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New brewery Wander Back Beerworks to open in Vineland

Three former Cape May Brewing Co. staffers are teaming up to embrace the 'agricultural side of beer' in South Jersey.



BY **MICHAEL TANENBAUM** - *PhillyVoice Staff*



Wander Back Beerworks is an upcoming brewery in Vineland, New Jersey led by three former brewers at Cape May Brewing Co. The company's first beers will be distributed in South Jersey beginning in late May.

South Jersey's beer scene will have a newcomer in May with the opening of Wander Back Beerworks, a brewery founded by three former staffers of Cape May Brewing Co.

The Vineland-based company will be just the second beer maker in Cumberland County, joining Millville's Glasstown Brewery. Wander Back Beerworks will begin distributing its first two beers — Wanderback Lager and Perfectly Cromulent IPA — in late May. A third beer, Future Proof Pils, will follow soon after.

The initial plan is to begin distribution in Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland and Gloucester Counties.

"We'll get the beer into the bars and restaurants for folks to try and then go to find it on the shelf, and vice-versa, then, once they know who we are and what we're about, we'll open our tasting room," said Justin Vitti, who formerly served as Cape May Brewing Co.'s general manager of sales and distribution.

Vitti is partnering with Cape May Brewing Co. co-founder Christopher Henke and former Cape May head brewer Brian Hink.

The trio said they settled on the brewery's name based on their history in the industry and their wish to explore new ideas.

"Part of our mentality is that we're traditional brewers, but finding a way forward," Henke said. "We were wandering back to beer and wandering back to some of our first friends in brewing. It worked out."

The choice of Vineland stemmed from the industry's relative void in the area, which welcomed the addition of a brewery that can grow in the community and eventually open a tasting room that serves as an attraction. Vineland's agricultural resources and proximity to Rabbit Hill Farms in nearby Shiloh will allow the brewery to use locally grown and malted grains.

Wander Back is temporarily brewing out of Hidden Sands Brewing Co.'s facility in Egg Harbor Township while the company secures a location in Vineland.

"Once I heard the guys that were from a very well-regarded craft brewing company were looking to start a brewery of their own, we wanted to do all we could to make sure they came to Vineland," said Sandy Forosisky, the city's director of economic development. "Entrepreneurs and small business owners are critical to the city's economy and culture."

Wander Back's mix of beers will focus on "the agricultural side of beer" and appealing to a broad palette.

"There's so much overly sweet, overly juicy, overly hoppy beer out there, and, at the end of the day, we wanted our beer to be appreciated by everyone, not just one segment or group of beer drinkers," Vitti said. "We wanted to make it stand out on the shelf and be technically sound but also enjoyable and approachable. We just want drinkability: beer that tastes like beer."

In January, New Jersey's beer industry was [given a lift by the passage of a law](#) that loosens heavily restrictive regulations that had hampered many small and independent craft breweries. The law allows brewers to manufacture more beer, hold more events and distribute more of their products directly to retailers instead of relying on wholesalers.

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