



## tasting room

Crafted for love
Paired in perfect harmony,

beer and chocolate offer feel-good warmth in Michigan's coldest season. BY TAI ALEXANDER

"Beer and chocolate make wonderful bedfellows," says Fred Bueltmann, Beervangelist at New Holland Brewing Company. "Both delight us with a symphony of roastiness, creaminess, bitterness and sweetness."

Michigan breweries have mastered the art of blending their malty beers to evoke rich chocolate flavors (both with and without the actual addition of cocoa) just in time for Valentine's Day.

The Poet from New Holland (www.newhollandbrew.com) is dark and luxurious with soothing aromas and a soft mouth-feel, enveloped in tones of roast and chocolate — a desert in and of itself.

Red Velvet, based on the cake with rich, red tones, is served up during winter months at Liberty Street Brewing Company (www.libertystreetbeer. com) in Plymouth.

Dark, rich and sexy: Founders Porter from Founders Brewing Company in Grand Rapids (www.foundersbrewing. com) pours silk-black with strong chocolate and



caramel malt flavors. It's touted as a lover, not a fighter.

Oatmeal and freshly roasted coffee lend to the mildly chalky characters of Espresso Love Breakfast Stout from Arbor Brewing Company (www.arborbrewing.com) in Ann Arbor.

Sanders Chocolate Stout marries two long-standing Detroit companies: It's created when more than 15 pounds of premium Sanders cocoa is added to batches of Detroit Brewing Co.'s pub-classic (www.detroitbeerco.com).

The Cocoa Loco Triple Chocolate Stout from Arcadia Ales (www.arcadiaales.com) gets its rich flavor from Simpson Chocolate, Weyerman Chocolate and crisp chocolate malts.

And, Traverse City's Jolly Pumpkin, North Peak and Right Brain breweries are partnering for their Passion brew, crafted to benefit local food banks (www.jollypumpkin.com), (www.northpeakbeer.com), (www.rightbrainbrewery.com).

Learn more at www.MichiganBrewersGuild.org. Tai Alexander is a West Michigan-based freelance writer.