

Hoppin' Around The Grand Valley

Pilsners, ales, stouts, wheats, porters, lagers, tripels — with so many types of beers available to the thirsting college student, what does one choose? Well, we came up with a little guide to help you out with beers around the Valley. We may not have a degree in brewology, so you won't notice too many fancy words such as acetaldehyde, anaerobic or estery, but we have all drunk our fair share, and we know what we like. So here is our guide to ambers, wheats, IPAs and porters within a 20-minute drive of CMU.

Wheats

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It is always a treat going to the local breweries and trying their handcrafted brews. I have always enjoyed wheat beers, and the four local breweries I visited this week, Kannah Creek, The Rockslide, Suds Brothers and the Palisade Brewing Co., all had very unique twists on a classic beverage.

The Palisade Brewing Co.'s atmosphere is very unique, sitting you down right in the middle of its brewing operation. Its signature beer, the Dirty Hippy Dark Wheat, was a very mellow but refreshing taste. With an added punch of chocolate and caramel malts, it is not a traditional wheat. While not being the most flavorful beer, adding a hint of orange gave it a mellow citrus taste that complemented its natural flavor.

Kannah Creek's Highside Hefeweizen also stands out as a very mellow-tasting wheat beer. The wheat flavor is very subtle, but the citrus flavors are more active in this brew on its own. Creating a unique blended flavor with



Ty Fife
The Dirty Hippy Dark Wheat from the Palisade Brewing Company.

the wheat undertones creates a refreshing taste but flavors that might be a bit to hidden in the blend.

Suds Brothers Brewery's Bizzy Bee Hefeweizen stands out as one of the lighter but more flavorful wheat beers. Very rounded in its flavor, it is tangy and bold with a very subtle wheat taste that adds to the flavor. Adding a lemon helps bring out the citrus flavors and does not disappoint.

The most flavorful wheat beer out of the four resides at The Rockslide. The Widow Maker Wheat has a very sweet flavor with just the right amount of citrus to add the tangy kick that brings the flavors together. This tasty brew is not one to miss.

Ambers

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Junction's ambers are varied enough to suit whatever mood you're in, ranging from dark and hoppy to light and sweet red beers.

Rockslide's hoppy Rabbit Ears Amber is the darkest of the Valley's ambers. A beer brewed to be enjoyed slowly, the amber is very rich and isn't geared for a quick drink like the other ales — Rockslide's occasionally lethargic service guarantees this. The beer's nutty flavor is best enjoyed with the bar's calamari.

Fruita's Suds Brothers Brewery features the aptly named Red Monkey Butt as the house ale, since it has more of a bite than the other beers and also sits the heaviest. Like the Rabbit Ears, this beer is best to sip on when you've got an hour or two to kill. The Red Monkey Butt has the strongest caramel flavor of the bunch, but its body is thinner than expected.

On the other end of the valley you can find Palisade Brewing Company's High Desert Red, a hoppy and sweet red ale. The beer is light, smooth and almost too easy to drink. The red strikes happy medium between the heavy and light ambers without being derivative. The beer's rustic character matches the bare-bones look of the working brewery. Plus, who doesn't love the pub's complementary popcorn?

Kannah Creek's Lands End is the best of the local ambers. Though slightly more bitter than I'd pre-



Whitney Kidd
The Bizzy Bee Hefeweizen from Suds Brothers Brewery in Fruita.

fer, the beer is substantial, but not heavy. With a welcome amount of hops, Lands End has a comfortable finish that suits the autumn season before the impending, biting death of winter. The Lands End is the perfect beer to complement a session of manic cramming during a last minute study group for the foreign language test you forgot about.

If amber is the color of your energy, the valley's collection of locally-brewed amber ales has enough variety to keep the most mercurial palate entertained.

IPAs

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Brewing India Pale Ale has been a growing trend in American beer crafting over the past couple decades. With their hoppy finish and high alcohol content, they are not for the lightweight. Despite its often golden color, it is a heavy-hitting beer for the serious drinker.

If you are an IPA drinker who loves hops, there are three words you need to remember: Tabeguache Double IPA. This was definitely my favorite IPA of the bunch and made me a little bit sad to hear that it was just a seasonal brew. This India packed a punch with its eight percent ABV, making it the strongest beer on the Suds Brothers tap. It had a heavy body with the outstanding hop after-taste that one expects when getting a double IPA. Suds doesn't offer an IPA on its year-round menu, but it does have a close cousin, the American Pale Ale, all year long.

The next beer that tops my list is the Off Belay IPA from the Palisade Brewing Company. It has a much lighter body than the Tabeguache, which really allows for the great hops to stand out. Palisade has great reliability and can be trusted for a good beer time after time. If it was a different time of year and the Tabeguache was out of season, this would have definitely been my favorite brew.

Kannah Creek's Broken Oar IPA is a beer that someone who normally doesn't like IPAs as well as an IPA lover



Whitney Kidd
The Broken Oar IPA from Kannah Creek.

could enjoy. Its malt flavor is subtle, and its lack of hops doesn't put it as high on the bitterness index as most IPAs, which makes it favorable to beer fans who haven't acquired the taste for bitter. It was a great beer that I'm sure I will enjoy again. It just was not exactly what I was looking for when it comes to an IPA.

The Rockslide's Horsethief IPA is another brew that robs its name from a local bicycle trail, but unlike the Tabeguache, it doesn't live up to its former hype. Whether it was a bad batch or not, I may never know, because this is the one beer that I most likely will not be ordering again. It had a body that wasn't too terrible going down, but immediately after swallowing the bad hoppy taste hit.

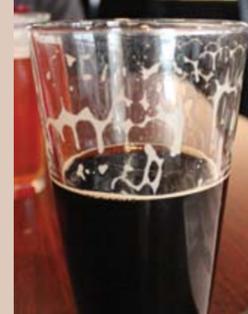
Darks

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Sometimes people need to take baby steps into the world of craft beer. With so many different infusions and variations between hops and malts, it may be unclear to a newcomer what the beer they are about to drink will taste like. It is easier to start simple with a beer that won't sting your taste buds with extreme hops or put a lead weight in your stomach with heavy ingredients. The Porter, Blonde and Stout ales are what could be considered gateway drinks.

At Suds Brothers in Fruita, the Basic Grumps is for those who enjoy the coffee flavor in their porters. The dark ale has a little more bite than your average porter with the emphasis on the coffee bean aftertaste. It is definitely the most dominating flavor in the brew but also has subtle overtones of chocolate. The alcohol content in the Basic Grumps is a slightly higher percentage compared to most Porters, but is barely noticeable in its taste. The milky body creates the feeling that you are drinking an alcoholic milkshake rather than a craft brew.

Kannah Creek's emphasis in their porter is the chocolate, and it is an excellent choice. For the Pegasus Porter, the brew masters chose to put the roasted nuts and coffee on the backburner and enhance the alcohol and chocolate for a light but enjoyable drink. The coffee and roasted nuts still have a presence in the flavor but are not dominating. The bitterness of the alcohol is definitely more noticeable in this porter than any other around the Grand Valley



Whitney Kidd
The Basic Grumps Porter from Suds Brothers Brewery in Fruita.

and manages to avoid contrast with the strong flavor of the coffee bean.

Rockslide Brewery offers the Big Bear stout fresh from the tap. The name might lead you to believe that this beer is going to attack your taste buds, but really it's just a big teddy bear. The stout, a similar brew to a porter, is also very dark in color because of the mixture of coffee, chocolate and roasted nuts. However, the difference lies in its strength. The Big Bear has a much stronger bite from the alcohol than any of the other milky beers in the Valley.

Palisade Breweries doesn't currently have a stout or porter, but they do have perhaps the lightest brew in all the Grand Valley breweries, the Laid Back Blonde.

Rockslide is friendly sports bar

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The Rockslide Brewery in downtown Grand Junction has a great selection of handcrafted brews and a friendly environment that's a good time any night of the week. It offers a variety of fun including, Trivia on Tuesdays, beer pong on Wednesdays, a DJ or band on Saturdays and two happy hour from 3-6 p.m. and 10-12 p.m. every day.

The atmosphere on almost any night in the bar is very social, but get there early because around five at night the seats start to fill up quickly. There are sports on the television, and on some nights live music in the bar. The brick construction gives the place an enjoyably rustic feeling, and the tall ceilings help a crowded night feel more open. Quick service, friendly bartenders and wait staff help make the Rockslide a fantastic stop for a night out.

If you are more of a morning person, it offers an all you can eat buffet every Sunday morning, and one of the best Bloody Marys in town every day of the week.

Suds Bros. pays tribute to old rock



Whitney Kidd

Suds Brothers Brewery in downtown Fruita has been open for a year and a half and provides nine hand-crafted brews, lunch and dinner daily.

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Just walk in to the entryway of Suds Brothers Brewery and you will see that whoever owns this place not only has a serious love for beer, but classic rock as well. Photos of Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin and the Beatles cover the walls of this brew pub, giving it a nostalgic feel. Don't worry if you aren't a classic rock lover. That isn't the

only thing that plays overhead.

Walk through the entryway and to the left through the first dining area and you will find yourself in a cozy bar atmosphere — straight ahead is a ten-person bar with dark-stained chairs, two flat screens and a tap of 10 or so of Suds Brothers brews. Filling the rest of the room is a dozen or so tables, with two on a raised floor in front of the front window, giving a view of Fruita's main drag. To the right of the bar, a large glass wall separates the bar from that special

place where the magic happens — the brewery.

Suds has karaoke on Wednesday nights and live music on Saturdays, which breaks up the monotony of the week. Since it is in Fruita and away from the college town, Suds doesn't have the exciting atmosphere you'd find closer to CMU.

The brewer resides near its main establishment in Evanston, Wyo., so don't expect to walk in on them brewing or the staff to know a lot about the beers.

Kannah Creek proves convenient

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The blessing or curse of Kannah Creek is the pub's almost too convenient location across the street from campus. Kannah is the perfect place to knock out some homework and take the edge off your least favorite class(es). I haven't yet had a beer at Kannah that I didn't like, plus the pub has a sizable whiskey selection if you're looking for something with a bit

more bite.

Besides its first class brews, Kannah Creek's menu is nothing to write off either. Ill-content with providing its guests with mediocre peanuts-and-diabetes bar food, the brewery offers calzones the size of a small child and designer pizzas with more toppings than jilted Taylor Swift anti-love songs currently in existence. A wide variety of appetizers can feed anywhere from two to ten while leaving enough room for the one last beer you're still

craving. The bar's salsa harmonizes with the Lands End notably well.

Kannah's clientele ranges from bearded mountain men to the Internet meme's Lazy College Senior, but all seem to fit in to the laid-back atmosphere of the brewery. A hot spot for school clubs and beer-conscious CMU connoisseurs, Kannah likely has a beer to please any palate from its dark Indian Creek to the refreshingly light Island Mesa Blonde. Kannah also supports local music by con-

tinuing to provide a stage for jazz artists for the first two Tuesdays of October at 5:30 p.m. While it's not experimenting with the diminished fifth, the bar usually projects eclectic yet familiar soft rock that blends with the bar's classic-tasting beers and savory comfort food.

If amber is the color of your energy, the valley's collection of locally brewed amber ales has enough variety to keep the most mercurial palate entertained.



Whitney Kidd

The Horsethief IPA at the Rockslide Brewery.

Palisade brewery has raw environment



Whitney Kidd

The Palisade Brewery has a unique atmosphere with its brewery and bar in the same warehouse with no separation.

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Most brewpubs keep their equipment tucked away in the building to make room for a nicer kitchen, large bar and dining tables. They want to create the feeling of a restaurant rather than having their patrons believe that they are in a factory. It's effective, but less authentic.

Palisade Brewery breaks that trend by putting you square in the middle of the production. There is no horseshoe bar with flat screen TVs or elevated stage for live music or even employee uniforms. It is stripped down to

the bare essentials and does not hide the brewing process from the customers. Instead, they sit you right next to it. You can see the process of how your beer is made down to the instant before the keg is hooked up to the tap. There is one small counter-top that fits seven or eight drinkers comfortably where all the beer is ordered and served. The seating is limited, but the small-town pub is not looking to bring in big crowds. Its main concern is its beer, and the atmosphere affirms that message. It likes to embrace the fact that it is a production facility in a warehouse rather than a restaurant in a bar.

The brewery itself has been in business for nine years, but the restaurant became available under new management in 2010. It began with the intention to only sell its drafts at the brewery, but with the increasing demand for its most popular brew, Dirty Hippy, it began canning and selling their beer around the Valley. As the business continues to grow, it hopes to be bottling a new beer for the public in the near future.

So if you are looking to get away from the packed bars on Friday or Saturday nights and get some good beer and free popcorn, then Palisade Brewery is a good fit for you.

What's your flavor? Know the difference between brews

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With the ever-growing array of microbrews hopping onto cooler shelves across the country, it may be hard to believe that all beers belong to one of two categories: ale or lager.

Ales are one of the oldest beers and are typically fermented and served at higher temperatures than lagers. Ales ferment between

60 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit with a yeast that flocculates toward the top of the of the tank, while lagers typically ferment between 56 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit and flocculate closer to the bottom of the tank.

So what does this mean for flavor?

Ales end up with a more intense, complex flavor and may be served at room temperature to help contain the rich aroma and flavor. Lagers end up with a clean, refreshing taste with a lighter aroma and flavor.

Wheat beers

Wheat beers have a wide variety of tastes and colors, but they are typically the lightest beer on tap with the lowest hop character, so they are a common choice for those that don't like traditional-tasting brews. They have a more dim flavor since they typically contain 30-70 percent wheat malt. The wheat contributes very little flavor, but it contributes to the thick, long lasting head and distinctive silky feel that most wheat

beers have. They are also often paired with a fruit like blueberry or strawberry during the brewing process to offer a stronger yet still subtle taste.

Amber Ale

This is primarily a catch-all for any ale with a less-than-dark ale color (so reds and ambers), and is typically a good choice for someone that doesn't like a lot of hops but wants something with a fuller taste than a wheat beer. Ambers tend to focus more on

the malts than hops, so expect a balanced beer with a light fruitiness and toasted malt flavors.

India Pale Ale

The hop stars of the beer world, IPAs are almost always the most hoppy and most alcoholic beer on tap. With a high bitter index (40-65 IBU) and high alcohol content (5-8 percent), IPAs are not for the weak-hearted. They typically do not have roasted characters, but instead they flood the drinkers pal-

ette with strong hoppy bitters.

Stouts and Porters

Stouts and porters are the darkest of the beers and are very similar in brew methods, taste and origin. Most commonly, the only difference is that stouts are brewed with roasted barley and porters are not. Both are typically smooth and brewed with chocolate and coffee.



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