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Bottoms Up in Mormon County

Utah's Newly-Relaxed Liquor Law Has Spurred a Boom in Craft Beers and Whisky

BY **SCOTT MAYEROWITZ**
 PARK CITY, Utah
 Feb. 1, 2010

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Utah isn't exactly the first place that comes to mind if you're seeking a good drink.



Utah isn't exactly the first place that comes to mind when seeking a good drink. But thanks in part... 

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But thanks in part to a recent loosening of the state's liquor laws there is a burgeoning booze business in the state where the majority of residents are non-drinking Mormons.

To see this boom, look no further than an old house and stable at the edge of Park City's [ski slopes](#) that has now become Utah's first distillery since 1870. It also happens to be ski-in, ski-out, making it -- according to its owner -- the only such facility in the world.

"Every state has weird drinking laws. Utah just gets a bum rap because the predominant religion of our population doesn't drink. But you can certainly get a drink," said David Perkins, proprietor of the

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High West Distillery. "I probably do more selling of Utah than I do selling of our spirits when I travel just because people don't understand Utah."

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Last year, the state legislature updated Utah's liquor laws. The most noticeable change was the elimination of the 40-plus-year old "private club" provision that forced people to complete a membership application when they [visited bars](#). Anybody could purchase a temporary membership, but there was a fee -- basically a small cover charge -- and at the very least a perception of hassle.

"It is good for the state," Perkins said. "You don't want to turn your customers away."

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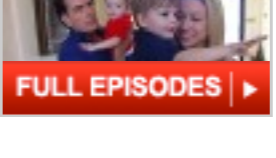
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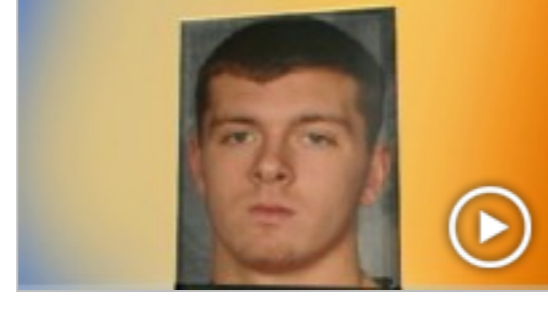
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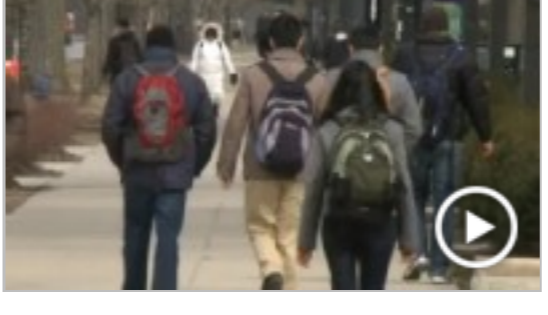
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