

# Got Beer? The Malted Barley

When I first saw the signs on the Kinsley building for the new Malted Barley, I was as giddy as a schoolgirl. Well, after months of waiting on the edge of my seat, it's finally open. They announced that they were officially open on March 11, but the craft beer hangout had been letting in curious and adventurous beer snobs for about a week beforehand as part of a quiet soft open. It showed, too, as I cruised through the door a hair before noon and was struck by that lovely new bar smell: fresh varnish and cut lemons.

The original Malted Barley in Westerly has been one of the best craft beer destinations since it opened. Serving only gourmet pretzels and sporting a lovely selection of taps, the original Barley won over the craft beer scene instantly. A location in downtown Providence, and on Westminster no less, was music to my ears. Between the new Doherty's that is walking distance from where I live and now an MB right in the heart of downtown where I frequently find myself searching for parking, apparently I can't turn around without a craft beer bar opening behind me. I won't complain, and I don't think any of you will either.

The bar itself has a nice earthy vibe with the polished wood bar and barn-like decor against a clean, bright robin's egg blue paint scheme. There's even a rope strung across some old pulleys over the tap lines. It's somewhat of an oddity compared to some of the other spots in downcity, striving for a rustic vibe in stark contrast to its neighbors like Aurora or Aspire.

Between bottles and taps, the selection features fermented favorites both local and regional, with a few highly praised national craft beer names thrown in for good measure. Friendly, cool bartenders will gladly talk beer with you, which is the mark of a good beer bar, and the energy was very much that of a relaxed gathering of like-minded lovers of good beer.

Their coffee is provided by Dave's coffee, as it says on the giant mugs, so in case you need a pick-me-up, the bowl of rich dark goodness is there. If it had wifi, I'd never leave.

And the pretzels... Oh my, the pretzels. The original Barley focused exclusively on gourmet, interesting and delicious pretzels, providing something more than just a simple bar snack, but a palate-pleasing adventure. The new location keeps that spirit, but also provides sandwiches, soup and more.

They also have a focus on craft cocktails, since this is downtown Providence and there always will be those people along for the ride who need their espresso-martini fix. Though why you wouldn't want a nice coffee porter on a nitro tap instead is beyond me, but then again, I also don't get the big deal behind Nutella. So what do I know?

So check it out for yourself, especially if you find yourself craving a jalapeño-cheese-stuffed excuse to take a long lunch with a tall dark glass of something sweet and malty.

*Malted Barley, 334 Westminster, Providence*