

6 Complexity tastes best One of Arcadia's most insanely tasty beers, HopMouth Double IPA, is the work of former head brewer Bryan Wiggs, who's now at Dark Horse Brewing. He and Davies have been tight since they were teenagers. "It's our regular IPA on steroids," Davies says—the same ingredients, with the hops and IBUs doubled, and the malt base bumped up by half. Ten pounds of Cascade hops steep in the hop percolator six hours before being pushed through the wort. But, in Davies' mind, it's Maris Otter malt that makes HopMouth special. "The complexity of that Maris Otter really plays on the lingering floral of the hops. For the beer to be based on the silky-smoothest, maltiest base malt that there is, says something for our product—at least we hope."

7 Let the balance tip Davies is proudest of his Hop Rocket Imperial IPA. "It's completely different than everything else," he says. "Arcadia has always been malt up front. We wanted something kind of like HopMouth, but something that wasn't so balanced, something that skewed to the hops, which is something Arcadia had never done. We get to use a stupid amount of Summit. You drink it two weeks after it's bottled, when the hops are still really outrageous in your nose. It's like heaven."

8 Follow the light Another recent favorite is Sky High Rye. It's heavy on Centennial and Simcoe hops, though it's lighter than anything else Arcadia brews. "If you didn't know what you were looking at, you'd be sure it's a Molson Golden." His first rye beer, a winter seasonal for Michigan Brewing, was an homage to Founders Red's Rye. Davies wanted to step out on his own this time around. He shot for a light, drinkable, hop-forward beer at 5-percent ABV and overshot his mark a bit. "I just killed it the first time we brewed it, and it was so good, we couldn't dumb it down from there."

9 Follow the trailblazers Michigan doesn't immediately jump out as a beer-making hotbed—until you start ticking off names like Founders, Short's, Dark Horse, Jolly Pumpkin, New Holland, Kuhnnein and The Livery. Great breweries all around—all thanks to Larry Bell. "Uncle Larry paved the road for everybody else," Davies says. "You've got a ton of brewers in the state under 30, and we all grew up drinking Bell's beer, long before we were supposed to be drinking it. We had something that was cutting edge, and we didn't even know. We just knew we liked to drink it."

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