

# VANCOUVER **courier**

## Distill my beating heart

Inaugural micro-distillery festival promises to be a spirited affair

[Cheryl Rossi](#) / Vancouver Courier

May 8, 2014 12:11 PM



Alex Hamer (left) and Charles Tremewen show some team spirit in anticipation of B.C. Distilled, the province's first micro-distillery festival, May 10 at CBC Studios, showcasing libations from 16 small-batch distilleries across B.C. and one from the Yukon. Photograph By Dan Toulgoet

Alex Hamer loves a good whisky. He also enjoys a good gin, so he was excited when a slew of distilleries opened in Vancouver last year.

To share his appreciation, Hamer has organized B.C. Distilled, the province's first micro-distillery festival, May 10.

"We all sit around and talk about wouldn't it be cool if this happened," said Hamer, who took a break from IT work to organize B.C. Distilled. "And I just thought, you know what, I want to do it for once instead of just

saying I wish someone else would do this.”

Sixteen of B.C.’s small-batch distilleries and one from the Yukon will showcase their artisanal gin, vodka and whisky alongside other fine spirits and liqueurs that include aquavit, cassis and absinthe at CBC Studios, Saturday.

Festivalgoers can snack on gourmet dishes provided by restaurants that include Grain Tasting Bar and Forage as they sip, and XOXOLAT will serve up advice on chocolate and spirit pairings.

Hamer wants drinkers to know about the tasty libations available in their backyard so they’ll be more likely to support small businesses and contribute to their local economy.

“Every distillery in this province should be so busy they don’t know what to do with themselves,” said the 41-year-old West End resident. “But we have to build that market awareness.”

Charles Tremewen, founder and master distiller at [Long Table Distillery \(http://longtabledistillery.com\)](http://longtabledistillery.com) on Hornby Street near Beach Avenue, hopes to one day see lineups out his door akin to the queues seen outside distilleries in Portland.

Long Table, the first distillery to open in Vancouver, crafts a traditional London Dry Gin, a Cucumber Gin and Texada Vodka.

“Which has a hint of lemongrass and it’s mineralized through a bed of limestone from Texada Island,” Tremewen said.

Long Table partnered with the Clos du Soleil vineyard in the Similkameen Valley to create Marc du Soleil, a French grappa. They’ve also turned out licorice-flavour-laced akvavit and bourbon barrel aged gin, which has received rave reviews, according to Tremewen.

Inspired by Portland’s [Distillery Row, \(http://distilleryrowpdx.com\)](http://distilleryrowpdx.com) Tremewen combined his experience as an organic food product manager and his teenage passion for distilling to co-create Long Table with his wife, Rita.

To attract foot traffic, Long Table runs gin and tonic Fridays with a food truck parked out front from 4 to 9 p.m.

Long Table is just one of four Vancouver distilleries featured at the festival and Tremewen believes synergy benefits each of them.

“As some of my fellow distillers in the U.S. say, there’s more than enough room on the shelf for all of us,” he said. “The multinationals are on the shelf right now and we have a tremendous opportunity ahead of us to replace shelf space with locally made spirits.”

Hamer encourages consumers to become locally conscious spirit connoisseurs. “This is your first and best chance to just try almost everything the province has to offer,” he said.

B.C. Distilled runs 6 to 9 p.m. at 700 Hamilton St. Tickets are \$49. Details at [bcdistilled.ca \(http://bcdistilled.ca\)](http://bcdistilled.ca).

[crossi@vancourier.com](mailto:crossi@vancourier.com)

[twitter.com/Cheryl\\_Rossi](http://twitter.com/Cheryl_Rossi) ([http://twitter.com/Cheryl\\_Rossi](http://twitter.com/Cheryl_Rossi))

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