

# 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).

# Cincinnati toasts Sam Adams' 25 years, \$85 million expansion



By [Zachary Jarrell](#) – Reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier May 14, 2022

Boston Beer Co. celebrated 25 years in Cincinnati and a recently completed expansion project as [Mayor Aftab Pureval](#) declared Friday, May 13, 2022, "Sam Adams Day." Pureval made the proclamation on "513 Day," which celebrates all things Cincinnati. Reading his declaration aloud, Pureval recognized the company's [\\$85 million investment](#) into expanding its brewery at 1625 Central Parkway – saying the [Sam Adams](#) brand put Cincinnati "on the map as one of the top cities in the country for craft brew production." To mark the day, Boston Beer (NYSE: SAM) launched an exclusive brew, Queen City Crown, at its taproom.

The expansion, which dates to 2020, saw the installation of two new canning lines and packing equipment that allowed the company to quadruple its local production. When the project was announced, the brewery planned to add 107 jobs to its existing 130. In total, the company has invested more than \$200 million in the site, which now employs more than 250 people, according to a release.

Koch told me when the brewery made the decision to expand its Cincinnati location, the company was facing a difficult decision – move away or make "probably the biggest single investment in a brewery in the state of Ohio in this century." It was a "major decision," Koch said, but one he made because of his love for the city.

"It's my hometown and I really didn't want to be the one to shut down the brewery where my father had worked," he said. Koch grew up in Mount Lookout. His father, Charles Koch, was a brewmaster at the Schoenling Brewing Co. "The people that work here are great brewers," he said. "They come to work every day to make a great product. They take pride in their work. They're just old school." Koch added that the commitment to Cincinnati also saved and created more than 200 jobs with an average "W-2 compensation" of \$75,000 a year. "These are good-paying, blue collar jobs for skilled, hard-working people," he said.

Part of the Boston Beer's Cincinnati operation runs out of the Schoenling Brewery, which was founded in 1933, the same year Prohibition ended. The 18-plus month renovation also updated the interior, added new worker and visitor parking, and a new route for trucks. The West End brewery, which once only pushed out bottles, now also produces Truly Hard Seltzer, Twisted Tea and Angry Orchard, in addition to the popular [Sam Adams](#) craft beer. Koch said the renovations took "a lot of ingenuity and creativity."

"Nobody builds breweries in the middle of a city today," Koch said. "We were able to figure out a way to not only keep this brewery going but make it a world-class brewery in terms of quality and efficiencies."

# Ohio Reaches 400 Brewery Milestone



When [Guernsey Brewhouse](#) in Cambridge received its brewery permit on May 10, 2022, it became the 400th licensed craft brewery in the state of Ohio. Located in rural southeast Ohio and slated to open to the public in mid-July, the brewery is emblematic of the recent growth of craft beer: there is now at least one brewery in 72 of Ohio's 88 counties, and nearly 40% of the state's 400 breweries have opened in the past three years. The overwhelming majority of those breweries sell their beer primarily in their own on-premise taprooms, serving as cultural hubs and gathering spaces for their communities.

The taproom brewery business model relies on personal interaction and congregation, two things that have been a challenge since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, despite adverse public health and economic conditions, Ohio has averaged 48 new brewery openings per

year since 2020, against just 11 average annual closings over the same span. While the number of yearly new openings has decreased slightly from pre-pandemic levels, there are still more than 70 known breweries-in-planning that will soon be making beer in Ohio. Let's take a few moments to reflect on this impressive milestone: as Ohio passes the 400-brewery threshold, what is the state of Ohio's craft brewing industry and what does the future hold?

**Ohio still \*loves\* craft beer.** Ohioans of legal drinking age consume about 4.6 gallons of craft beer per person every year, which ranks our state #13 in the country. Despite an above average consumption rate, Ohio ranks just 24th in breweries per capita, suggesting that there's still room for growth in the market, especially for breweries that sell mostly by the pint in their own taprooms. With the proliferation of breweries in smaller communities, it's not impossible to envision a future scenario where every resident of Ohio lives within 30 minutes of a brewery.

It certainly doesn't hurt Ohioans collective thirst for craft beer that our state's reputation for producing world-class beer is growing. Ohio breweries set a new state record this month at the [World Beer Cup](#) competition: against 10,542 entries from 2,493 breweries from 57 countries, Ohio brewers brought home a total of 15 awards in "The Olympics of Beer Competitions." Couple that with the 36 medals earned by Ohio breweries at the past three [Great American Beer Festival](#) competitions, and it all adds up to a state that knows how to make great beer.

With so much fantastic beer available, it's no wonder that Ohio's beer tourism industry is rebounding after the pandemic-induced slowdown. Visitors' bureaus and breweries in Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Dayton, and Toledo all offer brewery passport programs, encouraging people to visit all the participating craft breweries in their regions. Smaller passports are commonly available at the county level in other destinations outside the big cities. The Ohio Craft Brewers Association also offers a free statewide brewery passport app – [Ohio On Tap](#) – that counts more than 60,000 users drinking craft beer and earning rewards while visiting the nearly 300 association member brewery taprooms.

**Confronting challenges through collaboration and cooperation.** Industry production and sales numbers took a pretty sharp hit after the onset of the pandemic: limits on public gathering caused massive declines in on-premise craft beer consumption at brewery taprooms, bars, restaurants. Competition among independent breweries was already tough pre-Covid, and the sudden shift from on-premise draft sales to can and bottle packaging caused a ripple effect in beer's supply chain. Rather than adopting a Darwinian "survival of the fittest" mentality to competition, craft brewers leaned on their cooperative and collaborative roots to help each other weather the storm. When



taprooms closed, larger breweries offered to package beer for smaller breweries, so they'd still be able to offer carryout sales. When the demand for aluminum cans skyrocketed, breweries sold their unused, discontinued cans to competing breweries who could relabel them for their own beer. When prices of raw materials increased, breweries banded together to increase their purchasing power and get better rates.

Brewers continued to collaborate with each other throughout the pandemic as well, experimenting with new ingredients and processes, developing new products, and sharing best practices on everything from technical brewing to creating authentic experiences for customers. Some of those collaborations even benefited others that were affected by the pandemic, from charities whose fundraising avenues were closed by Covid to industry workers whose jobs were lost during the shutdown.

**A mature industry looks forward.** Data from the past five years shows a growth curve indicative of an industry that has reached maturity. The explosive growth of the mid-to-late 2010s is unlikely to repeat, so craft beer's future is dependent on three major variables: innovation, regulation, and community involvement.

For decades, craft beer has been marketed as an alternative to the mass-produced macro lagers that had come to define American beer post-Prohibition. By embracing classic, full-flavored styles from around the world, craft breweries could offer a wide range of options to the beer drinker. As the American beer drinker's palate broadened, craft brewers looked to new malts and hops, new production techniques and out-of-the-box adjunct ingredients to create new flavors that would meet public demand. However, today's craft brewer isn't just competing with Big Beer and with fellow craft brewers: the recent growth of hard seltzers, flavored malt beverages and ready-to-drink cocktails – often produced by large alcoholic beverage conglomerates with seemingly limitless resources – are a direct challenge to craft beer's innovation-driven market share.

Craft breweries as a whole produce more jobs and economic impact per barrel of product than their larger competitors. In 2020, even with the effects of the pandemic, Ohio craft breweries were responsible for more than \$880 million dollars in economic activity in the state, as well as nearly 8,300 local jobs. While a single macrobrewery can produce 10-15 times the combined barrelage of all 400 of the state's breweries in a single year, they employ a small fraction of Ohioans compared to those working at our independent breweries. That profound and outsized impact on our communities must be protected, which is why the Ohio Craft Brewers Association works tirelessly to preserve a legal and regulatory environment that will encourage further craft beer growth. Ensuring fair access to market and healthy competition, free from restrictive, antiquated regulation, is ultimately good not only for breweries but for their local communities and craft beer drinkers at-large.

Building and sustaining connections to local communities is imperative in order for craft beer to continue to grow. These connections take many forms, including community leadership and charitable giving. In 2020, despite revenue losses caused by the pandemic, craft breweries donated close to \$2 million and more than 8,000 volunteer hours to local non-profits. Craft breweries have also worked to reach out to segments of their communities that have historically been underrepresented in the industry. By diversifying their workforces and building cultures of inclusion that apply to employees and customers alike, craft breweries reinforce the community-centered nature of their missions and strengthen their local roots.

The landscape of craft brewing in Ohio has changed quite a bit since we hit the 300-brewery milestone just three years ago. The pandemic brought some unforeseen challenges, but the qualities that got breweries through the lowest points of the past two years – determination, resilience, cooperation, unity – will be what fuels the growth that we hope to see ahead. Cheers to all of our 400 Ohio breweries, the businesses that supply and support them, the advocates and champions for the brewing industry, and the craft beer drinkers whose unwavering support of their local breweries have carried us to this momentous milestone.

## One Holland Corp., one of Cincinnati's largest restaurant groups, opening Barleycorn's Brewhouse



A rendering of Barleycorn's Brewhouse. By [Andy Brownfield](#) – Cincinnati Business Courier May 19, 2022

One of Cincinnati's largest restaurant groups is getting into the craft brewing business with a pair of upcoming Northern Kentucky breweries. One Holland Corp., the owner of several LaRosa's and Skyline franchises, as well as iconic Northern Kentucky eateries Greyhound Tavern and Barleycorn's, is planning two craft breweries in Northern Kentucky: Barleycorn's Brewhouse in a former Wilder firehouse and 1842 Brewery in a \$22 million development planned for Independence. The latter brewery is named for the year Independence was founded. Barleycorn's Brewhouse is opening first chronologically at **402 Licking Pike in Wilder** in mid-July. But while it will open first, its origins are predated by the 1842 Brewery going into One Holland's Downs of Nicholson development planned for 40 acres in Independence. That though is slated to welcome guests in the fall of 2023.

Gary Holland is the owner of One Holland, the majority partner in both Barleycorn's Brewhouse and 1842 Brewery. He's opening both along with a group of business partners who were all friends dating back to their days at Simon Kenton High School in Independence. Holland said the group was and is so tight knit that they became known as the "Simon Kenton Mafia." "We were sitting around and said, '(1842 Brewery) isn't happening fast enough. Let's do a smaller one and get our feet wet,'" Holland said. The group behind the two breweries includes Holland, Matt Perry, Shawn Cunningham, Craig Sanders, Dave Meenach, Scott Harney, Brent Coppage, Jay Shelton and Shane Trego who will serve as head brewer.

One Holland acquired Barleycorn's, a restaurant that traces its roots to 1974, in December of last year. Holland said that one of the restaurant's founders, Ken Heil, had told him he should attach a brewery to the brand. It was an idea he decided to revisit with the Simon Kenton Mafia when they wanted to open a smaller brewery before 1842.

Barleycorn's Brewhouse will serve as a test kitchen for the Barleycorn's restaurants, with three locations in Northern Kentucky. The chefs from Greyhound Tavern will use the kitchen to create and test new items, the most popular of which could end up on the menu at Barleycorn's other locations. The menu will be more limited, due to the smaller kitchen space, but will include favorites like Doc-style wings.

Barleycorn's Brewhouse was designed by architects the Drawing Dept. along with Christina Lubbers, senior interior designer for One Holland Corp. The buildout is being done by Furlong Building Enterprises. Holland said it is a \$2.3 million project. Lubbers told me the brewery will retain some of the industrial midcentury modern aesthetic of the former firehouse it is calling home with exposed brick, concrete and piping. It has a total occupancy of 212 with seating for about 50 inside and another 60 on the patio. The patio will be covered by a state-of-the-art retractable awning with sensors that can detect when it is raining and cover the patio. Trego, who is serving as brewer, said Barleycorn's Brewhouse will have a 5-barrel brewhouse with 30-barrel fermentation capacity. Trego said the brewery will produce about 300 barrels of beer in 2022, boosting that up to 700 barrels annually starting in 2023.

The brewery, Trego said, will produce classic styles like traditional ales, pilsners, lagers and porters. But as 1842 Brewery ramps up – the details are being finalized, but Trego is eyeing a 15-barrel system with the capacity to brew around 10,000 barrels a year – Barleycorn's Brewhouse will transition into more experimental, small batch brewery, serving as a test brewery much like the kitchen will test new menu items for Barleycorn's.

The 1842 Brewery is being constructed next to and in conjunction with a restaurant called Limestone, which Holland described as a sister concept to the Greyhound Tavern. Both establishments will be about 7,000 square feet apiece, with a breezeway connecting the two. The brewery will have a 4,000-square-foot taproom and 3,000 square feet for the brewing operations.

Holland said the near-term goal is for the breweries to be able to produce enough beer to serve his group's restaurants. One Holland, from its headquarters in Taylor Mill, has in its stable 12 Skyline Chili locations, 11 First Watch restaurants, seven LaRosa's pizzerias and two Dunkin' Donuts. In 2020 it branched into independent restaurants, acquiring the Greyhound Tavern in November and then Barleycorn's in 2021.

From there, the breweries will have the ability to self-distribute around Kentucky. Holland said that he's most proud of being able to go into business with the same group that has stuck together since their days at Simon Kenton High School. "The core group, we all grew up together in Independence, the property was purchased by an entity called the Sons of Independence," he said. "All of us grew up going to Barleycorn's so it was really cool being able to do our test brewery tied to that."

## **Pour House, a 42-tap, self-pour bar-restaurant, opens in Hamilton**



The Pour House is the final tenant at the Marcum in downtown Hamilton, a building that features restaurants, bars, and apartments adjacent to the RiversEdge Amphitheater.

[the Journal News reports](#). BOB FARLEY May 17, 2022

A 42-tap, self-pour digital taproom in Greater Cincinnati celebrated its official opening last week,

The Pour House, a bar-restaurant in downtown Hamilton, is the final tenant at the Marcum, a building that features restaurants, bars and apartments adjacent to the RiversEdge Amphitheater and across from the Courtyard by Marriott.

Owners Toni Salem and her husband, Rafael, signed the lease at the Marcum in November.

The 42 taps serve domestic, craft, and import beers as well as seltzers and wine. They have a kitchen that will serve four types of pizzas as well as appetizers,

The couple considering a second location in Butler County, ideally in a community with a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area district.

The idea of a self-pour digital taproom isn't new as the Salems and their friends were in Tampa Bay, Fla., last spring and experienced a self-serve taproom.

Here's how it works: A customer purchases a Pour House card, picks up a fresh glass and places their card into the reader. Then the customer can pour as little or as much as they want, and the card will be charged accordingly.

Pour House is located at 138 Riverfront Plaza. Hours: 2-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, noon-midnight Friday-Saturday, noon-8 p.m. Sunday.





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**Introducing MOTTO: STRENGTH THROUGH SUPPORT Bourbon Barrel-aged Coffee Imperial Stout** (10.6% ABV, 50 IBU). Much like its namesake, this stout is something at the next level – made robust and bright through medium-roast Brazilian beans courtesy of Seven Hills Coffee Roasters ... a fresh-bag-of-coffee aromatic that perfectly complements the quintessential bourbon notes of caramel and vanilla.

Together, these flavors enhance the fullness of the beer, keeping it sweet, nutty and drinkably smooth. The label sees the classic Wright Flyer shadowed on a Wright-Patt hangar.

This specialty bottle release goes on sale this [Sunday, May 22, at 11:00 a.m.](#) – note that only a very limited quantity are available to purchase in the brewpub for \$16.99, first come, first served.

If history serves to repeat itself, and in the true spirit of flight, these bottles will sell out fast.







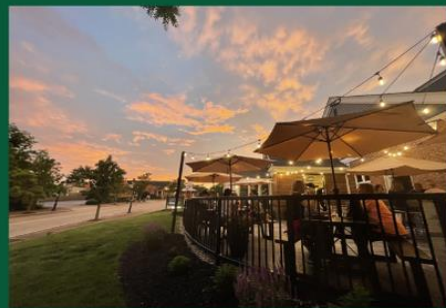
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