

Bottoms Up

Local breweries offer tours for a glimpse inside

Colorado offers a cornucopia of breweries – more per capita than any other state. But adding to those numbers are the unique microbreweries serving specialty beers throughout 100 locations in the state, according to the Colorado Brewers Guild. Right here in Boulder County, we're home

to a handful that offer tours for people to learn about the brewing process, and even allows people to sample a few at the tasting rooms afterward.

Here's a few you might want to check out this summer.

– KRISTI RITTER

Left Hand Brewing Company

1265 Boston Ave., Longmont, 303-772-0258
www.lefthandbrewing.com

Left Hand Brewing Company started in 1990 when co-founder Dick Doore received a homebrewers kit for a Christmas gift. When his travels led him back to Colorado in 1993, former college buddy and future co-owner Eric Wallace joined the homebrewing craze. After several batches impressed friends, Left Hand Brewing Co. was born on Jan. 22, 1994.

When are your tours?

Saturdays at 1 and 2 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m. No reservations necessary. Other times by appointment.

How long are the tours?

45 minutes

Cost: Free

What can people expect?

While participants will get a history of Left Hand, the tour starts in the malt room before moving into the brew house, cellar, bottling line and cooler. Head bartender and community liaison Josh Goldberg says



Paul Litman

Left Hand's tours are hands-on for people, being able to touch and feel the ingredients they use. "Our goal is education and to teach people the process of learning about beer."

Extra tidbits:

Left Hand's tasting room is open seven days a week, with live music every Saturday and Sunday.

Oskar Blues Brewery

1800 Pike Road, Longmont, 303-776-1914
www.oskarblues.com

As the first microbrewery in America to can its own beer, Oskar Blues opened its Lyons restaurant in 1997 and started canning its craft beer in 2002. Founder Dale Katechis feels canning the beer not only keeps it fresh and protected from light and oxygen, but the beers are more portable for outdoor fun, and the cans are easier to recycle, free of break-

age and less fuel-consuming to ship. In 2009, Oskar Blues moved their brewery from Lyons to Longmont, opening the Tasty Weasel Tap Room.

When are your tours?

Saturday and Sunday at 2, 3 and 4 p.m. Call for reservations during the week, but the weekend has an open-door policy.

How long are the tours?

30 minutes

Cost: Free

What can people expect?

With an open ceiling and no separating walls in the brewery, people can smell, see, hear and taste all the experiences of Oskar Blues. "Part of our culture is to stay in touch with everyone and be part of the group," says Chad Melis, marketing director. Wandering through the tour, people will see the brewing area, cellar and canning operation, which is unique to Oskar Blues.

Extra tidbits:

The Tasty Weasel offers live music on Saturdays at 4:30 p.m., while Tasty Tuesdays serve up specialty beer samples that aren't available anywhere else.



Courtesy Oskar Blues



Asher Brewing Company

4699 Nautilus Court, Suite 104
Boulder, 303-530-1381
www.asherbrewing.com

As Colorado's first all-organic brewery, Asher Brewing Co. is the baby among the crowd, opening in November 2009 and receiving its organic certification in February 2010. Owners Chris Asher and Steve Turner believe organic ingredients are better for the consumer, for the environment and for the beer.

When are your tours?

Stop in for small groups, but call ahead for large groups to tour the brewery.

How long are the tours? 15 to 30 minutes

Cost: Free

What can people expect?

Tours give people all the background about Asher Brewing Co. and why it feels organic beer is the way to go. Participants will see the entire operation from start to finish. After-



Courtesy Asher Brewing Co.

wards, they can stop by the tasting room with seating for 25, open Tuesday through Sunday from 4 to 8 p.m.

Extra tidbits:

Asher Brewing Co. is 100 percent wind powered. In the company's short history, people have already embraced Asher's brews which specialize in organic flavors.

Avery Brewing Company

5763 Arapahoe, Suite E
Boulder, 303-440-4324
www.averybrewing.com

Born in 1993, Avery Brewing Co. is the result of years of homebrewing trials by Adam Avery, perfecting the recipes for Redpoint



Courtesy Jonathan Casner

Amber Ale, Ellie's Brown Ale and Out of Bounds Stout. By 1997, the brewery doubled its space, with continued growth annually.

When are your tours?

Monday through Friday at 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.

How long are the tours? 35 to 40 minutes

Cost: Free

What can people expect?

Tour participants will get a full experience on a tour of Avery Brewing Co. to understand the process of making beer. CFO Jon Moldenhauer says they stress education in their tours. "Our goal is to give people an understanding of how beer is made in a craft environment."

Extra tidbits:

Avery Brewing's tap room offers 22 beers on tap, including a few samples of beers that haven't been bottled and are available only onsite.

Boulder Beer

2880 Wilderness Place
Boulder, 303-444-8448
www.boulderbeer.com

Boulder Beer became Colorado's first microbrewery in 1979. Its meager beginnings started in a goat shed near Hygiene before moving to its current location in 1984. Since its start, Boulder Beer has grown to be one of the top 50 breweries in the country.

When are your tours?

Monday through Friday at 2 p.m. No reservations necessary

How long are the tours?

45 minutes, but be sure to leave extra time for sampling at the end.

Cost: Free

What can people expect?

People can expect to have a lot of hands-on experience on a tour of the Boulder Beer brewery. Marketing director Dan Weitz says people will be able to stand next to the brew kettles, hold grains and hops, talk with the brewers and see the bottling line.

Extra tidbits:

A tour at Boulder Beer will end with generous samplings of approximately 10 beers, keeping people hanging around until late in the afternoon.



Courtesy Boulder Beer