



Craft Beverage Manufacturing

EconomicDevelopmentAsheville.org

Photo: Stewart O'Shields, courtesy A-B Tech



Craft Beer Capital of the East

Asheville has more craft breweries per capita than any U.S. city.

[source: NPR, 2014]

Asheville, North Carolina has quickly become known among discerning beer drinkers as one of the nation's top destinations and exporters of esteemed, high-quality craft beverages. More than 20 breweries are pouring over 200 local craft beers on tap any given day, from microbreweries like The Wedge to Wicked Weed Brewing. You'll find award-winning IPAs and coffee stouts to sought-after Belgian and sour ales.

Craft Brewing is rooted in the Asheville area's thriving hospitality industry, ingenuity in manufacturing,

and a deep appreciation for hand crafted traditions. That Appalachian craft culture is embraced widely, from artists and makers to local agriculture and Asheville's renowned farm-to-table dining scene. Visitors have long been attracted via the Blue Ridge Parkway to the area's inspiring natural beauty, waterfalls and a mountainous terrain coveted for its mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, and fishing – now often followed by a refreshing local brew.

"From the deep sense of community to the rich natural environment and a vibrant downtown, Asheville has everything we've been looking for to locate our second brewery."

— **Kim Jordan, Co-Founder, New Belgium Brewing**

Focus Report from the



Asheville-Buncombe County



Photo: Steven McBride Photography

Asheville, North Carolina HISTORY BY THE BARREL

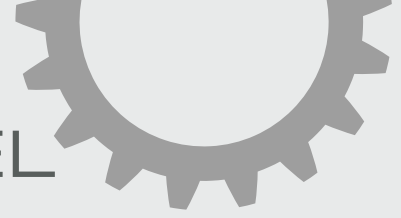


Photo: Carrie Turner Photography, courtesy Highland Brewing



Asheville's craft brewing industry began in 1994 with Oscar Wong, a visionary entrepreneur with a passion for good beer. From its first barrels of Celtic Ale rolling out of a basement downtown, **Highland Brewing Company** has led North Carolina as its largest homegrown brewery, today employing more than 60 and distributing its 50,000 barrels annually to nine eastern states and D.C. Its founder, Oscar (*above with daughter Leah*), is considered the Godfather of craft beer in Western North Carolina.

Next came Green Man, Asheville Brewing Company, and then the industry boomed. From 2011-2014, the number of craft breweries and brewpubs had nearly doubled to 19 and counting. In 2015, at least a quarter of the county's breweries were in the process of a large expansion, many of which distribute to at least a multi-state region. Today the South Slope is hopping with new breweries in retrofitted brick warehouses, totaling nine within less than a mile walk.

Since first winning the **Beer City USA** title in 2009, Asheville continues to edge out competitor cities like Grand Rapids and Portland almost every year. This reputation recently attracted new east coast breweries from three of the nation's 10 largest craft brewers—**Sierra Nevada**, **Oskar Blues**, and **New Belgium Brewing**.

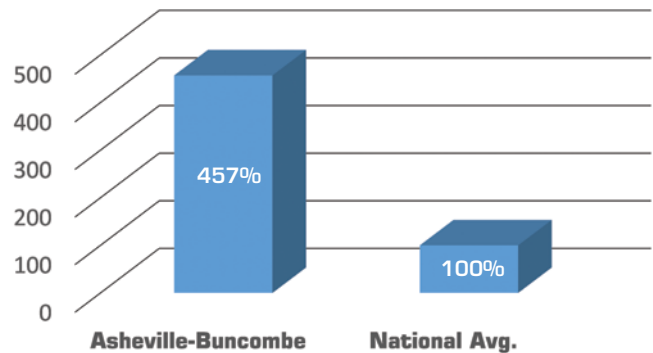
"Asheville is an amazing place to live and brew. Our love of culture, food, art, mountains, and pursuit of life quality fit well with craft beer."

— **Leah Wong Ashburn, Owner, President, Highland Brewing Company**

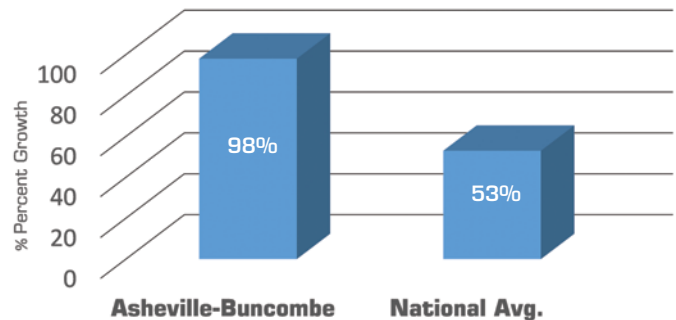
70+ breweries, wineries, cideries and distilleries in Western North Carolina

Craft Beverage Industry Employment Breweries, wineries & distilleries

Concentration of Industry Jobs
545 Direct Jobs, 457% Above national average



Job Growth 2010-2015 2X Faster than the nation



[Source: EMSI, 2015]

"Our brewing community has an unparalleled passion for **quality**, **sustainability**, and pushing the boundaries of **creativity**. Asheville's success is built on traditions of Appalachian craft culture and collaboration."

— **Kendra Penland, Executive Director, Asheville Brewers Alliance**





7.7X More concentrated craft beer employment than the nation

Talent to Grow Your Craft in Asheville

Benefits of a concentrated industry cluster:

- 1) Increased productivity due to specialized labor pools and access to information
- 2) Development of robust local supply chains
- 3) An environment for innovation
- 4) New business opportunities

[Source: Harvard Business School and Western Carolina University]



[Source: Beer Institute and National Beer Wholesalers Assoc., 2015]

Asheville Beer Travels

Asheville Metro attracts over **10,000,000 visitors** annually, packing a punch as a tourism destination with 450,000 residents. Naturally word about Asheville's beer scene travels far, and so does its bottled products. Two major interstates, I-40 and I-26, interest in Asheville, with 100 million people living within a 500-mile radius. Many craft beverage manufacturers export to regional markets, and a few companies like New Belgium and Sierra Nevada distribute nationally and as far as Europe.

Beyond the Suds: Wine, Cider and Distilling

The four-county Asheville Metro is home to several wineries, the best known being **Biltmore Winery**, America's most visited winery. Between distribution and direct shipping, Biltmore wine reaches 32 states.



Photo: Noble Cider

Lush with mountain apple orchards, Western NC attracts many **hard cider** producers in an industry that's recently tripled. The metro area has six cideries, such as Noble Cider, Urban Orchard Cider Co., and Bold Rock, which distributes across the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast.

You'll also find small batch, handcrafted distilling operations like **Troy & Sons Moonshine** and the first commercial kombucha brewery in the southeast, **Buchi Kombucha**, which distributes to more than 20 states.



Photo: courtesy of Capital At Play magazine, by Anthony Harden



Photo: Ken Abbott Photography, courtesy New Belgium Brewing

New Belgium Brewing Taps Asheville

The nation's 3rd largest craft brewer, New Belgium Brewing opened its new east coast brewery in 2016 on a reclaimed site near the River Arts District. The employee-owned, Certified B Corp was drawn to Asheville's sustainability ethics, depth in brewing talent, a 20,000-acre protected watershed, and a collaborative culture of innovation among craft brewers. The facility has a production capacity of 500,000 barrels and will draw 200,000 visitors annually.



White Labs Opens East Coast Facility

A world leader in fermentation sciences for the brewing, wine making, and distilling industries, San Diego-based **White Labs, Inc.** opens a new facility here in 2016. Asheville will serve as an East Coast base for the company, complete with a full lab providing analytical services and a production facility distributing to the eastern U.S. and global markets. In addition, White Labs will offer educational training and a tasting room highlighting the variety of flavors yeast brings to beer.

White Lab's presence not only increases Asheville's industry expertise in yeast and advancement of fermentation sciences; but a local supply of fresh yeast will significantly reduce the cost and carbon footprint for area breweries. It joins a robust supply chain that includes **Riverbend Malt House**.



Photo: White Labs

"Asheville serves as an innovation center for emerging and established breweries and is also centrally located to many of our east coast customers. It's a natural fit for the innovative and balanced corporate culture White Labs fosters."
— **Chris White, President & CEO, White Labs**

The Craft Beverage Institute



Launched in 2013, the **Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast** at A-B Tech (pictured on front page) offers the nation's first 2-year

degree for Brewing, Distillation & Fermentation. It provides an array of customized training courses in quality control testing, product development, production and sales and marketing, plus industry certifications like Cicerone – held by more than 330 people in the metro area. In its first few years, over 500 students took one or more courses there. Nearby **Appalachian State University** offers a BS degree in Fermentation Sciences with a strong focus on chemistry, biology and entrepreneurship to support the growing beer, wine and food science industries.

For a full list of breweries: www.AVLbrewers.com



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