

# GOLDBOOK

*presents*

Beer...

Wine...

Spirits



# Blue Cat Brew Pub

The perfect blend of beer and food



Gary Krambeck

Blue Cat Brew Pub co-owners Martha Cleaveland and brother Dan Cleaveland raise a glass of their favorite brew.

BY PAM BERENGER

**T**he difference between doing research in a lab at Argonne National Laboratory and exploring the chemical properties of beer is in the consumption.

“I can drink what I make here,” Dan Cleaveland, brewmaster at Blue Cat Brew Pub, said. “I have a master’s degree in chemistry and I like beer. It’s a good combination.

Brewing beer is just another procedure.”

Brewing beer is about formulas, Mr. Cleaveland said. Be it an ale or lager, it’s all beer. What makes the difference is the percentage of grain used and the brewing temperature, along with a few other factors that most people don’t care about.

“What most people want is a good tasting beer,” Mr. Cleaveland said.

For those who are interested in learning about the brewing process, the steps are written on the menu and many of the beers statistics are posted on the Blue Cat’s website. For those who just want to taste what Mr. Cleaveland offers up, there are a variety of samplers available. Beers come with names like Wiggled Pig, Off the Rail Pale Ale and Mad Hungarian Chili Ale.

What’s on tap depends on the season — in the summer it will be the lighter beers, in the winter it’s the heavier beers.

“It’s a great job,” he said.

Becoming a brewmaster wasn’t necessarily the next step in Mr. Cleaveland’s career path. He credits his sister, Martha Cleaveland, for that.

Ms. Cleaveland said opening a restaurant had always been a dream for her. She wanted

to create a meeting place where people could sit, relax and share their thoughts. As her children grew older her dream became a reality.

She found the perfect location for the business in the former VFW building, 113 18th St., in The District of downtown Rock Island. It took a lot of renovations, but the building lent itself perfectly to Ms. Cleveland's idea of a brewpub. She presented her plan for the Blue Cat Brew Pub to her brother 20 years ago and he wanted to be a part of it.

His part is in the basement, Ms. Cleveland's part is in the kitchen where she develops the menu that reflects her passion for cooking that she said comes from her mother.

The menu reflects the flavors of the Quad-Cities area, but also the kind of Dixieland food her mother enjoyed, like the barbecue pork over cornbread and topped with coleslaw.

While people can enjoy the menu year-round, the siblings offer up a beer dinner in the fall. The five-course meal pairs appetizers, soup, salad, entree and dessert with complimenting beers.

"I think the restaurant and brew pub go hand in hand," Ms. Cleveland said. "Food and beer are meant to complement each other."

**Address:** 113 18th St, Rock Island **Phone:** 309-788-8247 **Hours:** Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 a.m. **Website:** bluecatbrewpub.com

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# Wide River Winery

Midwest wine a hit at Wide River Winery



John Greenwood

Wide River Winery employee Alisha Espey presents some of the wines for sampling. The winery is located at 106 N. Cody Road, LeClaire.

BY SHARON WREN

**W**hat began as a hobby for Dorothy O'Brien, making wine for family and friends, has turned into a thriving business called Wide River Winery, with two beautiful locations in Clinton and LeClaire.

"We liked her wine. She loves making wine; it's pretty darned good," said Paul Quinn, Ms. O'Brien's son-in-law, who is currently in charge of the LeClaire Tasting Room, which opened in 2011, and also is wholesale and construction manager.

The winery in Clinton opened in 2005 and takes its name from the widest part of the Mississippi River, which flows below the vineyards. Its 7 acres grows a variety of grapes hardy to the Midwest, but the wines' popularity means the harvests can't keep up with demand, so they have to get more grapes from other Midwest vineyards.

"We get grapes from Iowa, Illinois, southern Michigan and Missouri," said Mr. Quinn. "Our port grapes come from Geneseo." They not only buy locally but collaborate with their neighbors too; they recently took wine and juice to the Mississippi River Distilling Company in LeClaire to make brandy.

The building that houses the Tasting Room has quite the history,

according to Mr. Quinn. Built in the 1840s, it used to be a bakery and a library, and during recent renovations, a tunnel to an adjacent building was discovered, which led them to believe it may have been a stop on the Underground Railroad. Unfortunately, safety concerns meant they were unable to preserve the tunnel but they took many pictures, which are part of an ever-changing slideshow on a large-screen TV in the shop.

The wines owe their unique names to Ms. O'Brien's day job as an attorney. White Collar Crime, Blushing Testimony and Ms. Behavin' are white wines that are sure to stick in one's memory, while Guilty Pleasure,

Conviction and Sweet Justice are red wines that won't cause anyone to plead the Fifth. The website gives suggestions on wine pairings, so besides the usual beef and chicken pairings, you'll know exactly which one goes best with potato chips (Sweet Justice) or a summer afternoon (White Collar Crime).

These wines aren't just fun; they are award winners. Ms. Chevious won gold at the 2011 Iowa State Fair and at the 2012 Tasters Guild International Wine Competition. Felony Red took gold at the 2012 Mid American Wine Competition and silver at the 2012 Tasters Guild International Wine Competition. Pursuit of Happiness



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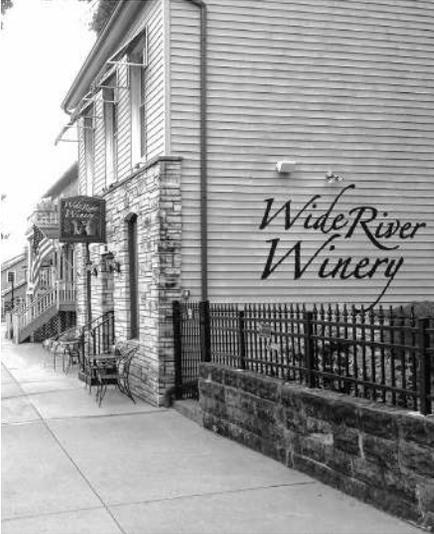
Inn & Wine Terrace: 7505 120th Ave., Coal Valley, IL

Wine Terrace: Weekends, May-October, 1-6pm

Winery & Tasting Room: 1667 Hwy 67, Preemption IL

Tasting Room: Open Daily 1-6pm (closed Mondays)





Submitted

won a gold medal at the 2012 Mid American Wine Competition and a bronze medal in the 2012 Tasters Guild International Wine Competition. Sweet Justice was the silver medal winner at the 2012 Tasters Guild International Wine Competition.

Fortunately for wine lovers on both sides of the river, Wide River's wares are available in more locations than just the Clinton and LeClaire stores. As the wholesale manager, Mr. Quinn admits he spends quite a bit of time on the road. Their wines are available at area Hy-Vee stores, and as far away as Des Moines, Galesburg and Peoria. For fans who don't live near any stores that carry Wide River wines, there's [vinoshipper.com](http://vinoshipper.com).

"Vino Shipper really makes it easy on us smaller wineries," said Mr. Quinn. "There are so many regulations on selling wine that differ by state and they take care of all that." The site ships to 21 states and has a minimum

order of two bottles. Buyers also can order cases of wine.

Both Wide River locations offer free live music on weekends from May through October with a wine purchase; in LeClaire on Fridays from 5 to 8 p.m. and in Clinton on Saturdays from 4 to 7 p.m. The Clinton concerts take place on the deck atop their bluff overlooking the Mississippi River and the LeClaire concerts take place in their courtyard wine garden next to the Tasting Room.

"It's fun," said Mr. Quinn. "We get people up and dancing, even dancing in the streets." Obviously lots of people enjoy themselves; it was voted the 2013 Quad-Cities Reader's Choice Honorable Mention for Best Live Music Venue. "We get a wide variety of ages here and a new demographic exposed to wine. It's never rained during one of our music nights, so if you want to know where to go on a Friday night where it won't rain, come (to LeClaire)."

---

**Clinton Tasting Room, Winery & Vineyard**  
**Address:** 1776 East Deer Creek Road, Clinton  
**Phone:** 563-519-9463 (WINE) **Hours:** 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Friday-Saturday

**LeClaire Tasting Room & Courtyard Wine Garden**  
**Address:** 106 N. Cody Road, LeClaire  
**Phone:** 563-289-2509 **Hours:** 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Friday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday

**Website:** [wideriverwinery.com](http://wideriverwinery.com)

# Mississippi spirits

Interest grows in Mississippi River Distilling Co.



John Greenwood

Mississippi River Distilling Company co-owner Ryan Burchett gives a tour of the LeClaire facility.

BY BRANDY WELVAERT

**W**ith a new deck off the tasting room to open this summer, and seasonal spirits bursting with local flavors at the ready, Mississippi River Distilling Company in LeClaire is the perfect place to unwind in warm weather.

The spirits, hard liquors handcrafted from corn, barley, wheat and rye grown within 25 miles of the distillery, “resonate with people everywhere. They know this is the real deal,” said Ryan Burchett, who opened the distillery four years ago with his brother, Garrett.

Visitors can get a glimpse of how the spirits are made, sip samples, and purchase gifts — an experience similar to what they might expect from a winery. Tours are offered regularly, and extended hours the first Friday of each month allow guests to linger and enjoy.

Whether they’re looking for a sip or a bottle, patrons at this time of year can look forward to a taste of locally grown fruits in seasonals like Pride of the Wapsi Strawberry Vodka — strawberries from Long Grove, Iowa — and, later, peach liqueur. Made in ultra-small batches of just one to 5,000 bottles, these fruity libations, like summer itself, disappear quickly.

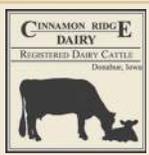
Yet the distillery's reputation is built upon five more traditional liquors: River Baron Artisan Spirit, River Pilot Vodka, Cody Road Rye Whiskey, Cody Road Bourbon, and River Rose Gin, which earlier

this year took a gold medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, an international contest drawing nearly 1,500 entries from 63 countries.

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how smooth it is,” said Mr. Burchett of his products. “We remove the harshest alcohols and bottle only the sweetest, smoothest part of the spirit.” The River Baron Artisan Spirit, “has a nice, sweet flavor from the corn. ... You can actually taste what the different grains do in the spirit.”

Each bottle can be traced back to the specific farmer and field it came from, he adds.

Mr. Burchett insists that the local flavor, and the local connections with the farmers who grow the grains (and fruits), set his beverages apart and keep those who enjoy them coming back for more: “We try to explore the flavors of the grain a little bit more because that’s where we come from.”

“We’re real people. You can meet us,” he said of the small crew of six full-time staff, counting himself and his brother. “People want to support something that’s local.”

Support they have. Since its opening in 2010, the distillery has been embraced by the farm community and retailers alike.

Area Hy-Vee stores were among the first to sell its products, and today most area grocery stores, and many bars and restaurants, have them on offer.

One organic farmer, Tracy Doonan of Reynolds, Illinois, read an early newspaper story about the distillery and called the Burchetts directly to inquire about a partnership.

Because Mr. Doonan’s cereal grains are organically grown, “He can’t go dump his

grain off at the elevator. He has to market his own,” said Mr. Burchett.

Since then other farmers have joined, several from Scott County and others just beyond.

“When we were looking for corn, we drove out of town and looked for the biggest blue silos,” said Mr. Burchett. “We found Ryan and Dan Clark, and they thought it sounded like a great idea. They’re certainly not getting rich from us taking 25 bushels of corn at a time, but one of the farmers stopped in for a sample and said, ‘This is my corn? I think this is the first time I’ve known where my corn has ended up.’”

Over the last four years, the business has grown, and Mr. Burchett said they have learned a lot. The brothers even spent a week in Germany “fine tuning” their process by learning about efficiencies and fermentation techniques.

Over the years, consumer awareness and preference for locally-produced fare have increased too, he said. “In the last six to 12 months, more people are looking for craft spirits — and with our products, they know they can support local.”

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**Address:** 303 N. Cody Road, LeClaire **Phone:** 563-484-4342 **Hours:** check website for retail and tour hours **Website:** mrdistilling.com

# Wines and wineries of the Q-C



Submitted

Three Sons Vineyard sells grapes to commercial wineries and also to individuals.

## 3 Sons Vineyards

**ADDRESS:** 20012 County Road X17,  
Columbus Junction, Iowa

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** facebook.com/3sonsvineyard, 319-728-7549

**DESCRIPTION:** Three Sons Vineyard grows cold climate grapes for the wine industry. We sell our grapes to commercial wineries and also to individuals that want to try their hand at making a little wine themselves. We offer free use of equipment to crush and de-stem the grapes. We have been a member of the Iowa Wine Growers Association since 2010 and this year our owner, Brian Jones, was elected to the board of directors. The Wine Growers Association is pleased to report that in Iowa we have 93 wineries and 300 vineyards with 1,200 acres of vines in production which provides Iowa with \$420 million in economic impact.



Submitted

Visitors to Lavender Crest Winery in Colona enjoy a Grilling and Chilling Wine Experience.

## ■ Lavender Crest Winery

**ADDRESS:** 5401 U.S. Highway 6, Colona

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** lavendercrest.com, 309-949-2565, info@lavendercrest.com

**DESCRIPTION:** Lavender Crest Winery in Colona features award-winning wines, banquet room, outdoor gardens, patio and gazebo, wine-tasting room with lunch served daily, wine production facility and tours, gift shop and beautiful vineyard all in a remote, relaxing country setting.

**SPECIALTIES YOU OFFER:** We offer 21 wines, made at Lavender Crest by our wine-making staff. Most of our wines feature grapes that can be grown in Illinois.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Five wine experiences: food and wine pairing events; Midwest Wine Sampler; nine Friday night Wine Downs featuring all you can eat prime rib and live music; wine tastings and tours daily upon request.

## ■ Ardon Creek Vineyard & Winery

**ADDRESS:** 2391 Independence Ave., Letts, Iowa (just south of Muscatine)

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** ardoncreek.com, 563-506-8044, dianerfurlong@gmail.com

**DESCRIPTION:** Ardon Creek Vineyard and Winery was founded on a 159-year-old family farm with a rich Irish heritage. We proudly carry on our family traditions of good stewardship of the land and promote a renewal of people working together to produce a quality product. Ardon Creek is a family owned and managed operation established by Mike Furlong and his son, Chad Furlong, in 2008 to fulfill the promise of community and farm revitalization.

**SPECIALTIES YOU OFFER:** Commission Man Red Wine is a dry red crafted from the Noiret grape. The wine has tastes of green and black pepper with a hint of mint. Lace Curtain White Wine is a crisp, dry white wine crafted from Seyval Blanc wine grape. Nouveau Wine is crafted in the spirit of traditional French Nouveau wines. The grapes are picked by hand and



Submitted  
Ardon Creek Vineyard & Winery offers a variety of exceptional wines.

the wine is fresh, youthful and fruity, and designed to be ready to drink within weeks of harvest. It's a light-bodied wine with sweet and fruity tones.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Music in the Vineyard runs June through October twice a month on Friday evenings, 6 to 9 p.m. It features local and regional bands. Bring your friends, children and snacks and enjoy the music! See the website for a full music schedule. Visit our tasting room to try our full selection of Ardon Creek wines. Tasting is free and winery tours are available upon request.



Submitted  
Trackside Liquors Inc., Geneseo, offers a large selection of wine, beer and spirits.

## Trackside Liquors Inc.

**ADDRESS:** 118 W. Exchange. St., Geneseo

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** tracksideliqors.com, 309-944-TRAX (8729)

**DESCRIPTION:** Retail store featuring the largest selection of wine, beer and spirits in the area.

**SPECIALTIES YOU OFFER:** Large selection of craft and import beers; wine room with more than 500 labels. We also do special orders and party orders.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Trackside Taste of Fall — outdoor tasting of wine, beer and spirits for the season, Saturday, Sept. 27, from 3 to 6 p.m.



Submitted  
Part wine store, part wine lounge, the Grape Life features the area's most eclectic collection of great wines from all around the world.

## ■ The Grape Life Wine Store & Lounge

**ADDRESS:** 3402 Elmore Ave., Davenport

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** thegrapelife.com, 563-355-7070, jim@thegrapelife.com

**DESCRIPTION:** The Grape Life sells bottles of premium wines from all over the world, but also offers wine lovers a relaxed and cozy atmosphere where they can sit and enjoy a glass of wine or wine flight. Select craft beers and top-shelf sipping liquors are also available. Live music every Saturday night.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Special wine-tasting events are offered throughout the year, culminating in our annual Grape Life Wine Fest featuring a tasting of nearly 100 exceptional wines from around the world.

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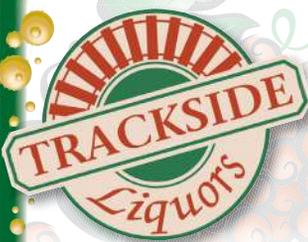
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# Great River Brewery

Good cheer and good beer

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

**W**ith microbreweries popping up all over the country and locally produced beer growing in both cachet and quality, it's hard to overlook the popularity of small-batch craft beers. Whether you're a beer aficionado or you waiver between crisp white wine and a golden light beer, sampling the current craft-beer trend can be a fun endeavor that's well suited for summer.

One local hot spot to try is Great River Brewery. Since its arrival in downtown Davenport, Great River Brewery has earned a reputation for producing and packaging quality beer season after season. On pleasant summer nights, the laid-back brewery has the feel of a neighborhood block party, offering a place to not only enjoy a quality beer, but our Quad-Cities community as well.

## What I love about Great River Brewery

There is something special about sliding into a picnic table at Great River Brewery when the sun is shining and the place is packed with interesting people. Though everything about the brewery is local, it's a part of town that feels especially urban — blink and you might think you're in Chicago, perhaps in Wicker Park or Logan Square.

Though I'm not the most adventurous beer drinker, I enjoy this summer's special release, the Golden Ale and its cleverly designed packaging. My husband prefers



Leslie Klipsch

Great River's 483 Pale Ale, a beer that's available year-round and is named after Mississippi River Mile Marker Number 483, which is one block south of the brew house. Mile Marker 483 also happens to be where the massive Mississippi River Lock and Dam

No. 15 — the world's largest active roller dam — is located.

### Why you should try Great River Brewery

There are many reasons to try GRB this summer and the palatable beer is just one of them. There's plenty of bike parking and though the brewery doesn't serve food, you can bring your own and enjoy it al fresco on the patio. If you can't get downtown to claim a picnic table, you can find the increasingly popular Great River beer at bars, restaurants, and groceries all over the region. You can also pick up a growler (a 64-ounce glass bottle) of your favorite microbrew to take home

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anytime. Look for specials at the Davenport brew house on Sundays and Mondays. I've found that a growler of Roller Dam Red Ale or Farmer Brown Ale makes a great gift and is especially fun to offer out-of-town guests.

## Great River Details

Great River Brewery is located at 332 E. 2nd St., Davenport. Room hours can be found on GRB's website ([greatriverbrewery.com](http://greatriverbrewery.com)) and specials, events, and other information is frequently updated on Facebook and Twitter (@GreatRiverBrew). Curious beer drinkers can enjoy a guided tour of the brew house, which occur on Fridays at 6 p.m. and Saturdays at noon, 1, 2, 3, and 4 p.m. The space can also be rented out and makes a unique place to host special events.

Each month in The Gold Standard, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for Gold Book readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer.

Read more of Leslie at [leslieklipsch.com](http://leslieklipsch.com).



### Find your hoppy place

If you're looking to sample local brew this summer, you don't have to look far. In addition to Great River Brewery, you'll find more homegrown libations at:

- **Blue Cat Brew Pub**  
[bluecatbrewpub.com](http://bluecatbrewpub.com)  
113 18th St., Rock Island
- **Bent River Brewing Company**  
[bentriverbrewing.com](http://bentriverbrewing.com)  
1413 5th Ave., Moline and  
512 24th St., Rock Island
- **Front Street Brewery**  
[frontstreetbrew.com](http://frontstreetbrew.com)  
421 W. River Drive and  
208 River Drive, Davenport

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**na·no·brew·ery** (*noun*):  
*a place that specializes in producing very small batches of craft beers; a small brewery that typically does not brew more than three barrels at a time.*

While the nanobrewery business model is increasing in popularity, the Quad-Cities is currently home to one nano, as this style of brewery is sometimes referred to, which made its debut in 2012. **Against the Grain Brewery and Alehouse** ([atgqc.com](http://atgqc.com)) is located in Rock Island at 1340 31st St.

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