

LEGION BREWING

FOCUSES ON FRESH,
LOCAL INGREDIENTS...



AND OIL-FREE AIR

Atlas Copco



Alexa Long studied finance in college, but it turned out her passion lied elsewhere. “I fell in love with craft beer eight years ago while working at The Liberty and frequenting establishments such as Flying Saucer and Common Market,” she explains. “I have been obsessing about it ever since.” Long started brewing her own beer at home, then she managed a store that supplies other home brewers. Her first position at a craft brewery was as an assistant brewer in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 2015, she became Head Brewer at Legion Brewing, in Charlotte’s Plaza Midwood neighborhood.



Long is a woman in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated, but especially in places where the industry is still young—including

Charlotte—women are making their own way, making craft beer. Still, some people are surprised to see a woman leading a brewery. “Sometimes consumers are shocked to see a female brewer, but to my peers I’m just another brewer. We all love what we do, and that’s what it’s all about. Hopefully the love for the craft is reflected in the quality of the beer.”

Legion Brewing has been doing what matters for craft beer lovers since December 2015. The facility, which covers almost 11,000 square feet, occupies a repurposed building in Plaza Midwood. “The neighborhood fits our brand,” according to Phil Buchy, owner of Legion Brewing. “It’s a diverse and collective culture and the people are fun and open to experimental beers. Charlotte is pretty quick to bulldoze, so we’re glad to be breathing life back into what’s already here instead of starting over. That matters because our business is built on friends and beer. The people we serve are drawn to authenticity, and we don’t try to be people that we’re not. While a lot of breweries are chasing West Coast or Eurocentric trends, we want to highlight our own region and local ingredients in our beers. It really sets us apart.”



Charlotte's craft beer aficionados agree: production at Legion Brewing has quintupled since its first year. "We went from 1,800 barrels our first year to more than 4,000 last year," Long says, "and this year we can brew from 8,000 up to 10,000 barrels. We enjoy presenting our creations to the public, and we want to grow that way. We may have more than one location one day, but we'll always be about friends and beer."



Included among the friends of Legion Brewing are the city's other craft brewers. "Especially in Charlotte there's camaraderie," says Long. "The craft brewing scene is still somewhat young here, and the people involved have kind of grown up in the industry together."

Now we're diversifying, and everyone has their own flavors. There's a close, healthy relationship between all of us, like a family, and we try to help each other. We're formulating a board with about 30 of us getting together to push positive political change and keep the money local. The charity work we do has us coming together and we help one another in trying times."



Long and her team have a knack for creative recipes. "We have meetings regularly to discuss what inspires us," she says. "We're always trying to take advantage of the awesome produce our state has to offer. We use local grain from local farms and real fruit in season."

When sourcing equipment for Legion Brewery, Buchy also uses a high-quality, local approach. "We're not looking



for the lowest bid offer,” he explains. “We’re looking for the best equipment that does what we need, really well, and we want to source it locally.”

Legion Brewing sourced their oil-free air compressor from Atlas Copco. “The way I see it, four things go into beer and oil isn’t one of them,” says Buchy. “I like oil-free air for the clarity of mind, so it was a no-brainer to go with an Atlas Copco oil-free compressor. No other options were considered. I knew I could trust Atlas Copco oil-free air because I had experience with their equipment at another brewery. They make the best, just like we do.”

Legion Brewing uses oil-free compressed air in production operations, including kegging. “I love how reliable our compressor is,” says Buchy. “I don’t have to worry about it not working, or any downtime.

We bought it a year and a half ago and still don’t need to service it. Atlas Copco has had a presence in Charlotte for a long time, and with our emphasis on local ingredients, why wouldn’t we choose a compressor company that’s here, too?”

Given Legion Brewing’s commitment to environmental stewardship, an Atlas Copco oil-free compressor offers additional benefits. No oil is injected into the process air, so there’s no oil condensate that needs to be disposed of. And, of course, no oil gets anywhere near the beer.

“When you cut corners, those corners end up costing you more than you think you’re saving,” says Buchy. “It’s better to always try and be the best you can be.”

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