

Barleycorn's Brewhouse to launch NKU-themed beer to benefit student-athlete NIL program



Barleycorn's Brewhouse opened in Wilder in 2022. Photo By: Corrie Schaffeld | CBC By [Steve Watkins](#) – Staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Apr 29, 2025

Story Highlights

- Barleycorn's is launching a new beer to support NKU's NIL program.
- The new beer will be the official NKU Athletics brew.
- Fans can name the beer through the contest ending May 16.

A Northern Kentucky brewery is teaming up with Northern Kentucky University by launching a new beer that will provide financial support for paying athletes. Barleycorn's plans to create a new beer to be launched in July. It will donate 10% of all proceeds from the sale of the as-yet-unnamed beer to NKU. That money will go toward supporting the school's name, image and likeness (NIL) program to pay student-athletes. The new brew will become the official beer of NKU Athletics. NKU Athletic Director Christina Roybal called the Barleycorn's arrangement "a creative initiative that supports our student-athletes through NIL," according to a news release. "This collaboration is a fun way to bring Norse fans together – one name, one beer and one toast at a time – while making a meaningful impact," Roybal said.

Fans of the Norse will get the opportunity to name the new beer. Barleycorn's is [conducting a beer-naming contest](#). Fans can submit entries anytime through 11:59 p.m. May 16. Barleycorn's will conduct a vote a couple of weeks later. All entries must include the name "Norse." Prizes for the fan who submits the name that's ultimately chosen include two tickets to a 2025-26 NKU basketball game, a \$100 Barleycorn's gift card and public recognition. "We're looking forward to creating something that celebrates Norse spirit, and letting the community help us name it makes it even more special," Shane Trego, Barleycorn's brewmaster, said in the release. Barleycorn's hasn't yet said what type of beer it will unveil. NKU's basketball program is getting more money as a result of its partnership with a local brewery. Tim Sofranko/Northern Kentucky University

Barleycorn's, with four Northern Kentucky locations, is owned by Taylor Mill-based restaurant group One Holland, which [purchased the company in 2021](#). [One Holland plans to open a fifth Barleycorn's location in Independence](#) this summer. Barleycorn's arrangement to make a beer in support of NKU Athletics is a natural fit, Barleycorn's CEO Jay Shelton said. One Holland CEO Gary Holland is a graduate of NKU's law school, while Shelton got his MBA from NKU. "This partnership with NKU is personal for us," Shelton said in the release. "As alumni, we're proud to strengthen our ties to the university with a beer that celebrates Norse pride. After Crazy Norse (one of Barleycorn's beers) was named Cincinnati's Favorite Beer, it's an honor to build on that momentum and give back through NKU's NIL initiative."

Barleycorn's has supported NKU Athletics for many years. That includes sponsorship of the basketball team and the athletics program, including hosting a halftime putting contest at men's basketball games and running a shuttle from its Cold Spring location to all home games.

The partnership between a local brewery and a Greater Cincinnati university isn't a first. Over-the-Rhine-based [Rhinegeist Brewery launched Cincy Light](#), an easy-drinking light lager, in May 2023. Cincy Light was created as part of a partnership between Rhinegeist and [Cincy Reigns, a fundraising collective](#) for NIL payments to University of Cincinnati student-athletes.

NKU's board of regents approved in February a plan for the university to offer NIL payments to athletes. It's targeting men's and women's basketball, with a goal of spending \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually on each team, Roybal said then. That's contingent on the settlement of a landmark [court case involving the NCAA governing body](#).

In addition, businesses and individuals can finance sponsorship dollars for teams and players. For example, NKU basketball player and Highlands High School graduate Sam Vinson has an NIL arrangement with St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

Rhinegeist rode massive Cincy Light growth to brewing record in 2024



By [Brian Planalp](#) – Staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Apr 30, 2025, Photos By: Rhinegeist Brewery & Corrie Schaffeld | CBC

Rhinegeist CEO Adam Bankovich, left, and Cole Hackbarth, vice president of brewing operations, in the Over-the-Rhine brewery. Rhinegeist's recent turnaround strategy of focusing on its core brands – Truth, Cincy Light and Bubbles – sparked the brewery's first significant year of volume growth since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Story Highlights

- Rhinegeist Brewery set a production record in 2024, becoming Ohio's largest craft brewery.
- Brewery focused on three core brands: Truth, Cincy Light, Bubbles.
- Tariffs and aluminum costs pose challenges for Rhinegeist's operations.

Cincinnati's Rhinegeist Brewery had a statement year in 2024, setting a new record for volume production, [becoming Ohio's largest craft brewery](#) even as the craft beer sector shrank around it. The 12-year-old brewery, headquartered on Elm Street north of Findlay Market in Over-the-Rhine, had its best year from a volume growth standpoint since 2018. That year marked the tail end of a remarkable five-year run during which Rhinegeist grew from 2,000 to 100,302 barrels produced a year. But growth slowed in 2019, and 2020 – the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic – saw Rhinegeist register its first production decline in its existence. The brewery recovered in the years afterward, growing output by 2.4% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023, according to data compiled by the *Business Courier*. It then recorded 8% volume growth in 2024, brewing 118,020 barrels of beer. Rhinegeist's Truth brand family and Cincy Light drove the bulk of the production increase last year, with 250% growth in Cincy Light alone, [CEO Adam Bankovich](#) told the *Courier*. The production bump came in roughly at par with the company's expectations, but it was nonetheless significant given industry headwinds. The U.S. craft beer sector, which saw decades of growth flatten in the 2010s, is now contracting – by 1% in 2023 and 4% in 2024, according to the Brewers Association. Total 2024 revenue and employment figures rose 3% each thanks only to an increased focus on taproom and brewpubs, which require more staffing and generate higher margins than distribution. The Brewers Association also credits pricing adjustments with the increase in sector revenue. Still higher prices could be in store this year thanks to tariffs, though unlikely for now at Rhinegeist.

Craft beer industry facing economic headwinds, higher prices, tariff impacts

Tariffs have already started to raise Rhinegeist's input costs, particularly on raw materials like aluminum cans, the brewery's single-largest material cost annually, according to Cole Hackbarth, vice president of brewery operations. (Rhinegeist sources most of its hops from Oregon and Washington.) President Donald Trump imposed a [25% tariff on aluminum imports](#) in March. Breweries likely can't source aluminum cans domestically because the U.S. lacks the natural resources and infrastructure to meet demand. Rhinegeist will turn to optimization strategies in an effort to offset the rising material costs. "We have no plans to raise prices on customers," Hackbarth told the *Courier*, "But we will see what the beer industry as a whole does in response to rising costs." The brewery has contended with aluminum sourcing challenges before. Trump's original 10% aluminum tariffs, imposed during his first term and continued in part by the Biden administration, contributed to skyrocketing aluminum prices during the pandemic. Rhinegeist pivoted at one point by purchasing \$1 million worth of cans from a supplier in the Middle East because domestic supplies were virtually nonexistent. But for that aluminum shortage, the brewery's RGBevs line, [which debuted in January 2022](#), might have come out in sleek, skinny cans to match the seltzer trend. RGBevs sales disappointed – for reasons other than the canning – and [the brewery pulled them from production after around 18 months](#). Nor is Rhinegeist any stranger to optimization efforts. In 2020, it became the third brewery in the U.S. to install a decanter, made by Cincinnati-based [Flottweg](#). The decanter nearly doubled throughput and resulted in a 10% yield increase. It paid for itself in less than a year. Additionally, Rhinegeist installed a filtration system in 2024. The system sped up Cincy Light production and freed up tanks for other beers. Continued efficiency gains are necessary given the brewery's space constraints. Its Elm Street headquarters has enough room to output around 135,000 barrels of beer a year, according to Hackbarth. "So no significant investment in additional breweries at this time," he said. "But we do continue to optimize our current processes both to drive more profitability from what we produce and also make life easier for our staff."

Brewery focusing on three core brands - Rhinegeist's return to growth marks [the success of its 2023 turnaround strategy](#). The strategy sought to bring clarity and focus to its lineup by focusing on Rhinegeist's three core brand families: Truth, Cincy Light and Bubbles. Bankovich described Cincy Light as "the breakout star" of 2024. Its growth from 2023 surpassed the brewery's internal projections. "We've spent a lot of time analyzing the success of this brand and believe authenticity is the key ingredient," he said. "While our distribution remains relatively small, we're exploring smart, intentional ways to expand – without overextending. We'll have exciting news to share early this summer." Truth, the brewery's flagship India pale ale, as well as Juicy Truth, which Rhinegeist introduced in late 2023, defy industry trends of declining interest in hoppy ales. "We expected some cannibalization, but instead, we're seeing strong consumer demand for both," Bankovich said of Truth and Juicy Truth. He also noted the January 2025 launch of Truth Bomb, an imperial India pale ale, proved one of the biggest launches in Rhinegeist history. "We're taking our top IPA innovations and giving them the 'Truth' seal of approval – because consumers trust that name, and the loyalty is real," Bankovich said. As for Bubbles, Rhinegeist has brought several "fan-favorite fruited ales" under the Bubbles umbrella "to build a stronger, more cohesive brand family," Bankovich said. Rhinegeist's new Imperial Bubbles – a 9% ABV version of the original in a 19.2-ounce format – is part of the brewery's effort to meet growing consumer interest in drinks with higher alcohol content.




CHEER ON OUR FLYING PIGS!

MAY 4 TH | ESOTERIC TAPROOM | 7 AM - 2 PM

JOIN US RACE DAY, ON THE HALF MARATHON ROUTE, WITH A BEER IN HAND!



Flying Pig Sunday at the Taproom! Doors Open at 7 AM | Grab & Go Brunch 8:30–10:30 AM

We're kicking off race day bright and early! Join us this Sunday as we open the taproom at 7 AM to celebrate one of Cincinnati's best traditions — the Flying Pig Marathon. We'll have a special **Grab & Go Brunch** from 8:30–10:30 AM, featuring breakfast burritos, parfaits, and quick bites perfect for fueling your cheers. Sip on a coffee, grab a beer (we won't tell), and settle in along the race route to catch all the action. Let's send those runners some serious good vibes!



BEER RELEASE

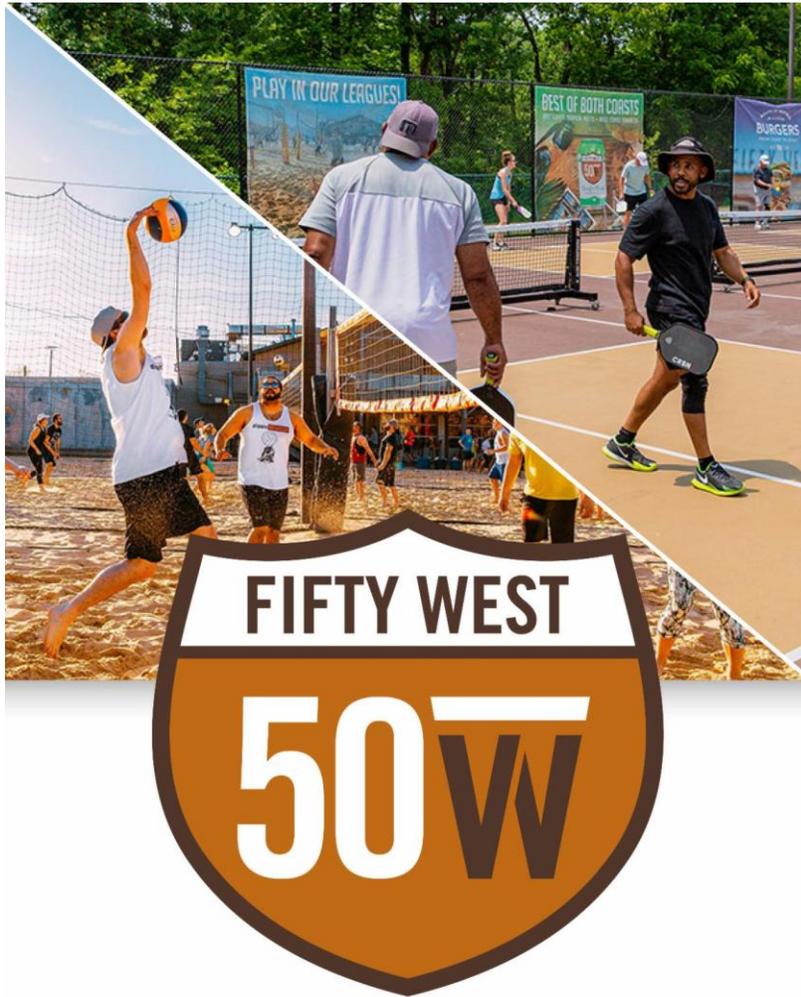
AZALEA

A BLONDE ALE WITH CHRYSANTHEMUM TEA, JASMINE TEA AND ORANGE ZEST

Back in Bloom: Azalea Blonde Ale, a Tribute by Anique

Brewed once again by our very own Antique in celebration of Asian Heritage Month this May. This refreshing blonde ale is infused with chrysanthemum tea, jasmine tea, and a bright kiss of orange zest. It's a floral, citrusy tribute to tradition, craftsmanship, and community. 🍷

Esoteric Brewing Company 918 E McMillan St., Cincinnati, OH 45206



Early Summer Volleyball & Pickleball Registration Now Open League Play Begins Week of May 12th. Get ready for another fun-filled season at Fifty West! Registration is now open to the public for our sand volleyball and pickleball leagues. Whether you're diving in the sand or dinking on the court, our leagues are a great way to stay active, make friends, and enjoy good vibes all season long. Spots fill up fast, so grab your crew and secure your spot today.



Volleyball Leagues \$405 Per Team

Recreational 6v6 Co-ed Monday-Thursday
Starts week of May 12th.

Pickleball Leagues \$135 Per Team

Beginner Through Advanced 2v2 Co-ed
Monday-Thursday Starts week of May 12th.

GRAINWORKS

BREWING COMPANY



[Star Wars Trivia](#) *Sunday May 4th, 2:00pm*

Celebrate *May the Fourth* the best way we know how: with beer and trivia. Whether you're a Jedi Master or just here for the vibes, come hang out and test your Star Wars knowledge. Lightsabers optional. 🍻 ✨



[Orange Dreams](#) - *Wheat Fruited Ale* - 5.8%

What's more refreshing on a hot summer day: a fresh, juicy orange, or a cool, creamy treat?

With copious amounts of tangy oranges, and creamy lactose and vanilla, we created a delicious treat that combines the best flavors to beat the heat.

Available now in four packs and on draft at the taproom for a limited time!



TERCER OJO MEXICAN LAGER 4.7% AVB | 25 IBU

Brewed in collaboration with our friend Daniel Rodriguez of [Tarabana Brewery](#). This lager has a unique and innovative approach using corn starch in the mash, combined with vibrant purple corn and pilsner malt—resulting in a truly one-of-a-kind brew. Just in time for Cinco de Mayo!

A New Meadery is Opening in Northern Kentucky

Allfather's Meadery offers "modern mead inspired by ancient gods."

By [Katherine Barrier](#) CityBeat Reporter Apr 28, 2025



Allfather's Meadery | 6685 Four Mile Road, Camp Springs *Photo: [Google.com/ALLFATHER'S MEADERY](https://www.google.com/search?q=ALLFATHER'S+MEADERY)*

A new meadery is bringing the nectar of the gods to Northern Kentucky. Allfather's Meadery announced the grand opening celebration of its tasting room in Camp Springs for Friday and Saturday, May 9-10.

The Norse mythology-themed meadery produces small-batch mead with locally sourced ingredients like honey, fruits and spices. While honoring the ancient art of mead-making, the meadery will also offer a modern twist, having been equipped with the latest technology in mead-making and crafting brews with innovative flavors to appeal to contemporary palates. Co-owner Jason Catanzaro says he founded Allfather's with his brothers, Bobby and Matthew, in part to share his love of mead with his community, but also as a way to honor fathers, especially their own, who has always been supportive of Jason's love of mead-making. Fueled by tales of Beowulf and his grand mead hall, [Jason says he made his first brew at the age of 10](#) with a Mr. Root Beer Kit, mixing together sugar, yeast, water and root beer extract. When he ran out of root beer extract, he switched to honey, the foundation of mead. Catanzaro says, proud of his creation, he offered his father a taste. His father told him the drink resembled "honey beer" and told him to make more. After that, Catanzaro says his father became a source of quiet encouragement over the years and never tried to stop his brewing experiments. Years later, the vision for Allfather's came to Jason as he and his brothers enjoyed mead at the Ohio Renaissance Festival. The brothers — all dads themselves — wanted a place that would embody their family values and love for mythic storytelling. The name "Allfather's" was chosen to pay homage to the Norse god Odin, as well as their own dad. "And so, Allfather's Meadery was born — a place where every batch of mead is a celebration of family, every flavor a testament to the bonds of brotherhood, and every toast a salute to fathers everywhere," the Catanzaro's shared on their website. The Catanzaro's say their plan is to create a collection of over 20 types of mead, including offerings incorporating seasonal ingredients and flavors. Allfather's meads are named after figures from mythology, mostly from the Norse pantheon, like Odin (oak-aged traditional mead made from clover honey), Frigg (vanilla oak-aged mead made with wildflower honey) and Muninn (a melomel — a mead created with fruit added to the fermentation process — featuring wildflower honey and wild blueberries). The tasting room will also offer food in the future.

Allfather's Meadery's tasting room is located at 6685 Four Mile Road in Camp Springs. The grand opening will be held Friday, May 9 from 4-9 p.m. and Saturday, May 10 from noon to 9 p.m. If you want a taste before the grand opening, [Allfather's also sells its meads online](#). Co-founder Jason Catanzaro will also be hosting a meet-and-greet on Sunday, May 4 at Stonehouse Settlement Winery (8292 Stonehouse Road, California, Ky.) from 12:30-6 p.m. Attendees can sample Allfather's mead and hear stories of its crafting. More info: [allfathersmeadery.com](https://www.allfathersmeadery.com).



Let's Get Together!

wiedemannsfinebeer.com

It's Kentucky Derby Weekend and The Wiedemann Taproom is Tuned In!

Wiedemann's has a long tradition as the official beer of the Kentucky Derby. Both of these iconic brands were founded in Kentucky in the 1800s. Today, Wiedemann continues the tradition at our annual Derby watch party this Saturday and all the races leading up to the Kentucky Derby. Stop in and enjoy taproom specials on Four Roses Mint Juleps, sparkling Mint Seltzers and, of course, our world-class craft beers! Catch all the daylong action of both the Kentucky Oaks races on Friday, May 2, and Kentucky Derby race on May 3. Post time for the Oaks is 5:51PM. Derby goes off at 6:57PM on Saturday!

