



Start your Distillery

in the Village of Empress

Alberta's craft spirits sector is poised for explosive growth as consumers seek small-scale, locally-produced product.

Empress is centrally located among some of the best ingredients in the world, with excellent market access into Alberta's major cities. Experienced distillers in Alberta and British Columbia are seeking new places to make their spirits.

A small group of local investors would have the means to bring distilling to Empress. With such a meteoric rise in interest, world-class ingredients, available talent, market access, and some local investment dollars, a craft distillery is a real possibility.



Growth Story

There are approximately 24 craft distilleries in Alberta, with nearly 80 in British Columbia. This indicates there is room for about 60 more distilleries in Alberta. Craft distilling is growing at an astronomical rate of 30% CAGR, part of a larger trend of consumers seeking locally-produced, high-quality food, beverages, and other consumables. Driven by millennials entering their prime earning years, this trend shows no signs of slowing. Craft distilling is a sustainable way to bring food manufacturing to communities of all sizes.



World Class Ingredients

Some of the best malting barley on the planet is grown in Alberta. Combine a fast-growing potato sector in Southern Alberta, an abundance of native- and farm-grown botanicals, microclimates conducive to growing hops, and increasing interest in craft malt, and an Empress-based distillery will have no problem finding the best ingredients for their spirits.



Regulatory Support

When the Government of Alberta changed the regulations around craft brewing in 2013, it released a cascade of craft brewery openings across the province. Those regulations also reduced the barrier to entry for craft distillers. And while Alberta craft brewing continues its ascent, craft distilling in the province has momentum of its own.



Distilling Talent

There is an opportunity for local investors to draw on this existing talent pool of craft distillers to handle the day-to-day operations and ensure their community is known for high quality spirits. If distilling is a passion, three week courses are offered at working distilleries across North America.

What others are saying about craft distilling



Geoff Stewart

Owner, Rig Hand Craft Distillery

"I don't feel that craft distillers in Alberta are really competing with one another. There's enough market out there for everybody to be successful."



Lyndsey Smiley

Owner, Raw Distillery

"When we secured a space in Canmore there were only three craft distilleries in the province ... Now there are 19 [with more in the works]. I am truly hoping we will be able to see collaborations between distilleries."



David Farran

President, Eau Claire Distillery

"There has been a slight cultural change with people drinking less and moving to quality products. This has also helped open the opportunity for producers of premium, craft spirits."



Josh McLafferty

Owner, Monashee Spirits

"Oh my god there is so much demand locally. I'm getting emails and phone calls from Whistler, Vancouver Island, Comox. They're all saying they want two cases. Stat."



Why Distill Spirits in Empress?

Empress is situated in one of Alberta's most interesting locations, near the confluence of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan Rivers. Remote and charming, minutes from Highway 41, the village is on Travel Alberta's map as a badlands destination. With abundant serviced land within village boundaries, a distillery could pay homage to its scenery, drawing cyclists, river and outdoor enthusiasts, bringing pride to the town while selling spirits province-wide.



Population 135



Participation Rate 53%

Critical Details



\$500,000 - \$2,000,000

Industry leaders indicate that distillery start-up costs range from \$500,000 - \$2,000,000, depending on items such as equipment cost, real estate cost, and the vision of the company.

Electric stills are less expensive than steam, but restrict what product you'll be able to produce. Steam provides potential for a greater product range, including whiskey and other coloured liquor.



Alberta Craft Distilling Association

If you're thinking of starting a craft distillery in Alberta the Alberta Craft Distilling Association should be one of the first calls you make.

Email bryce@bearhillbrewing.com for more details.



Regulations: Think Fire

Alberta Gaming and Liquor is important, but more important are provincial and municipal fire codes. Be sure your proposed facility works closely with your fire department to avoid costly overruns.



Job Creation Tax Cut

Alberta's corporate tax rate is 10%, which is the lowest in Canada. By 2020, Alberta's corporate tax rate will be 8%.



Alberta Investors Tax Credit

The Alberta Investor Tax Credit (AITC) offers a 30% tax credit to investors who provide equity capital to Alberta small businesses commercializing new products.



Community Futures Small Business Loans

Community Futures provides customized, affordable loan options for small business owners and entrepreneurs in rural Alberta, ranging from \$500 to \$150,000.



Olds College Craft Distilling Program

This eight week course prepares graduates for employment in the growing alcohol spirits distillation industry.



Location

Empress is located in Southeast Alberta, approximately 350 kilometers East of Calgary and 150 kilometers North of Medicine Hat. It is in the heart of Alberta's Special Areas and MD of Acadia, providing easy access to some of the best ingredients in the world, motivated and experienced agricultural producers.

In short, Empress has easy access to Alberta's most populated market, the best ingredients, all located at the confluence of two of the province's most recognizable rivers.



Empress is situated on the West side of the Alberta/Saskatchewan border and is at the geographical center of the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and Regina.

Contact us for more info:

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