

RJ Rockers Brewing Company

RJ Rockers Brewing Company became Spartanburg, South Carolina's first brewery in 1997, when owner and brewer Mark Johnsen set out on a mission to provide the people of the Upstate with the best microbrewed beer they had ever tasted. Mark, a New Jersey native, had loved brewing beer for his friends and family for years.

Following his service in the 1991 Gulf War, Mark was stationed in Germany as a member of the United States Armed Forces, and he took this opportunity to learn as much as possible about brewing from the experts. By the time he was honorably discharged from the service, he was ready to take his beer to the public.

Mark established RJ Rockers Brewing Company as a brewpub in Spartanburg's historic downtown Morgan Square in 1997. Over the course of the next five years, RJ Rockers became a favorite downtown meeting place. Rockers patrons enjoyed the best beer around, excellent food, and entertainment ranging from live rock and roll bands to fiercely competitive trivia contests hosted by the owner and brewer himself.

In 2003 Rockers began the transition to a production brewery. Over the next six years, and with a lot of help from the Sons of the Fermentation, RJ Rockers flourished throughout South Carolina.

After maxing out capacity at their 1,200 barrel location, Rockers made its triumphant return to Downtown Spartanburg in August 2009. Today the brewery anchors the West End of Downtown Spartanburg, affectionately and appropriately known as the Grain District. They have a 30-barrel brewing system which gives them an annual capacity of over 25,000 barrels. The new brewing system generates the majority of its hot water from the sun - brewing beer takes thousands of gallons of hot water, so by using mother nature to preheat the water to 142 degrees, they conserve a substantial amount of energy.

Mark, who continues to be the head brewer for Rockers, now shares ownership with John Bauknight and Henry Depew.

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Mark Johns