

# Three years in, Virginia Beer Co. adds new year-round beer to original core lineup

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Virginia Beer Co. has introduced a new beer to its year-round lineup, called Liquid Escape, a low-alcohol, low-calorie tart ale brewed with lemongrass and "a touch" of Australian sea salt. (WYDaily/Courtesy of Virginia Beer Co. Facebook)

With three years under its belt, brewing operations at Virginia Beer Co. are going pretty steady.

The brewery's core lineup of year-round beers is infiltrating Hampton Roads and Richmond area grocery stores, restaurants are tapping kegs of Saving Daylight and Free Verse on the regular, and the list of craft beers is constantly changing.

But last month, Virginia Beer Co. took another stride in its growth: The brewery added a new beer to its core lineup, the first time it's done so since the opening in March 2016, the brewery announced in a news release.

So, what's the brew called?

Liquid Escape, a low-alcohol, low-calorie tart ale brewed with lemongrass and "a touch" of Australian sea salt.

The beer became available on tap and in six-packs of 12-ounce cans in late June and is a "scaled-up" version of an original tart ale recipe.

The original tart ale was brewed as part of Virginia Beer's Workshop Series, but gathered a following of die-hard fans quickly.

"In fact the requests were so many that we sent a batch out to select events in the Hampton Roads area including a tap takeover at the Green Leafé Café & Pub in Williamsburg and the Pearls of Wisdom fundraiser for the Virginia Beach Education Foundation in Virginia Beach," said Michael Rhodes, the brewery's director of sales. "We wanted to see if the reaction in the market was the same as in the taproom ... and we enjoyed the feedback as much as everyone seemed to enjoy the beer."

Getting another year-round brew on tap wasn't as easy as it sounds.

This spring, the brewery doubled its production capacity by installing three new tanks, two of which are the brewery's largest tanks in the system, said Robby Willey, co-founder of Virginia Beer Co.

The tanks include the brewery's sixth 60-barrel fermenter, a 90-barrel brite tank — the largest in the brewery thus far — and a 90-barrel fermenter.

Those changes allowed the brewery to double its production capacity and while also expanding Free Verse IPA production — another one of its core beers.

The brewery also purchased a canning line to aid with distribution.

"We simply can't keep up with the demand for Free Verse, but at 3 years in we also wanted to freshen up our Year Round rotation with something quite different than anything we've brewed to this scale in the past," co-founder Chris Smith said in a prepared statement.

Liquid Escape will be offered and celebrated "in the wild" throughout the summer with release parties in Virginia across Hampton Roads and Richmond, according to the company.

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