

Craft breweries find a home in Northeast Central Durham

Triangle Brewing Co. and Fullsteam Brewery aim to capture the spirit of Durham

By Staff Writer Taylor Coil

Andy Miller and Rick Tufts, co-owners of Triangle Brewing Company, have been in Northeast Central Durham since the brewery's opening in 2007.

Miller said he and Tufts chose Northeast Central Durham for the location of Triangle Brewing Company because of its proximity to downtown and good water quality. Since Miller and Tufts wanted a large warehouse they could grow into, low rental costs were also a major factor in their decision.

"Since we're a production brewery, we don't need major frontage. All I need is a warehouse and water," Miller said.

Every Saturday, approximately 150 Durham residents come to Triangle Brewing Company for pingpong, darts and beer, said Miller. Many Saturday regulars at Triangle Brewing Company walk from Northeast Central Durham neighborhoods, especially Cleveland Holloway and Duke Park.

Sean Lilly Wilson, founder of Fullsteam Brewery, has noticed a similar trend. Wilson said that many of his patrons come from Northeast Central Durham and the Cleveland Holloway neighborhood in particular.

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Rick Tufts pours a glass of Triangle Brewing Company's India Pale Ale (Staff photo by Taylor Coil)

Wilson said that not everybody understands the spirit of Durham, which he hopes to reflect in the atmosphere of Fullsteam. Wilson does not target a specific demographic of people, but instead hopes that all Durham residents can feel welcome at Fullsteam.

The brewery is a spot for all Durham locals, and Wilson said 20 to 70-year-olds come in regularly. Families often bring children and dogs, and many host baby showers and birthday parties at the brewery.

"It's a bit of a home base for those folks," Wilson said.

Miller and Tufts said they have noticed a significant change in police presence in Northeast Central Durham in the past five years. Miller said they feel safer in Northeast Central Durham than they did in 2007 and hope to be able to remove the barbed wire surrounding the brewery soon.

"When we first opened up, we'd hear gunshots, what, every week? Not so much anymore. I haven't heard a gunshot in months," Miller said.

Increased police presence in Northeast Central Durham has allowed Fullsteam Brewery and Triangle Brewing Company to grow safely. Wilson said Fullsteam beer is sold in more than 100 restaurants and bars in the Triangle area, and Wilson wants to expand distribution to Charleston, S.C. Triangle Brewing Company's beers are sold as far east as

Wilson, N.C., and as far west as Boone, N.C., though mostly in the Triangle area, Miller said.

Both Fullsteam and Triangle Brewing Company have used Durham's history in the branding of their companies. Miller said all of Triangle Brewing Company's beers have aspects of the American Tobacco Company logo on their cans, but the bull is replaced with the Triangle Brewing Company logo.

"Anyone that grew up in Durham that remembers the American Tobacco Company, whenever they see that logo, they recognize it," Miller said.

Wilson said Fullsteam also incorporates historical aspects into the company's branding. The F in the Fullsteam logo is backward to signify looking to the past, and Wilson even uses historical recipes and ingredients like persimmons.

"We have a lot of interplay between looking backward and going forward. We have a nod to the past, but we're moving full steam ahead," Wilson said.

FOR MORE INFO ONLINE VISIT:

- <http://www.fullsteam.ag/>
- <http://www.trianglebrewery.com>
- <http://www.ncbeer.org/ncs-craft-breweries/>