

# Cincinnati Beverage Co., the brewery that owns Christian Moerlein, Little Kings, has been acquired



Cincinnati Beverage Co. refreshed the branding of Christian Moerlein beer. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JAY WOFFINGTON  
By [Andy Brownfield](#) – Senior staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier May 6, 2022

The owner of iconic Cincinnati beer brands Christian Moerlein, Hudepohl and Little Kings has been acquired. The Cincinnati Beverage Co., the company created to shepherd the beer brands of the Christian Moerlein Brewing Co. when it was acquired at the beginning of 2020, has been acquired by another local firm. A spokesperson for the new owner confirmed the acquisition in a statement, saying that a company "affiliated with the food and beverage industry" acquired the Cincinnati Beverage Co. in April:

This is an exciting next step as we expand our portfolio. This opportunity solidifies our commitment and interest in the modern craft brewery market. We are excited to revitalize historic beer brands crafted in Cincinnati. Cincinnati Beverage Company owns Moerlein, Little Kings, Hudepohl and many other current and historical brands. There are meaningful relationships maintained by Cincinnati Beverage Co. and we are committed to growing those relationships. We're delighted about the opportunities. No other comment was offered by the company's new ownership. Jay Woffington, the former CEO of the Cincinnati Beverage Co., confirmed the sale but declined to comment further.

The Christian Moerlein Brewing Co. was the oldest locally owned craft brewing company in Cincinnati, coming onto the scene in 2004 when Greg Hardman purchased the assets of the historic Cincinnati Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Co. in 2004, reviving the Christian Moerlein brand and ushering in the city's craft beer boom. Christian Moerlein the brewery dates back to 1853, when Christian Moerlein the person established his brewery in Over-the-Rhine, where it grew to global prominence, becoming the first American beer to pass the Reinheitsgebot, the German Beer Purity Law of 1516. The brand was relaunched by the Hudepohl Brewery in 1981 as one of the region's first "better beer" brands.

The Cincinnati Beverage Co. was formed by Woffington – the former global president of digital marketing agency Possible (now Grey Group) that he helped grow from 30 employees in Cincinnati and \$5 million in revenue to 1,200 employees worldwide and \$100 million in revenue before its sale to U.K.-based WPP – his wife, Jodi Woffington, and Possible's former global chief operating officer Michael Graham.

Leaning on the trio's background in the branding industry, they made a push behind Little Kings brand to produce new varieties and refresh the branding to appeal to a wider audience. Sales of Little Kings increased 75% in the first year that the Cincinnati Beverage Co. owned the brand.

The new owners also refreshed the core Christian Moerlein branding, unifying the disparate design schemes and artwork from its original cans and bottles under a blacksmith theme pulling from Moerlein the man's own past as a blacksmith, in addition to being a brewer.

The Cincinnati Beverage Co. took over though just as the Covid-19 pandemic began its spread across the United States in March 2020, and toward the end of the year the owners made the decision to shutter the brewery's production facilities and contract with another local brewer to produce the beer.

**From: The Charley Gnome- May 7, 2022**

Sugarcreek began in Washington Courthouse back in 1966 as a bacon producer. The company since then has done nothing but grow, with facilities all around the country, including a bunch of them right here in town. They've taken the small family-owned company and grown it into a billion-dollar juggernaut in the food industry. They work with a bunch of big names to provide custom branded food items... showcasing those brands vs highlighting their own.

They know how to helm something like these brands, and as their first foray into the craft beer market... I'm really, really excited to see how they do it.

# Third Eye Expanding with a Hamilton Taproom



Image: Cincinnati Business Courier

Chloe Schaefer, co-head brewer at Third Eye Brewing DAVID KALONICK FOR ACBJ By Andy Brownfield – Cincinnati Business Courier May 6, 2022

A Greater Cincinnati craft brewery has plans for a second location that would more than double its capacity to brew beer. Third Eye Brewing Co., which opened its doors in Sharonville in June 2020, is expanding with a new brewery facility including a taproom and restaurant in the former Pepsi bottling plant at 850 Erie Blvd. in Hamilton, expected to open in early 2023.

Third Eye Brewing owner Tom Schaefer, who opened the brewery with his daughter Chloe Schaefer as one of his brewers, told me the Sharonville location had hit its capacity of 2,000 barrels of beer annually and needed more room to grow. "We're trying to reach a bigger audience with our products," Tom Schaefer said. "I did the beer fest in Columbus, and I was surprised at how many people kept asking for our beer. We want to try to fill that gap if we can."

Third Eye is occupying 12,000 square feet of the former bottling plant, and about 6,500 to 7,000 square feet of that will serve as a taproom. An additional 6,500 square feet in the cellar will be used to expand the brewery's barrel-aging program and also offer a speakeasy-style experience.

The taproom itself and its adjoining kitchen will feel much like the Sharonville original but will have some industrial touches due to the building's past as a bottling plant. It will also cultivate more of a family friendly atmosphere due to the proximity to the Spooky Nook indoor sports complex. Schaefer said the food offering will also be similar to the Sharonville location – which serves a menu of upscale pub food with a global flair, like beer short rib poutine and elote waffle fries – but with more dishes that will appeal to families and the family pocketbook, like pizza and subs.

The Hamilton location will be able to accommodate between 400 and 500 guests, and the added capacity will immediately double its output to 4,000 barrels per year, with a total potential capacity of 10,000 barrels. Schaefer said there's an additional 10,000 square feet of space Third Eye could move into if it needed the additional room, which would allow it to increase capacity to 30,000 barrels annually.

Schaefer said with the brewery's current output, about half of the barrels of beer it brews produce about 75-80 cases of 16 oz. cans, and those cases have been sold before the beer even hits the cans. Those cans go out to smaller retailers, beer caves and bottle shops around Cincinnati and up to Columbus. "A lot of our customers will get one case, but they could do with more if we had the capacity," he said.

Schaefer's ultimate goal is to be able to produce enough beer to service larger retailers like Kroger. The brewery space is being designed by architects SMP design, and Schaefer is still in the process of bidding out contractors. The overall project cost is about \$3 million, which Schaefer said he intends to self-finance as much as possible. Third Eye Brewing is located at 11276 Chester Road, Sharonville. Find more information at [thirdeyebrewingco.com](http://thirdeyebrewingco.com).

# Samuel Adams 25 Years of Brewing in Cincinnati



## This Friday – You're Gonna Wanna Hang Out at Sam Adams!

The Gnarly Gnome May 11, 2022

Sam Adams took a while to really embrace the Cincinnati side of their personality, but when they opened their taproom in OTR back in the winter of 2018 they embraced it wholeheartedly. There is a long history between the Queen City and The Boston Beer Company and now that they are open, and pouring beer they definitely feel like they've always been a part of this community. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Sam Adams brewing here in Cincinnati, and what better day to celebrate that, than **513 day**?

### Celebrating 513 Day

**513 Day** has become an insanely fun way to celebrate what it means to be part of Cincinnati. All over town, there are special events and folks just waving the flag of being a Cincinnati. It's not a surprise that the brewery that gave us a beer called '513' – designed to celebrate Jim Koch's roots as a Cincinnati as well as to salute the folks that work at the brewery in the city – is going to go all out in celebrating a holiday that bears the proud '513'.

They're inviting the city to come out and celebrate with them... and not only will *founder Jim Koch be present*, but they're also going to have several other things happening that I think you're gonna wanna know about.

### The Beer Release

Sam Adams teamed up with Everything Cincy to rock out a collaboration beer that they're calling **Queen City Crown**. It's an ale that they brewed with honey and aged on peaches. This sounds like a perfect summer beer if I've ever heard of one!

The beer will be on tap, as well as available to take home in cans (stay tuned this week, I'm gonna try some and let you know what I think about it).

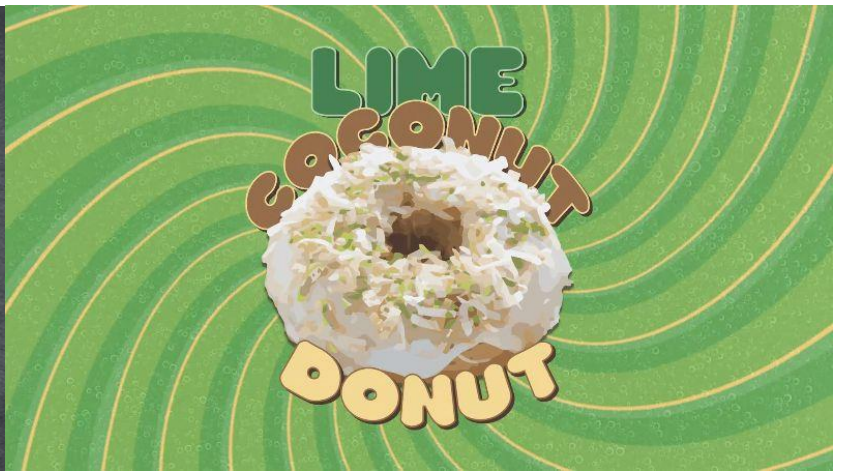
### The Event

The first 100 folks at the event will snag a swag bag full of great Cincinnati... stuff. But that's not the only reason to find yourself walking in the door that night. You'll be able to try the new beer, of course – but there's also going to be a bunch of local Cincinnati staple foods available to try, too.

Still not convinced. How about some live music? No... not enough? Let's talk about the raffles then! Throughout the night, the brewery will be raffling off some great stuff, too!

At 5, 7, and 8 o'clock that night there will be different giveaways – including an insane grand prize that I really, really, really wanna get my hands on. They're calling it a Willie Wonka-style private tour of the brewery with Jim Koch himself. (Make sure you either wear or have with you long pants and closed-toed shoes in case you win). This has never been done before, and to say that it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity is a massive understatement.

Be there, be there... be there. Although... the more I think of it, the less people, the better my odds of winning!



## Holtman's Lime Coconut Donut Beer

**Saturday, May 14th**

Join us in the Grainworks taproom for a **special event** celebrating the re-release of our Lime Coconut Donut beer, perfectly paired with Holtman's Donuts' special Lime Coconut donut!

You'll be able to purchase the new beer and donut as a pairing, or individually. The Lime Coconut donut will be \$2 with no other purchase or free with the purchase of a Lime Coconut Donut Gose pint or 4-pack to go. First come, first serve... while supplies last.

Come have a donut and raise a glass of this delicious brew to the perfect pairing: Grainworks Brewing & Holtman's Donuts!

## My Blue Heaven Blueberry Ale

The malty backbone of an English-style Pub Ale and just enough real blueberries to be refreshing, but with no added sweetness.

**A beer with fruit, not fruit beer!**



## Poundsign Nofilter Juicy IPA

Citra, Mosaic, and Azacca hops create pineapple, mango, citrus, and tropical fruit flavors and aromas. This light, delicious India Pale Ale has no bite, and a smooth, juicy finish.

**Easy to drink & delicious!**



# MadTree, 3 other Cincinnati area breweries win at World Beer Cup



By [Bill Cieslewicz](#) – Managing editor, Cincinnati Business Courier May 6, 2022,

Four Greater Cincinnati breweries took home awards from the prestigious 2022 World Beer Cup competition, presented by the Brewers Association. A total of 15 awards were given to Ohio breweries at the event, referred to as “The Olympics of Beer Competitions,” held May 5 in Minneapolis.

MadTree Brewing Co. in Oakley was the only local brewery to claim two awards: a gold medal for Ziegler in the American-Style Amber Lager category and a silver medal for Legendary Lager in Contemporary American-Style Lager.

Other local winners:

- **Big Ash Brewing**, Anderson Township, silver medal for Porter’s Porter (International Dark Lager)
  - **Fretboard Brewing Co.**, Blue Ash, silver medal for Crazy Train (French-Style Ale)
  - **Narrow Path Brewing Co.**, Loveland, bronze medal for Restless Seas (German-Style Sour Ale)
- Columbus Brewing Co. in Columbus also walked away with two medals: a gold medal for Crocodile Tongue (Mixed Culture Brett Beer) and a bronze medal for Lager (Contemporary American-style Lager).

Other Ohio breweries that received awards:

- Wolf’s Ridge Brewing, Columbus, silver medal for Daybreak (Coffee Beer)
- Gemüt Biergarten, Columbus, bronze medal for Woden’s Hunt Dunkel (European Dark Lager)
- Hoppin’ Frog Brewing, Akron, silver medal for Frogichlaus Swiss-Style Celebration Lager (German-Style Doppelbock or Eisbock)
- Sibling Revelry Brewing, Westlake, bronze medal for Red (Extra Special Bitter)
- Fat Head’s Brewery, Middleburg Heights, gold medal for Goggle Fogger (South German-Style Hefeweizen)
- Immigrant Son Brewery, Lakewood, silver medal for Common Ale (English Mild or Bitter)
- HiHO Brewing Co., Cuyahoga Falls, silver medal for Touchdown Brown Ale (American-Style Brown Ale)
- Inside The Five Brewing Co., Sylvania, bronze medal for Megaphone (Irish-Style Red Ale)

The nonprofit, Boulder, Colo.-based [Brewers Association](#) promotes small and independent craft brewers across the U.S. Returning after cancellation in 2020 due to the pandemic, the 2022 World Beer Cup was the largest competition to date, with 10,542 entries from 2,493 breweries representing 57 countries.

Historically a biennial event, the World Beer Cup competition will move to an annual event beginning in 2023. Brewery registration for the 2023 World Beer Cup will open in October, with the awards presented May 10, 2023, at the Craft Brewers Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

Countries with the most awards:

- United States: 252
- Canada: 14
- Germany: 11

Country with the highest winning rate: Ireland (16.7%)

To see the full list of 2022 award winners, visit <https://www.brewersassociation.org/>

# Verge Brewing secures location on Cincinnati's West Side



An early, directional rendering of Verge Brewing's new location may look like. VERGE BREWING

By Zachary Jarrell – Reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier May 12, 2022

A family-owned craft brewery has secured a location in Delhi Township on the West Side, weeks after announcing they were targeting the area they view as underserved. Verge Brewing Co. announced last week the acquisition of a 3,000-square-foot facility located at 4807 Delhi Pike, less than two miles from Mount St. Joseph University. The brewery said it would renovate the location to house its brewery, taproom, and kitchen. Verge Brewing plans to open its taproom by the end of 2022.

The property is currently home to flooring store Floors by Valvano, but the business is moving next door for an expanded show room, Verge said. The brewery will operate in the building through a lease agreement with Floors by Valvano, according to Pete Bender, who runs operations and finance at Verge. “We wanted to be around a lot of buildings, where folks will be able to find us,” Bender told me. As for the renovation, Bender said Verge expects to turn the showroom into a “warm and inviting place” where people can “enjoy time and a beer with friends” – a “third place,” in addition to home and work, as he put it.

Verge’s core group, made up of two father-daughter combos – Bender and Angela Praksti, and Greg Schmidt and Madison Schmidt – has spent most of the last four years brewing beer and winning medals. According to the brewery, the team has won more than 80 competitive homebrewing awards over the years. The company had its eyes set on the West Side, specifically targeting Price Hill, Delhi, and Green townships. Praksti said those communities are “thirsty for a brewery of their own.”

Verge ran a fundraising campaign with local platform Wunderfund, a crowdfunding service that allows individuals to invest in a business for equity – differing from popular donation-based platforms like Kickstarter and GoFundMe. As the *Business Courier* previously reported, the brewery had a budget of \$1.2 million, with a \$105,000 crowdfunding campaign to give the community a chance to buy into the brewery. Verge is “proudly family-owned,” with 50% women and 30% Native American leadership. The team is largely made up of longtime beer judges with certification through the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP).