

Gauntlet Drinking Supplement

Beer
Reviews



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Reviews



Naughty
Shots



Inside: Riley Hill's beer adventure

Challenged to review six beers in two hours, our totally-not-wasted news editor arbitrarily selected six beers off a liquor store shelf and recorded his unfiltered thoughts over the two-hour period. The drinking supplement editors have left his beer diary almost completely unedited. Follow along at the bottom of each page as Riley knocks back six beers and writes his reviews.

Brews and ciders



Weihenstephaner

Rating: 10/10

Weihenstephaner Hefe Weissbier is a product of the Weihenstephan Monastery Brewery in Freising, Germany, which claims to be the world's oldest continuously operating brewery. Founded almost 1,000 years ago in 1040, the brewery has survived plagues, wars and four fires but is still standing and now brews a variety of beers that are sold throughout the world.

This wheat beer is Weihenstephan's flagship drink. Dubiously advertised as being brewed according to the Bavarian Purity Law of 1516 — which stipulated that only water, barley and hops could be used in the production of beer — Weihenstephaner's claim is betrayed by their use of wheat and yeast to create a notable banana-like flavour. The result is a formidably smooth and refreshing beer that goes down very easy. Weihenstephaner receives top marks for drinkability.

Ultimately Weihenstephaner is everything that a wheat beer should be. The beer presents well with a nice cloudy colour and sweet aroma. It feels light in the mouth and has a well-balanced flavour. Weihenstephaner is one of the best wheat beers that I've come across.

Curtis Wolff



Mongozo Premium Pilsener

Rating: 9/10

Mongozo Premium Pilsener is a gluten-free beer from Belgium. It is also the winner of the 2012 World Beer award for best gluten-free beer and I soon found out why.

Right off the bat, Mongozo reminded me of Budweiser. The head is very light and it has a subtle fruity aroma. It's lightly carbonated and my first sip brought sharp tones of rice. It's smooth-bodied, sweet and tickled my senses wonderfully as it went down. This pilsner, unlike many others, has a very light, bitter aftertaste that does not linger for too long. The barley malt meshes well with the hops and produces a crisp taste reminiscent of a mainstream lager. After a few more sips, I realized that I had found a new friend.

The green-on-black label looks simple and clean, which is appropriate for this smooth tasting beer. Its only drawback is that at \$6.25 for a 330 ml bottle, you may want to sip this one slowly, unless you have deep pockets. However, in my opinion, it's worth it even if you aren't restricted to a gluten-free diet.

Ashton Chugh



Pumpkin Pie Spiced Ale

Rating: 8/10

Pumpkin Pie Spiced Ale is brewed by Alley Kat Brewing Company out of Edmonton. The beer is brewed with a mix of pumpkin, ginger and cinnamon and is only available seasonably in 650 ml bottles.

I've never been the first to reach for the pumpkin pie at the Thanksgiving dinner table — the mushy consistency of pumpkin has always thrown me off. Fortunately, this issue is resolved by transforming pumpkins into an excellent ale. The beer pours with little head and has a metallic-tinted orange-brown colour. A pleasant scent of fresh pumpkin is noticeable.

The beer has a surprising crisp taste that is not very hoppy. The pumpkin flavour is not particularly overwhelming and is mostly predominant in the aftertaste. The crispness of the beer followed immediately by the pumpkin flavour provides a great one-two punch upon first taste.

The effect of the pumpkin flavour wears off a little bit as the drink starts to empty, but the drink continues to be a pleasurable experience. Pumpkin Pie Spiced Ale would make a worthy addition to your turkey dinner this autumn.

Curtis Wolff



Lazy Mutt Gluten Free Lager

Rating: 3/10

Being born and raised in Calgary, I was excited at the opportunity to review a locally produced micro beer from Minhas Brewery, but I quickly realized that my beautiful city has many more desirable things to offer.

Lazy Mutt is gluten-free and that's about all it has going for it. This beer has a pungent aroma, which is strangely similar to that of a low-end scotch. It tasted like one too. Upon pouring, the head completely evaporated and I was left with what looked nothing like a lager. The beer is nearly as viscous as water. It has a dry aftertaste that clung to my senses the way cough syrup does.

Could the culprit here be the sorghum flour that is advertised on the bottle? Apparently, sorghum is supposed to be sweet and the beer did taste sort of sweet when I took a sip whilst plugging my nose. What is more confusing is that, to me, this beer tasted more like a cider than a lager.

I feel that the label serves as a warning to the potential consumer because I don't believe that the dog on the front is just lazy, I think it died after drinking this brew.

Ashton Chugh

Beer 1: Curious Brew — 7:10 p.m.

Well, here we go. I decided to drink the most expensive beer first because my tongue will soon be numb. According to the bottle, Curious Brew is a "premium lager re-fermented with Champagne yeast for a cleaner, drier, more refreshing beer." I couldn't agree more, beer bottle. This beer is delicious. I wish I could drink another five of these instead of the horrid piss-swill soon coming. 100 per cent refreshing!





Okanagan: Crisp Apple
 Rating: 4/10

The cider industry is booming in Canada, though still only occupying a tiny corner of the alcoholic drinks market. Unit sales increased by 32 per cent from 2011–2012, according to the Association of Canadian Distillers.

I wonder if the boom is from flavoured, sweet cider or more traditional English cider.

This label claims that this is “seriously good cider” and endorsed by Ogopogo. However, the label also says, “flavoured cider,” which is why it smells like sour apple candy, which over-powers any other flavour that could be in the cider.

I prefer my cider dry and slightly bitter, which is why I’ll never get this cider again.

If you’re trying cider because coolers are getting old, go here, but if you’re a beer fan, skip over it. It might as well be a sour apple Jolly Rancher in a can.

At \$12.99 for a 6 pack, it’s your call.

Susan Anderson



Blackthorn
 Rating: 7/10

I first had cider while travelling in France, and liked it from the first sip, which puts it ahead of beer and wine, which I had to acquire a taste for, and hard liquor, which I still haven’t acquired a taste for.

This cider reminds me of the one I first fell in love with, Eden’s Promise. Both are English dry ciders without flavouring.

I had to settle for Strongbow in Canada, because it was readily available, but I’m now branching out and trying Blackthorn. Blackthorn’s label claims “a distinctive crisp, dry taste” and lives up to it. While this cider does have added sugar, it doesn’t have any added flavouring.

I love cider for its subtlety, and this one doesn’t disappoint. It’s smooth, yet intriguing with a balanced apple taste. It might be a bit tame for true cider fans, but I will buy this again.

At \$15.99 for four 500ml cans it is a bit expensive but worth it.

Susan Anderson

Beer 2: Harvest Moon Organic Hemp Ale — 7:25 p.m.

The first thing I noticed about this beer is that it’s green — not the can, the actual beer. The taste is earthy, like I’m drinking the forest. It has a distinctive aftertaste that I assume is the hemp working its magical healing properties on my body and mind. The can is great because it doesn’t have a giant cannabis leaf on it like every other hemp product. And I can rest easy because it is certified organic by some NGO that has a logo. My consumer choice was an act of altruism and virtue. Five out of five!



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So you want to know about wine?

Melissa Gervais
Gauntlet wine connoisseur

Let me begin by saying that everything I know about wine I learned through working in the service industry. Before you flip the page, rest assured there is plenty to learn and quite a bit of random knowledge to be had. Over the past decade I've been able to work with some interesting characters. None more so than sommeliers — these are people who have studied the chemistry, biology and geography of how a little grape becomes the glass of alcoholic nectar you see before you. Maybe you never thought of drinking as science before.

Through these sommeliers, I found out there were thousands of varieties of grapes from over 6,000 wine regions and two classifications.

The two classifications for wine are old world and new world: for the history buffs, there are old-world wine producers in countries like Italy, France, Germany and Greece and new-world wine producers in Canada, Australia, South Africa, Chile and the United States, each further divided into specific wine regions. For sports fans it's like conferences and divisions.

Here in Canada we have several wine regions, mostly around large bodies of water or where there is the right climate and soil, such as the Okanagan.

Generally speaking there is red wine and white wine. I know there are people who are going to ask about the pink or blush wines. Even though these types of wine may be blended with white and red wine grapes, the wine produced can be considered red.

The reasoning behind this is the colour richness is due to the length of time the grape skins are allowed to sit in the grape juice. No matter what kind of grape is used, the juice is colourless

when pressed. It's when the skins are allowed to soak in that the wine gets its colour.

There are tannins in the skin of the grapes and the more tannins you have the darker the wine will be. Tannins also give wine a boost in flavour.

One common misconception is that the older the wine the better it is. Not necessarily true — there are many factors to consider. While it does take wine about two to three years to mature like most alcohol, wine that has been corked and has air leaking in over time can quickly turn to vinegar. This is rapidly becoming a smaller problem with the introduction of screw-cap lids.

Remember the colour changes depending on the type of grape. A Chardonnay (a common white wine) will be the colour of apple juice, or a bright golden yellow. A Riesling (a crisp German wine) is lighter in colour.

On the red side, a Merlot will be maroon in colour where as a Bordeaux will be a dark burgundy.

The outer rim of colour hanging on the glass tells the age of the wine. The next time you or someone you are with orders wine at a restaurant, lean the glass slightly over a white tablecloth or napkin. For older red wine you'll see a brownish red tinge and for older white you'll see a distinct gold.

In terms of meat pairings there are some common matches, however, true pairings are purely preference. If you like a wine, you can drink it with anything. For darker meats like beef, bison, or game, try a darker variety red wine such as a Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon or Chianti. For salads, fish and poultry you could stick with the Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio or Gewurtztraminer.

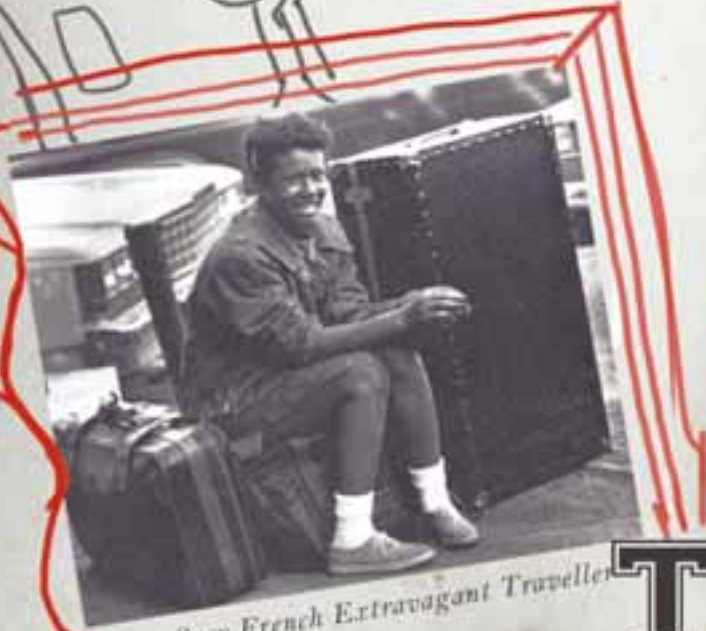
All in all, wine is about personal taste and don't be afraid to enjoy it with a peanut butter and banana sandwich, if you want.



Beer 3: Big Rock SAAZ Republic Pils — 7:40 p.m.

I'm now playing with the big boys — a nice tall 473ml can of delicious beer. The beer is refreshing and hipsters probably designed the logo. The name SAAZ sounds like some obscure leftist paramilitary group that is really just fighting for control of the diamond mines. But that's a nasty thought, so I instead imagine a group of beautiful 20-somethings drinking SAAZ at the beach house after a long summer day of tubing, flirting and horseplay. Nine out of ten!

THURSDAYS AT COMMONWEALTH



Susy French Extravagant Traveller



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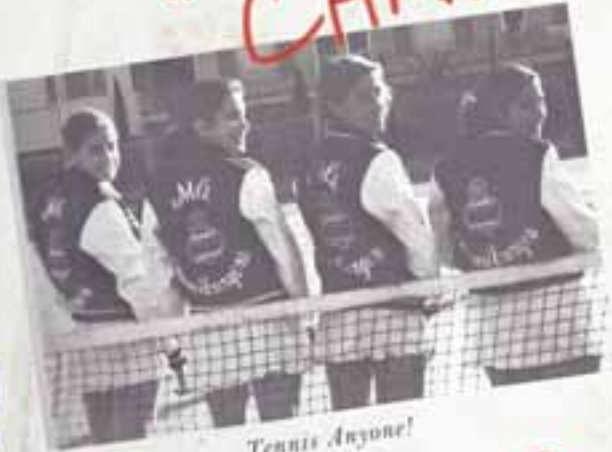


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Writers Tears

Rating: 9/10

I realize that a journalist with an Irish name reviewing an Irish whiskey called Writers Tears is ironic, maybe even a little cliché. It's true I was drawn to the name when I bought a bottle for the first time, but it's not the name or the funny little quotation on the back about Irish writers crying tears of whiskey that brought me back for another drink. Writers Tears is one of the smoothest whiskeys I have ever tasted.

Writers Tears is a pure pot still Irish whiskey from the Writers Tears whiskey in Carlow, Ireland. A pure pot still whiskey, according to the company's website, is a single whiskey brewed from malted and unmalted barley in a single still, unlike blended whiskeys.

The whiskey is a bright amber colour with a woody taste at first sip mixed with a sweet honey flavour. There are also subtle hints of citrus. After a moment the woody taste fades away and the sweet notes of honey and citrus come to the front followed by a fruity aftertaste.

While it may be common practice to touch up a tumbler of whiskey or scotch with a small amount of water to help bring out the flavours, Writers Tears should not be drunk with any added water or even over the rocks. Adding water or ice will ruin the taste and leave this whiskey crying in a dark corner faster than a manic-depressive poet.

There are a number of places that have carried Writers Tears around Calgary but it tends to sell out pretty quickly. It is priced around \$50 if you can find it.

Overall, Writers Tears is one of the better whiskeys available, and its smooth taste will leave you thirsty for more.

Sean Sullivan



Sortilège

Rating: 6/10

Sortilège is a no frills, head-on collision between two of Canada's national oral delights: whisky and maple syrup. A product of Quebec, this whisky is popular among Quebecers and visitors to the region looking for a local specialty, although it is not particularly popular in other areas of the country. Sortilège is usually served over ice or over ice cream, and I've opted to try both options.

Taking the time to smell the whisky reveals that it is incredibly smoky. The aroma coming out of the bottle is reminiscent of a campfire, followed by the sweet scent of maple. The flavours reverse orders when the taste test comes. After taking a sip of Sortilège the sweetness of the maple immediately hits the tongue and is quickly overpowered by the taste of whisky. The whisky is smoky, but not as smoky as you would expect given the smell. The whisky flavour slowly dissolves into a sweet maple aftertaste that lingers long after the first sip has gone down — a unique and pleasurable drinking experience.

However, Sortilège suffers from having too much of a good thing — the maple flavour becomes overwhelming. As I finished my glass it felt more like I was drinking maple syrup with every sip. Whether that is a good or a bad thing is up to you. I found that the sweetness made it difficult to finish the glass, and I did not pour that much. Drinking two glasses of this whisky would be a challenge. Sortilège is best served in small portions after dinner with some dessert, not by itself for the purpose of repeated servings.

Sortilège was most disappointing when served over ice cream. Maple, whisky and ice cream seems like a dreamy combination, but the appropriate balance was simply not present. The maple flavour was overwhelmed by the vanilla ice cream but the whisky flavour remained, making me wish I had just poured some maple syrup over my ice cream instead.

Curtis Wolff

Whisky or whiskey?

The Irish and the Americans use the spelling "whiskey," while the Canadians and the Scots spell the word as "whisky." Perhaps not a big deal to you, but for whisk[e]y lovers it has become a point of contention. So why don't we simply spell it as "whisky" in this Canadian publication and let the Irish and Americans spell the word as "whiskey" in theirs? Until recently the *New York Times* would take this approach, but would receive a flood of emails from annoyed Scottish readers whenever they referred to Scottish whisky as "whiskey." So they decided to spell drinks originating from or inspired by Irish and American producers with the "e" and Canadian and Scottish-style drinks without to keep everybody happy.



Beer 4: Peroni Nastro Azzurro — 8:10 p.m.

Another tall can. At this point, all I can think about is how bloated I am and the thought of beer makes me sick. But something must be said. This is an Italian beer; the only Italian beer I've ever had. It's a lager. It's mediocre. The can has some class, all covered in stamps, signatures and red and blue. The side of the can told me to go to talkingalcohol.com, so I took the bait. It advises me to talk to my children. I am now following [talkingalcohol](http://talkingalcohol.com) on Twitter. Four out of two.

Tequila Time



Corralejo Reposado

A couple summers ago, a friend and I went searching for the best reasonably priced tequila we could find. The reason was not because either of us enjoyed tequila, it was in fact the opposite. We both disliked tequila but wanted to learn why it was enjoyable — beyond the usual get-drunk-quick appeal. Rarely have I found a really good tequila in a Canadian bar. I know they must exist. I have just rarely wandered upon them in the various instances in which tequila shots have been foisted upon me.

One tequila in particular surpassed most of the expensive bottles of tequila and yet costed only \$30–40: Corralejo Reposado.

Corralejo Reposado is an award-winning tequila from Tequila Corralejo in Guanajuato, Mexico. It won a double-gold medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition in 2001 and in 2007 and according to the Tequila Corralejo website it has also won three other gold medals in international competitions. Corralejo ages its Reposado tequila in three different oak barrels, French, American and white oak for a total of for four months.

Corralejo Reposado is a clear white tequila with a very slight yellow tinge. Take a sniff of this tequila and what you'll smell is the agave with hints of vanilla and pepper.

The usual bar-fare tequilas have a very harsh taste. Corralejo Reposado is smooth, almost sweet and has a pleasant peppercorn aftertaste.

Sean Sullivan



Baluarte Blanco

My alcohol cabinet is filled with a number of random bottles of liquor. One, which I received as a gift recently, is a bottle of Baluarte Blanco tequila that has remained unopened.

I've never had a reason to uncork it until now. So let's try this one out together.

Baluarte Blanco comes in a deep black bottle but, as the name suggests, this is a crystal clear tequila. However, it does pack a kick. Baluarte Blanco has a hot spicy taste — it even smells spicy. It's spicy in the same way that those little red cinnamon heart candies are spicy. The taste lingers in your mouth well after you've taken a sip.

Baluarte stores their white tequila in oak barrels for nine months and the oak taste is distinct from the first sip, along with notes of peppercorn and honey.

Baluarte Blanco won a double gold medal at the New York World Wine & Spirits Competition in 2011, however I'm a little disappointed. The spicy flavour is overwhelming and never fades into anything else. I'm also not a fan of those cinnamon heart candies.

Taken in a shot glass, Baluarte is just like every other tequila. It has a harsh kick as you knock it back and drinking Baluarte in a tumbler, a proper tequila glass or snifter glass just seems to me like a waste of time because I'd be waiting too long for flavours to develop.

Baluarte would work best as an interesting addition to a margarita or cocktail, but I'm not sure it is worth the almost \$60 price tag.

Sean Sullivan



Beer 5: AC — lightning bolt — DC Australian Hardrock — 8:40 p.m.

The final tall can. To get in the mood, I'm blasting "Back in Black." This is exactly how I imagined AC/DC beer. It's easy to drink but aggressive. Not the greatest, but reassuring. I'm now listening to "Highway to Hell." This beer sucks, but that's all right, because it's a party, man. Elvis is in Graceland, 2Pac is still alive and 9/11 was an inside job. I can't believe I get paid to do this. Nine lightning bolts out of "Hells Bells."

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Classy gin for classy people



Citadelle

Are you looking for a gin that can make you look even more fancy than gin normally would? Look no further than Citadelle, which is sure to look impressive on your liquor shelf with its tall, slender bottle adorned with its eye-catching blue and gold label.

Such a wonderful first impression would mean very little if the gin inside the bottle failed to live up to the hype. Citadelle is a quadruple distilled London gin, brewed in Cognac, France. It is brewed with 19 different botanicals, which combine to give the gin a very strong floral aroma and flavour. Citadelle has an alcohol-by-volume content of 44 per cent, but the taste of the alcohol isn't very noticeable.

What is noticeable, however, is the floral flavours. When drunk straight or on the rocks, Citadelle is difficult to enjoy. The 19 botanicals that are the gin's claim to fame are simply too overpowering, creating the sensation of drinking a mouthful of liquidized roses — this isn't as pleasant as it sounds.

This weakness turns into a strength when Citadelle gin is used in a gin and tonic. The floral flavours mix beautifully with the flavours of the tonic creating what might be the best iteration of the classic cocktail I have ever tasted. Fans of G&Ts will fall in love with this gin, which begs for either a slice of lime or cucumber to finish the cocktail.

Citadelle is a bit harder to find than more conventional gins, but you should be able to track it down in larger liquor stores. It costs around \$35–40 a bottle.

Sean Willett



Tanqueray Rangpur

Tanqueray gin has long been considered a favourite by many gin drinkers. It straddles the line between price and quality, making for one of the best affordable gins in most liquor stores. However, Tanqueray produces more types of gin than its standard green-bottled staple. Tanqueray Rangpur gin is one of these varieties and is almost as delicious as it is elusive.

Tanqueray Rangpur doesn't look like much — it sports a paler bottle than normal Tanqueray and a transparent label, neither of which are very appealing to the eye. The gin itself more than compensates for this, however, combining the classic four-botanical London dry gin with rangpur flavouring.

Rangpur is a lime-like fruit that is native to India and has traditionally been used to smooth the flavour of gin. Unsurprisingly, this makes Tanqueray Rangpur an amazing gin to enjoy straight or on the rocks, as the rangpur balances out the floral flavour that often makes straight gin too overpowering.

It also mixes very well, especially with fruitier drinks and sodas. Cranberry juice, orange juice, Sprite, ginger ale and, of course, tonic water all go well with Tanqueray Rangpur. This makes it a good choice for people who may not normally enjoy gin, as the citrus flavouring makes for a much more pleasant experience.

Unfortunately, Tanqueray Rangpur is almost impossible to find in Canada, so try ordering it online. If you do find it, it should cost somewhere between \$40–50.

Sean Willett

12 Naughty shots

Melissa Gervais has scoured the recipe books and the globe for some very naughty shots.

The 69

1/3 oz Crème de menthe
1/3 oz Anisette (licorice-flavoured liqueur)
1/3 oz Irish cream

Brass Balls

1/3 oz Grand Marnier
1/3 oz Peach schnapps
1/3 oz Pineapple juice

Pierced Buttery Nipple

1/3 oz Irish cream
1/3 oz Butterscotch schnapps
1/3 oz Jagermeister

Viagra

1/2 oz Amaretto
1/2 oz Irish Cream
1/4 oz Crème de Menthe
1/4 oz White Crème de Cacao

Deep Throat

1/2 oz Whisky
1/2 oz Rootbeer schnapps

Maple Syrup Shot

2 oz Butterscotch schnapps
1/2 oz Spiced rum
Stir ingredients together in a mixing glass with cracked ice. Strain into a shot glass, and serve.

Purple Hooter or The Purple Nurple

1/3 oz Vodka
1/3 oz Black raspberry liqueur
1/3 oz Lime juice

Naked Bird

1/2 oz Vodka
1/4 oz Raspberry liqueur
1/4 oz Sweet and sour mix
Mix equal parts over ice. Shake, strain and serve.

Red Snapper also known as the Panty Remover

1/3 Crown Royal
1/3 amaretto
1/3 cranberry juice
Can be served as a shot or on the rocks.

The Screaming Orgasm

1/4 oz Vodka
1/4 oz Kalua
1/4 oz Amaretto
1/4 oz Irish cream liqueur

Hell's Fairy

1 oz Apple juice
2 oz Ginger ale
1 oz Lemonade
2 oz Red Bull
2 oz Absinthe
Combine in a cocktail shaker and shake well.

The *Gauntlet* takes no responsibility for any embarrassment that may take place due to the consumption of one or all of these shots.



Beer 6: Big Surf Honey Brown Lager — 9:00 p.m.

The final beer in this horrible experiment. I'm listening to "Sweet Home Alabama" because it seems like a song that is played at the end of a movie with a happy ending. But back to the drink. This beer is made of [censored by editor for legal reasons]. Only confused high school party-goers could be fooled into buying this [please don't sue us]. How did someone make a business out of this terrible, terrible brew? I give it five swells out of surfing. Volunteer for the *Gauntlet*.