

# All h'ale' Alewerks. They've just been named 2020 Brewery of the Year

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Alewerk's new brew, Absolute Uncertainty, helped raise \$7,500 to support displaced restaurant and hospitality workers. (WYDaily/Courtesy of Alewerks and Consociate Media)

You could say Alewerks Brewing Company has been busy this year.

The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA) named the Williamsburg brewing company as its Brewery of the Year for their contributions to the tourism and brewing industry in Virginia.

The brewery released a limited-edition brew called Absolute Uncertainty back in June, with proceeds from the beverage benefitting VRLTA's Virginia Restaurant & Hospitality Relief Fund.

Alewerks managed to contribute \$7,500 to provide support to workers displaced by restaurant and hospitality industry shutdowns related to the coronavirus pandemic.

“We’re humbled by this award and incredibly grateful to the members of the industry for their overwhelming support of this program,” said Michael Claar, Alewerks’ director of operations, in a news release.

“Giving back to the community is central to our mission and a huge reason why we wanted to go into craft beer in the first place,” he said.

The year also brought challenges for Alewerks as well.

The taproom closed on March 16, but by that afternoon, the brewery had altered its website to offer curbside pick-up.

Two weeks later, they were offering delivery service for customers from Virginia Beach all the way to Charlottesville.

But when some staff members were furloughed, Alewerks sold its used oak barrels for a charity drive, raising \$2,500 to support the furloughed workers, according to the news release.

Then the taproom reopened May 15, extending their outdoor seating into the parking lot, tripling their space, Claar said.

Production space also doubled by 5,000 square feet this year.

“The mission of that is to be able to package more beer, which is critical right now considering the shift in the marketplace with increases in packaged beer while draft beer sales have declined given the limited opportunity,” Claar said.

This expansion will allow Alewerks to increase production by 40%, producing 10,000 barrels annually.

But the work for Alewerks did not stop there. They also participated in [Black is Beautiful](#), an initiative to raise awareness of racial injustice. Proceeds from their Imperial Stout will be donated to the [Urban League of Hampton Roads](#).

Alewerks plans to redesign their packaging and expand their beer portfolio.

“When things got serious back in March, we made a decision to keep moving at full speed,” Claar said. “There is going to be something on the other side of this, and we’re going to come out of it being active and continue on the path we were already on.”

Alewerks Brewing Company has two locations in the Williamsburg, James City County area.

Their main taproom is at 189B Ewell Road, open 3 to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and noon to 9 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

Their LAB Taproom is at 5711-36 Richmond Road, open from noon to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 7 p.m. on Sunday.