



7 HILLS BREWING COMPANY

BY RICH BELMONT

I don't like the word Gastropub. To me it sounds like some kind of illness. However, there is no question the latest Brewpub that opened on Aug. 21, 2017 at the corner of 11th and Washington Sts. in the Millwork District of Dubuque is way more Gastropub than Brewpub.

So what's the difference you ask? Simply put, a Brewpub is a bar selling beer it brews on the premises. A Gastropub is a restaurant dedicated to serving not only quality food but also fresh, quality beer to go with it. The Gastropub is a cross between a casual and fine dining restaurant with an emphasis on beer and food compatibility.

7 Hills Brewing Company is a perfect example of the Gastropub because it offers a fusion of carefully designed and crafted beers brewed on-site and expertly prepared made-from-scratch food devised to pair well with the beer. Some examples are the Beer Battered Onion Rings, Pretzel Sticks served with Red Ale Beer Cheese, Crab Cakes mixed with IPA Spent Grain, Sliced Ham with Red Ale Beer Cheese and Beer Flavored Bratwurst. I think you get the idea!

7 Hills Brewing Company is named after the oldest nickname for Dubuque. Of course the city is known today as the Masterpiece on the Mississippi. After 1854 it was called The Key City but before that people referred to Dubuque as the 7 Hills.

This Gastropub is owned by Keith Gutierrez (goo-tee-air-es). He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and a Master's in Occupational Therapy. He cannot explain why, but he has always been drawn to bars and restaurants. He worked in several of them including Bricktown, Lot One and Courtside.

He took over the building in the summer of 2016. It had originally been one of several buildings of the wooden window and door manufacturing company owned by William Wyatt Carr and John Taylor Adams. James Currie Collier became a business partner in 1895 and years later the name was changed to Carr, Adams, Collier Co. (CARADCO). The dining area of the restaurant is located in what was initially an outdoor lumber storage yard. After the Dubuque flood on April 26, 1965 the floor was raised and in the 1980s Eagle Window and Door had a paint line in the building. Prior to Keith occupying the building it was used as an auto storage garage.

Keith took a year to completely renovate the property in order to turn it from an auto garage into a beautiful modern brewery and restaurant.

The restorative process had to conform to strict standards for historical buildings. Some of the major projects included:

- Corncob blasting the ceiling and all woodwork.
- Chemically stripping the interior brick walls which were painted white and blue returning them to their natural color.
- Reinforcing six of the wooden pillars by digging under them and pouring concrete foundations several feet deep necessary to support the roof.
- Repointing all interior and exterior brick at a cost of \$120,000.
- Installing an entire brewing system costing \$600,000.
- Installing a complete commercial kitchen priced close to \$200,000.

The total cost for this project came in at approximately 3 million dollars!

Considering the size of this investment it was important for Keith to assemble a primary staff of experts. His key personnel are all talented, experienced and creative professionals:

- Executive Chef – Tim Conklin. He was the Manager of Yardarm in Dubuque for 10 years. He then attended and graduated from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Mendota Heights, MN.
- Brewmaster – Sean Carter. He holds an International Diploma in Brewing Technology from the Siebel Institute of Technology, Chicago. As part of his training he attended the Doemens Academy in Munich, Germany where he was provided a truly international education in brewing technology. Sean has received many citations for the



design and brewing of specialty beer. Two of his most recent awards are a World Beer Cup Silver Award from the Brewers Association and a North American Brewers Award.

- General Manager – Megan Carter. She worked at Goose Island Pub, Chicago. She was Events Coordinator and Catering Manager at Eagle Ridge Resort and a former Manager at the Diamond Jo Casino and Galena Brewing Company. Oh, and she is also Sean's wife!
- Assistant Brewer – Brian Zeimet. He was a Lead Bartender at Lot One and has been a home brewer for over a decade.

(Fun Fact: Both Sean and Brian can be considered Cicerones. A sommelier is an expert in selecting, acquiring and serving fine wine. A cicerone is the beer equivalent to a sommelier.)

The Brewery can produce 30 kegs of beer at one time. There are six fermenters over 14 feet in height and 600 kegs can be stored in the beer cooler.

All of Sean's brews are unpasteurized and filtered. There are seven standard beers (one for each of the 7 Hills) and currently three seasonal beers. A pumpkin ale is coming soon. Some of the brews are served in 17.5 oz. beer mugs and some are served in 16 oz. tulips. I recommend sampling four of Sean's masterpieces by ordering the Flight of 4. Any four of your choices are served in a rack of 5 oz. beer taster glasses.



Sean also has fun brewing other beverages in addition to beer. Right now he has Blue Raspberry and Orange Cream sodas available. He also makes a 7 Hills Ginger Citrus Twist Kombucha. OK, I didn't know what this is either so I had to ask. Kom-boo-cha is a fermented, slightly effervescent sweetened black or green tea refreshing beverage.



The Pub Menu offers a variety of selections as close to fine dining as a Gastropub gets. Here are some of the highlights:

- Soft Pretzel Sticks – They are already a pub favorite. Served with Red Ale Beer Cheese and IPA Spicy Mustard.
- Beer Nuts – Mixed nuts roasted and tossed in a sweet and salty somewhat spicy seasoning.
- Piggy Pops – Miniature Pork Shanks tossed in a delicious berry sauce.
- Crab Cakes – These are excellent and unusual! Real Jumbo Lump Crab is mixed with bread crumbs and toasted spent grain used to make IPA beer.
- Hummus – Chickpeas and Tahini Paste are blended with lemon juice and other ingredients. Tah-hee-nee is made from toasted ground sesame seeds and olive oil.

The Brisket Burgers are quickly gaining a reputation as some of the best hamburgers in Dubuque. Chef Tim purchases a special Brisket and Sirloin Blend from Iowa Premium Beef Company in Tama, IA. They are cooked to medium well temperature on a flat top grill. The 7 Hills Burger is the most popular. It is topped with bacon, beer cheese and a beer battered onion ring.



TIM CONKLIN, SEAN CARTER, KEITH GUTIERREZ, AND MEGAN CARTER

The Pretzel Crust Pizzas are all first class and highly unusual. The dough is made in house and hand tossed into a thin crust. The ingredients are all extremely fresh. For example the pizza sausage is made from cut up and ground pork shoulder in house with homemade seasonings. How's this for an uncommon pizza? The Richie Rich has a spinach cream sauce, lump crab meat, spinach, fire roasted tomatoes, red onions and a balsamic drizzle.



If you like salads may I suggest the Smoked Salmon? Atlantic Salmon is prepared in a candy brine made from sweeteners including honey, then smoked and covered with a candy glaze. It is placed on mixed greens along with toasted chickpeas, red onions, cucumber and Feta cheese.

The sandwiches are exceptional. These are a few of my favorites:

- Pulled Pork – Pork Shoulder is massaged with a house rub. Then it is smoked and braised in cola for a tender, sweet flavor. It is topped with a mild BBQ sauce and topped with a very compatible coleslaw.
- Beer Brat – The pork is ground in house and stuffed into a casing. It is mild and has a distinct beer taste.
- Ham and Beer Cheese – Bone-in smoked ham is hand-carved and covered with Red Ale Beer Cheese and placed on a Pretzel Roll.
- Chicken Fried Hot – I love this one! A breaded chicken breast is fried then tossed in a wonderful tasty hot sauce and topped with thick cut bacon, pepper jack cheese, lettuce, tomato and a side of ranch dressing. It's impossibly messy but oh so good!



Don't forget to have some ice cream! Lactose free soft serve is just the thing to top off a fine meal. For a limited time enjoy Orange Cream Ice Cream reminiscent of Dreamcicles from years ago.

When you visit 7 Hills Brewing Company be prepared to have a lot of fun. The tables are bench or German style for accommodating large groups. There are live bands on Friday and Saturday nights. Check the website for dates.

There is free Wi-Fi and starting next week you can relax in the sidewalk café offering table service. Just go to the hostess stand inside and request outside seating.

I predict you will have such a good time at 7 Hills Brewing Company you will be bragging to all your friends you were there. So be sure to check out the shirts, hats, growlers and glasses in the display case. You will want everyone to know you go where they too can be "Unapologetically Individualistic"

7 HILLS BREWING COMPANY

1085 WASHINGTON ST, DUBUQUE, IA 52001
563-587-8306 • 7HILLSBREW.COM

Hours: Sun–Thu: 11 AM–11 PM; Fri–Sat: 11 AM–Close
Kitchen Closes 10 PM every night

Dining Style: Come As You Are

Noise Level: Loud

Recommendations: All Beer, Pretzel Sticks, Piggy Pops, Crab Cakes, Beer Nuts, Brisket Burgers, Pretzel Crust Pizzas, Beer Brat, Pulled Pork, Chicken Fried Hot Sandwich, Beer Mac N' Cheese, Smoked Salmon Salad

Liquor Service: All Beer on Tap, Craft Cocktails

Prices: \$9.95–\$15.95

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, NO Checks, ATM on Premises

Accessibility: Ramp to Front Door, All 3 Restrooms

Kids Policy: Ask Server for options including corn dogs and chicken strips
High Chair–Yes, Booster–No

Reservations: No • **Catering:** No • **Take Out:** Yes

Delivery: No • **Parking:** On Street