
Treaty City's Stephen Cuneen is brewing up a storm

This Friday (4 October 2019), Stephen Cuneen, the founder and chief brewer at [Treaty City Brewery](#) will be on hand at the [Friday Breakfast Club](#) at the Bank of Ireland Workbench Limerick City to tell his story of how he is bringing the art of brewing back to the Treaty City.

Cuneen, a manufacturing engineer who worked with tech giants like Intel, is not only putting his home city on the map for beer but he has refurbished a premises opposite King John's Castle in Limerick that will serve as a venue for events as well as a nice place for visiting tourists to drop in and sample his produce.

Drawing on his experiences and travels to places like Vancouver and the US west coast, the premises feels both international and traditional simultaneously, preserving the original building's integrity while evoking the feeling that you are either traveling back in time or about to meet Hemingway at a bar in Cuba.

Cuneen describes himself as having always been a maker and, drawing on his heritage as one of Limerick city's families of market gardeners, building a business for the city came natural to him.

"I was always making my own cheeses and sausages and while I was travelling I could see the craft brewing business was growing. I loved the idea that you could just walk into a bar and drink something that someone there had created.

"When it came to creating Treaty City Brewery, I drew on my experience of manufacturing with Intel and wanted to create a facility that allows people to not only enjoy our beers but also see how they are made. We are very international, our master brewer is from Brazil."

Limerick has a new confidence

As Cuneen recalls, after coming home from his travels he saw that the craft beer business was growing at 40pc per annum, and he decided to get into the business initially as a “gypsy brewer” where he borrowed other brewers’ facilities.

But as he started producing more and more batches, his manufacturing experience came in handy and he established his own brewery in the city, making signature batches but also speciality stouts and IPAs to suit every occasion.

The idea for a signature venue opposite King John’s Castle was to help accentuate the diverse culture and history of Limerick city.

“You have to stay true to your roots. You have to be also passionate about visual identity. Limerick has this fantastic arts culture and more. The city is coming alive, it is the best kept secret on Ireland’s west coast. It has a really good business environment and there is a sense of optimism and anticipation in the city that has not been there before.

“There is a healthy, vibrant economy emerging in Limerick. Where we are located here in the Medieval Quarter is the very essence of what Limerick city is,” Cuneen added, pointing out how brewing is an art that goes back thousands of years but how likely it is someone had been perhaps brewing in the same spot 1,000 years ago. He added that the last known brewing activity in the neighbourhood in the 18th century was in the house next store to his premises.

“We see ourselves as the new but also custodians of the city’s past. We are entrepreneurs, we are pushing forward and in doing so we are pushing the envelope for Limerick too. It’s about respect for the past and anticipation for the city’s future.”

In conclusion, Cuneen paid tribute to his working relationship with Bank of Ireland in Limerick city, recalling a difficult situation over the course of a weekend where the company had almost been gazumped while acquiring critical brewing equipment during a visit to Norway.

“We were able to pick up the phone and ensure the transaction occurred on time. If we had to wait until the Monday morning the deal would have collapsed. Having a finance partner that understands the needs of our business is essential.”

To register for this Friday’s Friday Breakfast Club briefing with Stephen Cuneen, [click here](#)

Main image: Stephen Cuneen at his Treaty City Brewery premises in Limerick city. Image: John Kennedy

[Is your start-up business in need of support? Click here to see what options are available to you](#)

Written by [John Kennedy](#) (john.kennedy3@boi.com)

Published: 30 September, 2019