

Arvada Beer sets roots in Olde Town

By Dick Kreck Special to The Denver Post The Denver Post
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A city of 104,000 souls, Arvada once had no breweries. Now it has two, thanks to the opening last month of Arvada Beer Co.

Arvada was microbeer-less until the Yak & Yeti, which is also a restaurant, replaced the long-gone Cheshire Cat.

Barely 1 month old, Arvada Beer opened in the heart of Olde Towne Arvada, the historic neighborhood (it's on the National Register of Historic Places) that has undergone a huge redevelopment recently with streetscaping and the influx of restaurants and shops. Even the venerable Arvada Tavern has been upgraded.

Cary Floyd, who co-owns ABC with his wife and fellow brewer, Kelly, has two great passions — brewing and helping restore Olde Town. Especially brewing. A homebrewer since 1994, Cary took the big leap into professional beer making in 2004. All he lacked was a place to do it.

After years of searching, he found the A.L. Davis Building, a 1916 beauty in the heart of Arvada that originally housed a pharmacy and a Ford dealership. It wasn't perfect. "We had to completely gut it, redo the electrical and install a sprinkler system," said Floyd, 50, who fled the world of computer software after almost two decades.

He loves, he said, "brewing to style," following standard recipes, beers that offer the proper balance of taste, aroma and appearance without any tricks or gimmicks. He has five regulars on tap — Olde Town Brown, Poolhall Porter, Ralston's Golden Ale, Goldline IPA and Wheat Tower Wheat, with the occasional dopplebock or seasonal thrown in. ABC's head brewer is Dennis O'Harrow, a veteran brewer trained in England.

The tasting room is large, 130 seats, and is packed on Friday and Saturday nights. Arvadans have discovered the place, but Floyd estimated that half his business comes from out of town. With a 10-year lease in his pocket, he's looking forward to the arrival of the Gold Line light-rail station, expected to be up and running in 2016, only a block away.

Arvada Beer, 5600 Old Wadsworth Blvd. (at Grandview) is open noon to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday. Food may be brought, and the TVs are mercifully silent except on football game days.

Seeing the dark

Imagine Danny Wang's excitement when his microbrewery on the Denver/Aurora border got invited to this year's "Parade of Darks," the beery counter-celebration to the annual Parade of Lights through downtown.

"It's pretty awesome," said Wang, who opened his Caution Brewing Co. in an industrial strip mall less than a year ago and who will play with the "big boys" at the Parade of Darks at Wynkoop Brewing in LoDo, starting at 1 p.m. Saturday. "It's cool to be included with the sheer giants. "

Wang will rub elbows with brewers and representatives from 31 breweries, including industry giants Deschutes, Firestone Walker, Sierra Nevada and Samuel Adams, and local biggies New Belgium, Odell, Avery, Breckenridge, Bull & Bush and Great Divide.

It's all for a good cause — Metro CareRing. Last year, the event raised \$13,900 in admissions and donations for the hunger-relief organization that operates one of Denver's largest food pantries.

Tickets for sampling more than 60 beers ranging from ambers to opaques are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. More info at wynkoop.com.

Beer notes

All in the family: William K. Busch, son of the late "Gussie" Busch — yes, that Busch family — is going out on his own with a new brewery in St. Louis. "We are not a brewpub or 'craft' brand brewer," Busch the younger said in a release. He's thinking big with his all-malt Kraftig lager and Kraftig light. For now, the beers, available only in St. Louis, are being made by City Brewing in LaCrosse, Wis., but plans are in the works for a large St. Louis facility and national distribution. ... The season for seasonals: Odell Brewing is out with the rich and roasty Mountain Standard Double Black IPA, and New Belgium has released its seasonal Frambozen, at a hefty 6.5 percent alcohol (by volume). ... Crazy Mountain Brewing in Edwards is launching a \$4.1 million expansion in preparation for national distribution. ... Quotable: "The problem with the designated driver program, it's not a desirable job. But if you ever get sucked into doing it, have fun with it. At the end of the night, drop them off at the wrong house." — Jeff Foxworthy.

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