

Ankrolab Brewing Co. launches on Bayshore Drive in East Naples

The new local microbrewery is on Bayshore Drive in East Naples. Tim Aten, tim.aten@naplesnews.com; 239-263-4857

Two more new venues — Sicilia Italian restaurant and Ankrolab Brewing Co. — recently launched on Bayshore Drive in East Naples.

The new restaurant and brewery join Bean to Cup Coffee Lounge, which opened Feb. 1 at 3248 Bayshore Drive, as well as the food trucks that debuted last fall at Celebration Park to provide expanding options on that local stretch running south from U.S. 41 East to beyond Naples Botanical Garden. Other spots to grab a bite along Bayshore include Three60 Market, The Real Macaw Restaurant & Bar, Molcajetes Mexican restaurant, Taqueria San Julian, Del's 24 Hours store and the Best Popcorn Co.

Former Kelly Road has seen a lot of positive changes recently and more is yet to come along the growing Bayshore Arts District.



Ankrolab

After facing construction and launch delays, [Ankrolab Brewing Co.](#) opened Friday with long lines of customers waiting to order beer and food at the new microbrewery on Bayshore Drive.

"We've had a steady line the whole time. It's been awesome," said Adam Kelley, owner of the latest local brewpub.

“We are so pleased to be on Bayshore,” Kelley said. “I believe in the next five to 10 years this is going to be the new happening spot in all of Naples.”



Some of the first beers produced by Ankrolab Brewing Co. on its opening day, Friday, May 3, 2019, on Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

Ankrolab definitely has proven to be the place to be already. Its atmosphere pairs well with the extremely successful food truck park that opened nearly a half-mile north in what had been an empty lot next to the Haldeman Creek bridge on the other side of Bayshore.

Naples-based BUILD broke ground last May for Ankrolab Brewing at the site of a former small engine warehouse next door to the popular Taqueria San Julian. Within the steel skeleton of the former building, the award-winning design by Naples-based architect HLevel took shape for the state-of-the-art microbrewery.



Fermentation tanks can be seen through the front windows of Ankrolab Brewing Co., which launched Friday, May 3, 2019, at 3555 Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

Stainless-steel fermentation tanks can be seen through the front windows of the nearly 6,000-square-foot building. Patrons enter on the south side or rear of the business where parking spaces wrap around a tasting and entertainment area with a food truck next to a large patio.

Families with small children and leashed dogs quickly settled into the corner lounge seating or on long, narrow German fest tables with benches. A wall of budding plants and a unique fountain made with a row of 27 beer taps helps separate the parking area from the beer garden.

More seating is available inside in a bar area that can be opened to the outside with two overhead doors. The brewery operation at the front of the business can be seen through windows in the taproom.



Ankrolab Brewing Co. was packed inside and out all day and night on its opening day, Friday, May 3, 2019, on Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

Kelley has been homebrewing beer for the past decade but he hired head brewer Lynden Preuss, formerly of Katabatic Brewing in Montana and Echo Brewing in Colorado. They started brewing the first beers at Ankrolab in late March.

“All made in-house with love,” Kelley said.

Ankrolab debuted with 11 craft beers but plans to have 35 varieties by its grand opening around the Fourth of July weekend.

“It’s a lofty goal, but I think we can do it,” Kelley said. “We are going to work day and night to get there.”

The names of the beers will elicit some chuckles or maybe even some head scratching.



Ankrolab Brewing Co. launched Friday, May 3, 2019, on Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

"I thought, if we're going to name something, it's got to make me smile every time I hear it," Kelley said. "It's got to keep it interesting, keep it fun."

Whose Cat is This? is a SMASH — single malt and single hop — pale. Phalange Pistols is a West Coast-style IPA. Esophageal Impact is an imperial, or double, IPA. Participation Award is a Belgian wit. Famers Hands is a French saison, or pale ale.

Simplexity is a Mexican lager. IMWALKINOVAAEEAH is a New England IPA. Temporary Clearance is an imperial stout. Theory Query is a golden kettle sour with cherry and lime, and Wave Back is a golden kettle sour with guava, mango and pineapple.

Otto's Barn, an American Amber Ale, is named for the century-old barn in Nebraska from which the Ankrolab team reclaimed the age-worn wooden boards and rusting corrugated tin roof to accent areas of the brewery inside and out.



Ankrolab Brewing Co. launched Friday, May 3, 2019, on Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

So far, Ankrolab's Mexican lager, New England IPA and sours have been the brews best received, said Kelly, who is having a difficult time choosing a personal favorite.

"It's like asking to pick a favorite kid. I can't do it," he said. "I'm really into saisons right now. It's not our biggest seller but it is really world-class, in my opinion."

Alcohol by volume varies for the inaugural brews from 5 percent to 8.8 percent. Half pours range from \$3 to \$7, while a full pour is \$5 to \$8.50. Crowlers range from \$7.50 to \$12.50, while growler fills are \$12 to \$15.50 with growler jugs sold separately for \$5.

Ankrolab also offers other beverages for those who may not have a taste for beer.

"We have six or seven really nice wine selections. Also, two ciders," Kelley said. "We also make an ice tea and a root beer in-house."



Jewban's Deli Dale food truck served guests on opening day at Ankrolab Brewing Co., which launched Friday, May 3, 2019, at 3555 Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

Pit Commander's Central Texas barbecue was going to be the exclusive food truck with a rotating menu at the brewery when details of the concept were initially announced but plans changed so he returned to Plano, Texas, a couple of weeks ago. To fill the culinary need, Kelley has scheduled different local food trucks to park next to the beer garden.

"We are going to rotate out. We have them booked up pretty well every weekend for a different one for the entire month," Kelly said. "We're trying to get weekdays too, but it's kind of hit or miss."

Jewban's Deli Dale sold out of food on Ankrolab's opening day Friday. Mojo chicken tacos, hot pretzels and pickles were the last items left after hundreds of Cuban, Reuben and pastrami sandwiches were devoured by the lunch and dinner crowds.



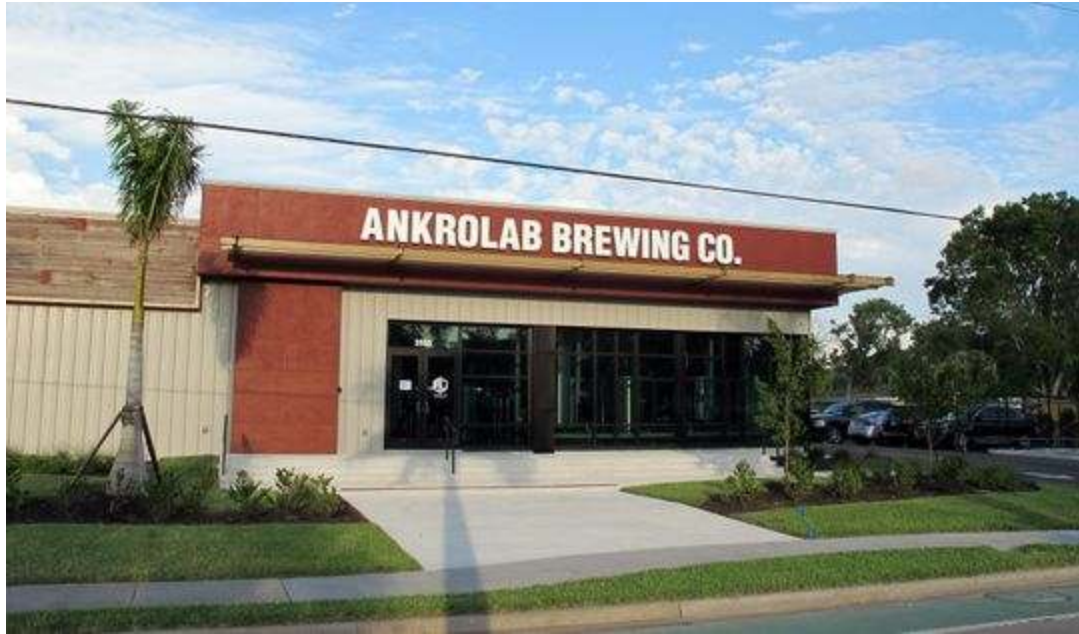
Ankrolab Brewing Co. launched Friday, May 3, 2019, with ha garden patio area at 3555 Bayshore Drive in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)

"It's been nonstop since noon. Around 3:30 we had a lull for about 20 minutes and then it picked up again around 4. We've done over 200 tickets already," said Julie Dana, who operates the Jewish-Cuban food truck with her husband, Ray Garcia.

"Our next time here we are going to bring our Cuban roast pork and pan con bistec, which is a Cuban steak sandwich, and obviously the pastrami," Dana said. "We have three more dates this month and three in June the way it stands now."

Other local caterers scheduled at Ankrolab include the Sizzle Truck, Dave's Cosmic Subs, The Brit Pit and Vesuvio's Pizza.

"They all have their own local following, so it's fun to play off of that," Kelley said.



Ankrolab Brewing Co. launched Friday, May 3, 2019, at 3555 Bayshore Drive in East Naples. *(Photo: Tim Aten/Daily News)*

Customer parking for the brewery may be an issue on the weekends. Avoid tow zones such as the business directly across the street. Patrons are encouraged to arrive by bicycle or foot or by transportation services such as Uber, Lyft and Slidr.

“We have really wonderful neighbors — Green Door Nursery, Amanda Jaron Studio — that are letting us park there after business hours,” Kelley said.

Ankrolab Brewing Co., 3555 Bayshore Drive, is open noon to 10 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and noon to midnight Fridays and Saturdays. For more information go to facebook.com/Ankrolab.