

"Right now there are five breweries within five blocks and another two are being built, and now we have heard another distillery is opening up. So, not long from now, there will be seven breweries and two distilleries within walking distance. It's a new booze district."

Glanz and company celebrated their location by naming their vodka after it.

"We sort of tapped into something when we called it East Van Vodka," said Glanz. "People take a bit of pride in that. So here's something that is new and kind of cool that they can support and it is just nice for the neighbourhood."

Now in 40 or so bars and restaurants and 30 private liquor stores, East Van Vodka's reputation has travelled well beyond its 'hood.

The vodka, made from 100-percent malted barley, scored a gold medal for its packaging and a silver in the blind-tasting competition at the recent San Francisco World Spirits Competition.

"It sort of validates your product and helps people choose you over someone else," said Glanz, who trained in Scotland.

Most B.C. distilleries are focusing on vodka or gin. Some make a few other limited-edition specialty liquors. Whisky is a scarcer commodity as the province's liquor laws dictate that whisky must be put down (in barrels) for at least three years before it can be sold. Some distilleries do offer a white whisky.

Speaking of liquor laws, all the distillers interviewed for this story did not hesitate to say government red tape was the biggest challenge to starting a liquor business in booze-rule-bound B.C., despite the recent relaxing of some rules.

"It is a lot of fun, the people are awesome, it is really working with a community," said Simpson, whose signature gin Endeavour was created



Co-owners Rita and Charles Tremewen in the tasting lounge of the Long Table Distillery, Vancouver's first micro-distillery.

by distiller Laurent Lafuente. "I'd be lying, though, if I didn't say it was hard, too. We have to work through a lot of challenges because we are breaking ground in a new industry."

"It's not for the faint of heart," laughed Tremewen, who fell in love with the idea for the business after a trip to Portland, OR, North America's leading purveyor of hip and home-grown food and drink.

But despite the daily hiccups and the long hours, the distillers agreed that this exciting new industry is worth toasting.

"We are enjoying it immensely. We are very passionate about what we do and we hope that flows over into our products, because we are very keen about high quality premium spirits," said Tremewen.

"If we can't drink it, we are not going to sell it to anyone else."

## B.C. Distilled

▶ **When:** Saturday, May 10, 6-9 p.m.

▶ **Where:** CBC Studios, 700 Hamilton St.

▶ **Tickets and info:** \$49.99, [bcdistilled.eventbright.com](http://bcdistilled.eventbright.com)

If all this talk of local liquor has you hankering for a tippie, why not make a night of it and sample some spirits at B.C. Distilled?

The special event will showcase products from 16 B.C. small-batch distilleries and one Yukon outfit.

"This is really the first event in B.C. where people can try almost every spirit that is produced in the province," said event organizer and founder Alex Hamer.

"There's a reason why farmers markets are so popular and there's a lot of great local micro-breweries. People like that attachment," said Hamer.

"These are small local businesses. When you walk in, there is a pretty good chance you are going to meet the owner, the distiller. They're going to be the ones standing there and giving you a sample and selling you the bottle. I think people like the connection."

Also on site for the inaugural event will be food from vendors including the Grain Tasting Bar, Forge, Blackbird Public House, Distillery Bar & Kitchen and Edible Canada.



Gordon Glanz is the co-owner and co-distiller at Odd Society Spirits, which makes East Van Vodka, which was named as a celebration of the 'new booze district' in which the distillery is located.

# Keep your cocktails local

Recipes from three B.C. distilleries

## Whistle Punk

An authentic steam whistle is fastened to the Liberty Distillery's batch copper pot still. Its former home was a steam donkey (a steam-powered winch) used to haul lumber on Granville Island at the turn of the century. The whistle punk, on the steam donkey's crew, sounded the whistle when the log was ready for hauling.

**1 oz Liberty Truth Vodka**  
**½ oz fresh lime juice**  
**½ oz ginger cordial**  
**2 leaves fresh basil**  
**Soda**

▶ Shake ingredients and top with soda. Strain into rocks glass, add ice and top with a splash of soda. Garnish with ground pepper, a basil leaf and a red chili.

— Liberty Distillery



## Camp X Cocktail

A twist on Ian Fleming's Vesper cocktail, Camp X was where the James Bond author trained to be a spy during the Second World War.

**1 ½ oz Long Table London Dry Gin**  
**¾ oz Long Table Texada Vodka**  
**½ oz Long Table's Empire Tonic Syrup**  
**Rinse of Long Table Langbord Akvavit**

▶ Pour gin and vodka and tonic syrup into a mixing glass. Add ice and stir vigorously until well chilled. Double strain into an Akvavit-rinsed coupe and garnish with a star anise and lemon peel twist.

— Long Table Distillery



## Razzle Basil

**2 oz East Van Vodka**  
**½ oz cassis**  
**3 lime wedges**  
**4 basil leaves**  
**Soda**

▶ In a Collins glass, add lime wedges, basil leaves and vodka. Muddle to release juices and basil aromas. Add cassis and fill the glass with ice. Top with soda and gently stir to combine. Garnish with a healthy sprig of basil.

— Odd Society Spirits



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