

## Brink Brewing acquires adjacent College Hill building in a move to boost in-house barrel production



HUGHES By [Christian LeDuc](#) – Staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier May 6, 2024 PHOTO BY CHRIS

A small Cincinnati craft brewery is close to completing an expansion project in College Hill. Brink Brewing opened in College Hill in 2017. It's now expanding in the neighborhood. Brink Brewing Co. is on track to finish work on its new production space, the installation of its own canning line and barrel-aging room – along with an expanded patio for guests – this summer. The brewery, which is located at 5905 Hamilton Ave., currently occupies 3,200 square feet. With the recent purchase of an adjacent building at 5909 Hamilton Ave., it's adding 2,400 square feet of space. The brewery started working with the College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CHCUTC) in 2019 when talks of an expansion started getting serious.

According to Andrew McCleese, founder, and director of operations at Brink, the initial plan was to expand outside of the neighborhood. "We had actually put an offer in on a building to open up a second location, a production facility," he told me. "The price tag was getting pretty big at that time, and we decided to keep our investment in College Hill." After renting the space for storage for a bit, McCleese said he was approached with the opportunity to purchase the building in 2021. The brewery officially closed on the deal in September 2023 and construction started the following month. "The plan was basically to get our own canning line and be able to take over as much of the packaging as we could," he said. According to *Business Courier* research, the brewery sold 1,200 barrels in 2023, ranking it the 18th-largest in the region. Last year, the brewery only produced 30% of its inventory in-house. And McCleese said the most the brewery has ever produced from its own facility is around 680 barrels. It currently works with Impact Brewing through a contract brewing partnership. With this expansion, Brink will now be able to produce 85% of its products in-house. "That's if we don't add any more tanks," McCleese said. "We have space where we can potentially add more down the line to do a little bit more canning." McCleese still plans to use the contract brewing model for Brink's core brands such as its flagship IPA. The goal is to still produce around 1,200 barrels a year, with around 900 in-house.

The buildout for the space cost around \$300,000 with around \$180,000 spent on new capital equipment including a canning labeler, palletizer, walk-in cooler, and a pallet stacker. Conotton Construction is primarily responsible for the work, which is expected to be done in June. Brink currently has around 14 part-time and three full-time employees. McCleese plans on hiring an additional staffer to accommodate for the expansion. The brewery recently started working with Heidelberg Distributing and has seen an increase in brand visibility through on-premise partnerships. "They got us in Great American Ball Park this year, which was a big thing for us," he said. "We're one of the primary beer sponsors this year now for Taste of Cincinnati, which is something that we've never been approached for until this year, largely due to our distribution relationships."

In addition to the adjacent building acquisition, Brink's patio space is doubling in size to around 3,000 square feet thanks to a collaboration with CHCUTC and the city of Cincinnati's outdoor improvement program. Brink Brewing is preparing to open its taproom. Barrels used for aging brews decorate the area. A large community table adorned with red chairs aims to get people talking to their neighbors. [Brink opened in February of 2017](#), and by 2021, it landed a deal to be in 72 Kroger stores. It has won multiple awards including three consecutive Great American Beer Festival gold medals for its Moozie milk stout and [back-to-back nods as the Best Very Small Brewery in the United States](#). Despite the relatively swift success, the operations have remained quite lean. "We are truly a small business," he said. "We're not over-leveraged, and we don't have a bunch of investors to pay. We've got the marathon, not a sprint approach here." [The business started from humble beginnings](#). Jack Duncan, Mark Landers, and Kelly Montgomery started messing around with home brewing and by 2015 they won the prestigious Best of Show at the Hop Courage Great American Homebrew Contest. McCleese, a longtime friend, was brought on in the early days. McCleese said they all want to keep it small and run it organically. The brewery has also grown with the neighborhood. "We were really the first anchor business to come in and take a chance when there really wasn't anything there," he said.

# HighGrain Hopes To Become Part Of A New Neighborhood With Brentwood Location

Written By: The Gnarly Gnome Photography By: The Gnarly Gnome 5/6/2024



It's hard to open your already existing brewery in a space that was a community hub for decades before you took it over. It sets you up for people to walk into your doors with expectations, often lofty ones. That's exactly what is happening with the new HighGrain Brewing Company location over in Springfield Township at the former Brentwood Bowl building on Winton Road. I might be getting a little bit ahead of myself, though. Let's talk about HighGrain just in case you are new around here.

## Who Is HighGrain Brewery, Anyways?

It might seem like a new brewery to anyone who doesn't venture out of their neighborhood very often, but this new space is really a new piece of the puzzle for a brewery that opened up in Silverton in 2019. When they opened up their doors there, it was a similar story, just maybe in a smaller way. They took over a former Municipal building (again, a bit of a hub for a community) and put in a brewpub that quickly outgrew its space due to not only amazing food and beer, but a brilliant understanding of how to become part of the neighborhood around you. Once they started packaging their beer, their space, although great for a restaurant or small brewpub was not nearly enough to carry the business into the next phase of its life. Thus... the search began.

## Finding Brentwood Bowl

Brentwood is located in Springfield Township and was a community staple for decades until closing its doors during covid. The township, desperate to save a space that means a ton to anyone who spend time here connected with HighGrain and plans were put into motion. The brilliance of this matchup is that it's not that far off from what they did when they opened their doors in Silverton. They're walking into a community that already has strong roots, into a space that means a lot to a ton of people – and I think that they're going to do it amazing justice. The Brentwood building is massive, though. This is not a cookie-cutter replication of the magic they created last time. It is a whole new animal.

## What To Expect When You Walk In HighGrain Brentwood

Walking in the doors, you'll immediately realize this is NOT a brewery in an old bowling alley. The space has been completely renovated into a modern brewpub. One side of the open dining room houses the big bar. The other side features the kitchen and a coffee bar (we'll talk about that in a minute) – glass doors at one end of the room showcase the huge production brewery (again... we'll talk about that), and a glass garage door at the other end shows off a big event space. The outside space features a huge covered patio with its own bar for events, and a patio out front is ready to go for even more outdoor seating as they get things up and rolling. Hidden behind walls is a massive space that houses storage for the brewery, as well as two other businesses. Revel Winery now lives here and produces wine out of their own space (without a storefront) – and LaTerza Coffee has their roasting facility in the warehouse as well... we should talk about that.

## Mornings, Work From Home, And The Community

This addition of a coffee concept to the taproom itself is critical to the bigger picture of HighGrain. The brewery is hoping to attract plenty of folks who live around them to come in and spend their mornings and afternoons in the space. Coffee and Wi-fi are pretty much the base ingredients that anyone who works from "home" needs to get things done. It all goes back to that desire to become a big part of the community around them. For me, as someone who enjoys working from breweries much more than I do holed up in my basement office. **THIS** is good stuff. You can come into the brewery early, grab a coffee and a light snack, work all morning – grab lunch and a beer, and keep working all afternoon. This is how I want to work.

## What It Means For The Future

HighGrain has a great advantage to watch how other places locally have grown as they hit this pinch point in their business. There are things that have worked, things that haven't and ways to keep growing even when people like to talk about the shrinking market of craft beer. Sure, the brewery will make more beer out of this location, but even more importantly, it will attract even more people who aren't here just because of craft beer. I'm thrilled to see how they take this ball and run with it.

**HighGrain – Brentwood** 9176 Winton Rd., Springfield Twp, Ohio 45231 [www.HighGrainBrewing.com](http://www.HighGrainBrewing.com)



## The Bouquet Mom *Really* Wants.

**Limited Edition Mother's Day Doom Pedal**  
\$10.99 6-Packs Available Now In Stores Near You

Surprise Mom this year with one of her faves!

Doom Pedal White Ale, the beer you know and love, is now blooming with floral flair as it hits shelves this month, just in time for Mother's Day. These bouquets of limited edition cans can be found in specialty bottle shops all around the city, and at both Fifty West locations.

## Doom Pedal

**White Ale | 5.5%**  
Floral | Citrusy | Easy-Drinking

Doom Pedal gets a floral makeover just in time for Mother's Day! This Belgian-style White Ale pours a beautiful hazy blonde. Coriander, orange peel and grains of paradise come together to masterfully blend black peppery spiciness with crisp, sweet citrusy notes.

Get the mother figure in your life the bouquet she *really* wants this year.

# !!HUMBLE MONK BREWING IS MOVING!!

“Where to,” you ask? That’s a question we hope can be answered. We’ve been blessed to serve the Northside community for five years in our original taproom and brewery. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Humble Monk is deeply in search of a new home for our taproom and brewing operations. The last day in our current building will be **June 22, 2024**.

We hope to have a new location solidified very soon. We plan to continue sharing our craft brews with our community through packaged cans and kegs and will continue selling our merch online if you’d like to support us through this transition. We are humbled by our loyal customers’ and community’s support these last five years and hope to brew your favorite beers for many more years to come. We will share updates, as we can, via social media and our email newsletter. We hope you’ll join us in this next chapter.

Humbly,  
Mike and Alicia



Humble Monk Brewing Co.  
1641 Blue Rock Street, Cincinnati, OH, 45223



Monday 4-9  
 Tuesday Closed\*  
 Wednesday 4-9  
 Thursday 4-10  
 Friday 4-11  
 Saturday 12-11  
 Sunday 12-8

Food By



No Outside Food Allowed  
 \*Except for Monday

**Catering for  
 Parties Available!**



Visit Our Website for  
 Party Reservation Request

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**5.10 Teacher Appreciation Happy Hour 4-6**  
 \$1 off beers for Teachers

**5.12 Mother's Day - Moms Spin the Prize Wheel**

**5.13 13<sup>TH</sup> of the Month Celebration & 513 Day**  
 \$1 off Beers 4-6, 13% off Merchandise, \$10 4-pk 16 oz Cans

**5.13-19 American Craft Beer Week!**

**\*5.14 OPEN on a Tuesday With the Incline Smoke Shack**

**5.16 Cincinnati Themed Trivia 7-9**

**5.27 Open 12-9 Memorial Day**

\$13 Growler Fills\* \*16 for Wedding Day \*64 oz. Growlers

**6.16 Father's Day - Dads Spin the Prize Wheel**

**6.20 TBA Theme Trivia Night**

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Monday**

**Rail Road Special**

\$1 off Beers for the 1/2 Hour After a Train Passes the Taproom

**Select \$4 Draft!**

**Incline Smoke Shack Closed - Bring Your Own Food!**

**Wednesday**

**Hump Day Happy Hour \$1 off Beers 4-6**

**Select \$4 Draft!**

**5 Wings for \$6 From the Incline Smoke Shack**

**Thursday**

**Last Call Trivia Flex Trivia Night Starts at 7**

**Saturday**

**Samplin' Saturday**

Order a Pint & Flight and get \$1 off each 12-3

**Sunday**

**\$13\* Growler Fills \*16 for Wedding Day \*64 oz. Growlers**

Dog Friendly  
 #DogsOf13Below



Children & Dogs must  
 be supervised at all times



Family Friendly

**MONDAY 5/13**  
 HAPPY HOUR 4-6 \$1 OFF PINTS  
 13% OFF MERCHANDISE  
 \$10 4-PK 16 OZ. CANS  
\*EXCLUDES ALE-TIORA AMBER ALE

**WEDNESDAY 5/15**  
 HAPPY HOUR 4-6 \$1 OFF PINTS

**THURSDAY 5/18**  
 \$10 4-PK 16 OZ. CANS  
\*EXCLUDES ALE-TIORA AMBER ALE

**FRIDAY 5/19**  
 FRIDAY NIGHT FLIGHTS 4-6 \$1 OFF FLIGHTS



**SATURDAY 5/20**  
 13% OFF MERCHANDISE

**SUNDAY 5/21**  
 SPIN THE  
 PRIZE WHEEL

**American  
 Craft Beer  
 Week™ May 13-19**

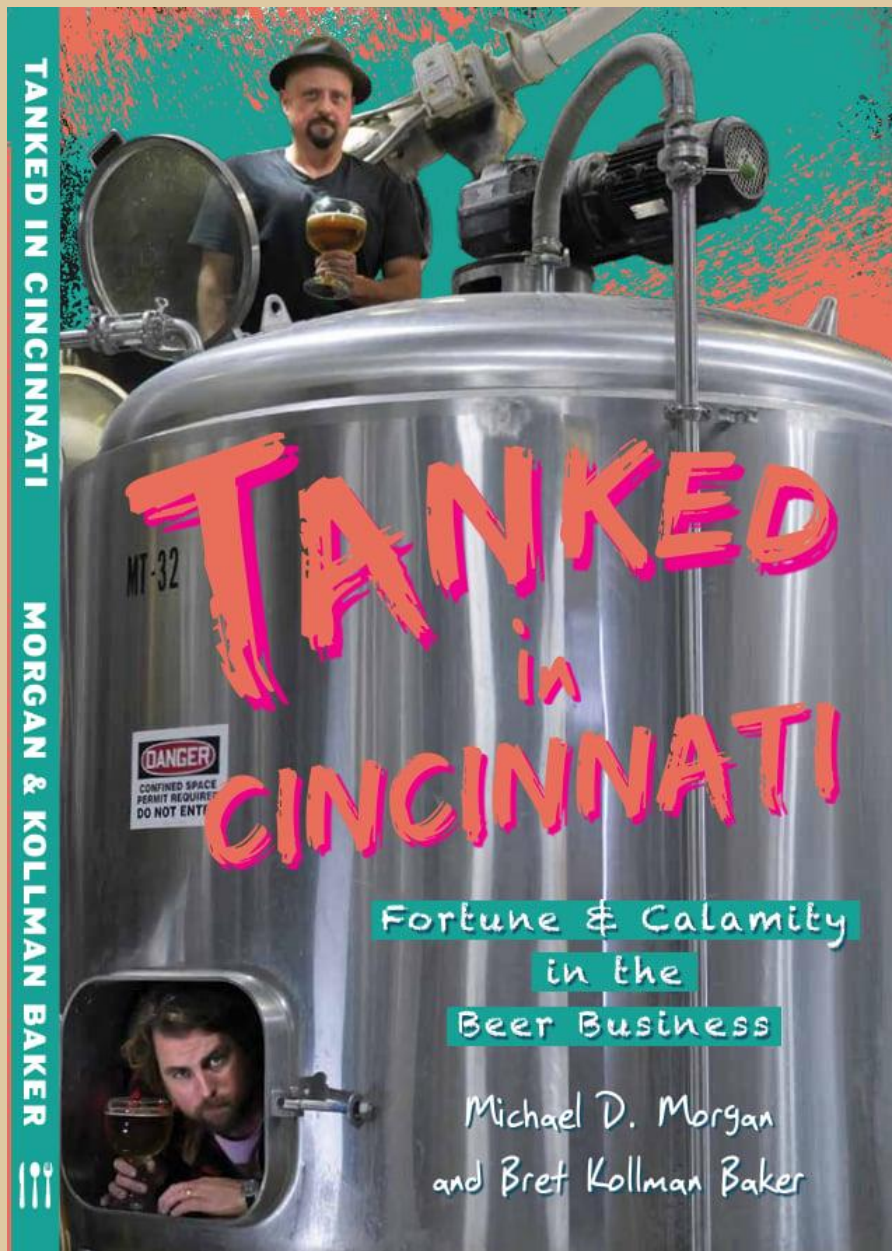


NORTHSIDE ~ CINCINNATI ~ OH



# MISSING LINCK FESTIVAL

**Missing Linck Fest, [June 1, 2024](#)**  
**"Tanked In Cincinnati" Just Released.**  
**Get your copy now and come to the**  
**Book Release and Brewers Panel at**  
**Missing Linck, 5PM, [Sat. June 1st.](#)**



In this just released book *Tanked in Cincinnati*, authors Michael D. Morgan and Bret Kollmann Baker sit down with the region's most legendary brewers, beer reps, and bar owners, drink a few brews, and take a soul-searching look at why some great ideas succeed wildly, and others become a dumpster fire. Along the way, we embrace the nostalgia for the early days in craft beer, answer what it's like to be the number one enemy of Anheuser-Busch, and ask hard hitting philosophical questions such as, "why are there so many kids in this tap room?" Interviews include Jim Koch of Boston Beer Co., "Mr. Cincinnati" Jim Tarbell, infamous Beer & radio personality "Beer Dave" Gausepohl, Scott LaFollette of the late Blank Slate, Lindsey Bonadonna of Goose Island and Rivertown, and Bryant Goulding of Rhinegeist Brewing Co., along with more of our favorite people and craft beer rabblers.

**GET YOUR COPY NOW!** And join us for a **book release party and brewers panel at 5PM on Missing Linck Day, Saturday, June 1st**. Details about this event, the Sasquatch Calling Competition, Stein Holding Competition, and all the other weirdness happening at Missing Linck 2024 can be found at:

**[www.MissingLinck.com](http://www.MissingLinck.com)**

