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Local Food Group and Great Basin Brewing Company Announce Merger

Craft Beer Pioneers Tom and Bonda Young Pass The Torch

RENO, Nev. (September 15, 2021) – The first beer that Tom Young homebrewed didn't quite impress his wife, Bonda — in fact, she made him pour it down the drain. Yet, he kept at it, methodically working to perfect his brews where he would go on to win local, state and even national homebrew competitions. In 1991, when he was laid off as a geologist for a large mining company, Tom and Bonda decided to make his passion for brewing their livelihood. They teamed up with local homebrewer Eric McClary and Cami Prenn and began planning their new endeavor.

Unfortunately, at the time, the prohibition-era laws in the state of Nevada prohibited breweries from operating. They pressed on undeterred, working with state legislators and other local beer lovers to change the laws so that they could realize their dream. After years of work, Great Basin Brewing Company had their grand opening in Sparks, Nevada on December 4, 1993.

"When we first opened, most people thought that beer came in one flavor: fizzy yellow," said Tom Young, Brewmaster and Founder of Great Basin Brewing Company. "We honestly had no idea if anyone outside a handful of homebrewers would enjoy a full-flavored, hoppy IPA."

Fortunately, Great Basin's brews were enthusiastically received by locals raving over their first Brewmaster's Special, Ichthyosaur "ICKY" IPA®. More success followed less than a year later when, in 1994, the brewery won their first two medals at the prestigious Great American Beer Festival® — Gold for Cerveza Chilebeso® in the Herb and Spice category and Bronze for Wild Horse Ale in the Altbier category. The fledgling craft brewery wouldn't be a stranger to awards over the next 28 years. To date they've racked up 16 Great American Beer Festival® medals and 9 World Beer Cup® awards, becoming one of the most award-winning craft breweries in America.

The demand for their craft beer was so high that Great Basin Brewing Company expanded in the early 2010s to include a second brewery & restaurant as well as a 23,000 sq. ft. production facility. The company now distributes statewide in Nevada as well as California, Utah and most recently Idaho.

Craft Beer Meets Local Food

Tom and Bonda always wanted the brewery they poured their blood, sweat and tears into to remain relevant and independent long after they retired. They soon met the perfect match in Local Food Group, led by visionary restaurateur, Mark Estee.

In fact, Mark Estee was no stranger to craft brewing, first opening The Union in Carson City, Nevada in 2017. The two would go on to collaborate for years to come, building a strong rapport with each other along the way — Tom imparting brewing knowledge and Mark offering advice on new dishes.

"Tom and Bonda's heart and soul are evident in every drop of beer that Great Basin brews today," said Mark Estee, Chief Executive Officer of Local Food Group. "We couldn't be more honored to carry on their tradition of brewing the most award-winning craft beer in Nevada."

The Future of Sustainable, Local Craft Beer and Food

As Local Food Group takes the helm of Great Basin Brewing Company's restaurant & brewery operations they draw from a deep well of knowledge and passion from their partners including Tanya McCaffery, Chief Executive Officer and Owner of VAST Financial Group; Tommy Linnett, Culinary Director and Nick Meyer, Director of Operations. Each brings a skillset laser focused on quality, results and growth.

By marrying the best in local food with the best in craft beer, Local Food Group seeks to build upon the success that Great Basin Brewing Company has enjoyed over the past 28 years. On the restaurant side, this will include new initiatives to source ingredients from local ranchers and growers as well as many house-made items produced at Liberty Food and Wine Exchange's 4,000 square foot production kitchen, bakery and USDA inspected butcher shop. There will also be a renewed focus on beer distribution, with plans to expand into more states across the country.

"We believe Great Basin Brewing Company makes some of the finest craft beer in the world and has been a wonderful community partner," said Mark Estee. "By blending our culinary ideals with their award-winning brews we are creating an unmatched hospitality group when it comes to brewpubs: food, beer, hospitality and knowing where your food and beer comes from makes this a match made in heaven."

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About Local Food Group

Local Food Group has built a multi-location restaurant group in the Lake Tahoe, Reno, Carson City and Gardnerville markets. Local Food Group operates multiple restaurant outlets in these markets and also works with independent operators to provide an extensive management overlay that encompasses front of house and back of house operations along with financial management and administrative support. For more information on each location please visit renolfg.com.

About Great Basin Brewing Company

Tom & Bonda Young founded Great Basin Brewing Company in 1993, and it remains the oldest-operating and most award-winning brewery in Nevada. Great Basin Brewing Company currently distributes its beers across Nevada, California, Utah, Idaho and is looking to expand further. The company has won 16 medals at the prestigious Great American Beer Festival® and 9 at the international World Beer Cup®. For the latest brewery news visit greatbasinbrewingco.com.