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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## Some stocking up on liquor, planning parties to ride out Hurricane Irene

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By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

While many are stocking up on plywood, sump pumps, and rain boots in preparation for a significant hurricane expected to douse the city with inches of rain this weekend, some are also heading to local liquor stores to bolster their personal booze supply. They'll take refuge indoors and cheers to Irene.

Ryan Malone said he and his six roommates plan to ride out Sunday's anticipated hurricane at their Allston home with a get together, drinking a blend of "hurricane-themed" beverages after possibly starting the day at area bars.

The 25-year-old said he expects to make the routine weekend beer run tonight, but with some special purchases. He plans to stock up on hurricane-appropriate Caribbean rums, fitting "because the storm's coming out of the Caribbean."

Malone and his housemates plan to host a gathering of between 20 to 30 people, a tradition he and friends partake in virtually "anytime there's a reason for us not to leave the house." He said they'll likely serve dark and stormy cocktails, a mixture of rum and ginger beer.

Beer manager Casey Gruttadauria at Brookline Liquor in Allston said he expects at least a slight surge in pre-storm sales over the next two days.

"It's hard to say though, because the [college] kids aren't back yet. I wouldn't be surprised," the 25-year-old said. "I'm probably going to do something to that effect myself."

Gruttadauria said he's worked through major snowstorms and blizzards before and that locals often journey to local beer, wine and liquor retailers before the flakes start to fly. He's not sure if the forecasted hurricane will create quite the same rush.

But, "We anticipate a bit bigger spike in sales," said his colleague Doug Harrington, 22, of Brighton. Though, "we aren't in emergency mode or anything."

The beer manager said residents are not typically fearful that stores will close, a very rare occurrence at the store he works at. And, he added, in a walk-able city like Boston, severe weather is seldom so bad that it prevents customers from physically being able to venture out.

"It's not like people will think 'Oh no, I can't go out,'" said Gruttadauria. However, for those who stockpile ahead of time, "They just don't want to deal with having to get here," during poor weather conditions.

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He expects staples like vodka and relatively cheap beer are likely to be the most common purchases.

For those planning to ride out the hurricane with a party he recommended selections that fit the weather's theme – including the dark and stormy mixed drink.

He suggested a personal favorite, Green River Ambrosia Ginger Libation, which he described as a ginger beer with a “sweet finish” and noted its above-average 8.5-percent alcohol by volume.

“I’m going to go home with a couple of those,” he said, adding that he’ll drink and watch a movie during the storm, or perhaps play the board game Scrabble if the power goes out.

Down the street in Allston at Comm. Ave Wine & Spirits, 26-year-old employee Justin Marchetti, said “We think we might be a little busier,” between locals stocking up in anticipation of Irene along with the return of some area college students this weekend, before a bigger influx expected next weekend, after September 1st apartment leases begin.

His colleague Anthony Shroud, 31, said he also expects some residents will make a special pre-hurricane visit to the liquor store.

“We’ll probably get those folks tonight,” he said, but added of the day the brunt of the storm is expected to hit the area, “Sunday’s aren’t a huge drinking night. It’s usually a recovery day.”

Marchetti said the store was prepping for the incoming hurricane by installing a rubber seal under the store’s front doorway to help prevent water from the sidewalk, which can flood in heavy rains, from seeping inside.

The store will also likely reposition some of its retail area product displays and additional supplies in the store’s basement by placing them on wooden pallets in case water does infiltrate.

*E-mail Matt Rocheleau at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com).*



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