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FEBRUARY 28, 2013 12:55 PM



(http://www.waltermagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/WALTER.RALEIGHBREW1.020713.JEL_.jpg)by Charles Upchurch
photographs by Juli Leonard

Don't look now, but Raleigh is sneaking up on Asheville for the title of craft beer capital of North Carolina. That calls for a cold pint of Hell Yes Ma'am.

Hell Yes Ma'am is one of six beers currently offered by Raleigh Brewing Company, the latest addition to the ranks of outstanding craft brewers and brewpubs in our metro area and the ninth by my count, not including those in Durham, Chapel Hill, and Hillsborough.

Raleigh Brewing is a brand-new 20,000-square-foot operation located in a Neil Street warehouse just off Hillsborough Street across from Meredith College. The brewery, featuring a taproom and event space, also houses Atlantic Brew Supply, a retail store serving home and commercial brewers throughout the country.

(http://www.waltermagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/WALTER.RALEIGHBREW2.020713.JEL_.jpg)Kristie and Patrik Nystedt founded Raleigh Brewing in 2010. Kristie, a former financial executive, serves as CEO, and Patrik, an accomplished home brewer, engineer, chemist and commercial pilot, acts as COO and technical manager. The Nysteds recruited local brewers John Federal, Alex Smith and Eddie Brown to complete the team and help create a variety of different beers.

"Our goal is to brew enough different styles of beer to have something for everyone," said Kristie. "We are very proud of our connection to the local brewing community and to Raleigh, both in our brand approach as well as our location."

The search for the right space to build the brewery and bar took nearly two years, during which time Patrik made trips overseas to monitor the construction of his custom-engineered brewing system.

On March 1, it will all be ready to roll. Raleigh Brewing Co. will open its doors and introduce six new beers, available in kegs, half-gallon jugs known as growlers, on draft in the taproom, and in local taverns around town:

Uncommon Curiosity is a nicely balanced lager that is light in both color and body, low in hop bitterness, with a crisp, easy-drinking finish. Perfect for anyone who normally prefers a standard macrobrew, but with just enough flavor and character to keep it interesting. 4.5-5 percent alcohol by volume.

City of Blokes is an English bitter in the middle of the flavor spectrum. Hints of roasted nuts and caramelized honey complement a round, earthy hop note. With a relatively low alcohol content of 3.8 percent, this full-flavored British session ale is designed for maximum drinkability. Blatherskite, a rich, malty Scottish ale, delivers caramel, toffee and honey, with low hopping rates that produce a surprisingly clean finish. Named in the Scottish vernacular for the bluster known to issue forth from a certain assembly hall on Jones Street, it has 5.3 percent alcohol by volume.

House of Clay is a robust (7.5 percent alcohol by volume) rye IPA that is dry hopped for five days for a nice, hoppy nose, accompanied by a subtle rye spice. The name is a nod to Shaw University, the oldest African-American University in the South, built from ground up with bricks fired from native clay.

Hidden Pipe is a robust porter, characterized by aromatic notes of cocoa, creamed coffee, espresso, molasses and blackberry, balanced by moderately high bitterness. Legend has it that during the Civil War, the Briggs family hid gold and silver in a hidden pipe beneath their hardware store on Fayetteville Street, eluding Union search and allowing Briggs Hardware to survive and thrive in Raleigh to this day. It's 6.5 percent alcohol by volume.

Hell Yes Ma'am is a dangerously drinkable Belgian Golden that packs a punch at 8.5 to 9 percent alcohol volume. Brewed with premium pilsner malt, organic cane sugar, noble hops, and an extremely complex Belgian yeast, this big golden ale is strong, fruity, spicy and pleasantly warming, with a dry, complex character.



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