

# Something's brewing

## Island business taps into home-grown suds market

By LYNNE HUMMELL  
Packet staff writer

The first brewery in South Carolina since Prohibition is scheduled to open today on Hilton Head Island.

Bill Herbkersman, his brother Marty Herbkersman, and pizza guru Steve Carb and Tony Arcuri, partners in the business, are proud to own the state's first "brewhouse" license. Their operation, Hilton Head Brewing Co. Restaurant and Brewhouse, opens tonight with little pretense but much excitement.

A brew pub manufactures its own beer on site; sells the brew only at the establishment; and also offers a full food menu. According to Bill Herbkersman, there are "500 brew pubs in the United States, and one in South Carolina — us."

The "microbrewery" will produce beer and ale in small quantities. Its products will be sold to distributors for local sales. Restaurants also can contract with the brewery to make an exclusive brew with the restaurant's label. A similar brewery is set to open in Bluffton, operated by a separately owned corporation with which the partners are associated.

Brew pubs are limited by law to producing 2,000 barrels a year. The local operation will produce 1,000 barrels annually. The Bluffton brewery will be limited to 15,000 barrels. The two operations will produce different beers.

The state law governing the making and selling of beer was modified this past July. The three-tiered law stated that a beer manufacturer could not be a distributor, a distributor could not be a retailer, and a retailer could not be either of the other two. The new law amends the last clause to allow the retailer to be a brew pub, and therefore a manufacturer.

"I've been following brew pubs and microbreweries for years," Bill Herbkersman said, "just waiting for the law to change."

The "brewhouse license," as it is known, was not easy to come by. "The state ABC Commission received 500 to 1,000 inquiries when (the law) changed," Herbkersman said. "But they sent out only 40 applications. I think when some of the applicants saw how long the



Marty Herbkersman checks some of the beer he is brewing at the Hilton Head Brewing Company.

Brian LaPeter/The Island Packet

process would be, they lost interest."

Of those 40, the Hilton Head Brewing Co. principals were first to complete the necessary paperwork and filing requirements. The partners got their license in November.

"There were so many gray areas, because there was no precedent," Herbkersman said. "But the state ABC has been extremely helpful. They were glad to give us the first license. I think they were as excited as we were. The guy who actually handed it to me waved it around in the air shouting 'This is it! The first one!'"

Marty Herbkersman said the regu-

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### Local 'micro' recipes favor quality, taste

By LYNNE HUMMELL  
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At Hilton Head Brewing Co., three beers — or more specifically, ales — will be brewed on site. Marty Herbkersman, master brewer, developed the brew pub's recipes will oversee all aspects of the brewing. Herbkersman, who has long been a homebrewing enthusiast, studied commercial brewing in a comprehensive 12-day school given by a brewery consultant in West Virginia.

"What microbeers offer first is flavor," Herbkersman said. "They are different from domestic or imported bottled or draft beer. There are no additives and no preservatives, although hops is a natural preservative. This is the freshest beer you can drink. It is brewed right here, and you drink it right here." The beer can't be sold off the premises, according to law.

The brewery on site will brew three varied ales.

Goosed Golden Ale is medium bodied and lightly hopped. Herbkersman said it will be a good starter for someone new to "microbrewed" beverages. Hammerhead Red is amber colored, a little more "hopped" and slightly heavy bodied. Old Duck Dark, which is darker in color, lightly hopped and heavier bodied, will appeal to lovers of darks and stouts. The beers are brewed for quality, and are meant to be tasted rather than chugged.

The brewery is contained within a 500-square-foot area near the bar, and is visible from nearly every seat in the 150-seat establishment.

The brewing process begins in two 210-gallon brew kettles, where Herbkersman puts in the ingredients at the proper times. "The four major ingredients are barley, hops, yeast and water," he said. "Hops is very important. When it is added early, it adds a degree of bitterness, determined by the amount. When I add it in the last 10 minutes of boil, it gives

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