



GALENA BREWING COMPANY

BY RICH BELMONT



When Warren and Kathy Bell established the Galena Brewing Company in 2009 in the former Furlong Funeral Chapel they envisioned operating a small brewery in which to showcase Warren's talents for making great

beer. There were no breweries in Galena even though over a century ago there had been at least nine of them.

The owners anticipated operating a small batch craft brewery with a tasting room where customers could sample different styles of beer while munching on some tapas style appetizers. Little did they know there was a fervent pent-up demand for a local brewery who would hand craft quality beers using no preservatives, pasteurization or additives.

Soon Galena residents and visitors alike were tasting fresh brewed beer the way it was meant to be enjoyed and Warren and Kathy knew they would have to expand. So a year ago last March they remodeled their craft brewery into a full bar with a 12 tap draft system. Their tasting room evolved into a 100 plus seat restaurant serving extraordinarily good food.

Warren is an electrical engineer who came to this country from Durban, South Africa in 1998. He is a technology consultant and is a recognized authority on the use of SAP (Systems, Applications and Products) data processing software. Since moving to Galena he has also become somewhat of an amateur Galena history buff and he used to be an enthusiastic home brewery hobbyist until he became a professional brewer.

Kathy is from LeClaire, Iowa and is an accountant. She specialized in public school accounting and was a Budget Analyst at California State University in Irvine, CA. Kathy is currently the brewery accountant and kitchen manager. Warren and Kathy operated the Captain Harris Guest House in Galena from 2003 to 2007.

When you visit Galena Brewing Company I suggest you check out the fascinating pictures of Galena history on the walls. Also the photographs featured on the beer bottle labels and 6 pack designs are actual historical photos from Galena. They are provided by the Alfred M. Mueller Collection. "Alfie" Mueller was a long-time resident of Galena who cherished its history and heritage.



David Hammel is the Restaurant & Bar Manager. He is from Dubuque and has been in the restaurant service industry most of his life including 9 years at Olive Garden. He took a short break from the restaurant business while he was a tennis coach at Loras College.

David is a talented and creative mixologist. Some of his most popular cocktails include:

- GBC Mai-Tai - vodka, rum, Malibu, Triple Sec, orange juice, pineapple juice, lemonade and grenadine.
- Bloody Mary - vodka and Bloody Mary mix with a few secret ingredients added for a special taste.
- Salted Caramel Apple Martini - vodka, apple pucker, salted caramel and lemonade.
- Raspberry Beer Shandy - the perfect blend of Galena Brewery's Farmer's Blonde Ale and raspberries. A Shandy is a beer mixed with a soft drink or juice. (Fun Fact: non-alcoholic shandies are known as Rock Shandies).

Kathy's daughter, Jayme Caspers, is responsible for Brewery Production and Distribution. She started working here when the brewery first opened over 6 years ago. She is also the graphics designer and has produced all of the marketing materials for the brewery.



Warren, the current Brewmaster and Jayme, the production specialist are fascinating people to talk to if you are at all interested in beer (either making it or drinking it). Each style of beer is mostly determined by the quality and quantity of the ingredients used. These include Malts, Grains, Hops, Sugars, Spices, Fruits and Yeasts. Many of these ingredients are supplied by the Country Malt Group - Midwest Division. By the way, I didn't know what hops were so I had to ask: they are flowers of the Hop Plant and are used as a flavoring and stability agent in beer.



There are six beers on tap that are House Selections and are always available. They range from light to dark beer and include:

- Farmer's Blonde Ale - a light crisp and refreshing malty flavor beer with no bitterness. It received the 2015 Gold Medal from the North American Brewers Association (NABA).
- Fevre River Ale - this is called a Hefe (pronounced heffy) ale. It is a cloudy Bavarian-style wheat beer with a medium-heavy mouthfeel. It is a Hefeweizen (hay-fuh-veyt-ssenn) meaning a cloudy wheat ale. This is truly an award winning brew having won the 2013 Bronze Medal and the 2014 Gold Medal from the NABA.
- Anna Belle's Indian Pale Ale (IPA) - this one is a hoppy beer style with citrus and piney hop flavors and finishes with a clean crisp bitterness. It was the 2013 NABA Gold Medal Winner.
- Uptown Brown - A Nut Brown Ale made with English hops and malt with aromas of roasted nuts and dry coffee. This one is an International award winner having received the 2012 Silver Medal from World Cup Beer.

There are also six Seasonals on tap. Since they are brewed to compliment the season they change often and are listed on the blackboard. On my last visit these included:

- Major Daviess - This American Wheat Ale is brewed with Horizon and Cascade hops and then finished with fresh citrus peel. Aromas of fresh oranges and zesty citrus compliment the clean and crisp finish.
- John Kelly's Dry - Irish-style Stout. English roasted and flaked barley lend a sharp, dry finish and smooth roasty, licorice-like quality to this light bodied stout.

When you are checking out the blackboard you will notice numbers for ABV and IBV.

- ABV = Alcohol by Volume. You should take note of these numbers so you are aware of how much alcohol you are consuming. Some of these brews have 6.8 and 7% alcohol content.
- IBV - International Bitterness Units. This is a measure of how hoppy a beer is. The higher the number the more hops resulting in increased bitterness.

Some of the beer is aged in recycled oak barrels. This brewery has been using Bourbon, Rye Whiskey, Brandy, Gin and Kentucky Bourbon barrels.

After all this talk about beer you may have forgotten I stated this Brewery is also a great place to get exceptional food. And it's also a little unusual. That's because there is no frying or grilling done in this kitchen. Everything is baked or roasted and I must say they have baking and roasting down to a science.



If you don't believe me try the Baked Chicken Wings: meaty wings are marinated in apple cider overnight then partially baked. When you order them you choose either no sauce or Sriracha, Buffalo, BBQ or Garlic

Parmesan. The sauce is then slathered on the wings and they are baked again until they are done but still juicy.

You will also know why I say these people are baking experts when you have some French fries. They are sprinkled with a special house seasoning and baked in convection ovens and served hot and crispy.

Several appetizers are available as starters or as snacks to go along with some serious beer drinking. The Baked Pretzel is fun to eat. You pull it apart with your fingers and dip it in your choice of sauces. This pretzel is impressive because it weighs over 2 pounds! Don't worry, though, you can take whatever you don't eat home and heat it up in a 325° oven for a few minutes and it will taste like you just baked it.

Beer Cheese Nachos are delicious. The chips are dressed with a tasty taco ground beef marinated in Miner's Treasure amber beer.



The Hefe (Heffy) Lime Nachos are chips topped with chicken roasted in Fevre River Ale (Hefeweizen) smothered in beer cheese sauce and sprinkled with pico di gallo.

The sandwiches are all excellent. The Miner's Treasure Pulled Pork is made from hand pulled pork roasted low and slow with Amber Ale BBQ sauce.



The Beef & Portabella sandwich is a wonderful combination of roast beef and roasted portabella mushrooms, roasted sweet peppers and Swiss cheese on a French roll.

The Italian Beef is a French roll generously stuffed with beer braised roast beef with pepperoncini peppers served with an Italian seasoned au jus.



Members of my tasting team really liked the fabulous Flat Breads. I expected them to go for the meat like the Brewmaster's Choice with ham, bacon, jalapeños, red onions and mozzarella Colby jack cheese blend. Or the Philly Beef & Bleu with roast beef, jalapeño cheese sauce, bleu cheese crumbles,

roasted peppers, red onion and the mozzarella cheese blend. But they surprised me by raving about the Veggie Flat Bread. It contained portabella mushrooms, scallions, roasted tomatoes, mozzarella and Colby jack with a balsamic glaze.

All the Wraps and Salads are good too. Especially the Turkey Cranberry with sliced turkey breast, cranberry, avocados and cream cheese spread with lettuce, red onions, minced walnuts and dried cranberries rolled up with a homemade cranberry sauce.

My favorite salad had Buffalo Chicken. The buffalo sauce is poured over crispy chicken tenders and baked when the salad is ordered. Then they are tossed into fresh mixed greens, tomatoes, red onions, cucumbers, carrots and mozzarella Colby jack cheese.

Growlers are typically glass or ceramic refillable jugs used to transport "draft beer to go". So not only does the Galena Brewing Company sell growlers but they are sold at a huge discount on Thirsty Thursdays.

Galena Brewing Company is proud to be collaborating with Jo Daviess Conservation Group (www.jdcf.org). This organization is dedicated to preserving natural habitat in the Galena Territories. The Brewery is donating the grains and brewing Major Daviess Summer Ale now available in many bars and retail stores in Galena and Dubuque. All proceeds from the sale are used to support land preservation.



Friday and Saturday are Live Music nights at Galena Brewing Company. Come out and enjoy splendid brews along with some outstanding food accompaniments while listening to some great local musicians.

The Galena Brewing Company has it all: Fresh Brewed Beer, Great Food, Good Music and Good Times!

GALENA BREWING COMPANY

227 N. MAIN STREET, GALENA, IL 61036
815-776-9917 • GALENABREWERY.COM

Hours: Mon-Thu: 4-9 PM; Fri-Sat: 11 AM-11 PM
Sun: 11 AM-9 PM

Dining Style: Come as you are

Noise Level: Conversational

Recommendations: House & Seasonal Brews, Baked Pretzel, Beer Cheese Nachos, Baked Wings, Vegetarian Flat Bread, Buffalo Chicken Salad, Beef & Portabella Sandwich, Turkey Cranberry Wrap, Cod Filet

Liquor Service: Full Bar, 12 beers on tap, non-alcoholic and gluten free beer, hard cider

Prices: \$6.95-\$16.95

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards except AMEX, Local Checks Only

Accessibility: Front door & restrooms

Kids Policy: Menu; High Chairs & Boosters

Catering: In-house only • **Take Out:** Yes

Delivery: No • **Parking:** On Street