

## Absolution by the Sea Brewing Co. opens in La Jolla

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Absolution Brewing Co.'s customized beer vats, which contain 16 taps.

Steve Farguson is, as he describes, a "cradle Catholic" who has always loved beer.

"I just love the flavor profiles, it's always been my go-to consumption," said Farguson. "My dad would buy a quart bottle of Coors when I was a kid and have a glass when he came home from work. Later, I'd sneak out with the rest of the bottle."

Farguson, who lives in Coronado with his wife Cissy, is the founder of Absolution Brewing Co., which has now taken the place of the former La Jolla Brewing Co. The cradle Catholic came up with the business name by flipping through the pages of the Bible.

"I wanted a name that was powerful," said Farguson, who started out as a home brewer in the '90s. "One day, I was sitting on the couch in the family room and I glanced down at my Bible. I thought, 'Well, I bet I could come up with a bunch of names in there.' That's how Absolution was born."

Although homebrewing was never a long-term plan, beer was Farguson's long-term love. Farguson and his partner put together a business plan in 2012 and, a year later, opened Absolution Brewing Co. in Torrance.

Farguson has fond memories of La Jolla Brewing Co.

"It was a brewery that I used to come to with my folks, who now live just eight blocks away," said Farguson. "Back in the day, they made some really great beer."

Getting ready to open on March 2, Absolution has made some major renovations. The brewhouse has a newly furnished, wooden bar with two large brass vats behind the table, each containing 16 beer taps. There are large leather booths in the dining area and strobe lighting that alternates between colors depending on the "mood of the evening." Farguson also plans to create a speak-easy distillery room in the back of the brewery. But a unique feature of Absolution is its versatile beer.

"Some guys just want to make these hop bombs that appeal to a macho audience," said Farguson.

"But then you're ignoring a better part of the population," added Bart Bullington, head brewer for Absolution. "Every flavor that's in beer is something that we eat or drink regularly. But the first thing people do is say, 'Oh, I don't like beer.' So that tube between your tongue and your brain is like, 'Well I'm closing up. You've already turned off half your taste buds and so when someone takes the first sip, it's not great.'"

Bullington, Farguson and other members of the team have created their own beers like Cardinal Sin, Fallen Arc Angel, Padre Bravo, and Shooting Star, all using Maris Otter brewing grains, making the beer incredibly smooth and rich in flavor with cream-like froth.

"It [Maris Otter] makes it balanced, so the hop doesn't overpower the flavor," said Bullington.

Farguson added: "The people that come in and try our beers always say, 'These are the most smooth and approachable beers that I've ever had.' That's a hallmark of our brand and something really overlooked in the industry today."

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