



Where There's a Will (Kemper), There's a Way

Two Breweries, Two Brewers, One Man's Legacy

BY KENDALL JONES

JOSH PFRIEM ▶ PFRIEM FAMILY BREWERS

Like many other professional brewers, Josh Pfriem started brewing at home while he was in college and quickly recognized that his hobby was his destiny. "I knew after brewing that first batch of beer that I wanted to be a brewmaster and own my own brewery," he says. "That started me on a career path of working at breweries by day and continuing to educate myself about beer and brewing by night."

Pfriem's first professional brewing gig was at Utah Brewers Cooperative, but it was at Chuckanut Brewery in Bellingham, Washington, that he really began to diversify his skill set. He began brewing alongside Chuckanut's co-founder, Will Kemper, shortly after the brewery opened in 2008. As head brewer, Pfriem helped put the brewery on the map, earning four medals at the Great American Beer Festival in 2009.

His time at Chuckanut Brewery offered two valuable opportunities. First, he was there as the brewery and business took shape. Second, he worked closely with Kemper, a Northwest brewing legend, who co-founded Thomas Kemper Brewing in 1985 and later spent two decades consulting on craft brewery projects around the world.

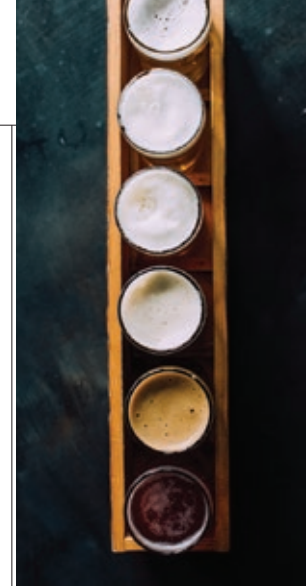
"I was able to see and work through all of the risks and rewards that go into starting a brewery," Pfriem says. "I also worked very closely with Will and Mari Kemper, who had a wealth of experience in the brewing industry."

He accepted a position with Full Sail Brewing in Hood River, Oregon, and shortly thereafter opened pFriem Family Brewers in 2012, his own award-winning brewery in the same town. "I am the brewmaster at pFriem, we have a lot of really talented folks here, and I see myself as their coach," Pfriem says.

KEVIN DAVEY ▶ WAYFINDER BEER

While attending brewing school at Chicago's Seibel Institute, Kevin Davey knew exactly what he wanted to do and where he wanted to do it. His penchant for German-style lagers found him knocking continuously on Will Kemper's door, recognizing that Chuckanut Brewery was dominating the lager categories at the nation's most-prestigious beer competitions.

His perseverance paid off and he landed a position at Chuckanut Brewery, training to take over for head brewer Josh Pfriem. "Those were some big shoes to fill," says Davey. "But I think I did a pretty good job."



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In 2011 Davey and his team at Chuckanut won four medals at the Great American Beer Festival and secured the title of Best Small Brewery of the Year.

After two years he decided to try his hand at a bigger brewery, Firestone Walker Brewing in Paso Robles, California. Turns out, his attachment to the Pacific Northwest was stronger than he knew and it didn't take long for homesickness to deliver Davey back to Seattle where he accepted a position brewing at Gordon Biersch. Once again, he found himself doing what he loves: winning national awards for his German-style lagers.

The two-year itch caught up with him again when he was recruited as brewmaster at Portland's Wayfinder Beer. Since beginning brewing in June 2017, Wayfinder Beer has also earned the admiration of local beer lovers. ●

