

# ST. EDWARD PRIDE

1996 SUMMER VOLUME 1 NUMBER 3

## WALKING THE WALK

land, Ohio



St. Edward students and alumni demonstrate the true essence of Christianity as they reach out a helping hand to others through compassion and community service.

## TOAST OF THE TOWN

land, Ohio

Combining innovation and tradition, Pat and Dan Conway have brewed a recipe for success, making Great Lakes Brewing Company a national discovery.

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St. Edward named a Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education.

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Eagles hockey celebrates its 3rd state title, basketball makes it to the final four and wrestling celebrates its 44th state champ.

land, Ohio



Pat Conway '66

Dan Conway '79

## THE BREWERS' TALE

As proprietors of the Great Lakes Brewing Company and virtuosos in the micro brew renaissance, Conway brothers Pat ('66) and Dan ('79) have set the standard, tapping into a hometown approach that has won national cheers while their beer has become the toast of the brewing industry and has even mugged the cameras for *The Drew Carey Show*.

by Matt Weiland

**A**h, the brewer. Few human endeavors carry as much ancient nobility, as much tradition, as that of the village brewer. Since the ancient Egyptians began cultivating barley in the Nile River valley, the brew master has held sway over a community's consumption, and the brew pub has been a center of celebration and exaltation, discourse and debate, renaissance and revolution.

In many ways, the Great Lakes Brewing Company epitomizes this long legacy of brewing and the haven of the brew pub, the precision of the artisan with the hearty handshake of the innkeeper. For owners Dan and Pat Conway, it has been a recipe carefully cultivated leading to the serendipitous discovery that there are rewards for doing things the right way.

Begun in 1988, the Great Lakes Brewing Company is housed in the old McClain's Feed & Seed/Market Tavern building across from the Westside Market in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood, a three-story Victorian structure built in 1860 that attracts some 150,000 guests per year. Over the past two years, the Great Lakes Brewing Company has become the national sweetheart of the brewing industry while garnering much attention in the national media. Its brews have won numerous medals and awards at international competitions and its grassroots business approach has earned it feature stories on the Cable News Network (CNN) and in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.

In addition, the characters from Cleveland on ABC's *The Drew Carey Show* have been shown drinking Great Lakes beers. Native son Drew Carey himself mentioned the Great Lakes Brewing Company on the late night *Conan O'Brien Show*. And on a *Drew Carey* episode airing in May, the characters, who have lost their jobs, muse about

*"The quality of the product has to be maintained or else the quantity produced doesn't really mean anything... We've been fortunate that we've been able to achieve a nice blend of tradition and innovation."*

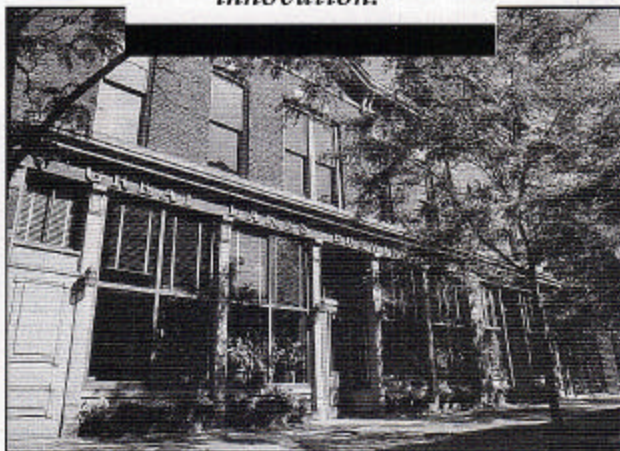
the possibility of opening up a micro brewery "like those guys over at Great Lakes."

"When I bartended in college, I noticed so many people developing a taste for imports," says Pat. "Then, years later, I reflected on the brew pubs I'd visited in Germany just after college, places where the buildings were small and the beer was fresher and better tasting. It seemed at the time that the same sort of operation might be worth pursuing in America. Dan and I had been talking about doing something like this for years and so we started tossing it around again."

A 1966 graduate of St. Ed's, Pat Conway earned his bachelor's degree in urban studies at Loyola University in 1973 and a divisional master's degree in interdisciplinary social studies from the University of Chicago in 1978. He spent the year after graduation traveling the world with a friend, first driving a jeep up to Alaska then flying to Japan, China, southeast Asia, India then Europe. It was in Germany that he recognized the allure of the brew pub, where indeed the beer and the atmosphere held an intimate, old-world purity.

Upon returning to Chicago, Pat worked as a case worker with the Chicago circuit court before teaching history, English and social studies while coaching junior varsity baseball for three years at Holy Trinity High School, located in Chicago's inner city and run by the Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

"Eventually, my wife and I decided to move back to



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Daniel L. Berry '74



Photo by Bill Fleiter

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Cleveland and I began searching for the right occupation for myself, the right niche," says Pat, who with his wife Jeanne have two children, Therese who is eight and Emmett who is six. And through his vast array of experiences, it was those culled from his college bartending days from which the skies parted and the brew pub revelation smiled upon him. "Finally, Jeanne just said, 'You and Dan have been talking about this for years, so just do it and see what happens.'"

When Pat and Dan went to research other operations of a similar nature, however, they found a dearth of information. "There were only a dozen or so micro-breweries in the country at the time," says Dan, a 1979 graduate of St. Edward who, with his wife Erin, have three children, Sheila age six, Clare age four, Joan age two and Catherine Marie who arrived April 10. Having earned an English degree from John Carroll University in 1984, Dan was at the time working as a management trainee in the Small Business Lending Division of Huntington Bank. He had likewise visited Germany while in college and the brew pubs had also made a lasting impression on him while instilling within the lingering bouquet of possibility.

So, in 1988, after securing the financing, the Conway brothers procured the old Market Tavern restaurant space that had long been abandoned and contracted the services of Master Brewer Thaine Johnson, he of 40 years brewing experience, and thus commenced the process of concoction and creation.

And lo and behold, Dortmund Gold was born!

**F**or aficionados, connoisseurs and quaffers, such brews as the Eliot Ness, the Commodore Perry India Pale Ale, the Moondog Ale, the Burning

River Ale and the Edmund Fitzgerald Porter have become the best tasting and most enjoyable tutorials on the local lore after which the brews are so named. (Ironically enough, Margaret Conway, mother of Pat and Dan, once worked as a secretary for Eliot Ness, who often frequented the Market Tavern.) In the relatively short time that Great Lakes has been brewing, they have not only embraced the local legacy that is uniquely Cleveland, but have won some of the brewing industry's top awards in doing so. Great Lakes has become a perennial Gold Medal Winner at both the World Beer Championships held at the Beverage Testing Institute in Chicago and at the Great American Beer Festival held in Denver.

"We were the first micro brewery in Ohio," says Dan. "And the nice thing about the brew pub is that our customers seem to like trying new concoctions. If it works in the pub, it makes it to the big plant. We've been fortunate that we've been able to achieve a nice blend of tradition and innovation."

The Great Lakes Brewing Company fills approximately 100 kegs and 2,000 cases per week and last summer opened a new \$1.2

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Photo by Bill Fleiter

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million plant in the old Fries & Schuele building adjacent to the Great Lakes complex, a plant that is four times the size of the old brew plant. "The expansion was a logical move," says Dan. "We pretty much had it mapped out from the beginning. At the time we opened, there were maybe 30 breweries in the nation. Now, there are some 600 breweries in the United States with an average of about three opening per week."

Pat and Dan both point to the late 1800s as a good example of brewing at its most prevalent, with some 4,100 breweries operating nationwide. In 1860s Cleveland, there were some 30 breweries producing anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 barrels per year. The Great Lakes Brewing Company - which experienced a 50% growth over last year and in the coming year will produce an estimated 14,000 barrels of ale - was at the forefront of not only the micro-brewery revolution, but are essentially carrying on that mantle of tradition for new generations.

One of the key challenges of their industry, they acknowledge, is how to manage macro-growth while maintaining micro-ambiance and premium distinction. "We really believe that reputation means more than a quick buck," says Dan. "The quality of the product has to be maintained or else the quantity produced doesn't really mean anything."

*"Brother Charles Van Winkle used to say, 'Sacrifice plus purity of intention equals growth and spiritual happiness.' That phrase has always stayed with me."*


"I think there will be a macro-shakeout of the micro-brew industry," says Pat, explaining that a good deal of micro-brew appeal is freshness, which revolves around stock rotation. This relies on producing just enough to adequately meet demand without having a lot of bottles and cases sitting on shelves for months on end. Great Lakes has carefully tread the supply-and-demand course while establishing a reputation for maintaining freshness.

"We've had distributors call us from Chicago, Toronto and Washington, D.C.," says Pat, "and they have sought us out through the generous word-of-mouth endorsements of our customers, through various homebrew clubs and through the trade and national media. So it is of the utmost impor-

tance that we retain the qualities that have earned us a good standing and not let it slip."

They have also maintained strong ties with St. Edward High School, where they attended along with brothers Mark ('71), Jim ('72) and Joe ('76). Great Lakes hosts a number of St. Edward alumni events each year and employs St. Ed's graduates on their staff. "St. Ed's gave us a good foundation of character building and friendships," says Dan. "It reinforced the lessons taught by our parents, how to be first and foremost good individuals, good people. In many ways, St. Ed's prepared us to daily meet the challenges of the business world from a strong base of morals and ethics, basically how to deal with people in a way that is both respectful and considerate."

"Brother Charles Van Winkle used to say, 'Sacrifice plus purity of intention equals growth and spiritual happiness,'" recalls Pat. "That phrase has always stayed with me."

"In many ways, I think that the success of the Great Lakes Brewing Company is attributed not only to our customers and staff, but to the time I spent at St. Ed's as well," he continues with a wry, somewhat subversive, smile. "It not only instilled in me a solid sense of character and self-expectation, but I initially acquired my thirst during the Saturday morning detentions I spent digging out the sub-basement." 

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