

CAPE MAY

BREWING COMPANY

College buds' suds becoming the hot local beer

By Josh Kinney

*The Cape May IPA,
Wheat, and Stout,
brewed to perfection.*

What started as a couple of college friends brewing their own beer in the backyard of their Avalon home at 22nd and the bay is quickly becoming the local brew of Cape May County.

Just one year ago, Villanova graduates Ryan Krill and Chris Henke took the first steps toward starting their own brewery after being introduced to the craft by Chris' roommate, Fred: They acquired the rights to the name, The Cape May Brewery, applied for a license and started looking for a suitable location.

"It's the perfect timing for this sort of thing," says Bob Krill, Ryan's dad, who helped fund the county's first and only microbrewery. The idea originated with Ryan, the company's planner and vibrantly outgoing personality. Henke, who has a mechanical-engineering degree from Villanova, adds his skills to the group. And with Bob's carpentry and funds, the group is an ideal fit, each bringing a special and important skill set to the table. For Henke, the Cape May Brewery is a full-time job. Ryan, who has a master's degree from NYU, works at a large bank in Manhattan during the week. On the weekends, he's working at his new brewery at the Jersey Cape. "We all come from different walks of life," says the elder Krill, who has a degree in psychology.

Ryan and his dad built the

fermentation room and Henke constructed the brewing machine from scratch.

"Our short-term goal is to get some tours, test tasting, and people to start asking about it," the younger Krill says.

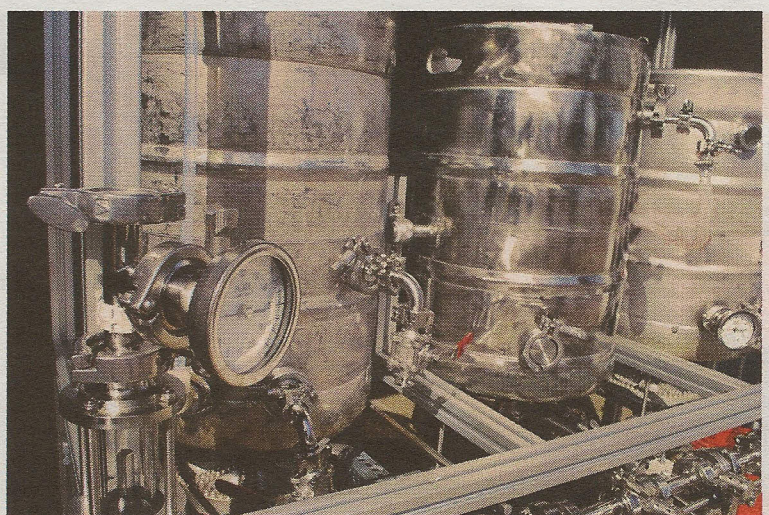
Just off Breakwater Road by the Cape May County Airport is where the brewing has begun. These brewers thrive on the most logical and economical means of producing their beer, focusing solely on efficiently fermenting the best quality possible.

The brewery is a laid-back, casual work environment, but great patience and precision are required to make the freshest quality beer. "That's our goal," Krill says, "to make the best beer we possibly can."

And he means it. If the quality isn't perfect, they toss it. Rather than money, these brewers are focused exclusively on excellence. Registered brands include Cape May Wheat, Cape May Stout and the Cape May IPA (Indian Pale Ale), an American IPA by style but with a reduced hop and bitterness in order to make a beer that is more "sessionable," meaning the taste buds don't get worn out from drinking more than one, or a session, of them, making the Cape May IPA an easily drinkable beer. For a nonfilter beer, their IPA is very clear and they try to make it that way. From start to finish, a batch of beer takes about three weeks to make. From there it will take about four hours to



The team raises a glass to their new exciting endeavor of brewing the local beer of Cape May County. Bob Krill (left), Chris Henke, and Ryan Krill (right), each use their unique skills for bringing about the new brewery.



The brewing machine, built entirely from scratch by engineer Chris Henke, provides the precision necessary to produce what this team hopes to become the summertime beer of the Jersey Cape.

brew and the rest of the time is spent in fermentation, carbonation and cleaning the beer in the fermentation tanks.

"The beer has to be exact and perfect," Bob Krill says. "If you don't put absolute perfection into what you're doing, then just make beach chairs."

Just one month after Cape May Brewing got the license to brew, Cabanas Beach Bar and Grill in Cape May became the first to have it on tap. The first night, two of the four kegs were gone, and five were gone in less than three days.

"It's flying out of here," Cabanas owner George Kelly says. "We're thrilled to have it."

Coming straight from the brewery, the perfected beer is sure to be one of the county's new favorites.

"We're building a beer the local people like," Bob Krill says. "The local people want a local beer."

The brewery has quickly started a strong following, from the customers at Cabanas to the people on the Seven Mile Island asking about it and the few hundred Facebook fans. They hope to migrate their beer up the coast to Avalon and Stone Harbor.

"The beer captured the unique taste of an IPA without containing the strong bitter hoppy taste afterward," said Matt Worrell, a Philadelphia-area blogger. "I usually don't enjoy the harsh taste of an IPA because of the strong aftertaste but the Cape May IPA had a unique initial taste without the bitter finish."

The beer itself offers a more complicated taste than most other summer beers, while still maintaining a lighter, easily drinkable body. It offers a complex taste for the experienced beer drinker, while not being too harsh for someone just looking for a unique beer to enjoy while out on a summer night.

"We're taking our time with it, keeping the customers that we do have happy," says Ryan Krill, who's intent on making the perfect brew, tweaking it to the customers' desire. For now, the focus is getting kegs on tap because it's not too labor intensive and is what's economical. However, in the future they hope to produce a bottling line and cases. In the short term, this fall the brewery will be producing its own cranberry and pumpkin ale. This September, the Cape May Brewery Company will be sponsoring the MS bike

ride from Cherry Hill to Ocean City.

A lot goes into making a genuine craft beer, and a lot can go wrong. But the Krills and Henke are students of the craft, reading a book a week on the brewing process, and enjoying themselves as they work. Ryan says that the goal was "to have as much fun as possible."

"It's such a cool idea. You do this for a living and you'll never have to work a day in your life," says Bob, who has been thrilled to hang out with his son and Henke, who are in their late-20s. "They couldn't have dreamed up a better thing."

The Cape May Brewery will be open for tours once a month, with half-gallon growlers to go, T-shirts, hats and Frisbees for purchase. Be sure to check its Facebook page and website for times.

Josh Kinney is a recent graduate of Asbury University and avid social media fan who spends his summers at the Jersey Shore. He has interned for The Daily Caller in Washington and hopes to follow journalism where ever it leads him as well as publish his novels.

