

# BALTIMORE Jewish 100 Years 2019 Times

August 9, 2019/8 Av, 5779

Candle Lighting: 7:52 p.m.

## A Jewish Collective Effort

Revitalizing industrial  
Baltimore

PAGE 20

YOU  
SHOULD  
KNOW  
MELISSA SELTZER  
PAGE 12



# A Jewish Collective Effort

## Revitalizing industrial Baltimore one business at a time

STORY BY SHANI GOLOSKOV  
AND SYDNEY KLIGMAN  
PHOTOS BY DAVID STUCK

**U**nion Collective is a group of independently-owned, Baltimore-based businesses set under one roof and anchored by Jewish-owned Union Craft Brewing. Housed in a 155,000 square-foot former Sears warehouse, the Union Collective has revitalized an industrial area into a vibrant manufacturing, retail and community gathering space in Baltimore City. Union Collective is the brainchild of founders Kevin Blodger (director of brewing operations), Jon Zerivitz (director of marketing) and Adam Benesch (director of operations.)

UCB recently celebrated its seventh anniversary with a sold-out event with around 2,000 people in attendance. The event featured local food trucks, music and of course, beer!

The JT took the opportunity to sit down with Adam Benesch and enjoy a few cold brews on a hot late July afternoon.

Benesch isn't new to Baltimore. The 42-year-old Owings Mills native attended Franklin High School and graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a business major. His son Jake celebrated his bar mitzvah last summer with a party at UCB, and Moishe House used the site two weeks ago to host their "Torah on Tap," a networking and learning event for young Jewish professionals with optional free classes on topics from Jewish perspectives led by local rabbis.

### What's your favorite part of your business?

The best thing about what we do is that no one's ever unhappy when you give them a beer. You always get a smile in return when you serve someone. As we've grown over our first seven years, we're able to really see that we can have an impact in our community in a positive way. Whether it's through

Top left: JT staff and friends got to taste some of UCB's signature beers and cider. Left: Heirloom tomato pizza from Well Crafted Kitchen.





“The best thing about what we do is no one’s ever unhappy when you give them a beer. You always get a smile in return when you serve someone.”

ADAM BENESCH  
CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS OF UNION CRAFT BREWERY (UCB) AND THE UNION COLLECTIVE

hosting events here in our taproom that raise money for our local nonprofit ... or being out in the market and doing good things, we really are able to see a positive force coming from what we’re doing here at Union.

That’s grown into another phase here with the Union Collective. Now it’s not just us trying to do all these positive things to Baltimore and our community. We’re now in a bigger building with a bunch of other growing, awesome Baltimore businesses that are all focused on the same goal: improving what it is to live, work and play in Baltimore.

### What do you feel each place in the Collective offers to the organization as a whole?

What I love about how the Collective is set up is that you can really come here for many different reasons. People are ... much more interested in how things are made and who’s making them, so we wanted to stretch that model across all these other industries. Just like when

you’re in Vermont and you drive by the Ben & Jerry’s factory, now you can do the same exact thing here in Baltimore with The Charmery [and] Vent Coffee Roasters, who roast their coffee right on site. You can learn about how coffee is made, smell the smells, and see the process with your own eyes. [It brings] that greater appreciation for the cup of coffee you get because you know where those things came from and how they’re roasted. Same thing with the whiskey distillery.

### Where do you see Union Collective being in 10 years?

We’re working on phase two of the Collective right now. We’ve got a full-scale production winery under construction that will open in the coming months. Then we’ve got room for two or three more businesses to move in. We’re working to figure out what’s the right mix of companies to come in here to create space for them to grow and expand on what they’re doing.

### UNION CRAFT BREWERY

UCB first opened in 2011, releasing their first beer, Duckpin, in spring 2012. There are usually around 20 beers available on tap. The most popular drinks, according to beertender Maureen Quinn, are Duckpin, followed closely by their India pale ale (IPA) called Divine.

A “Baltimore Original,” Duckpin is a generously hopped pale ale, full of big citrus and tropical fruit aroma and flavor.

Called a “perversely hoppy ale,” Divine IPA lets the hops burst forth – plump, juicy and oozing with tropical fruity charisma. With an aroma that’s big and bold and a body that’s soft and smooth, this unique IPA is as free spirited and full of character as Charm City itself.

UCB always carries seasonal drinks. Their spring/summer special is Old Pro.

And be sure to catch their special anniversary beer Nectar Collector. The JT staff got to try it, and it’s delicious!



## EARTH TREKS

The Hampden Earth Treks (ET) opened in the Collective in June 2018, recently celebrating their first year there. One of three indoor locations in Maryland, the 20,000-square-foot Hampden location boasts the only bouldering gym on the East Coast. They are fully equipped with training essentials, state-of-the-art climbing equipment and a gear shop.

In addition to rock climbing, the Hampden ET is home to a full yoga studio and exercise room for when you want to “take a break from the wall.” Yoga and fitness classes are available at all experience levels.

“People like the sense of community we build,” said Jon Meltzer, marketing coordinator for Hampden ET. “We take pride in how we’re working to build a diverse group.”

ET offers individual, family and student membership rates. Members get access to all ET locations, unlimited climbing time, free clinics and event entry, discounts on classes and gear, and more! Learn more at [earthtreksclimbing.com/hampden](http://earthtreksclimbing.com/hampden).

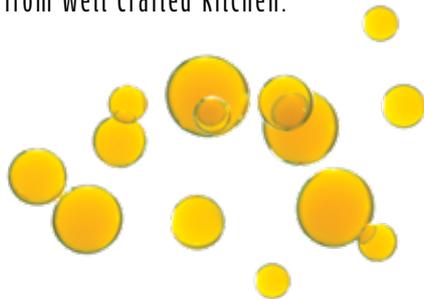
## THE CHARMERY

The Charmery was founded by Jewish Maryland natives David and Laura Alima after mulling over the idea for more than 10 years. The Charmery’s Hampden location is where the business produces all its ice cream. The Charmery works to support the Baltimore community by utilizing local farmers and producers for their ingredients. Their sweet treats range from sundaes and seasonal ice creams to handcrafted milkshakes and more.

The weekend of August 4-6 marked The Charmery’s sixth anniversary. They celebrated in true ice cream style: by creating seven new sitcom-themed concoctions. Specials included “Golden Girls”-inspired Cheesecake Fixes Everything, a cheesecake-flavored ice cream with graham crackers mixed in; and Can’t Live with Them ... Pass the Beer Nuts, featuring their Union Craft Brewing Skipjack caramel ice cream topped with honey roasted peanuts, inspired by “Cheers.”



The pretzel with beer mustard and beer fonduta with apples and bread from Well Crafted Kitchen.



## BALTIMORE SPIRITS COMPANY

Baltimore Spirits Company (BSC) prides itself on mixing old-world distilling methods with modern approaches. Originally founded as the Baltimore Whiskey Co., BSC opened for business in 2015 in Remington, Maryland. The business, founded by friends Ian Newton, Max Lents and Eli Breitburg-Smith, changed its name when they announced the new distillery location within the Union Collective in September 2018.

BSC won Best Distillery in Baltimore magazine’s “Best of Baltimore 2019” issue. It is known for its Epoch Straight Rye Whiskey, Shot Tower Gin and Baltimore amaro. The Hampden distillery has a tasting room open during their regular weekdays and holds tours every half hour between 1-5 p.m. on Saturdays, for those who like to know about what they drink.

The BCS does not just sell the alcohol, though. Go to their website’s “Cocktails” page ([baltimorespiritsco.com/cocktails](http://baltimorespiritsco.com/cocktails)) and see how you can mix their products to make your next favorite drink!

## VENT COFFEE ROASTERS

Vent Coffee Roasters opened in 2013 thanks to founder Sarah Walker, who wanted to create a coffee store “that not only cares about the quality of its coffees but, and maybe even most important, creating a communal atmosphere in the heart of Baltimore,” according to their website. Vent Coffee Roasters has been the in-house coffee provider for Argosy Cafe in downtown Baltimore since 2015. All their coffee beans are provided by local importers, including Keffa Coffee and Direct Origins Trading.

In 2017, Sarah met the owners of Union Craft Brewing for a coffee beer collaboration and ended up with a spot at the Collective.

“My ideal location was some sort of outfitted garage, so this was a perfect match. Plus, all the businesses are like family!” said Walker.

Vent Coffee Roaster can be found in several different local Baltimore locations such as at Foraged, The Avenue Kitchen, Ida B’s Table, Guinness and more.

## WELL CRAFTED KITCHEN

Well Crafted Kitchen (WCF) began as a food truck in April 2016, operating out of a 1949 Dodge mobile pizza truck. It was the brainchild of the four co-owners, Tom and Laura Wagner and Liz and Ryan Bower. They took the big step of opening their first brick-and-mortar storefront at the Collective in September 2018 - and the food truck is still used for on-location events!

“Going from a mobile pizza kitchen where we did mostly catering and some public sale events, to a full-scale kitchen where we are open Wednesday-Sunday and serve hundreds each week provided an incredible opportunity to establish ourselves within our community,” said co-owner Liz Bower. “It is super exciting for us to be able to share a locally sourced and seasonally-inspired meal with so many each week.”

WCF’s mission is “to bring people together for a shared local food experience,” said Bower. All ingredients come from local farmers and makers, leading to a new menu each week and sometimes even daily, based on ingredient availability. J

sgoloskov@midatlanticmedia.com;  
skligman@midatlanticmedia.com