

# Enjoy Life, Love, Beer and Bourbon

The Chattanooga brewing and distillery scene has exploded in recent years, giving locals yet another reason to be proud of the Scenic City, which is quickly becoming a destination for tasty libations and concoctions of all sorts.

Atlanta resident and advertising executive **Eric Berrios** made the drive up I-75 for that express reason. His plan of attack for one night might make most people weary, but for him, it was a journey with no precise destination - just enjoying local brew and bourbon.

"We set rules for the night; you could only have one drink and one appetizer at each place. So, each place was like, 'I want the signature cocktail at this place, then we want to move on to the next one,'" he said.

Berrios' favorite aspect of this trail of concoctions was not the alcohol itself. "When I think about all these experiences as an adult, the idea of walking around a town, going to one bar to the next, I love to do that. I love to walk, it's the best," he said.

He started his evening with a heavy hitter - the Chattanooga Whiskey Experimental Distillery - and a flight of whiskey.

Located across the street from the historic Chattanooga Choo Choo, it is billed as a "hip whiskey distillery with artisanal cocktails and one-hour guided tours with tasting flights."

"I'll let the bartender know you are here. The bar is separate and legally we

nessee high malts, our flagship whiskeys; they are straight bourbons. They are made with corn, malted rye, caramel malted barley and honey malted barley. That very first one is 91 proof, very light in body, easy drinking. Tends to be very grain forward in taste. Mixes very well with light

The vibe is definitely cool at Naked River.

The Chattanooga Brewing Company, located across the parking lot on Chestnut Street, is the next walkable brewery on the tour. Convenient to Sunday's Chattanooga Market and Main Street Farmer's Market on Wednesdays, the CBC is very



*Chattanooga Distillery flight*



*Naked River flight*

can't serve up here," said the front desk attendant. "Send them on back," said the bartender over a two-way radio.

They opened the gate and let Eric slip into a forbidden-like hallway that opened up into an old-fashioned bar with mirrors surrounded by oak and bottles of bourbon. "So, the flight is \$12. It is five neat pours then a cocktail at the end. It's about three ounces, total," the bartender said.

"The first two are our signature Ten-

cocktails, but stands up on its own too," she said.

Berrios said he appreciated her in-depth explanations of each pour. "For me it's more about understanding the craftsmanship the artanship, of how they make it," he said. And it translated to him buying two bottles of bourbon to take home.

Next up, Gate 11 Distillery. Located across the street within the historic Chattanooga Choo Choo complex, Gate 11 touts itself as a distillery that distills, bottles and serves a diverse range of fine spirits, including vodka, gin, rum and whiskey. "Through our Gin Class and Tennessee Whiskey Experience programs, we offer an unparalleled opportunity for our visitors to learn about and participate in the process of distilled spirits production," its website states.

Eric ordered a gimlet, basically gin with lemon that is shaken until foamy. Food is not on the menu, but next door at the Frothy Monkey, one can order and have it delivered into the distillery. "[The] atmosphere feels a bit sterile here, lights are really bright, and the wait staff doesn't feel as welcoming or informative as the last place. But the gimlet is good, and they have live music, which is always a plus. I'd like to come back when the band gets going," Eric said.

With a full belly, it was time to move on to another part of town and to his first brewery, Naked River, which is located in the rehabbed brick building next to the Tennessee Pavilion on the south side of town.

The high ceilings, rustic surroundings and live music were a hit for Eric as he tasted a flight of sours and stouts, including the signature Moon Pie Stout, along with a platter of ribs and brisket.

**Cade Lafrenz**, the Naked River barkeep, explained the flight Eric was about to taste, "These are IPAs. The Gorge is a west coast style. Ludacrisp is a brut floral IPA. Whea-Teas is actually an herbal tea infused wheat beer. Moon Pie Stout is our flagship beer made with 500 pounds of hand-crushed moon pies, and the new Christmas beer is a peppermint winter warmer."

Cade, who works days across the street at Trident Transport, says he enjoys working at Naked River. "I work here one day a week. Everyone here is very cool."

convenient.

Dogs are welcome inside at the CBC - definitely a cool perk. Another interesting perk is the Mug Club. For \$100 a year, you can hang your mug in the bar and get an extra four ounces free per pint.

After a beer, Eric was off to Hutton & Smith Brewing Co., where he ordered a Kaledonidy Kveik Sour Beer. "I have found my people here. This is my kind of place," he exclaimed as he walked in.

No frills, just a bar, friendly barkeeps and folks enjoying the art of brew.

Finishing the night off, Eric slipped into the Mad Priest Coffee and Cocktails for coffee. The smell was undeniable; the aroma of fresh coffee filled the air as well as the scent of carefully curated cocktails.

Looking back at the evening, Eric felt a sense of accomplishment. "I really appreciate the ability to walk from one place to the other, having a walkable city. A lot of cities haven't focused their attention on enjoying the local environment," he allowed.



*A bartender pours a beer at Hutton and Smith Brewery.*

His favorite of them all? "I think the Chattanooga Whiskey Experimental Distillery, the first one we went to. That was probably the best one for hanging out. It had intellectual barkeeps happy to give detail about the product. I'm less interested in 'give me a beer,' but I want to know how this beer was crafted. Makes you want to stay, linger and explore."

Eric is already looking forward to visiting the Scenic City again to see even more breweries he missed the first time around.

*by Michelle Michaud*

*embellish*  
EMBELLISH



Visit us inside Warehouse Row!

[EmbellishCollection.com](http://EmbellishCollection.com)