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Explore the Central Wisconsin Craft Collective

A tasty trip to sip your way through central Wisconsin

Some of central Wisconsin's finest craft breweries, distilleries and wineries are joining forces to encourage visitors to sip their way through the Stevens Point area. Six local businesses have collaborated to create the Central Wisconsin Craft Collective, a promotional partnership that highlights the unique flavor that the four craft breweries – as well as two wineries and distillery – bring to the Stevens Point area.

Stop by each of the Central Wisconsin Craft Collective locations, which are spread throughout Portage County, for your own chance to discover the local flavors of craft brewing, winemaking and distilling. The Central Wisconsin Craft Collective consists of Central Waters Brewing Company in Amherst; Plover's Great Northern Distilling; Kozy Yak Brewery & Winery in Rosholt; O'so Brewing Company in Plover; the historic Stevens Point Brewery and the newest addition, Sunset Point Winery in Stevens Point.

Flavored with History

Start with a brewery steeped in history by visiting the Stevens Point Brewery. A local favorite since 1857, the Stevens Point Brewery is one of the oldest continuously operating breweries in the United States. The location hasn't changed since the beginning; although the buildings have continued to expand as does the business, having completed four expansions since 2010. Schedule a tour to walk through the brew house, aging cellar, bottling house, and warehouse to watch the history in action. After the tour, visit the hospitality room for samples of their best brews and specialty sodas.

Where to find it? The Stevens Point Brewery is located at 2617 Water Street in Stevens Point (at the same location where it started in 1857). Think you've seen it all? With continued expansion, the tour has changed, and it's definitely worth a stop. The brewery offers a gift shop as well as tours Monday through Saturday. Reservations are not required, but do call to ensure availability as they can only accommodate a set number of people on each tour.

Tasty Tidbits

1. The brewery recently introduced its' sixth specialty soda, a Wisconsin supper club classic Kitty Cocktail (also known as a Shirley Temple). The brewery also produces Point Premium Root Beer, Diet Root Beer, Black Cherry Cream, Orange Cream and Vanilla Cream.
2. The Stevens Point Brewery and Point Beer is a movie star and has been included in movies set in northern Wisconsin, including the classic film "The Great Outdoors."
3. In 2012 Ciderboys started production and is now one of the top hard cider producers in the nation. For a taste, check out the two year-round varieties' including First Press and Strawberry Magic in addition to one of the current six seasonal varieties' including the newest addition of Grand Mimosa, a fruitful pairing of orange and apple.

Suds and Sustainability

Central Waters, the next oldest brewery to call Portage County home, is located in the Amherst Business Park. The brewery is powered by more than 1,000 square feet of solar panels, and is recognized in the

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Green Tier program. Their tap room is open to the public on Friday and Saturday evenings. The brewery has also seen extreme growth in recent years.

Distributing beer throughout Wisconsin, Central Waters was born in 1996 in the small community of Junction City. The brewery started with eagerness to brew a variety of recipes in smaller batches.

Where to find it? The Central Waters Brewing Company is located at 351 Allen Street in Amherst (since 2007). The brewery offers an inside peek to the brewing process, with the Tap Room nestled in the working brewery. Tours are offered on Friday and Saturday at 5 p.m. Tasting can be enjoyed the laidback Tap Room, with a variety of beers on tap. They also offer bottled soda for purchase.

Tasty Tidbits

1. Central Waters hosts the Great Amherst Beer Festival United in October each year, at its location. This year, it featured more than 50 beers on tap from 22 breweries.
2. Their beer, 'Shine On', which is made with Wisconsin grown, organic barley, helps support the Midwest Renewable Energy Association.
3. Central Waters is well-known for barrel aging many of its' brews, including the Bourbon Barrel Barleywine Ale, Brewer's Reserve Bourbon Barrel Scotch Ale, Brewer's Reserve Bourbon Barrel Stout and the Bourbon Barrel Cherry Stout.

Homegrown Passion

To explore more Wisconsin flavors, try O'so Brewing Company in Plover. O'so started as a home brewing passion that finally bubbled to the surface in 2007 when O'so opened in a small retail space along Post Road in Plover. Since 2007 the business has grown, moving to a new location at Village Park in Plover and increasing production from 350 barrels to over 6,000 barrels. O'so's passion for brewing beyond their own beers is evident in their Tap House, which features 40 beers on tap, all from Wisconsin breweries.

Where to find it? O'so Brewing Company is located at 3028 Village Park Drive in Plover. Plan a stop to visit the Tap House, which is located between the Point Brew Supply shop and the working brewery. Even if you miss the normally scheduled tours on Saturday afternoons (at 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.), viewing windows allow you to grab a sneak peek into the brewery.

Tasty Tidbits

1. O'so is a great place to start if you aren't quite sure what you like. Sampler platters are available to help you hone your palate. (Want something completely different? O'so regularly creates extreme and one-off varieties worth a try.)
2. Over 21? Try a beer served on a Nitro tap for an interesting change in texture and flavor.
3. Peek in the windows to the working brewery to see the colorful tanks and see if you can recognize the classic characters.

Grapes and Grain

Next, plan to visit Kozy Yak Brewery & Winery, the newest brewery located in Rosholt. Drawn to the sensory experiences that surround wine making and brewing, and spurred on the fun they had while traveling and learning, the owners decided to share those experiences and started the winery and brewery. The brewery, which features a new beer almost every week, offers more than beer and wine: you'll find a small selection of bistro style food.

Where to find it? Kozy Yak Brewery & Winery are located together at 197 North Main Street in Rosholt. Tucked inside Downtown Rosholt, the brewery and winery offer a cozy spot to enjoy tasty selections of wine, beer and homemade food.

Tasty Tidbits

1. At Kozy Yak beer is great and borderline educational, with most specialty beers each week having a connection to historical events, local information or a tidbit of trivia. (Case in point – the standard red, the Rosholt Red Beer, RrB, shares the name with the soil designation that the brewery sits upon.)
2. In addition to grapes, the wines are augmented with other locally grown fruits.
3. Don't call it a growler here – in tribute to the Yak, the carryout jugs are called grunters.

Artful (and local) Mixology

Great Northern Distilling, located in Plover is the region's first and only distillery is committed to creating small batches using the highest quality ingredients from local farmers. From local potatoes for its iconic potato vodka to grains and fruit, the distillery is committed to use sustainable sources from within 150-miles. Great Northern Distilling has released potato vodka, opportunity rum, and a young vanguard whiskey, four-grain whiskey and an herbalist gin. Still in development is an old fashioned brandy. They elevate the cocktail to an art form, in their mixology bar, where you can get a taste before or after a tour.

Where to find it? Great Northern Distilling is located at 1740 Park Avenue in Plover. The distillery is located close to O'so Brewing Company at Village Park in Plover. The distillery offers great views of the iconic copper still, just off of the mixology bar and lounge area. Tours are available on Saturday at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to get a closer look behind the scenes.

Tasty Tidbits

1. The iconic still might have smooth rounded edges, but don't expect to find that on Great Northern's bottle, which is an unusual square-shaped bottle.
2. Local flavor is handmade here, including all of the mix-ins from ginger beer to other infused products used in the mixology bar.
3. It might be new, but the potato vodka is award-winning, as the distillery's vodka received a medal during the 2014 San Francisco World Spirits Competition.

Sunny Spot

The newest addition to the Craft Collective is Sunset Point Winery, located in the historic Bakery Point building in downtown Stevens Point. The winery offers a Tasting Room on the second floor of the facility, with charming hardwood floors and lofted ceiling with skylights. The space, which once held the flour and sugar for the bakery, now offers an open and inviting space to relax to taste wine, as well as an assortment of other Wisconsin goods (including crackers, cheese, toffee and cranberry products).

Where to find it? Sunset Point Winery is located at 1201 Water Street in Stevens Point. The winery is located close to Pfiffner Pioneer Park, a great stop before heading to hearing live music at Pfiffner Pioneer Park in the summer months including city band concerts or the popular Central Wisconsin Jazz Festival.

Tasty Tidbits

1. The winery's first bulk wine order went to Great Northern Distilling for their Brandy, which will be released in late 2017.
2. Don't miss sitting in the swings located in the tasting room, to kick back and relax.
3. Interested in reds and whites? Don't miss out on the variety of fruity and dessert wines they make, including their Chocolate Raspberry Port and Vortex (their ice wine).
4. The sun rays of the logo represent the family of the wine makers, one ray for each member of their family.

For more information on tasty stops in the Stevens Point area, visit www.stevenspointarea.com. You can also find the Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).