

Fretboard Brewing to open taproom in \$100 million Factory 52 development



Fretboard Brewing signed a lease for 3,300 square feet of space in PLK Communities' Factory 52. PLK COMMUNITIES/MSA DESIGN

[Tom Demeropolis](#) – Managing editor, Cincinnati Business Courier Aug 15, 2022

A Greater Cincinnati brewery plans to open its third location in a more than \$100 million development. Fretboard Brewing has signed a lease to open a taproom in Factory 52, PLK Communities' 20-acre redevelopment of the former U.S. Playing Card factory in Norwood. The Blue Ash-based brewery will open a 3,300-square-foot taproom with a large patio that brings its total space to about 6,000 square feet.

Nick Lingenfelter, chief development officer with PLK, said Fretboard is the “perfect” addition for Factory 52. “Last year, [a nationally recognized brewery signed on](#) at one end of the Factory 52 neighborhood and now, Fretboard caps the other end,” Lingenfelter said in a news release. Lingenfelter, who’s favorite Fretboard beers are Trey and Reba, said the developer has been working to get them in Factory 52 since PLK started demolition in early 2020.

Factory 52 is a more than \$100 million redevelopment of the former U.S. Playing Card Co. factory at 4590 Beech St. The development will include apartments, breweries, boutiques, a public market, a bark park, outdoor social areas, eateries, and creative office spaces. It also incorporates pieces of the former factory, including the iconic 100-year-old clock tower.

Fretboard Brewing was founded in 2017 in Blue Ash by friends, Joe Sierra, Bradley Plank and Jim Klosterman. All three are musicians and created a venue for locally brewed beer and live music. Kevin Moreland, a Norwood native and brewing expert, was originally hired as a consultant and is now also a managing partner. Klosterman said the group has been interested in growing throughout the region. He said the group is “thrilled” to open a taproom with a full bar that focuses on showcasing Fretboard’s craft brews and live acoustic music “next to some of Cincy’s best culinary experts all under one roof.”

In addition to its original location Blue Ash, Fretboard Brewing is part of Fretboard Brewing & Public House in the heart of Hamilton. Fretboard is scheduled to open in Factory 52 in spring 2023. The brewery joins Hi-Wire Brewing, [which is opening a brewery and taproom](#); Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams, which [is opening its first Greater Cincinnati location](#); and Rinse Cycle, the [first expansion for a Dayton-based cycle club](#).

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Tours run rain or shine, so please dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable footwear, as the tour route covers a variety of paved and unpaved surfaces. All guests will be provided with a flashlight for exploration of darkened streets and the underground cellar portion of the tour. This is an outdoor walking tour of less than one mile, beginning from the Brewing Heritage Trail Tour Center at 1939 Race St. in Cincinnati, concluding at the same location. Beer is not included with this tour. Go to: <https://brewingheritagetrail.org> and book your tour today!

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Thanks to our Presenting Sponsor, *The Party Source*, Early Admission tickets are now available in-store for **ONLY \$40 flat**—with **NO ticketing fees**!

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- Access to The Pitch View Club on the home side, with additional beers and photo op with stadium backdrop
- Access to the walk on the outer walkway of the Pitch itself, in front of The Bailey

The poster features a background of golden beer with a blue-tinted image of a stadium crowd. On the left, a circular logo for 'CINCY BEERFEST' shows a hand holding a beer. To the right, the text '@ TQL STADIUM' is displayed, with 'TQL' in a large, bold font and 'STADIUM' below it. At the bottom, the date 'SAT. AUGUST 20, 2022' is written in large, bold letters, followed by the session times: 'SESSION 1: 12:30-4:30PM' and 'SESSION 2: 6:00-10:00PM'.

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Commonly served during Oktoberfest celebrations in Germany, this Festbier Style is light in color, malty, and crushable at 5.8% ABV compared to its Märzen sibling.

Perfect for any festival. Prost!

Available in the Taproom and in 6 packs starting Friday, August 19th!

March First Brewing opening tasting room, restaurant on Fountain Square



March First Brewing is opening a location on Fountain Square. CORRIE SCHAFFELD
By [Andy Brownfield](#) – Senior staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Aug 17, 2022

A local craft brewery is opening a tasting room and restaurant in one of the most prominent spaces in downtown Cincinnati. March First Brewing and Distilling is taking over 10,000 square feet of the former Rock Bottom Brewing space on Fountain Square, with the goal of opening by spring 2023. Rock Bottom, which originally opened at Fountain Square in 1996, permanently closed in 2020.

The brewery and distillery signed a lease for the space with Fifth Third Bancorp, the building's owner. Thomas Neltner, the bank's head of enterprise workplace services who oversees all its facilities, told me the old Rock Bottom space sat vacant for the past two years because Fifth Third wanted to be very selective about what would go into that spot.

"We had some issues over the years, we didn't want the night club thing going on," he said. "We wanted a more family-friendly concept, one that could utilize the outdoor area." Josh Engel, spokesman for March First, declined to comment for this story.

Neltner said the bank is redoing the kitchen and the facade of the building, with doors that slide open to create an indoor-outdoor feel in the warmer months, and a walk-up window to serve food onto the Square. He said the back of the building, on the Sixth Street side, is being converted into a tasting room.

Fifth Third has been taking a close look at the tenant mix on Fountain Square and is aiming at making sure that there are options for all visitors, downtown workers and the bank's own employees. Neltner said as companies are returning their workers to the office, restaurant tenants like Bru Burger Bar, Green District and Potbelly have had some of their best sales months since the pandemic.

He said the bank is trying to keep downtown Cincinnati vibrant and work with groups like Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC) – developer of the Foundry across the street, home of restaurants like Royce and the upcoming Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse – to activate the Square and keep it alive.

"We really do believe in the city, we want people to come back," he said. "We've had some great success with our employee base coming back. And then with the Foundry across the street, it's putting a lot of people on the Square."



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Chow down on food specials including:

Crawfish Hand pie with Louisiana crawfish tails, green onions, flakey crust, and remoulade.

Shrimp Po'boy with crusty bread, fried shrimp, shredded lettuce, tomato, and mayo.

Specialty cocktails being served up include Merchant's Sazerac, Pimms Cup, and Ramos Gin Fizz.

Jack Mansfield and Friends will be playing during the day and Ivy Square takes the stage at 8pm in the Gardens