, mostly for the space stuff. The Atlantic, which I still like online quite a bit, even it strays into the esoteric and impractical at times.

We had word processors that we'd write papers on — and poetry and one acts, made-up nonsense we thought might be books — but computers weren't really a thing you just had at your house, yet.

And, Jesus, we'd get stoned. Lots of purple from Canada. Stuff that people would say was Humboldt County, but who knew? Local stuff people would grow in apartments, with hydroponics, to mixed success. And stuff from farmers in places like Montgomery and Newport, where you'd drive up there and get a garbage bag and hope at least some of it got you stoned. And lots of bong hits, though gravity bongs and other nonsense were mostly a thing of the past by then.

So, we'd sit around, stoned, and read magazines, often outloud to each other, with CDs playing and sometimes the TV on without sound, and sometimes two people playing MarioKart. It was something to do. But also over meals — you always read magazines while you ate, although breakfast was for the newspaper.

That was during the first wave of craft brewing, too. I had a roommate who brewed for Otter Creek — good old Kevin Loftis, who runs Mother Stewart's Brewing in Springfield, Ohio, this

very day. He loved National Geographic so much, he ended up working for them for a while, I think. Or at least something close that involved lots of traveling and sleeping in bags under the stars.

Seems like things were a lot slower back then, when the possibilities were fewer. You trusted someone else to do the heavy lifting of information-sorting for you, so you could focus on other stuff that mattered. You didn't have to go searching or surfing. The magazine just showed up at your door once a month. Convenient, right?

”

“So, we'd sit around, stoned, and read magazines, often outloud to each other, with CDs playing and sometimes the TV on without sound, and sometimes two people playing MarioKart.”

That's the sort of thing we want to get back to. We hope you read this magazine with other people, and use it to plan things or have a conversation. Maybe you tear a page out, so it's handy, or it winds up on the wall for a while. It should be a net-positive for your life.

Same goes for beer and weed, really. I do, of course, consume both as a means in and of themselves. I do enjoy them for their own sakes. At their best, they are a net positive all by themselves.

But it seems like they work better as a force multiplier, in combination with great people, smart movies, your family (or not), hikes that make you sweat a little bit, stupid comedies, a short story, anime, all five seasons of Supergirl, motorcycles, bands, video games, pancakes, literally whatever the fuck.

If that's not the case for you, we would support you not consuming beer or weed. Whichever. Or both. You'll still enjoy this magazine, I think.



WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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15 MAINE BREWERIES AGREE: BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

Maybe you've noticed: A whole bunch of your favorite breweries were pitching the same imperial stout this winter. What's going on?

What's going on is Black Is Beautiful, a nationwide initiative begun by Weathered Souls Brewing, in San Antonio, Texas, whereby breweries all agree to brew the same basic recipe and donate the proceeds to organizations working to support equity and Black, indigenous and other people of color. The imperial stout is a doozy, packing 10% ABV and a basic recipe that calls for flavoring with chocolate and caramel malts.

Of course, while everyone is starting with the supplied recipe, breweries are encouraged to add in their own little flare. At Austin Street and Blaze Brewing, you'll find they've collaborated on a toasted coconut version. Bissell Brothers went with a blend of madeira-wine-barrel-aged porters and stouts, presented in an elegant bottle. Both are donating proceeds to the NAACP. At Allagash, you can find the stout in 12-ounce



cans and brewed with flint corn for a slightly sweet flavor. Proceeds go to Indigo Arts and Maine Inside Out. The flint corn was even grown by members of the New American Farmers project, which focuses on finding farming opportunities for new Mainers coming here from other nations as immigrants or refugees.

Many breweries quickly sold out of their runs. Others are still ramping up production. Ask for it wherever you're out and about, or find the participating breweries at www.blackisbeautiful.beer. In total, more than 1,200 breweries have signed on to the project, in all 50 states and in 22 countries. Cheers to that!

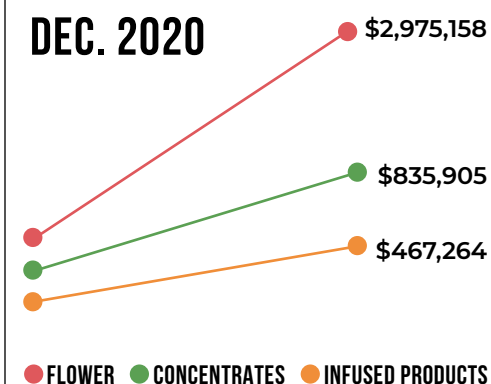


SWEET DIRT OPENS IN WATERVILLE

Don't tell former Mayor Paul LePage, but Waterville now has the first adult-use cannabis shop in Kennebec County, with the opening of Sweet Dirt's location at 475 Kennedy Memorial Drive. Ownership and staff held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 7 alongside the Kennebec Valley and Mid-Maine Chambers of Commerce. Pretty posh!

But Sweet Dirt are hardly rookies. The certified-organic growers have been in the medical field since 2015 and on January 21 opened Maine's largest cannabis greenhouse, a 32,800-square-foot facility in Eliot, Maine, which will employ up to 30 and yield as much as 12,000 pounds of cannabis annually. That should help with Maine's current supply problem.

THIS JUST IN / WORDS / SAM PFEIFLE



ADULT-USE MARKET BREAKS \$4M FOR 2020

Even though adult-use cannabis didn't open for business until October, and with limited supplies at that, the industry still crested \$4 million in sales by the end of December. Leading the way was flower sales, which closed the year just under \$3 million, with concentrates and infused products growing less quickly.



LONE PINE GETS AN UPGRADE

While the pandemic has affected every business a little differently, Lone Pine is one brewery that has seen nothing but expansion over the past year.

In December, they installed a new canning system from Codi, based in Golden, Colorado (hmmm, why does that sound familiar?), that had them pretty excited. The fresh new line allows for a higher rate of packaging speed, helps with quality control, and keeps them from wasting time and beer. They also hope to experience less dissolved oxygen getting into the cans, which can lead to muted flavors and a shorter shelf life.

Then, just after the new year, Lone Pine added five 80-barrel fermenters to its Gorham facility, along with a new 80-barrel brite tank, which is where you can do rapid carbonation or a secondary fermentation. As you might expect, the addition of 99,200 pints of capacity is pretty dang significant. Lone Pine might even call it "exponential" expansion.

Nor is their need for expansion a big surprise, given the run of great beers they've been releasing, including the brand-new double-IPA Diamond Unicorn and the success they've had with their Holy Donut variants, all based on popular Holy Donut varieties like Chocolate Covered Strawberry Imperial Stout and the Fresh Lemon Glaze Imperial Sour.

Despite a raft of competition in the Portland area, Lone Pine has exploded in the past year and shows no signs of slowing down.

BUBBLE UP, MAINE



ON A CHILLY DAY AT RISING TIDE BREWING COMPANY IN PORTLAND, AS THE ZIPPER ON MY LARGE PLASTIC BUBBLE CLOSES, THE ROAR OF A WINTER'S GALE IS REPLACED BY THE MUFFLED DIN OF OTHER PATRONS. LIKE THE DISTANT MURMURS OF A COFFEE SHOP, I CAN HEAR CONVERSATIONS WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THEM, HEAR CLIPS OF LAUGHTER AND THE OCCASIONAL DOG BARK. IN THIS COMFY CONE OF SEMI-SILENCE, THE TEMPERATURE FROM PIPED-IN HEAT IS ENOUGH TO ALLOW ME TO OPEN MY COAT AND REMOVE MY HAT AND GLOVES. I OPEN MY PHONE, SCAN THE QR CODE ON THE TABLE, AND TRY TO DECIDE WHAT BEER TO ORDER.

For Mainers, the desire to hunker down, hibernate, and get cozy is in our bones. We know when the weather gets rough we can just snuggle up, light a fire, and ride it out. In a normal year, breweries and craft beer businesses would just ride out this quiet period, making preparations for the busy summer and fall seasons ahead. But facing a massive deficit in on-premise (in person) sales due to our current circumstances, many breweries are unfortunately on the brink, just as they enter the slowest sales months of the year.

The speed of the vaccine roll out will help, but for some, it will not be enough. The kicker is that it may not be merit and quality that decides who comes out the other end intact, but rather the numbers that were on their balance sheets on March 15 or so of last year.

While stories on pop news sites imply that alcohol consumption is up during the pandemic, businesses are not booming for most craft brewers, who rely on tasting room and keg sales. Without restaurants to take their kegs and without a tasting room open to sell the beer directly, there's a growing gap between the haves and the have nots.

Fortunately, some Maine breweries have been able to creatively attempt to make up this shortfall by maintaining outdoor, isolated tasting areas. As the weather has gotten colder, some have even doubled down, investing in bubbles, tents, pods, and other creative places that can offer a safer (or warmer) alternative to sitting outside.

Rising Tide was one of the first breweries to publicize their investment in such a solution. To experience the bubbles — which are available by reservation — is to step into a tiny microcosm of the tasting room experience. Mast Landing Brewing Company in Westbrook and Banded Brewing in Biddeford have similar bubble-like setups, and others have done whatever possible to create heated spaces with fire pits, propane heaters and wind breaks.

If you've yet to visit one of these setups (and feel comfortable), I recommend it as a way to get a taste of normal life. It is at least a solid excuse to get some fresh air, providing a welcome relief from winter's isolation.

”

“The speed of the vaccine roll out will help, but for some, it will not be enough.”

As with any small business, it is important not to underestimate the impact your individual purchases can have. Even if you are not ready to bubble up, nearly every brewery in Maine has some way to purchase their beer to go, and many also have online gift certificates. Occasionally, when I know I would have gone out for a beer after work, but don't want to go in person, I will go online and buy a gift certificate or something else from the brewery in the amount that I likely would have spent.

As I drink my Rising Tide Cutter, a hearty Double IPA, from this bubble, I reflect that I am privileged to still be working, to have a similar amount of funds put aside for beer-related entertainment. I am lucky to be able to leave such a hefty tip for the mitten-clad server who brings me my beer that my budgeting software will later ask me if I've made a mistake.

If you are so lucky, I would encourage you to spread your love to the breweries this winter so that they have a fighting chance of being here in the summer, too.



WORDS / BEER BABE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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MOM HUSTLE AND HEALING MAKEUP

WORDS / KIRAH BROUILLETTE

How Betoken Exemplifies Women-Owned Weed Collaboratives

Betoken (transitioning from “Good Jane”) owner Liz Kirby used to live what she describes as a “typical” corporate life as an attorney in Southern Maine: “Work late. Don’t sleep. Repeat.”

“But family life changed all that,” she says, inspiring her to grab onto her dreams instead.

Though being a lawyer might suggest a more serious personality — someone who wouldn’t change paths to a federally prohibited and (in some circles) socially shocking one like starting a female-forward, cannabis-based wellness brand that includes everything from sleep aids to PMS-easments and healing makeup — Kirby isn’t that sort of person. In fact, she’s the total opposite. She’s the kind of woman who will rearrange her entire day’s schedule for a friend who drops in by surprise with tacos and beer because, as Kirby says jokingly, “It’s tacos and beer, DUH!”

Kirby clearly knows a good opportunity when she sees one, so she started Good Jane in 2018, after leaving law, taking a position in a wedding industry start up, and then teaching herself marketing and media techniques. With her new skills, she was able to work from home as a freelance media and marketing specialist for alternative healing businesses, where she garnered critical knowledge about herbs and the role inflammation plays in every aspect of human illness — info that would later serve as a scaffolding for Betoken’s “sustainable, local, helpful, discreet and female-focused” ethos.

Most importantly, though, the experience connected her with multicultural women from all over the country, people who shared a dream to break the “normal” career mold by braving new realms. This female collective is what Kirby believes helped her gain the support, knowledge, and confidence to launch herself into a brand-new career. Ultimately, it became part of her very business model.

“I fell into a group of supportive women early on and knew that I wanted my future marketplace to be a collaborative, full of women-made and -designed products, being sure to feature work by women of color,” Kirby says. “Ultimately, I knew that I wanted any potential business to be female-focused.”

Kirby was intuitively drawn to one of the newest (and, according to the Associated Press’s October 2020 in depth canna-industry report, the most potentially lucrative) industries: cannabis healing. All of the data affirmed Kirby’s own intuition that millions of people worldwide are finally beginning to understand — and accept — the inherent medicinal power of cannabis, specifically CBD therapy. Luckily, Kirby herself was on board by way of a familiarity with the recreational aspects of the plant already.

“I am definitely a THC user; the products have become so refined and specific to certain uses,” Kirby says. “My husband and I smoke on the weekends — after the kids are in bed, of course.”

“NIGHTY NIGHT CAPSULES”

Are these crazy times we’re living in keeping you up at night? Look no further than Good Jane’s “Nighty Night Capsules.” Each one is filled with 15 mg of full spectrum CBD (and zero THC) blended with proprietary herbs that include valerian root as a sleep aid and lemon balm to help soothe the physical expressions of anxiety, like tight muscles and headaches. One capsule and you’re out for eight solid hours.



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But it was a girlfriend living in California, whom she met through her women’s group, that turned Kirby on to the power of CBD. “Obviously I wanted to build something that had good financial returns,” she says, “but also something that would help heal people. Cannabis was not only a new market, but it also allowed me to combine all my skills in a way I had never done before. It felt perfect.”

After a few months of tossing ideas around, Kirby decided to open up her online store, then named Good Jane, with a brand design that suited what she saw as a hole in the market. “I wanted to offer something upscale,” she says, “something women would be comfortable using around friends or family; something they wouldn’t think twice about taking out of their purse at the playground, while shopping, or at work.”

She wanted to focus her products around healing, specifically targeting inflammation with her mix of full-spectrum CBD, healing herbs and minerals. So she set to creating a business model that presented itself as a luxury CBD wellness brand, with products designed for and with women’s needs in mind, all made with sustainable, cruelty-free and (when possible) local ingredients.

She also developed packaging that stood out from the rest by designing the boxes and labeling with clean lines and a “bespoke, urban feel,” Kirby says, a far throw from the usual weed-leaf-embazoned packaging so many companies had been using for years.

Plus, her products themselves differ slightly from the average offerings of the same type from sister brands. She uses capsules instead of simply a bottle of tincture for sleep in the Nighty Night



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LIZ KIRBY / BETOKEN
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◀ FROM PAGE 11

sleep formula, which works wonders to lull you into a physically relaxed, mentally dreamy state. And she offers a "pain stick" (in 100% recyclable aluminum tubes) versus a cream in the Pain Pain Go Away formula, which helps spot-reduce inflammation, and the pain that goes with it, in mere seconds (proven by our tester who suffers from Lupus SLE and uses it daily).

All her products are "designed to stand out," Kirby said. Though she does include brands in her store that are not her own in-house formulas, she always tries to choose brands that mirror her standards.

In fact, she said the most important aspect of her business model was her commitment to filling her virtual shop with items sourced from other women makers in the industry who held the same standards for local, sustainable, high-end, and female-made. "I knew even at the start that there was a place for products geared specifically around the issues women struggle with most," she said, things like stress of managing busy lives with work and family or the physical changes that come with aging and child bearing.

Kirby's hunch was a smart one, because two years later her business has exploded, even without a brick and mortar storefront to work from. A story in BuzzFeed early on spread the word of her brand nationally, helping to boost early sales, and she has been able to build on that momentum and actually pay the bills.

At the moment, Kirby does all the work of sourcing and producing the online retail site herself, both in developing her own products and selecting items from other brands from the basement of her home in Cape Elizabeth, with two kids under age 6 at home with her much of the time. She also serves as PR and social media manager and handles customer service. She tries to keep as many of her supply purchases — including manufacturing and ingredients — within or as close to Maine as possible, with manufacturing coming from Massachusetts and ingredients sourced from smaller Maine growers and farmers, all of whom she has friendly relationships with.

"I like to know who I'm working with," Kirby says.

Ultimately, Kirby is happy with the diversity of her online store, both with the products themselves and their makers. "I feel especially proud that a lot of our products are from Black female business people," she said, "because letting our customers have so many options to shop Black-made is important to us."

To this day, she remains thoughtful in her choice of non-house-made products that fill her online marketplace, especially when it comes to the burgeoning trend of CBD-based makeup, which she mainly sources from the luxury plant-based makeup brand Dehiya, a Black-owned natural makeup company located in California but inspired by Morocco's ancient warrior princess of the same name. She only carries a handful of Dehiya's makeup items online now — like a lip tint and a multi-use highlighter — but there are plans for an office pop-up expansion as early as 2021 and grand dreams of a holistic multi-use sales and wellness community space by 2025 that will house a vast array of makeup lines, as the options in the national CBD makeup market naturally expands.

"No matter what happens in the industry at large, though, I know my business is going to continue to grow," Kirby said. And she plans to bring her female collaborative with her.

bw WORDS / KIRAH BROUILLETTE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



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So, You Want a Throwback?
Just over the NH border,
a place to gather around fires
and barrel-aged beers

ROAD TRIP

WORDS / CYNDLE PLAISTED RIALS

You'll know when you've found Throwback Brewery in North Hampton, NH. The hard-packed dirt driveway to the sprawling farm feels like a journey into a faded postcard, and that's only the beginning. The restaurant entrance at the rear of the barn ushers you into a cozy room full of exposed beams, a long, rough-hewn bar, and, at the back, a pair of towering, thick wooden doors flanked by windows that provide a glimpse of the 1860s sheep barn they've renovated into a bustling brew house.

When co-founders Nicole Carrier and Annette Lee began Throwback, they had a vision to unite the best parts of the past with the present. "We wanted to emulate those pre-Prohibition places that used ingredients around them, but, also, people went there and hung out and had dialogue and built community, and for Annette and I, that was a big part of starting the brewery," Carrier says, speaking quickly and ruffling a hand through her halo of blond curls.

Throwback knows exactly what we need to get through the dark New England winter after one of the more atrocious years in collective history: to forget 2020 ever happened. They're cracking open the vault on some cold-aged bottles they've hoarded for the last year or two for the "Rare Breed: Party Like It's 2019 Edition," as well as debuting some barrel-aged beers as part of their "Unafraid of the Dark" series, all with ABVs conducive to assuaging the year's myriad pains.

Although they have remained closed to indoor dining since March, Throwback's customers continue to enjoy their food and beers outside the barn, with the added benefit of reservable fire pits for the cold months and an outdoor menu that includes s'mores kits, complete with marshmallows and graham crackers made in their kitchen. With this flexibility as well as special releases like the "Unafraid of the Dark/Rare Breed" beers and some creative new offerings like artisan take-and-bake meals, weekly home beer delivery, and a sausage line dubbed "Lady Sausage," Throwback has managed to weather the pandemic.

Carrier rhapsodizes about the latest sausage she's cooked up: "It's turkey, pork, cranberry, sage; I soaked some apricots overnight in white wine and orange juice. Carrie (the chef) makes this amazing sourdough bread and so we have the sausage patty, cranberry walnut conserve on it, with the sourdough . . . It's really good,"

THROWBACK BREWERY

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she grins, as if she can taste the delectable sandwich, and tucks her hands into the pockets of her Throwback-branded camo hoodie.

It's clear food is a language Carrier speaks fluently. "We're very food-driven here. We're lucky, we have a very talented chef, and for me, the perfect beer is all about what I'm eating and how well it complements it." She mentions their Spicy Bohemian, a jalapeno pilsner, as her go-to for many different meals. "Some people think it's a gimmick beer, but it's not — it's the perfect amount of fresh green pepper aroma and the spiciness that sits on your tongue but doesn't overwhelm your palette. Really my favorite thing is in the summer, when you get a gorgeous white fish, locally caught, with fresh tomatoes from the garden on top and some lemon, and that beer adds a little bit of spice — it's just that marriage of the two."

Finding great combinations is just what they do at Throwback: food and drink, tradition and innovation, individuality and community. What started as a small warehouse tasting room has grown into a 12-acre farm with a 10,000-square-foot facility housing the restaurant and brewing operations, and a business that has won awards every year since 2014, from their first recognition as Food & Wine's New Hampshire pick for "50 Amazing Nanobreweries in 50 States" to taking home the Reader's Choice crown for Best Brew Pub AND Best Local Brewery at 2019's Taste of the Seacoast Awards. For Carrier, though, it's not really about the accolades: "For us, we talk about how, you know, breweries exist to make beer, but honestly we do this because we just wanna spread a little bit of happiness."

That desire has led Throwback to champion many causes, including Rett's Roost, a charity that provides sanctuaries for families dealing with pediatric cancer. In previous years, Throwback has partnered with them to host The Rett's Roost Superhero 5k/Fun Run. This year, they joined the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire for a three-month virtual poetry reading/discussion series, which led to the production of a new beer, "Blacknificent," which was released on Black Friday. Carrier describes the beer: "It's an American Black lager, 4.4%; imagine if PBR were black. Very light and roasty drinking." Blacknificent is the latest beer in their "Cans of Kindness" initiative, for which Throwback donates a dollar from every draft pour and 50% of all can profits to a given charity.

Another important tenet at Throwback is local sustainability. Their ultimate goal is to craft their beers solely with ingredients originating within a 200-mile radius. One of the particularly tricky ingredients to source was malt. "Most brewers get malt from the UK or from big factories in the midwest or Canada," Carrier explains. But when her cousin Andrea Stanley started Valley Malt, in Hadley, MA, the first small malting company on the East coast, "she really solved a problem."

Taking "local" and "sustainable" to a new level, one of the earlier "Unafraid of the Dark" beers Throwback released was El Chupacabra, a Mexican chocolate porter that is still a menu staple. Key ingredients for that brew come from cinnamon sticks sourced from Flag Hill Winery's rum production and chocolate husks that are a byproduct of the single-source chocolate process at Exeter's Enna Chocolate. Local peppers, including those grown right on Throwback's farm, complete the spicy-sweet flavor profile.

For the 2020 additions to the "Unafraid of the Dark/Rare Breed" series, Carrier says, "This year I was like 'That series was so fun,' but like, fuck 2020," she laughs. "So every single beer was brewed in 2019 or 2018 and we've just been cold-aging, barrel aging. They're all 9.8% and above." Two of the four beers in the series were introduced on Black Friday: 2019 Der Sandman, a Cognac barrel- and cold-aged doppelbock with fig, raisin, plum, and caramelized brown sugar, and Port Barrel 5-Minute Fugitive Russian Imperial Stout, which is as much of a tongue-pleaser as it is a tongue-twister, bursting with flavors of cherry, berry, coffee, and cream.

The final two beers will roll out in January and February: Bourbon Barrel-Aged Long Lost Friend Belgian Strong Ale and Rye Barrel-Aged Barleywine, both of which Carrier is particularly excited about. "You never know [with barrel aging] — it's just this magical alchemy of craziness. We've been pretty lucky with our barrels. These two that we tried

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...” her eyes roll back as she sighs. “When you try ‘em from the barrel, they’re not carbonated and they’re warm, but still ... when you drink the whole flat pitcher, you know it’s gonna be a really good one.”

Like all of us, when Carrier looks ahead to 2021, she doesn’t fully know what’s in store, but Throwback still has their eye on what they can offer to keep bringing people to their rustic haven through the winter. She paints a picture of staunch New England brew fans dressed for the weather and still making pilgrimages to the back of the big 19th-century barn. They’ve also set up a skating rink and a snowshoe track on the farm. “I imagine we’ll keep the fire pits going all winter as long as people wanna hang out,” Carrier says. “That’s when you can drink the 11% beers!”



In a time when so many once-normal aspects of life are altered and so many other things still uncertain, Throwback offers a philosophy that extends beyond the walls of their brewery. “For me, I love all different kinds of beer, but it’s all about enhancing the experience. Whether I’m eating, which I do a lot during covid, or when you get up to the top of a mountain and you have a really crisp beer you enjoy ... My favorite beers are all about enhancing the moment.”

Perhaps a moment that might include a gooey s’more, a dark and roasty beer that warms you to your toes, and conversations around a firepit that stretch into the endless, starry New England night. That’s a throwback we could all use.



WORDS / CYNDLE PLAISTED RIALS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



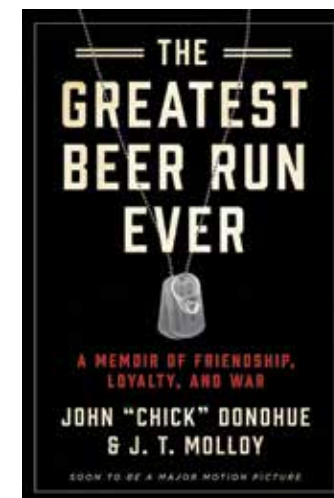
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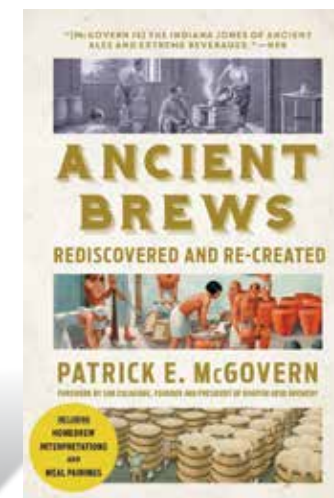
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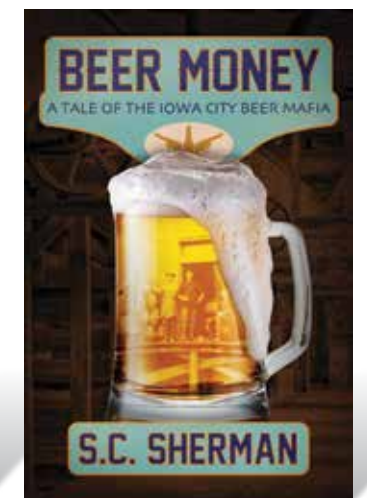
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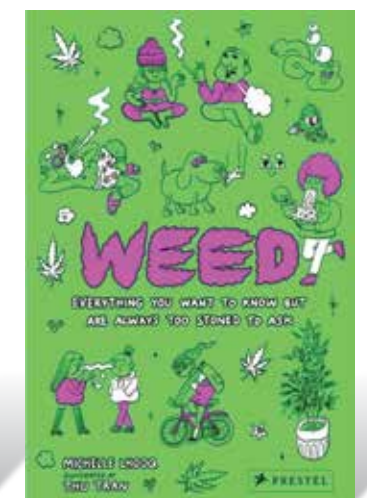
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THE GREAT COLLABORATOR

Getting heated with the dynamic Renée Coolbrith

WORDS / SAM PFEIFLE
PHOTOS / MATT ROBBINS

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Most people avoid confrontation. Renée Coolbrith — songstress, personality, advocate, general positive presence, kick-ass multi-instrumentalist — embraces it. Seeks it out, even.

“As a delusional person,” she says, looking to undo stigmas around body dysmorphic disorder and anorexia and CPTSD, “I cannot wait to tell people that the world is not the way they think it is.”

We’re talking over Zoom — that’s what we do nowadays — but the force of her energy comes across, regardless. A native Mainer, there’s more than a little New Yorker in her. The words seem at times to crash into you as she moves across topics in a hurry. You will not run into many people with a more palpable self-confidence.

And that comes from having a well-studied knowledge of herself. Coolbrith knows she’s never going to be happy doing one thing, staying in one lane. Maybe that’s why she’s one of the most accomplished and versatile collaborators in the Maine music scene. She’s worked to augment tracks with hip-hoppers like Vinyl Cape and Sarah Violette. Supplied dreamy lead vocals to innovative jazz-duo Odd Couple. Fueled pop-dance tracks as part of a duo with the likes of Trent Gay (and OHX). And now she’s co-fronting one of the most interestingly heavy rock groups in Maine, Johnny Cremins, while also partnering with Dustin Saucier in the emo project Pretty Sad — oh, and doing this all-gal punk group, MissFits, and . . .

Well, you get the idea. She’s not one to be tied down. And when you can both create the right kind of creepy croon for Johnny Cremins and hit the bell-clear crispness required for Odd Couple’s exactitude, people keep knocking on your door whether you like it or not.

“People say, ‘You should really focus on one thing,’” she muses, “and I say, ‘You should really focus on yourself, bro.’ People thought I was, like, greedy. Like I’m getting too much stage time in this town. But I’m just being an introverted person with an external processor.”

Like the artists she grew up emulating — Freddie Mercury, Prince, Dave Gutter — there’s more to her passion for music than making music. She’s a performer as much as anything. Why would she pass up an opportunity to get in front of people and make great things? It’s so damn fun!

But, at the same time, Coolbrith is conscious of the face she’s putting on, and more than one admirer has wondered exactly who the person is behind that persona.

“I’m attracted to people who are just profound, but have an anonymous part to them,” she says. “People are all in their faces, and trying to steal their privacy,” but they manage to transcend their personal biographical details by always refocusing people on their art.

What is Prince if not his outfits, his symbol, his music, his creations? Just a little dude from Minneapolis. Freddie Mercury was from everywhere and nowhere when he commanded the stage.

“I get excited,” she says, “when I meet a true creative, who’s not creating to be seen first.”

Likely, it’s that straightforward honesty and sense of purpose, shrouded in a bit of mystery, that has led to her profile in the cannabis industry, judging events like the High 95 Cup and serving as a brand ambassador currently for Earth Air.

“I was probably like 14 when I became a regular pot smoker,” she laughs. “With my brother in the barn.” But that doesn’t mean she thinks weed is a cure-all. Just like she’s done with drinking, “THC isn’t for everyone,” she says. “It can make people anxious and change their thought processes. It’s just a plant, but it’s a powerful plant.”

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“I was probably like 14 when I became a regular pot smoker,” she laughs. “With my brother in the barn.”

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She also has harsh words for those in the industry who try to make weed inaccessible to those just coming to it now that it's adult-use legal.

"They just get so crazy," she says. "There's this bravado. It's in beer, too. It's in wine. It's in any kind of craft where you can act like a douche bag to make yourself feel important. When people turn it into a personality, that's where it stops for me."

What's Coolbrith looking for in a cannabis product, then? "Just make it consistent," she says. "Just make it something safe, something with real information about how it's going to make me feel. I want you to care about the craft and not about trying to make it the biggest or the mostest."

In general, she's a fan of sativas and sativa hybrids, saying the indicas can sometimes make her feel a little panicky and neurotic, and she's also not afraid to get into some of the concentrates, like shatters and badders, with her dab rig. In fact, the last thing she said to me leaving the photo shoot was, "we gotta get you a torch!"

But she's also conscious that not every cannabis product is for every person. "There are people who love smoking weed," she says, "and they meet someone who says they don't like it and they'll say, 'You're just not trying the right ones, man!' And I've been that person! But some people just want CBD, and they don't even know that world yet."

It can be easy, nowadays, to lose track of just exactly what world anyone is in, of course. It's certainly hard to style yourself a performer when there's nowhere left to perform. Coolbrith has done a stream or two here and there, but the experience is "mad awkward" and deeply unsatisfying when you're used to working a crowd.

And so she finds herself writing solo material, looking for racists to call out online, and generally trying to sit with herself.

"I've been going through it, for sure," she says. "But I think the contrast will hit on the other side. It will make things a lot sweeter."



WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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CITY ▼ COUNTRY ▼ CASINO

WORDS/ **SAM PFEIFLE**

The refined and simple pleasures of Route 26

Perhaps the influx of out-of-staters will change this, but Maine's largely rural nature still makes it possible to go from one place to another, over very long distances, without turning much. Who needs a map or a GPS when the directions are as simple as, "Take 95 to exit 86 and take a right and it's right there, up a couple miles"?

But it's other numbered roads that offer the most possibility, those state and federal roads that criss-cross the Pine Tree State, overlapping one another for miles at a time until they deviate to continue on their way to some border or another. How can you get lost when you never left the road you were on?

This can make for some serious touring fun. Get in the car, start driving, and see what you find.

One of the best stretches you'll find for beer and weed is the relatively low-profile Route 26, probably most well known to skiers who enjoy Sunday River. With a starting point right in the heart of Portland's most interesting neighborhood for booze and restaurants and an end-point in the wilds of uncharted and unorganized Maine, it offers an incredible diversity of experiences and a hell of a lot of fun.

WASHINGTON AVENUE

Technically, Route 26 begins at the corner of Cumberland and Washington, a great little Portland corner where you can grab a pint at the Snug and a slice at Otto's (once covid is over, hopefully) and quickly walk down to the waterfront along India Street, if you'd like.

But it's the other direction, out Washington and toward Tukey's Bridge where the fun happens. On your right, you'll find **Oxbow Brewing's** Portland location, which they've combined with the delectable **Duckfat** fries to create a Belgian-style Friteshack with tee-pees you can sit in around firepits, fresh pints in hand. In the summer, expect bands and fewer people in hats in mittens.

When we swung by in late January, they had the Vestige, a farmhouse ale, on tap along with their Sap House, a smoked lager flavored with maple syrup. Just the thing for a bitter afternoon with snowflakes drifting through the air. Obviously, their inviting and well-spaced tap-room isn't as accessible at the moment, but there will be winters in the future where people still choose the outdoor ambiance they've created.



"By the time you hit Gray, though, you'll find you're at an intersection with 4, 115, 26, 100, and 202. Yikes!"



More good news: Oxbow shares a side of the street and part of a warehouse building with other booze suppliers, including **Hardshore Distilling** — which sells one product, a 92-proof 750ml bottle of gin — and **Maine Meadworks**, which offers a variety of playful flavors. Just a few steps further brings you **Cong Tu Bot**, where you can get some Vietnamese comfort food to make sure the alcohol doesn't hit you too hard.

But you should wander around before you hop in the car. **Terlingua** is just across the street and is gaining a reputation as the best and most creative BBQ in the city, and you can also find Japanese (**Izakay Minato**) and Salvadorean (**Tu Casa**) on the same block. Plus, there's Maine **Craft Distilling** and the amazing sandwich shop **Ramona's** just a couple blocks down. Not bad for Maine!

But this is a tour, and time's-a-wasting. Start heading north!

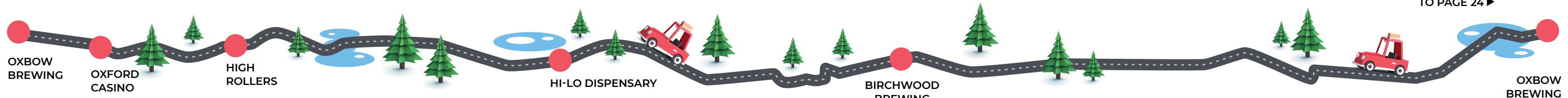


GRAY/NEW-GLOUCESTER

They don't call Gray the "crossroads of Maine" for nothing. After following Washington Avenue out of Portland you come into Falmouth and Cumberland, filled with rolling hills and horse farms as you join with Route 100.

By the time you hit Gray, though, you'll find you're at an intersection with 4, 115, 26, 100, and 202. Yikes!

Better stop, first, at **Birchwood Brewing**, one of Maine's newer breweries and in one of the most random settings, a shopping plaza that also includes a hardware store, dance studio, grocery store, bank, and a walk-up ice cream shop. Set in a former pool hall, this is the sort of place where you can get in a good cornhole game out back and watch sports on the giant TV on the side of the wall.



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FEATURE : MAINE'S GREAT ROADS

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Most important, though, is to pick up some beer. On a recent afternoon, we decided to stop in and grab a growler, which they offer in 32- and 64-ounce brown bottles, and which they'll fill with anything they've got on tap. Pleased to see a number of gluten-reduced options, we decided against the Numero UNO pale ale and the Birchwood Red and went with the XYZ Pilsner, which runs an ABV under 5 and has a beautiful, bright coloring.

Tearing off the electrical tape and cracking the bottle later that night, we found a lovely carbonation and very drinkable beer with a good mouth feel.

But time to get moving! Follow signs for Route 26 through what is a legitimately confusing downtown Gray and you'll soon be passing the **Gray Wildlife Park** (an excellent summer destination for kids) and the **Shaker Village** (same), on your way into a truly country setting where you can open up to 65 mph and take in looming hills and mountains.

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“Get in the car, start driving, and see what you find.”

POLAND AND BEYOND

Time to pick up some weed, though, right? You're in luck.

Right before you come up on the historic **Poland Spring Resort** (make sure you get 18 in there this summer, or catch a concert on the lawn), and one of Maine's largest gun shops (if that's your thing), you'll find the brand-new **Hi-Lo Dispensary**, which just opened in November and is a sharp little local adult-rec retail outlet.

A relatively non-descript white building on the outside, the interior is well-appointed, with cool lighting features, wood floors (knock the snow off your boots!), and elegant glass cases that showed off plenty of concentrates, including SeaWeed carts.

We were looking for some flower, though, and were initially disappointed to see they only had the Skywalker OG in a pre-rolled, but, “Oh, wait, I've got an eighth set aside for someone and they're a week late to pick it up, so you can have it,” said the kind woman behind the counter. Score!

In a childproof plastic container, the Skywalker was a bit brittle, but had an excellent powered-sugar coating and keef basically exploded off the buds when we broke them up. And, as always, the pure-sativa Skywalker delivered an energetic kick.

Have a medical card? Then we highly recommend you check out the equally brand-new **High Rollers** medical dispensary, just a very short distance from the **Oxford Casino**. They went in big on their location and feature a beautiful log cabin exterior that could pass for a sap house. The place was packed on the day we visited, and we had the Skywalker in our pocket, but we saw a big selection of flower from **Great Falls Greenery** and some delicious-looking goodies from **Buzzed Bakery**.

And though it could be seriously tempting to just stop at the Casino and start with the gambling till dawn, we recommend you hoof it just a little bit further to give you a feeling of closure: Yes, **Oxbow's** Oxford location is right there, and you will not be disappointed. This is one of the great out-of-the-way spots in Maine, with a full menu, one of the largest beer selections you'll find from any single brewery in Maine, and, well, cross-country skiing, too, if you're feeling healthy.

While the list of bottles and cans is daunting, we decided to grab a small, medium, and large off the laminated menu: 750ml of the Magenta, a farmhouse ale aged with concord grapes; 500ml of the Newcastle Morning, a blended farmhouse ale aged for 18 months; and 250ml of the Saison du Smeirlap!, an extra-hoppy ale, stainless aged.

This place is a perfect spot for getting beer lovers birthday presents, we'll tell you that.

Now you can spend some time at that casino, we're sure. Or continue on up toward Bethel and Sunday River, maybe even swing over to North Conway, New Hampshire, for some shopping. Surely, you've got enough beer and weed on board by this point to make any endeavor enjoyable.

WHERE WE STOPPED ▼

OXBOW BREWING

49 Washington Ave, Portland | 207.350.0025

BIRCHWOOD BREWING

19 Portland Rd, Gray | 207.657.4593

HI-LO DISPENSARY

435 Maine St, Poland | 207.515.2656

HIGH ROLLERS

532 Pigeon Hill Rd, Mechanic Falls | 207.345.7013

OXBOW BREWING

420 Main Street, Oxford | 207.539.5178



WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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WORDS & PHOTO / JANELLE LAPLANTE

A few things you should know: I'm an extremely minimal beer drinker, avid cannabis consumer, and attracted to the finer foods in life. This recipe is inspired by our good friend Rick Smith, who so generously gave us a can of Bissell Brothers Swish Double IPA during a recent visit. He probably thought we were going to drink it, but I had an idea to share this Citra- and Mosaic-based DIPA with many more taste buds.

My first step was to try it so I could determine what to pair it with. I had been taste testing Valrhona's Jivara couverture (chocolate) for a few weeks and instantly knew its notes of caramel, vanilla and hint of malt would make the perfect base for the ganache.

Feel free to use any chocolate you see fit, though. If you decide on a dark chocolate, I suggest reducing the amount of chocolate in the ganache to 400 grams to maintain a similar consistency. Otherwise, the ganache will be quite thick.

To bring out the beer's citrus body, I cold-steeped heavy cream in orange peels for a week. This is a step you can skip for simplicity's sake, but it certainly enhances the orange flavor.

To sweeten it up a bit, my mind instantly went to the frozen strawberry puree I made in August, using fresh strawberries picked at peak ripeness. Making your own strawberry puree from frozen strawberries at the grocery store is an easy accessible alternative option.

Upon first bite, you'll notice the ganache has a silky texture, with a fudge-like taste that slowly transitions into a sweet tang.

One thing I cannot stress enough is the use of a steep-sided bowl to make your ganache. This enhances its texture and mouthfeel by reducing the amount of air incorporated into the ganache while stirring. Also, if you're looking to infuse cannabis into this recipe, simply warm your desired amount of cannabis concentrate to 65C and add it to your melted chocolate for ganache in step 4.



HOW TO TEMPER CHOCOLATE BY SEED:

1. Make sure your environment is no warmer than 20C and less than 50% humidity.
2. Pour 1kg chocolate couverture in a plastic or glass bowl.
3. Pour 200g of chocolate couverture in a separate bowl and set aside. This is your seed.
4. Place the bowl in a microwave and heat the chocolate to 40-46C.
5. Take the bowl out of the microwave every 15 to 20 seconds and stir well to make sure that the heat is evenly distributed throughout and to keep the chocolate from burning.
6. Using a thermometer, check that the temperature of the 1kg melted chocolate is now between 40-46C. The type of chocolate you are using will determine the correct temperature. Check your chocolate bag for guidance.
7. Stir chocolate.
8. Add your seeding chocolate to your melted chocolate.
9. Stir continuously but not vigorously until the seeded chocolate has melted completely.
10. Using a thermometer, check that the temperature of the chocolate is at the recommended temperature. Dark chocolate should be between 31-32C. Milk and white chocolate should be between 29-30C.
11. Heat the chocolate slightly if it has gone below the recommended temperature.
12. Perform a temper test by smearing tempered chocolate on a piece of parchment paper or utensil. The chocolate should harden within minutes.
13. Stir the tempered chocolate and check the temperature while you're using it for molding.

STRAWBERRY SWISH GANACHE INGREDIENTS:

- 247g** strawberry puree
- 44g** heavy cream cold stepped
- 77g** invert sugar (honey can be used as a substitute)
- 20g** Bissell Brothers Swish Double IPA
- 580g** Valrhona Jivara (milk chocolate can be used as a substitute)

STRAWBERRY SWISH GANACHE DIRECTIONS:

1. Temper chocolate to cast molds.
2. Cast molds with tempered chocolate.
3. Weigh each ganache ingredient into a separate container.
4. Gently melt the chocolate in a large steep-sided bowl. Add cannabis concentrate if desired and stir.
5. Combine the puree, invert sugar, and heavy cream and heat until very hot but not boiling.
6. Stir 1/4th of the liquid into the chocolate, working in vigorous tight circles to create a shiny core.
7. Stir another 1/4th of the liquid into the chocolate, continuing to develop the core.
8. Continue twice more until the ganache is fully emulsified.
9. Work in Bissell Brothers Swish Double IPA.
10. Allow ganache to cool to 30C, then pour into a piping bag.
11. Pipe ganache into prepared shells.
12. Cool overnight until fully crystallized.
13. Cap shells with tempered chocolate.

bw WORDS & PHOTO / JANELLE LAPLANTE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

About the author: Janelle LaPlante is co-owner of Tastefully Baked, a family-owned micro-indoor medical marijuana farm and licensed processor, located in Portland, Maine. They specialize in edibles and concentrates.



FOR THE LOVE OF BROWNIES

WORDS / MINDY MOORE

Having been baking for love or money for nigh on 40 years, I'm often asked which treat is my personal favorite. There is almost unanimous surprise when I name the humble chocolate brownie. Hear me out:

SIMPLICITY - They are ridiculously easy to make from scratch, with no fancy ingredients or equipment required. All you need is a saucepan, a baking pan and a wooden spoon.

VERSATILITY - This simple snack can be elevated to an elegant dessert with a cookie cutter, a dollop of whipped cream, and some fresh fruit.

CREATIVITY - The velvety chocolate pairs beautifully with sweet, salty, savory, spicy or the herbaceous. (See "Pimp My Brownies" for more in this vein.)

If you prefer a sweet or cakey brownie, move along, there's nothing to see here. For those who love a dark, complex, delectably squidgy brownie, read on. In less than an hour, you can be sneaking warm bites from the edge of the pan.

RECIPE : BROWNIES

PERFECT CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

While this recipe is suitable for all skill levels, here are a few tips to insure perfection:

- Keep an eye on the butter and chocolate while melting. There's no fixing scorched chocolate.
- Mix by hand with a wooden spoon, no electric mixer. Just trust me on this one.
- Start checking 5 minutes before the timer is set to go off. Perfect becomes overbaked in a matter of minutes. Pro tip: If by some chance overbaking happens, all is not lost. Trim away any burnt edges, chop up the middle and mix into your favorite ice cream. Voila: Sundae!



INGREDIENTS:

- **6 oz.** Ghirardelli Semi-Sweet or Bittersweet (60% Cocoa) chocolate bar, chopped
- **2 oz.** unsweetened baking chocolate, chopped
- **1 ½ sticks** unsalted butter, room temperature, cut into pieces
- **1 ½ c.** granulated sugar
- **2 tsp.** vanilla
- **4** large eggs, room temp
- **1 tsp.** salt
- **1 c.** flour
- **1 c.** Ghirardelli Semi-Sweet or Bittersweet chocolate chips (or mix-in of choice)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In heavy saucepan, over lowest heat, slowly melt chocolate and butter, stirring occasionally. To prevent burning, remove from heat while still a few lumps and stir until smooth. Set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly.*
3. Using a wooden spoon, stir in sugar and vanilla.
4. Then add eggs, one at a time, stirring well after each addition. Once all eggs are incorporated, beat vigorously by hand for another 20-30 seconds until batter is thick and glossy.
5. Gently stir in flour and salt, just until combined, then gently fold in chocolate chips.
6. Use butter or cooking spray to thoroughly grease a 9 x 13 metal baking pan. Pour the batter into the pan and shake a few times to ensure batter is evenly distributed. If you want to easily remove brownies from pan for cutting, line the bottom with foil or parchment paper with enough overhang on each end to use for lifting.
7. Bake at 350° for 25–30 minutes or until middle is set, top is shiny and starting to show signs of cracking. Let brownies cool completely in the pan on a wire rack before removing or cutting.



*For cannabis-infused brownies, warm your desired amount of cannabis concentrate to 149° and add it to your melted chocolate and butter in step 2 before cooling.

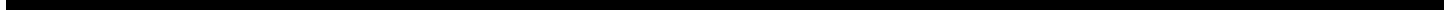
PIMP MY BROWNIES

As long as the measurement is roughly equal, the chocolate chips can be substituted with any number of mix-ins. Or you can add flavor with toppings. Here are a few options to get you started, but hey, you do you:

- Flavored baking chips, like mint, peanut butter, toffee, or caramel
- Dried fruit
- Toasted pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts
- Chopped up candy bar
- Drizzle with caramel sauce and sprinkle with sea salt flakes



WORDS / MINDY MOORE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



WORDS / SAM PFEIFLE

Stocking up for pre- and après-ski activities in out-of-the-way places

Everyone knows about après-ski activities. Heck, half the reason most of you go to the mountain is so you'll have a good excuse for a beer afterward.

But we've also seen what's littered underneath the chairlift as we ride up, even at 9 a.m. — all sorts of evidence that plenty of people like to enjoy a pop and a puff before and during the ski and ride experience as well.

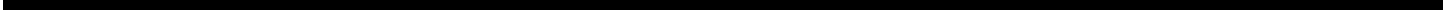
So:

A: Stop throwing your cans on the ground under the lift! If we see one more Fireball mini lying in the snow, we just might lose it. Just put your empties in the trash cans at the top of the mountain, or stow them in your backpack, and don't be a dink.

B: This is what edibles and vape pens are for! Watching y'all struggle to do the cupped hands, lighter, don't-drop-your-gloves things is downright anxiety inducing. Stop it.

And if you're going to imbibe on the mountain, might we suggest you do it with some local products at some local mountains and with a bit of style? Natty Lite isn't doing anything for your turns, we can assure you.

To help you out, we've put together some handy listings of great breweries and cannabis shops that are within easy pick-up distance of some of Maine's awesome community mountains, a little off the beaten path and maybe with fewer fellow skiers and riders. It was the least we could do. At some of these cannabis shops, you'll need a medical card. We've indicated where that is the case.



LISTINGS KEY

- ▲ Mountain
- Cannabis
- Brewery

▲ **BAKER MOUNTAIN, MOSCOW**
www.baker-mtn-ski-tow-club.business.site/

Operating via volunteer power only, and featuring a tow rope to get you up the hill and nothing more, you'll need to make sure you bring some durable gloves if you don't want your best pair to get torn to shreds.

● **Kennebec River Brewery**
1771 Route 201, The Forks
207-636-4466
www.northernoutdoors.com/kennebec-river-brewery/
With beer only available on site, you'll find everything from a refreshing Whitewater Wheat to creamy Penobscot Porter. And you can book a snowmobiling trip while you're there.

■ **Norridgewock Springs [Medical]**
8 Waterville Road, Norridgewock
207-634-2170
www.norridgewock-springs.business.site/

Not only do they offer \$7 pre-rolls of delicious indoor like Agent Orange, there's also a Dunkin' Donuts right across the street. Handy!

▲ **BIGROCK, MARS HILL**
www.bigrockmaine.com/

Not only has Bigrock just opened a brand-new terrain park, but this is one of the few areas in the world where you can ski in the shadow of giant windmills. Trippy stuff.

■ **Northern Maine Flower [Medical]**
540 Main Street, Presque Isle
207-760-7015

Do they have a web site? They do not. Do they have some lovely flower, concentrates, and edibles? The do! Maybe try a Wednesday trip up north — they offer 12% off concentrates all day. Plus, it's right next to City Hall. That's kind of fun.

● **Northern Maine Brewing Company**
22 Main Street, Caribou
207-469-3031
www.northernmainebrewingcompany.com/

Make sure you leave time for a bite, as this is a full-service pub with plenty of great menu options. As for beers, we recommend the Skidder Grease, an extra stout featuring chocolate rye.

▲ **BLACK MOUNTAIN, RUMFORD**
www.skiblackmountain.org/

Maybe the best vertical-per-dollar ratio in Maine, Black Mountain has great deals and some great steeps if you find a local to give you a heads up. Plus, the side mountain is among the best places to learn, anywhere.

■ **207 Farms [Medical]**
29 Main St, Dixfield
207farms@gmail.com

One of the most truly local medical shops in Maine, they'll also sell you organic fertilizer straight from their farm. Look for short runs of fun strains and alternative edibles, with everything completely sourced on site.

● **Ambition Brewing**
295 Main Street, Wilton
207-578-0229
www.ambitionbrews.com

They bill themselves as the smallest brewery in Maine, but they live up to their name, with some truly interesting brews. Big question: Do you want to know what the Derivation Porter, modeled after Moxie, actually tastes like?

▲ CAMDEN SNOW BOWL, CAMDEN
www.camdensnowbowl.com/

While this place may not be known for the steep slopes and deeps, it's the only ski area we can think of with an ocean view from the top. It's truly resplendent on a sunny day.

● **Blaze Brewing**
5 Bayview Landing, Camden
207-944-8723
www.blazebrewing.com/

One of four Blaze locations throughout the state, this is the most eclectic, a mixture of brewery and sushi restaurant, featuring an Asian fusion menu and some interesting can options, from the Bailey Boy Brown Ale to the Backshore Kettle Sour that comes in at a sessionable 4.2%.

■ **Maine Marijuana Shop**
1 Priest Road, Northport
207-930-5430
www.sweetreliefshopthemaine.business.site/

Paired with the Sweet Relief medical dispensary, this is the sort of roadside shop where flower comes in big glass jars and the edibles come and go, but you'll always be met with a smile and an attempt to please.

▲ LOST VALLEY, AUBURN
www.lostvalleyski.com/

This ain't your granddaddy's Lost Valley. Recent years have seen big improvements, with a new chair and nine new gladed trails cut with advanced skiers in mind. And can you say, "Tube Park"?

● **Lost Valley Brewing Company**
Right in the basement of the Lost Valley ski lodge
207-689-7615
www.lostvalleyski.com/lost-valley-brewing-company/

We did say that Lost Valley has made lots of improvements lately, no? Well, this "nano brewery," which produces three barrels at a time, just opened in 2018 and is putting out one interesting brew after another. The Otterslide IPA is the flagship, but also look for blondes, Belgians, and blueberries.

■ **Strawberry Fields Apothecary [Medical]**
44 Strawberry Avenue, Leviston
207-420-8440
www.strawberryfieldsapothecary.shop/

A well-established medical shop, Strawberry Fields is known for its family-friendly vibe and attention to detail. They carry Mighty Viking gummies and Lit Girl cookies and have a strong selection of flower, featuring Blue Cheese and Bubblegum.

▲ MOUNT JEFFERSON, LEE
www.skimtjefferson.com/

Among the most truly out-of-the-way ski areas in the country, Mt. Jefferson isn't really close to anywhere, so make sure you call ahead, but if the lifts are running, you'll be doing unfettered laps all day.

■ **New England Reserve [Medical]**
983 Stillwater Avenue, Old Town
207-817-0518
www.newenglandreserve.com/

This close to Maine's college town, it's unsurprising that this dispensary is among the state's most creative and varied. From Stones Throw flower, to in-house strains like Frosted Cherry Cookie, they've got a big selection, and the THC honey and "elixir" are mouthwatering.

● **Marsh Island Brewing**
2 Main Street, Orono
207-942-7678.
www.marshislandbrewing.com/

Make sure to swing by the tasting room and pick up a four-pack of their creative cans. The Black is Beautiful Imperial Stout is rich and creamy, while the Puckerush Blackberry Lemonade will cleanse your palate with a citrusy finish.

▲ NEW HERMON MOUNTAIN, HERMON
www.skihermonmountain.com/

Another great bargain, adults ski for just \$30 and there's night skiing galore. This is a great spot to grab some morning turns to catch a bunch of corduroy and then call it a day at lunchtime, too.

■ **Firestorm Cannabis Company**
1172 Hammond St, Bangor
207-922-2917
www.firestormcultivation.com/

One of the largest selections you'll find in Maine, Firestorm is currently the northernmost adult-use shop, too. You'll find a ton of pre-rolls to choose from, and lots of Green Alien edibles.

● **2 Feet Brewing Company**
80 Columbia Street, Bangor
207-573-1979
www.twofeetbrewing.com

You'll find a classic brew pub here, with locally sourced ingredients and an emphasis on home cooking. Vegan corn chowder, baked fried green beans, and sticky fingers all taste just like mom used to make. And they augment their beers with things like the Hagrid, a hard butterscotch seltzer, and a big list of local wines.

▲ POWDERHOUSE HILL, S. BERWICK
www.powderhousehill.com/

This is about as local as it gets. You don't pay much (just \$5), but you also only get a rope tow and whatever grooming the all-volunteer workforce can put together. And it can get crowded on the weekends. Try this joint with a lot of patience on a Friday and cross your fingers.

■ **Green Truck Farms [Medical]**
19 Buffum Road Unit 6, North Berwick
207-756-4420
www.greentruckfarm.com/

This place is known for its terrific edibles, tasty and punch-packing. We're especially fond of the macaroons, but don't miss the gummies either. And, of course, you'll find a big selection of locally produced flower.

● **Corner Point Brewing Company**
341 School Street, Berwick
207-432-1095
www.cornerpointbrewing.com

A tap room where you might be able to score a hotdog, this spot is known for some great labels and original creations. Hit the Straight Outta Berwick for an in-your-face IPA; try the Aroma Joe's Porter for a pick-me-up.

▲ TITCOMB MOUNTAIN, FARMINGTON
www.titcombmountain.com/

Why keep driving to Sugarloaf or Sunday River, when Titcomb is right here in Farmington? They'll tell ya they're the friendliest mountain in Maine, and we won't argue. At 350 feet of vertical, it's not big-mountain skiing, but you can find some steep slopes and there are cross-country trails for days if you want to burn some real calories.

■ **Caniba Naturals [Medical]**
232 Broadway, Farmington
207-578-2102
www.canibanaturals.com/

If you're in a hurry, this is a great spot, with an excellent online store and easy ordering for pick-up. Plus, the selection is deep, given they've been around for so long. Look for the Humboldt Lemon Shatter and their homemade Chem 91 rosin.

● **Tumbledown Brewing**
805 Farmington Falls Road, Farmington
207-949-0697
www.tumbledownbrewing.com

Order ahead for pick up here, too, and make it an easy pop through Farmington. One of the rare spots still offering growlers, Tumbledown has its flagship Tumbledown Red, with dark-roasted malts, and fun offerings like the Thoughtbridge Berliner Weisse, where they change around the fruit accents depending on the season.

BLACK MOUNTAIN, RUMFORD

LOST VALLEY, AUBURN

TITCOMB MOUNTAIN, FARMINGTON

CAMDEN SNOW BOWL, CAMDEN

NEW HERMON MOUNTAIN, HERMON

MOUNT JEFFERSON, LEE

BIGROCK, MARS HILL

POWDERHOUSE HILL, SOUTH BERWICK

BAKER MOUNTAIN, MOSCOW

▲ MOUNT JEFFERSON, LEE
■ New England Reserve [Medical]
● Marsh Island Brewing

▲ NEW HERMON MOUNTAIN, HERMON
■ Firestorm Cannabis Company
● 2 Feet Brewing Company

▲ POWDERHOUSE HILL, SOUTH BERWICK
■ Green Truck Farms [Medical]
● Corner Point Brewing Company

▲ TITCOMB MOUNTAIN, FARMINGTON
■ Caniba Naturals [Medical]
● Tumbledown Brewing

▲ BLACK MOUNTAIN, RUMFORD
■ 207 Farms [Medical]
● Ambition Brewing

▲ CAMDEN SNOW BOWL, CAMDEN
● Blaze Brewing
■ Maine Marijuana Shop

▲ LOST VALLEY, AUBURN
● Lost Valley Brewing Company
■ Strawberry Fields Apothecary [Medical]

▲ BAKER MOUNTAIN, MOSCOW
● Kennebec River Brewery
■ Norridgewock Springs [Medical]

▲ BIGROCK, MARS HILL
■ Northern Maine Flower [Medical]
● Northern Maine Brewing Company

ANY IDEA IS... BETTER



AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE WELLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL, I DISCOVERED THAT IF YOU ARRIVE PREPARED AND INSPIRED, PEOPLE USUALLY LATCH ON TO YOUR IDEA.

If you've got one posterboard, they're sold on your homecoming theme.

I learned to sketch it out. Draw it on a napkin. Make a slide show. Show them what you're thinking and, most times, that's enough to win people over. Because, frankly, most people won't put in much effort at all.

It's a lesson I've found especially helpful when working with other artists in my current career as a songwriter, producer, and rapper.

In 2014, I had a session at The Studio (RIP) on Casco Street in Portland, with my long-lost acquaintance from the University of New Hampshire, a really talented producer named Decap. I hadn't seen him in about a decade, since I was drunkenly freestyling at a blurry frat party with him and his rapper friend LB in Durham, NH. Through social media, though, Decap and I had loosely kept in touch.

This session, however, would be our first time collaborating.

Since I had last seen Decap, I had been in and (very quickly) out of a major label record deal and then a full-time professional rapper for almost five years. As a result of that journey, I had been in a shitload of recording sessions.

I've been in legendary ones (like the hazy summer of 2010 when Cam Groves and I would make four songs a night in Los Angeles, with producers like The Cataracs and Mike Caren); I've been in ones I wish I could forget (like when I got way too high to make anything in the studio with Rome, from Sublime with Rome, in Boston). Through good and bad, by this point I'd learned that it helps the session when I bring something to the table to get us off to a good start. Even if it's not on a posterboard.

On the 40-minute drive up 95 to Portland, I listened to no music. I just brainstormed song ideas for the session. By the time I parked, I had three ideas. Maybe one would work. Maybe none. But it was something.

I walked in with iced coffee, my MacBook, and my ideas: a song called "Thanks Obama" where I would blame President Obama for

all my flaws; an idea for a sample I wanted to flip and a pre-chorus; and a song where I'd use a popular rappers' signature ad-libs.

Like most songwriting sessions, we didn't actually make any music for nearly an hour. We talked life, UNH, weather, iced coffee, and he explained AirDrop to me (which blew my mind).

And then I told him my ideas.

I AirDropped him a song by this great, soulful Chicago band I'd met called The Right Now. They had this beautiful song called "Nobody" that I had loved since I saw them perform it one night in Toledo, Ohio. He loaded it into Ableton, his weapon of choice.

Within half an hour, Decap had flipped it into a rap beat. The pre-chorus I had mumbled into fruition on the drive up was recorded.

”

“In just that one session, we created the bones of what would be three of my biggest songs.”

I had learned by this point not to bog down collaborative sessions with writing verses, so I saved writing and recording the verses for a later date. Then, via email and DropBox, I scored a verse from George Watsky, an impressive California rapper I knew through an Emerson College friend.

The rest is history.

In just that one session, from noon until about 4 p.m., when I had to leave to pick up my daughter, we created the bones of what would be three of my biggest songs: "Thanks Obama," "Kanye Go," and "Nobody."

And "Nobody" is currently my third most popular song, racking up millions of streams, YouTube views, and a half-dozen tattoos along the way. All of this mostly as a result of Decap being super dope and me coming in with *something*.



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