

Pivotal Brewing: Dropping anchor in downtown Bristol

In 2019, **Todd Nicholson** and **Rebecca Ernst** made the courageous decision to quite literally “pivot” from their 9-to-5s to go all in on their dream of owning a brewery. “We were at pivotal points in our lives. Todd was between jobs and I was looking to transition out of my job in the event industry, so Pivotal Brewing Company was born,” says Ernst.

Pivotal joins Twelve Guns and Six Pack Brewing as Bristol’s third brewery. The newest edition to the thriving East Bay brewery scene has found a home in a repurposed mill building – similar to The Guild Warren, which opened in 2021 in the Tourister Mill development in nearby Warren.

Launching with three carefully crafted beers, Pivotal was welcomed by its new neighbors on Wood St. when the brewery opened Thanksgiving weekend. Ernst & Nicholson weren’t sure what to expect for a turnout but were pleasantly surprised by the range of guests, from locals to RWU students to neighbors from the assisted living community next door. “It has been an amazing experience so far,” Ernst says. Flowing on the taps was flagship “Hello My Name Is Pivotal,” a Double IPA, “ESB,” Extra Special Bitter English ale, and “Sippican Fruit Salad,” a sour. Each beer represents the co-owners’ and head brewer’s specific tastes in beer. The plan is to have up to 12 different beers available in seasons to come.

An unmistakable smoke stack marks the entrance of Pivotal Brewing. The repurposed mill space is wide open with 40 foot ceilings and an array of quirky and comfy fittings. Ernst has adorned the walls with art from her hometown of New Orleans, LA and is still seeking art from locals to give the space an eclectic, funky feel. In warmer months an outdoor beer garden will be open for summer activities including a party for Bristol’s famous 4th of July parade.

In the meantime guests are encouraged to get comfy and stay a while. The brewery is dog-friendly, even indoors, catering to the K-9-forward community. Food options are available from nearby restaurants such as Common Pub and Brick Pizza Co. Food truck collabs and pop-ups are also in the works for warmer months to come.

Learn more at pivotalbrewing.com