

Suds heaven for the beer lover

COLIN JACK - The 2010 Nando's Canada Cup of Beer, Vancouver's largest beer festival, happens today and tomorrow at UBC. Now, some of the festival highlights.

B.C. beers will be well represented and include Russell Brewing which worked with Nando's to create an exclusive Peri-Peri beer. Pacific Western Brewing will have its new German brewmaster Peter Boettcher in attendance hand-pouring his 100% organic Hefeweizen. Other new brews include Dead Frog Pepper Lime, Cariboo Honey Lager and Vancouver Island Sea Dog Amber Ale.

Eastern Canada has three great representatives. Steam Whistle Brewing from Toronto make its festival debut with its crisp pilsner, while Alexander Keith's Pub Experience features white and amber ales. Moosehead, from New Brunswick, is also represented with its icy cold lager.

Estrella Damm from Spain will make a big splash this year as its countrymen get ready to contend with the Dutch in the World Cup final Sunday. Scottish beer Innis and Gunn comes from oak-aged casks and is complex with a hint of caramel and vanilla.

To top it off, Tropictonics Steel Band Friday night and The Silverstars Saturday will set the mood. Cheers!
Tickets/Information:
CanadaCupOfBeer.com

COLIN JACK IS AN OFFICIAL BEER AFICIONADO. CHECK OUT HIS WEBSITE JUSTHEREFORTHBEER.COM. SEND QUESTIONS TO COLIN@JUSTHEREFORTHBEER.COM

SEXY EATS

This Dog's a fine breed

SARAH ROWLAND - When it comes to location, the Smoking Dog Bistro is one sweet spot.

Located on the corner of West 1st Avenue and Cypress Street, it is the epitome of Kits casual. Which, ironically, has sometimes worked against the modest Parisian-style restaurant; in that when diners are in the mood for a casual atmosphere, they don't necessarily want the price tag or decadence of high-end food and vice versa.

That's because generally speaking, Vancouverites simply have a different dining out sensibility than Euros. We tend to go for the flash of new-money hot spots, the consistency of trustworthy chain restaurants or the charm of funky, inexpensive down-home joints. There's not too much



The Smoking Dog's peppered beef tenderloin is delish.

of an appetite for anything in between.

Well, the recently reinvented Smoking Dog is starting to change all that with its \$15 menu. Now you can enjoy the understated elegance of its primo sidewalk patio without breaking the bank.

And the new menu does-

n't come at the cost of quality, or variety for that matter. You still have the choice to kick it high-end with an always satisfying peppered beef tenderloin (\$29), which comes with green beans and pomme puree, or you can stay on budget with the highly recommended \$15 roasted chicken breast

and wing special, which comes with mushroom sauce and pommes frites.

Or if you're simply looking for a really great dessert, this is your place. The tarte tatin (\$8), vanilla crème brûlée (\$7) and profiteroles (\$9), in particular, are not to be missed and always best shared.

It's the best of both worlds, really: Sexy Euro eating with all the benefits of a Kits environment. You can either people-watch with a friend on the patio, as you nurse a fine wine and graze on a side of house frites (\$5) with mayo and ketchup dips.

Or you can take a date for a no-frills, yet classy, delicious meal and not worry about dealing with any kind of status-symbol scene normally associated with this type of kitchen.

Experience the pleasures of an Izakaya

RAJ TANEJA - If you ever wondered how the creators of Japadog got inspired into making their acclaimed street meat, look no further than your local Izakaya. Raj has a chat with Melody Fury, the founder of Vancouver Food Tour.

Fury: An Izakaya is a Japanese after-work drinking and unwinding destination that serves up small dishes in a communal atmosphere. Uncomplicated, fast, and fun.

Raj: When I lived in Japan, ultimately my coworkers and I lived for one thing - getting to the Izakaya

for a dozen after-work bevies. Heck, most of our business entertaining was done in Izakayas.

Fury: There are many types of Izakayas out there. Yakitori - literally translated as "barbequed bird" - is essentially a meat and vegetable skewer grilled to perfection over a charcoal grill. Zakkushi's topmost chefs take this whole charcoal grill business to a new level in their quick-paced open-kitchen bar.

Raj: If there's one thing that Zakkushi is really known for, it's their Tsukune (pronounced skoo-nay), a



Raj and Fury also enjoyed the newly launched Kobe beef-ball skewers on their beer-fueled rampage that evening.

Japanese chicken meatball that's grilled over intense heat generated from special charcoal imported from

Japan. Retaining up to 1,000 degrees of heat, even the charcoal in Japan has an outrageous work ethic.

Fury: They grill their chicken-ball skewers from raw as opposed to par-boiling them, resulting in a much juicier and more flavourful meatball. A squeeze of Japanese mayo, a hit of seaweed, a two-litre bottle of Asahi's "Bigboy" beer, and you're ready to rock!

Raj Taneja runs urbanmixer.com. Follow him on Twitter: @tinhead. Follow Melody: @GourmetFury.

top 5

Bakeries...

There's nothing quite like the enticing aroma of freshly baked goods to get the mouth watering and the tummy growling. Here are the top five bakeries around town in which to go carb crazy:

LA BAGUETTE ET L'ÉCHALOTE

1680 Johnston St.
This Granville Island favourite has been serving up French delights for over 20 years. Be sure to sample the croissants, they're très délicieux.

BUTTER

4321 Dunbar St.
There's some serious indulgence to be had at this West Side gem. If you're not counting calories, try the chocolate cookie sandwich with a vanilla butter cream filling.

TRANSYLVANIAN TRADITIONS

1111 Davie St.
This joint is famous for its kurtos kalacs (Hungarian traditional pastries). Also known as chimney cakes, the delicacy comes in a tall, tubular shape and is decked with sweet spices, nuts or powdered sugar.

TARTINE BREAD AND PIES

770 Beach Ave.
The perfect place to head when you're feeling blue. There's nothing a slice of pie at this cozy little eatery can't cure.

CUPCAKES

Various locations
Moist and fluffy and topped with that irresistible cream frosting, these sugary delights have become a local institution.

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE

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