

Rhinegeist makes huge jump in ranking of largest U.S. craft breweries

By [Brian Planalp](#) – Staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Apr 17, 2025

Story Highlights

- Rhinegeist becomes Ohio's largest craft brewery, ranking 16th nationally.
- Rhinegeist's production increased despite industry-wide 4% decline in 2024.
- Rhinegeist surpasses older Great Lakes Brewing Co. in the ranks.

Rhinegeist has vaulted up the authoritative list of the largest craft breweries in the U.S., leapfrogging Great Lakes Brewing Co. to seize Ohio's craft brewing crown.

Cincinnati-based Rhinegeist Brewery ranked as the 16th largest craft brewery in the U.S. in 2024, according to the [Brewers Association's annual production report](#), published April 15.

The 2024 ranking reflects a jump of eight spots from the 2023 list, a year during which Rhinegeist produced 110,834 barrels of beer. The brewery's 2024 total barrel production count isn't yet known – the Brewers Association doesn't publish its barrel production data until May. A Brewers Association spokesperson nonetheless confirmed Rhinegeist's production did increase last year, bucking the pullback trend among some brewers – and the craft beer industry at large, which produced 4% fewer barrels in 2024 compared to 2023.



Image: Cincinnati Business Courier

Rhinegeist CEO Adam Bankovich, left, and Cole Hackbarth, vice president of brewing operations, stand in the Over-the-Rhine brewery. Photo by: Corrie Schaffeld | CBC
Rhinegeist Vice President of Brewery Operations Cole Hackbarth in January 2024 told the *Business Courier* the brewery was planning to increase production to 120,000 barrels produced per year in 2024 and 150,000 in 2025 or 2026, [thanks largely to the introduction of Cincy Light and Juicy Truth](#) as well as the reintroduction of Bubbles. It may have overshot those goals. The 16th largest craft brewery in the U.S. on the Brewers Association's 2023 list produced 158,000 barrels that year. It's easy to forget Rhinegeist is still relatively young in the craft brewing world. Cleveland-based Great Lakes was founded in 1988 and has been the largest craft brewery in Ohio for most of the years since. Rhinegeist [only got its start in 2013](#), rehabbing a historic former brewery building north of Findlay Market in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. Great Lakes rose from 19th largest craft brewery in the U.S. in 2023 to 18th largest in the 2024 – but fell behind Rhinegeist all the same. The only craft brewery headquartered in a Midwestern state to rank above Rhinegeist in the 2024 list was Wisconsin-based New Glarus Brewing Co. BrewDog Brewing Co., headquartered in Canal Winchester, Ohio, ranked 36th. Boston Beer Co., which produces a significant amount of its beer in Cincinnati, ranked second. The largest craft brewery in the U.S. remained D.G. Yuengling and Son.

Rhinegeist has not responded to a comment request, but it did author [a social media post](#) Thursday reacting to the Brewers Association's craft breweries list: "We are humbled and honored! Sixteenth overall craft brewery by volume and number ONE in Ohio! We couldn't have done it without all of the Rhinegeist fans out there – THANK YOU for choosing us!" The brewery ranked 27th on the Brewers Association's 2024 ranking of all U.S. breweries, a list topped by [Anheuser-Busch](#) and Molson Coors. It ranked 32nd in the 2023 list.

2024 Top 50 U.S. Craft Brewing Companies

(Companies are ranked by beer volume produced or sold in the U.S. including imports, when known)

1	D.G. Yuengling and Son Inc, Pottsville, PA	26	Three Floyds Brewing, Munster, IN
2	Boston Beer Co, Boston, MA	27	Odell Brewing Co, Fort Collins, CO
3	Sierra Nevada Brewing Co, Chico, CA	28	Great Frontier Holdings, Eugene, OR
4	Tilray Beer Brands, New York, NY	29	Abita Brewing Co, Covington, LA
5	Duvel Moortgat USA, Cooperstown, NY	30	BrewDog Brewing Co, Canal Winchester, OH
6	Gambrinus, Shiner, TX	31	Creature Comforts Brewing Co, Athens, GA
7	Matt Brewing Co, Utica, NY	32	Hendler Family Brewing Company, Framingham, MA
8	Athletic Brewing Company, Milford, CT	33	Alaskan Brewing Co, Juneau, AK
9	Brooklyn Brewery, Brooklyn, NY	34	Summit Brewing Co, St. Paul, MN
10	Monster Brewing, Longmont, CO	35	Saint Arnold Brewing Co, Houston, TX
11	Deschutes Brewery, Bend, OR	36	Revolution Brewing, Chicago, IL
12	New Glarus Brewing Co, New Glarus, WI	37	Kona Brewing Hawaii, Kailua-Kona, HI
13	Barrel One Collective, Boston, MA	38	Pizza Port, Carlsbad, CA
14	Georgetown Brewing Co, Seattle, WA	39	Surly Brewing Co, Minneapolis, MN
15	Gordon Biersch Brewing Co, San Jose, CA	40	pFriem Family Brewers, Hood River, OR
16	Rhinegeist Brewery, Cincinnati, OH	41	Fremont Brewing, Seattle, WA
17	Craft 'Ohana (Maui/Modern Times) Kihei, HI	42	The Florida Brewery, Auburndale, FL
18	Great Lakes Brewing Company, Cleveland, OH	43	BJ's Restaurants, Inc., Huntington Beach, CA
19	Narragansett Brewing Co, Pawtucket, RI	44	Russian River Brewing Co, Santa Rosa, CA
20	Tröegs Brewing Co, Hershey, PA	45	Shipyard Brewing Co, Portland, ME
21	Allagash Brewing Company, Portland, ME	46	New Trail Brewing Company, Williamsport, PA
22	August Schell Brewing Company, New Ulm, MN	47	Zero Gravity Craft Brewery, Burlington, VT
23	Fiddlehead Brewing, Shelburne, VT	48	Fat Head's Brewery, Middleburg Heights, OH
24	Stevens Point Brewery, Stevens Point, WI	49	Drake's Brewing Co/Bear Republic, San Leandro, CA
25	Pittsburgh Brewing Co, Pittsburgh, PA	50	Rogue Ales Brewery, Newport, OR

City Beat's Best of Cincinnati

BEST OF CINCINNATI | 2025 | MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE | READER PICK

1. Little Miami Brewing
2. Urban Artifact
3. Rhinegeist
4. West Side Brewing
5. MadTree Brewing
6. Fretboard Brewing Co.
7. Dead Low Brewing
8. Braxton Brewing Taproom
9. Esoteric Brewing Co.
10. Darkness Brewing



ADULT.



EASTER EGG HUNT AND PHOTOS.



WITH THE EASTER BUNNY

SATURDAY APRIL 19 | HUNT STARTS @ 12 PM

Who says adults
can't have fun too?



THIRD EYE
BREWING COMPANY
SHARONVILLE

WHO SAYS ADULTS CAN'T HAVE FUN TOO?

Join us at noon, when we open, on Saturday, April 19, for an adult only (21+) Easter Egg Hunt and this year it's going to be even BIGGER! 🥚🥚 Hunt for Easter eggs filled with goodies, including a few with FREE pint tokens! Find the golden egg and win a Third Eye swag basket. Bring your pet and/or kids for photos with the Easter Bunny 🐰, 1-4 PM (weather dependent)!



HAPPY 10th BIRTHDAY TO URBAN ARTIFACT

In April of 2015, we opened the doors to the historic St Patrick's church in Northside, Cincinnati as Urban Artifact for the first time. That first summer, our best-selling brew was a Key Lime Gose, and less than a year later the groundbreaking first batch of Gadget was born. We've been rewarding the curiosity of folks looking for fruit beverages ever since.



Urban Artifact 1660 Blue Rock St, Cincinnati, OH, United States, Ohio 45223

Celebrate 10 years of fruit wonder! We opened the doors at Urban Artifact in April 2015, and within months, our best seller was a Key Lime Gose, and within a year, Gadget was born. Taste through our history and future with us on **Saturday April 19th**.

- Fresh Fruit Tarts, - Small Batch throwbacks and oddities on draft, - Cellared dinosaurs
- Learn about our new hemp beverages, non-alcoholic sodas, and FRUITBLOOD.
- Evening music and art at Radio Artifact featuring Michael A Coppage



HOFBRÄUHAUS NEWPORT

BREWERY & RESTAURANT

*Make Your
Plans For
Easter @
Our Haus!*



MAKING LAST-MINUTE EASTER PLANS?



Enjoy Easter Sunday with us!

We still have a few seats left for our usual Sunday brunch offering, PLUS a special Easter entree.

Slow-roasted Applewood Smoked Ham drizzled with honey and pineapple glaze, served with Mashed Potatoes and fresh steamed Green Beans. Just \$17.

While supplies last.

Kölsch Service Pops Up All Over Cincinnati – What (And Where) Should You Go to Experience It?

Written By: The Gnarly Gnome and Photography By: The Gnarly Gnome



I didn't think when I was an early beer drinker that I'd be writing this sentence, but here we are. I love Kölsch. That might not be really fair, actually, the more that I think about it. It's not the Kölsch itself that I'm so in love with. It's the Kölsch service that I've fallen in love with. Kölsch night. That needs a little explanation before I tell you how to do it correctly here in Cincinnati.

What Is Kölsch? Kölsch is a simple, subtle, easy-drinking beer to keep this as simple as possible. It's light and a little bit fruity... but at the end of the day, it's super-crushable. The style was born in the mid-1800s as the response in Cologne, Germany, to what was happening in the beer world around them – namely, lightly kilned malt making an appearance in German lagers. Pilsner. It was a response to Pilsner.

The folks in Cologne created a beer that still used the top-fermenting ale yeast they were familiar with, but the lightly kilned malt was becoming all the rage. After fermentation, the new beer was stored (or lagered), making it a hybrid. This new style became such a hit in the area – and the brewers were so protective of it that they protected the style in the 80s via the 'Kölsch Konvention,' which states that if you're not making the beer in the immediate area around Cologne... you're not making a "real" Kölsch. Kölsch is about more than light malt, ale yeast, and lagering. I heard it stated best by Anna Heller from 'Heller's Brauhaus' in Cologne... "In our region, Kölsch is more than only a beer; it unifies tastefulness, tradition, passion, and, of course, a good portion of localism." This? I can certainly understand this.

What Is Kölsch Service? I also spend much time trying to capture all those craft beer pieces. Taste, tradition, passion, localism. These things made me fall in love with this industry in the first place – and many days, glimpses of them keep me so deeply involved. There aren't a lot of events that make me feel that as well as Kölsch Night does when it's done right. To understand what "doing it right" means, we again have to look to Germany to get a picture. In Cologne, you belly up to Kölsch service by simply showing up at the brewery. Most breweries you'll find in town just make one beer. They make Kölsch. You order your beer, which is served in a small (about 7oz) tall glass called a stange. Your waiter (called a Köbe) marks a little tally mark on your coaster, and you start drinking. If you run out of Kölsch (and you will; they go down really easily), a new glass appears in front of you, along with another tally mark. When you've had your fill, you simply put your coaster on top of your glass, where the tally marks are added, and you pay. The simplicity of the night is its beauty. It's about the act of drinking with others. It's about the conversation; you don't spend any time thinking about your next drink or with your nose deep in a glass of an IPA, wondering if that's the Simcoe you're smelling. With their custom-designed trays of beer moving about refilling people's beers, the waiters are just facilitating a much more important experience. This experience of just drinking has been lost in far too many watering holes here in the United States and beyond.

Where To Get It In the Cincinnati area? So, at this point, I know you're probably itching to get into a traditional Kölsch service. Good news for you (and the rest of us): they've been popping up around Cincinnati for the last year. You can find Kölsch service at many of your favorite breweries – and I really want you to experience them all! You can find Kölsch nights (or Kölsch days) at several different local spots:

- **Alexandria Brewing Company** does theirs in the summer when their Kölsch is on tap. You can get all their beers, but traditional Kölsch service gets me to show up! (Full disclosure: they're a client of mine, so I'd be showing up regardless...) They have a **great** Kölsch, and it's definitely worth the trip, even if you swing by on a night when they aren't doing service.
 - **BC's Brewing** hasn't even had their first Kölsch service as of me writing this, that doesn't happen until April 27th, 2025 (That's a few weeks away) – but if I know anything about the folks over at BC's, I know that it will be great! They're making their event ticketed, so when people come in, they'll know what to expect. All Kölsch, only Kölsch, all night. I think it'll be great!
 - **Braxton** is new to the Kölsch service list, so I haven't made it down to check it out quite yet (though... I certainly will be very soon) – they spent some time in Cologne and fell in love with the style (and the experience) and brought it home to their taproom in the form of 'Kranz' with it's bright red, traditional serving trays... you can order a half or a full wreath to share with your friends.
 - **Esoteric** holds their Kölsch service once a month, where they try to keep things as traditional as possible, providing tableside service to ensure that your glass never empties while you're sipping away with friends. It's an experience worthy of a visit (and one that I still have to mark off my list) – they hold them on Sundays, so make sure you check out their social media so that you can schedule accordingly!
 - **Rhinegeist** was holding their Kölsch night regularly when I started working on this post... but when I started writing it, they've since stopped service, though they still have their tasty Kölsch on tap as of this writing. It's called Shuffle, maybe they'll be forced to bring Kölsch service back if we drink enough of it!
- All Kölsch, Only Kölsch – Northern Row Sets the Standard.** Then, finally, Northern Row is on our list. I saved them for the last because they were the first in town to start doing it and are still doing it better than anyone else. Let me explain why. A night in Northern Row's taproom during Kölsch service is something special. I say that because they open special on a Tuesday (the third Tuesday of every month) to make the event happen. With it being on a day they usually aren't open – it doesn't seem like anyone who shows up is caught off guard by the fact that **all** they serve is Kölsch. In fact, when you grab your seat, you don't even need to tell anyone what you want. They just come by with the Kranz serving tray and start serving. The coaster that marks your beers, the camaraderie that Cologne has pioneered in its service style, it's all there. It feels different from any other night you'll spend in a local taproom because it is different from any other night you'll spend in a local taproom. The brewery rotates various special food menus for the events, usually, in my experience, something fantastic. You'll hear German music (sometimes people speak German if one of the clubs shows up), and you'll sip on Kölsch and nothing but Kölsch all night. It's a thing of beauty that has yet to be replicated anywhere else in town.

The Germans Know What They're Doing I love modern craft beer. That should be obvious by this entire website – but there's something unique about a Kölsch night. It doesn't matter which one you stroll into; you'll quickly realize that traditional Kölsch service scratches an itch that our modern taproom culture sometimes misses completely. Conversations flow more freely. Yes, it “unifies tastefulness, tradition passion... and of course, a good portion of localism.” The Germans might be onto something with this whole beer thing.



ESOTERIC BREWING



SEASONAL RELEASE

ORACLE

Mango Wheat Ale with Passionfruit

(5% ABV) Indulge in a tropical paradise with our mango wheat ale with passion fruit. Bursting with ripe flavors of ripe mango and tangy passionfruit, Oracle is both bright and refreshing, perfect for savoring under the sun.

2024 U.S. Beer Open Championship Medalist

Gold
American Fruit Wheat - POC

Bronze
American Fruit Wheat - Mango

Paraiso Mexican Lager is Back!

Our crisp, crushable Mexican-style lager returns just in time for patio season. Paraiso is back on tap and in cans—light, refreshing, and made for warm days. Swing by the taproom and pick some up today!

Award Winning Oracle Coming End of Month

Our fan-favorite Mango Wheat is back and better than ever. Catch Oracle on tap and in cans at the end of the month—just in time for sunny days ahead.

ArBeer Day

Saturday, April 19th
2:00-6:00

FREE POTTED TREES PROVIDED BY CITY OF XENIA TREE COMMITTEE (LIMIT 2 PER PERSON)

BEER SPECIALS

ROOTER'S FOOD TRUCK
MUSIC BY BRIAN JUMP 3-5PM

Every day at an Ohio craft brewery is “Our Beer Day,” but this **Saturday, April 19** at [Devil Wind Brewing](https://www.devilwindbrewing.com), it’s ArBeer Day! Devil Wind has teamed up with the [Xenia Tree Committee](https://www.xeniatreecommittee.com) to give away free potted trees — two per person limit — starting at 2 p.m. They go fast, so make sure to get to the taproom early so you can get your pick of the Redbud, Red Maple, Northern Red Oak, Eastern White Pine, Pawpaw and Arrowwood Viburnum varieties available. Get full event details at facebook.com/devilwindbrewing