

Bitchin' Brews: Funky Buddha Brewery

THE CONSUMPTION OF BEER in Broward County has always been great, especially if you count the millions of gallons quaffed by zealous Spring Breakers over many decades. But the creation of beer — especially craft beer? Not so great. Sure, for 20-plus years, a band of local homebrewers has been industriously imparting malty odors to their bathrooms. And a few ambitious types have enjoyed a modest success by producing their beers via contract brewers outside of the county. But attempts at establishing a thriving Broward brewpub (a brewery selling 25% or more of its beer onsite, according to the Brewers Association) have failed miserably. All throughout the 1990s, five separate owners tried their luck in a 10,000-square-foot space in Downtown Fort Lauderdale to no avail.

It took an enlightened pair, brothers Ryan and K.C. Sentz, coming from — of all places — Boca Raton to redirect Broward's bad beer karma. On June 1, the Funky Buddha Brewery debuted in the city of Oakland Park. Since 2010 in Boca, the Funky Buddha Lounge & Brewery has been offering its own culinary-inspired beer from a modest 55-gallon setup, more than 100 other craft brews, 40 teas, and hookah pipes galore. However, once the international beer geek community poured on the praise for its formidable Maple Bacon Coffee Porter, the Buddha knew it had to evolve in a big way.

Text Nina Korman



Pouring one of the 100 plus craft brews at Funky Buddha in Oakland Park.

With a 20,000-square-foot facility encompassing a 30-barrel (1,000 gallons) brewhouse and an expansive tap room, they're doing just that, becoming Broward's first production brewery, South Florida's largest, and the anchor for the nascent Oakland Park Culinary District. Beer is not being bottled just yet but is distributed to restaurants, bars and clubs, as well as sold on the premises. Open from noon to midnight daily, the tap room features ever-changing, intense draft brews including regulars such as wheaty Floridian Hefeweizen and piney Hop Gun India Pale Ale, plus limited releases such as the refreshing Cucumber Jones Saison and rich Nitro Espresso Porter.

But there is more to do at FB than drink: Tour the facility, play Bocce ball or Jenga, chow down from the food truck of the day (or bring your own food). And if you prefer to sip your suds at home, purchase a 32- or 128-ounce glass bottle known as a growler. The Buddha crew will sterilize it and then use a nifty contraption to fill it with the fresh beer of your choice. Ah, nirvana!

Funky Buddha Brewery
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In a setting that is relaxed and industrial, crowds gather to sample what the brewhouse has to offer.

P.S. On Saturday, October 19, hundreds of craft beers will pour in Coconut Grove's Peacock Park during the third annual Grovetoberfest. See Grovetoberfest.com for tickets and schedule.