

North Texas Pub Crawl

FERMENTER
2

by Deborah DOVE

Fifteen years ago, breweries were practically unheard of in North Texas. Rahr and Sons Brewing Company opened its doors in Fort Worth in 2004, but there was nothing in the Dallas area until German brewmaster Dennis Wehrmann opened Franconia in McKinney in 2008. Then, the brewing scene exploded with more than half a dozen breweries tapping into a burgeoning market of North Texans thirsty for craft beer.

Today, in the small radius that encompasses Allen and McKinney alone, there are three breweries—Franconia Brewing, Tupps Brewery and Nine Band Brewing. In the name of research, I coerced a few friends to come along for a pub crawl, North Texas style. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it.

Franconia Brewery

We started our day off at Franconia Brewery, off south McDonald just north of Highway 380. The brewery offers tours every Saturday at 11 a.m., and although it seemed a little early to start drinking, we were game. So were about fifty other people who congregated outside the non-assuming building waiting for the doors to open.

As owner Dennis Wehrmann explained the basics of the tour, it quickly became apparent why—Franconia is possibly the best kept secret in town. After paying the five-dollar admission, we all lined up for a taste of Franconia beer. There were four beers to choose from—Franconia Kolsch, a smooth, light gold, refreshing beer that was my favorite; Franconia Wheat; Franconia Dunkle, a dark lager with hints of chocolate; and a sneak peek at the brewery's Oktoberfest beer fresh from the keg. Regulars brought their own glasses and steins, but neophytes like us were given plastic cups that we could refill throughout the two-hour tour.

Then we moved into the cooler—a welcome respite on a hot summer morning—where Wehrmann educated us on all things Franconia. Dennis Wehrmann, who started Franconia brewing in February of 2008 to bring the essence of Bavarian beer to North Texas (and, he adds with a laugh, so he wouldn't be thirsty), comes from a long line of beer brewers. Born in Nurnberg, Germany, Dennis grew up in the biggest beer region in Germany, and his family's brewing history dates



Dennis Wehrmann at Franconia Brewery

back to the 1800's. Many of his family members work in the business, and Dennis himself brewed his first batch at age twelve, eventually going on to earn his master's degree in beer and fruit science before moving to the U.S.

Wehrmann is as funny and entertaining as he is knowledgeable about beer brewing, and his jokes kept the tour lively as well as informative. Franconia beers, like 99 percent of all German beers, are made with only four ingredients—hops, water, barley and yeast.

"Beer is healthy," Wehrmann asserted, only half joking. "It has the same nutritional value as bread."

We learned how beer is made from start to finish, and the surprising revelation that Franconia is completely green. One hundred percent of the hops left over after brewing are recycled into cattle feed and sent to local farmers, Franconia produces its own power, the company is landfill free (there's not even a dumpster onsite), and it will be the first craft brewery of its size with a CO2 recovery system.

After the tour ended, we were

free to sample more beer and socialize with the other guests, and the general air was convivial and fun. My best friend's husband, who'd come along as the designated dark beer taster, likened the atmosphere to the original Hofbrauhaus in Munich, where you're always destined to meet new friends, and we left with new friends, great memories and a newfound taste for German beer.

Franconia is located at 495 McKinney Parkway in McKinney. For more information, visit www.franconiabrewing.com

Tupps Brewery

The second stop on our pub crawl was Tupps, McKinney's newest microbrewery that opened last year next to the Cotton Mill. While Franconia is all about the beer, Tupps is all about the party (along with the beer of course), albeit family style. There are several other notable differences between the two breweries. Franconia produces lager while Tupps produces ale. Franconia is only open



Tupp's Brewery



to the public on Saturdays at 11 a.m.; Tupp's is open Wednesdays through Saturdays. And while Franconia only distributes its beer in bottles, Tupp's only distributes cans.

Founded by Keith Lewis and Tupper Patnode in 2015 after brewing hundreds of gallons of craft home brew over a six-year period in Keith's garage, Tupp's is family-owned, with a Texas flair. The 16,000-square-foot, open-air building, although new, is decorated with rusty steel and reclaimed wood. Cool metal sculptures and bicycle parts decorate the exterior, a nod to the fact that Tupp's is a drop-off point for ReCycles McKinney, a non-profit that "re-cycles" bikes and gives them to underprivileged kids.

Both kid and dog-friendly, there's an easy-going ambiance about Tupp's. Guests are encouraged to listen to the live music on weekends, kick back, play family games such as life-size Jenga, write their name on the wall, and bring old bottles to add to the bottle tree farm.

Of course the beer is the main draw and my friends and I decided to sample a flight while we enjoyed the band. Our \$15 flight included the Texas Shade (a typical wheat beer that was smooth and refreshing), the Raspberry Shade (a full-flavored pale ale similar to the Texas Shade, but with a distinct raspberry aroma),

Cotton Mill Gold (smooth with a slightly bitter taste), the Tupp's IPA or India Pale Ale (the brewery's flagship brew which has a pleasant malt body), and the Northbound 75, a fire-roasted poblano pale ale that my friend said left him "hankering for an enchilada dinner."

On one side of the warehouse-style building is the brewery operation, where tours are offered on Saturdays at 12:30 and 4 p.m. The brewery's "Happier Hours" are Thursdays from 4-8 p.m., Fridays from 4-10 p.m., and Saturdays from 11 a.m.-10 p.m., with live music from 1-4 p.m. Beer is \$5.

October marks the release of Tuppkin, Tupp's popular seasonal pumpkin spiced ale. Tupp's will also host a plethora of fun fall events in October, beginning with the Brew Ha Ha Comedy Show on October 7. The Wish 100 Bike Race on October 8 will start and end at Tupp's, with a party after the race and it benefits a child with a wish through Make a Wish foundation. A chili cook-off on October 15, Ratrodtober—a show with crazy cool cars and hot rods—on October 22, and a costume party on October 29 round out the fun.

Tupp's is located at 721 Anderson Street near downtown McKinney. For more information, visit www.tuppbrewery.com.

Nine Band Brewing

By this point, my friends and I were in good spirits and excited about rounding out our pub crawl at my hometown Allen brewery—Nine Band Brewing. A cool silo out front, emblazoned with the Nine Band armadillo logo, let us know we were in the right place. Named for the nine bands on a Texas armadillo, the unofficial mascot of Texas and the namesake and official mascot of the brewery, Nine Band opened in 2014.

“I was looking to open a craft beer brewery in a big town with a family feel,” owner Keith Ashley says. “That was Allen.”

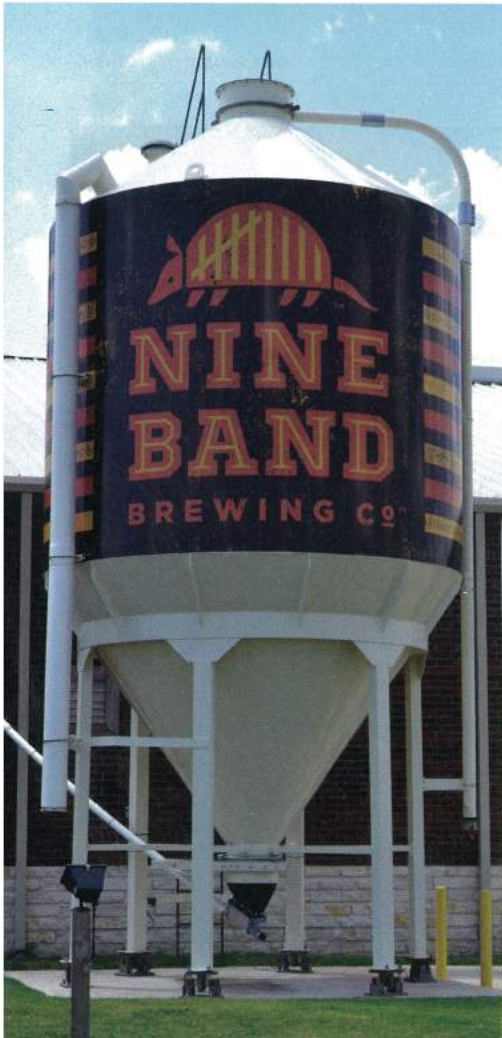
Although the tap room and patio is open Monday-Thursday, 5-9 p.m. and Fridays, 5-11 p.m., Saturday afternoons are when patrons can get

an inside look at how Nine Band beer is brewed with a tour lead by head brewmaster, Ian Larsen. The tour also offers a chance to sample some of the brewery’s six core brands, along with a seasonal beer (not surprisingly, fall’s beer is Oktoberfest). The \$15 tour included a Nine Band branded pint glass and a thirty-minute tour where we learned the process of beer brewing and sampled freshly-brewed beer straight from the bright tank, which is essentially one giant keg

where the filtered beer is stored until it goes into smaller kegs.

After the tour, we hung out on the patio and enjoyed some of Nine Band’s house-brewed libations. Unlike other craft beers that are sometimes bitter or strong, Nine Band beers are uniquely smooth and palatable.

It turns out this was Ashley’s goal—to create a transitional craft beer house that brewed core brands that appeal to every palette. People like me who don’t typically like the hoppy





DOLCELIVING

twin creeks

LIVING THE SWEET LIFE






Call About
OUR SPECIALS.

NOW OPEN in Allen, Texas

**Brand New 1, 2 & 3 Bedroom
Luxury Apartment Homes**

Garages • Stainless Steel Appliances • Granite Countertops
Club Dolce with Fitness, Cardio, Resort Pool

DolceLivingTwinCreeks.com

972.747.5000 • Leasing@DolceLivingTwinCreeks.com
659 Junction Drive • Allen, TX 75013 • Just North of McDermott & Watters Dr.






Nine Band Brewing

taste of some craft beers, often find that they enjoy Nine Band beer, which often encourages them to try other craft beers. "Nine Band is the gateway to other craft beers," says Ashley.

In keeping with Nine Band's Texas theme, all of the core brand

beer names reference something from Texas. There's the Nine Band Pale Ale, Cactus Cat Kolsch, Hoop Snake Hefeweizen, Toad Choker Barley Wine, Blue Lacy Brown Ale and the Badge Honeyblond, a light-bodied blonde beer named in honor of law

enforcement, firefighters and emergency responders (Ashley donates a percentage of the proceeds to benefit law enforcement officers).

Be sure and stop by Nine Band Brewing on Saturday, October 1, from noon until 11 p.m. as the brewery hosts Allen's first ever Oktoberfest, with bands, German food, free steins, prizes and other brewery merchandise. Oktoberfest packages will be available to

purchase, which will include a Nine Band stein, t-shirt and more.

Nine Band is located at 9 Prestige Circle in Allen. For more information, visit www.ninebandbrewing.com. ❖

Deborah Dove is a freelance writer from Allen.

Seniors-Class of 2017

Schedule your Fall Senior Portrait Session today!



Larry Fleming
PHOTOGRAPHER

305 S. Jupiter #11 • Allen
972 422 8176
www.larryfleming.com

\$50 off any Senior Portrait Session booked in October