

Another Round: More Words of Wisdom About Beer



By Scott Laird

Astoria: Worth the Trip - We recently took an overnight trip to Astoria. There is plenty to do in Astoria, but even if you only go and spend your time drinking beer in the numerous brew pubs, a visit to Astoria is worth the trip.

We spent a good portion of our time checking out the local brewery scene. It's pretty impressive – Astoria has five brew pubs along its waterfront/downtown corridor: the Rogue Ales Public House, the Fort George Brewery and Public House, the Wet Dog Cafe, the Astoria Brewing Company Tasting Room and Buoy Beer Company. Wet Dog, Astoria Brewing, Fort George and Buoy are all within blocks of each other, making for a great pub crawl.

In Astoria February is Stout Month. Fort George, Rogue, Wet Dog and Astoria Brewing all had special beers, dinners and more during the month. While we did just miss Fort George's Festival of the Dark Arts on February 14, billed as a "Carnival of Stout" and featuring all kinds of entertainment and dark brews, we did stumble upon some other excellent porters, stouts and other fine brews during our visit.

The Wet Dog Cafe at 11th Street on the waterfront was definitely featuring stouts. When we asked the bartender about dark beers on tap he immediately, without another word, grabbed four taster glasses and served us up some samples. In addition to their regular Poop Deck Porter and seasonal Bad Ass Imperial Stout – a big, bold and chocolaty stout – they were also serving the delicious and smooth Shanghai Stout.

The atmosphere at Wet Dog is fun, loud and lively. The bar seems to always be full, as does the dining room. With a great menu and at least twelve beers on tap – including three different IPAs, along with a great view of the river and live music on Friday

nights, this is a must stop on any visit to Astoria.

To top it off, Wet Dog had a barrel of aged 2009 Deschutes Abyss Imperial Stout. Really big at 11% ABV, this was a special treat!

Just one block away Astoria Brewing recently installed a new 15 barrel system which is on full display at their new tasting room which opened at the corner of 12th Street and Marine Drive in December of 2014. Although lacking character, the new room allows guests to sit and sip while overlooking the brewery below. With the whole lineup of Astoria Brewing beers, there's a lot of choices.

Buoy Beer Company's partners spent a bunch of money renovating a ninety year old cannery building on the 8th Street pier, but the results are spectacular. Although it doesn't look like much from the outside, inside the building is beautiful with a large open pub and spacious and attractive dining room with sweeping river views.



Astoria Brewing's new 15 barrel system.

The food was wonderful – what I would describe as gourmet pub – and very reasonably priced, and the beer menu comprehensive with fourteen beers on tap. We tried the Coffee Brown which was excellent along with the Oatmeal Stout which was also enjoyable. The glass floor through which guests can watch local sea lions is an added treat.

Fort George Brewing is located in the heart of downtown at 14th Street. Built on the location of the original fort and settlement, Fort George is steeped with history. Rogue Brewing is located at the east end of town out on the 39th Street pier, with great river views and a chorus of sea lions right next door.

All the breweries in Astoria capitalize on microbrew popularity and offer loads of swag for purchase – tee shirts, pint glasses, growlers and more. I even managed to pick up several new coasters to add to my beer mat collection. Astoria was definitely worth the trip.



Taps Around Town - The Cedar Side Inn in Vernonia has six taps flowing, three dedicated to domestics – Bud, Hamm's and Coors Light – and three to micro brews. In addition to Widmer Hefeweizen, the Cedar Side also has African Amber from Mac and Jack's Brewing Company and Georgetown Brewing Company's Porter. Mac and Jack's is from Richmond, WA. Their signature African Amber is dry hopped and flavorful. Georgetown Brewing, from Seattle, only produces draft beer – they have no brewpub and no bottles. Their porter is smooth and tasty. Stop by the Cedar Side and give one a try.

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