



Eating Around



Beer Is Here (Finally)

Market Garden Brewery Adds Another Chapter to Ohio City's Brewing Legacy



After nearly two years of anticipation, Market Garden Brewery has opened to standing-room-only crowds and rave reviews for its beers. The cozy patio on West 25th Street gives diners the chance to survey the action on the busy street. (Photographs by Bernie Thiel)

BY BERNIE THIEL

How does it feel to have your dreams become reality—and exceed your expectations in only two weeks? Just ask Sam McNulty and Andy Tveekrem, the creative forces behind Ohio City's latest culinary sensation, Market Garden Brewery (MGB).

When the long-anticipated brewpub and restaurant finally opened for business in late June, the pent-up demand was palpable. Customers flocked to the establishment in the first two weeks of operation. But there was just one problem: They nearly drank the place dry. "We were running out of beer," McNulty noted. "It was selling like hotcakes."

There was only one thing to do: make more beer. But that would require a slight acceleration of MGB's expansion plans. "Our two-year plan to expand our capacity by 20 percent became our 12-day plan," said McNulty. "We didn't think we'd be ordering more tanks three weeks after we opened," added Tveekrem.

As luck would have it, Tveekrem found two new 10-barrel fermentation tanks in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Problem solved. For now.

One look at the tap handles behind MGB's impressive hand-built wood bar reveals why customers have been smitten. When a brewpub launches, it typically starts with three or four beers and gradually expands. Not MGB, which on day one had 10 beers on tap representing a range of traditional beer styles—including wheat, lager, Scotch ale, pale ale, India

Pale Ale and stout. Of course, journalistic due diligence required us to sample every one of them, and we found them all to be of the highest quality—not a "filler" in the bunch. We especially enjoyed the Cluster Fuggle IPA, named for the two types of hops that give the beer its pleasantly bitter taste, and the slightly sweet and malty Forest City Brown Ale.

We, however, must be in the minority, as the Pearl Street Wheat has been the brewpub's biggest seller thus far, something that is somewhat of a surprise to Tveekrem. "I really didn't expect that," he said. "Usually lagers or light pale ales sell best, but people love the wheat beer and we're happy to make it."

McNulty credits brewmaster Tveekrem's 20 years of experience—at both Great Lakes Brewing Company in its early days, as well as nationally known Dogfish Head Brewery in Delaware—for being ready for primetime from the get-go. "He's had these recipes rattling around inside his head for years," explained McNulty. "In fact, the Old School American Lager was a beer he was making back in his homebrewing days. He tweaked the recipe over the years, and now is doing it on a brewpub scale."

And it's not just the beer recipes Tveekrem brought to the enterprise. He spent several months overseeing the construction of the brewery so MGB would have the full complement of brews ready to slake the first customers' thirst.

Many of the beers on tap at the brewpub's launch remain on offer as year-

round house beers. However, with the weather now cooler and the holidays just around the corner, MGB has been focusing on its versions of time-honored late-year favorites, including an Oktoberfest, a pumpkin ale and, of course a Christmas beer called Festivus Ale, which will be a strong spiced beer (and "somewhat different from what they brew around the corner," noted McNulty, referring to the famous Great Lakes variety).

While McNulty is understandably proud of MGB's brews, he also is not selfish about highlighting beers being produced by other Cleveland-area breweries. He says his ideal is to have 12 house beers and 12 guest beers on tap at Market Garden—with the guest beers, whenever possible, being from other local craft brewers. "The idea is that if we don't have a style represented by our house lineup, we'll get it on our guest list," McNulty explained. "There are a lot of great breweries in this town, and we want to support them."

With the brewing capacity situation settled for now, McNulty and Tveekrem are turning their attention to liquor. A pot still installed in September is dedicated to churning out a trio of clear spirits: white whiskey, gin and light rum. "Brown" spirits—such as traditional whiskey and dark rum—are planned once MGB installs the requisite aging capabilities.

Lest one get the impression MGB is all about booze, we'd be remiss if we didn't mention the full menu available at the brewpub. About a half-dozen appetizers are on offer, including wings, currywurst, scotch egg and the unusual but strangely intriguing BBQ popcorn for those looking for some taste without a lot of calories. The house-seasoned potato chips, made on the premises, are crispy and perfectly flavored, and serve as a good complement to the beers.

A number of traditional salads and sandwiches are available, as are four different types of tacos: pork, chicken, black bean and rock shrimp. The tacos, according to McNulty, have "been a runaway hit." We can attest to the fact that the chicken taco is, indeed, tasty, featuring the right amount of red chili seasoning and a flavorful salsa rojo to temper the spice.

A limited number of full-size entrees are available. On one visit, we had the lobster roll and the seared ahi tuna. The lobster roll was MGB's take on the tra-



These bags of goodies will soon be transformed into some of the tasty brews now being made and poured at Market Garden Brewery.

ditional New England fare, and it is a winner. Filled with tender, sweet lobster claw meat and a pickled radish slaw, the lightly-sauced lobster roll is delicate yet filling. And the ahi tuna, lightly grilled and served with hearty heirloom tomatoes and earthy Swiss chard, is a great alternative for diners looking for a more healthful option.

While MGB initially opened serving dinner only, it recently expanded into Sunday brunch and Friday and Saturday lunches. The spacious dining area easily accommodates group functions and likely will be a popular venue for holiday gatherings this year.

If the current 300-plus seats in MGB's restaurant and heated, open-air beer garden (complete with a roaring fire in the large brick fireplace) aren't enough, a newly renovated lower-level dining room seating 200 diners is expected to open in time for this year's holiday season. And next spring, when MGB's rooftop patio debuts, Clevelanders will be able to enjoy their meal and drinks while taking in one of the best views in the city.

For now, however, we remain focused on MGB's true calling. Yes, it's all about the beer. There's truly something here for everyone. In fact, the range of offerings can be a little overwhelming, and picking a favorite can be difficult—even for the guy who makes them. "It's like asking someone to pick their favorite child," said Tveekrem. "When someone asks me my favorite beer, I usually say, 'Whichever one is in front of me.'" ★



The large and rustic courtyard patio, complete with a huge wood-burning fireplace and overhead heaters, enables patrons to enjoy their beers outside even when the weather turns chilly.