

RICHMOND BREWERIES

7 Hills Brewing - Fun location in Shockoe Bottom and damn good nachos, but I'm overwhelmed by how many beers they have. Sampler flights not available after dinner hours.

The Answer Brewpub - Part restaurant, huge beer list, and a few of their own brews.

Ardent Brewery - My personal favorite, with smooth beers in interesting flavors and a great outdoor patio.

Castleburg Brewery - No one in town is even talking about it, but their beer list looks interesting.

Center of the Universe - Smooth drinking beers made well without the crazy twists of some other breweries. Come for the beer, stay for pinball and darts.

Champion Brewing Company - Love the location in easy walking distance to some great Richmond restaurants. Start with a Shower beer and then work your way through other styles.

Extra Billy's - While they technically make their own beer, this stop is more about BBQ and that's okay by me.

Final Gravity Brewing - It smells a little funky inside, but the beer is really good and has won awards for a reason. If you're a local, buy it to drink at home instead.

Garden Grove - It's in my least favorite neighborhood of Richmond with terrible parking (but you're not driving anyway if you're drinking, right?). Fun weeknight events.

Hardywood - There's always something going on at Hardywood! Beer ranges from average to excellent, with the stouts consistently ranked highly.

Isley Brewery - In my opinion, one of the weaker breweries. None of their beer is bad, but it doesn't have that "wow" factor. That said, it's conveniently close to several other breweries.

Kindred Spirit Brewing - I didn't know it existed until I compiled this list, but now I want to go. Not really near anything, so I'll call it a field trip.

Legend Brewing - The original Richmond brewery, long before craft beer was a trend. Good beer, full restaurant menu, and an amazing view of city skyline from outdoor patio.

Midnight Brewery - Some of the friendliest bartenders in town and a solid variety of beers. There's something to please everyone here.

Steam Bell Beer Works - I haven't made it to the brewery itself, but have had their beers in local restaurants and they're great. My friends love the brewery itself, too.

Stone Brewing - California brewery in Richmond? I don't get it and it feels very commercial, but solid beer and a few Richmond originals.

Strangeways Brewing - They do creative/borderline weird flavors and a lot of sour beers. It's a fun way to mix things up, if you're in the right mood.

Three Notch'd Brewing - formerly of Charlottesville, but now with a Richmond location and some exclusive beers. In my opinion, stick to lighter-colored beers here.

Triple Crossing - I've been three times and end up leaving with mixed opinions every time. Good for IPAs, and the rest are hit or miss.

Väsen Brewing Company - opening "early 2017" but no dates officially announced.

Veil Brewing - It's always busy and probably the local favorite, but there's a huge caveat: they usually only have a few beers to choose from (last time it was 2) and they are potent and hoppy.

TOTALLY NOT BEER BUT STILL FUN TO TRY

Belle Isle Craft Spirits - Moonshine. After all, we *are* in Virginia.

Black Heath Meadery - I haven't been, but I'm intrigued by chili mead and other creative blends.

Blue Bee Cider - Typically dry ciders that feel a little "special occasion" to me. It's so close to the Scott's Addition brewery route that it's easy to add to your plans.

Buskey Cider - Great taproom (can you call it a taproom if there's no beer?) and board games to borrow on your visit, but not my favorite ciders.

James River Cellars - I keep meaning to go because they have good reviews. Based on my other VA wine experiences, I'd try the Viognier and Petit Verdot first.

James River Distilleries - They started with gin, but I see they now have a vodka, aquavit, and rum on the menu. I don't drink liquor, so can't comment on the quality.

Reservoir Distillery - Whiskeys, all of which are highly recommended by people who know more than me.

MORE DRINKING (FARTHER FROM TOWN)

AMMO Brewing - looks bright and happy.

Ashton Creek Vineyards - I haven't heard of it, but it's easy to access from I-95 if you're heading south anyway.

Lickinghole Creek Brewery - Watch out for the high alcohol percentage, especially since you're sorta in the middle of nowhere. That said, it's delicious!

New Kent Winery - Reviews are polarizing, love it or hate it, and it's not my personal favorite.

Origin Beer Lab - a spinoff of my beloved Center of the Universe. Opens February 3.

Rusty Beaver - You never forget your first beaver (or so they say). Make it a fun stop on your way to or from Lake Anna.

Saude Creek Winery - Probably the best winery in the area, unless you head all the way to Charlottesville.

Trapezium - Good beer, good pizza, and easy to walk through Old Town Petersburg. Add it to your list.

Upper Shirley Vineyards - Such a lovely riverside location and a good excuse to explore Charles City.