

East Side craft brewer buys Old Firehouse Brewery



Williamsburg's Old Firehouse Brewery has been acquired by Paradise Brewing out of Anderson Township. By [Andy Brownfield](#) – Staff Reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Mar 5, 2021

An East Side craft brewery and homebrew supply store is expanding its footprint and capacity through the acquisition of a shuttered Greater Cincinnati brewery. Paradise Brewing, an Anderson Township craft brewery and brewing supply depot based at 7766 Beechmont Ave., has acquired Old Firehouse Brewery in Williamsburg, Ohio. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Paradise Brewing President Jeff Graff told me the acquisition of Old Firehouse Brewery will allow his brewery to increase its output by sixfold. Paradise has a 5-barrel brewhouse, allowing it to make 150 gallons of beer at a time, and Old Firehouse Brewery has a 15-barrel system with four 30-barrel fermenters.

"It was a great opportunity to get much bigger equipment and to expand our brand out to many more markets," Graff said. "We built quite the following with this outfit we have out here." The expanded output will allow Paradise Brewing to begin canning its beers, as well as expand into distribution to place kegs into local bars and restaurants.

Graff said Paradise Brewing will reopen the taproom in Williamsburg, though a timeline has not yet been set. It will operate under the Paradise Branding and the plan is to bring in food trucks to serve patrons over the summer with the goal of opening a kitchen to begin serving food in-house.

"This is a new place, you're not going to have the same thing as what left, we're going to hopefully be a vital part of the Williamsburg proper and be a good neighbor to all of the people over there," Graff said. "We're going to try to expand the paradise brand out into Cincinnati and even places beyond."

Old Firehouse Brewery opened at 237 Main St. in Williamsburg in 2014 by Adam Cowan and Lori Ward, who went on to expand its footprint with the purchase of two properties at 209-225 W. Main St. The brewery was listed for sale in September 2019 at a price of \$1.5 million, and announced its closure one day after going onto the market.



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\$22 million mixed-use project, with microbrewery, coming to NKY

By Tom Demeropolis – Senior Staff Reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Mar 3, 2021, 2:00pm EST

A Northern Kentucky restaurateur and developer plans to break ground this summer on a mixed-use project in southern Kenton County. Gary Holland, CEO of Taylor Mill-based One Holland, plans to purchase and develop about 30 acres of land at the northeast corner of state Routes 16 and 17 in Independence. The land will be developed into the Downs of Nicholson, which will include two restaurants, a microbrewery and taproom, and 85 rental patio homes. The project is expected to be a total investment of \$22 million.

Holland, who grew up in Independence, has driven by the site for years. He has thought about what he could bring to the site that would be special for the community. After buying the Greyhound Tavern, Holland thought it would be great to have a similar restaurant in southern Kenton County. “I know that I am blessed because it just sat there for so long,” Holland told me. “I’m getting to buy this and make it something where the whole city can appreciate it.”



This site map shows the planned \$22 million development, the Downs of Nicholson.

Holland is calling the project the Downs of Nicholson because this area of Kenton County is known as Nicholson. And the development will look like a Lexington horse farm, complete with four-board white fences. The microbrewery will be designed to look like a barn. The sit-down restaurant will be designed to resemble a nice home that would be found on a horse farm. “You’re going to drive by it and say, ‘Wow, this is beautiful,’” Holland said. The Downs of Nicholson will include 85 patio homes with a mix of two-bedroom and three-bedroom units. The patio homes will have attached two-car garages and separate access. The patio homes will be rental units, with One Holland planning to own and manage them. Holland said pricing for the patio homes has not been finalized yet.

Holland has not selected a general contractor for the patio homes but said a number of builders have expressed interest in this portion of the project. He said Independence has a lack of single floor living product available and many residents want to stay in the city. “My phone has been ringing off the hook from builders who want to build these patio homes,” he said. The patio homes at the Downs of Nicholson will have a clubhouse with fitness center, swimming pool, event rental room and leasing office.

The commercial portion of the development will include a quick-service restaurant with a drive-thru, a 5,000-square-foot convenience store market with gas pumps, the brewery, and a sit-down restaurant. The convenience store would be like a mini-super market, Holland said. It would be a place for people to grab a few items instead of making a full grocery shopping trip. The restaurant, which will be called Limestone, will have some similarities to the Greyhound Tavern, but it will have its own feel, Holland said. It will have a bourbon bar and large outdoor dining patio area.

The microbrewery will be owned by a group of people Holland went to high school with from Independence. It is planned to be called the Sons of Independence. Some members of the group are brewers and are already brewing batches to determine their lineup. The brewery will be about 7,000 square feet, with 4,000 square feet for the tap room and 3,000 square feet for brewing operations, plus a basement. Both the brewery and Limestone will have a lake as their backyard. Holland plans to have live music and extensive patio seating for both.

Amanda Williams, Drew Holland and Dave Meenach are all part of the One Holland team working on the project. Bayer Becker is the civil engineer for the Downs at Nicholson. Covington-based AGI is the architect for the development. Holland has number of banks interested in financing the development. Holland has the land under contract and is scheduled to close on March 5. If all goes as planned with planning and zoning, Holland expects to break ground this summer and be wrapped up by the summer or fall of 2023.



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Sweet 16: March 11-12

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Final Four: March 18-19

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Winner announced Sunday, March 28, 2021.

Cincinnati brewery releases beer in honor of business partner who died of Covid-19



Fretboard Brewing is releasing "Bright Side of Life," an IPA in honor of a former business partner who died of Covid-19. Jeremy Bowman, right, died in late 2020 from Covid-19. PROVIDED BY FRETBOARD BREWING
By Andy Brownfield – Staff Reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier

A Cincinnati craft brewery is releasing a special beer in honor of a friend and former business partner of the brewery who died following complications experienced due to Covid-19. Fretboard Brewing, based at 5800 Creek Road in Blue Ash, is releasing "Bright Side of Life" in honor of Jeremy Bowman, who died in December 2020.

Bowman was an early business partner of the brewery. Longtime friends of its founders, he was unable to contribute to or invest in the startup brewery – law prohibits retailers of alcohol like bars from owning manufacturers like breweries, and Bowman was a part owner of Jefferson Social at the Banks – Bowman teamed up with O'Bryon's Bar & Grill owner Jason Esterkamp to open Smoked Out Cincy, a small barbecue kitchen inside of the brewery's taproom in 2017.

Bowman's relationship with the brewers started much earlier though. As a bartender at Jefferson Hall in Over-the-Rhine, he built up a friendship with Fretboard co-founders Jim Klosterman and Joe Sierra, who played in a local band, often at the bar.

The Jefferson Hall establishment made several moves to Newport and then the Banks, where it is now known as Jefferson Social. Through that, Bowman maintained his friendship with Klosterman and Sierra and had kicked around the idea of a lower alcohol IPA to serve at the bar.

Brad Plank, the third co-founder of Fretboard Brewing, made that a reality through a home-brewed test batch for friends and family. But before that could evolve, Sierra's brother, Cincinnati Police Sgt. Eric Sierra, died from a brain aneurysm.

Bowman petitioned craft brewery Rhinegeist to work on a collaboration beer to aid the family of Eric Sierra. That beer became Fretboard's original session IPA, S23, named for the police sergeant's badge number. It was also the catalyst that prompted Joe Sierra, Klosterman and Plank to open their own brewery.

Bright Side of Life will be released at O'Bryon's Bar & Grill on March 12 with a special tapping at Fretboard's Blue Ash taproom on March 13. It will also be available in six packs. A portion of all sales will benefit the Jeremy Bowman Fund, aiding his widow Kelsie Bowman.

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