



Old Friends Reunite to Start Mare Island Brewing Co.

When Mare Island resident Kent Fortner moved to the island seven years ago, he had dreams of starting his own brewery. As Fortner, a winemaker by training, began making his dream a reality, he asked his good friend and former Lagunitas Brewing Co. brewer Ryan Gibbons to join in. After working together at a Napa cellar more than five years ago, the two have reunited to create the Mare Island Brewing Company.



Mare Island Brewing Co. founders Ryan Gibbons and Kent Fortner in front of the Mare Island Coal Sheds.

Fortner and Gibbons have leased one of Mare Island's historic waterfront coal sheds for the brewing company. Built between 1901 and 1903, the Coal Sheds were originally used to store coal for steamships. They are now cleared for occupancy and classified as a City of Vallejo historic landmark, with their distinctive truss roofs making them easily identifiable along the Mare Island waterfront.

Fortner and Gibbons said naming their brand after Mare Island was an easy choice.

"I love the idea of being able to use beer as a way to take the history of Mare Island beyond the Strait," Gibbons said. "It's about bringing people together and celebrating our common history."

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Celebrating Mare Island's Winged Population

The 18th Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival was held on Mare Island from February 7 to 9, 2014, bringing in friends and families from all over the Bay Area to learn about the area's winged residents. The festival celebrates and observes "a million shorebirds and hundreds of thousands of ducks, geese, hawks and songbirds" that stop in the area on their journey from their winter to summer homes.

Attendees of the 3-day festival enjoyed indoor activities including, the Wildlife and Birding Expo, a live raptor show, a fine art exhibit, a silent auction and more. Other attendees participated in bird-watching outings and hikes.

Also coming up from June 27 to 29 will be the 2nd Annual All Osprey event. Headquartered at the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve, this event will highlight and inform the public about the emergence of nesting osprey populations on San Francisco Bay for the first time in the 20th and 21st century.

More information on the Osprey Event can be found at www.facebook.com/SanFranciscoBayOspreyDays.

Blu Homes to Celebrate Grand Opening of Design Center

Blu Homes, the leading provider of premium prefab homes in North America, which are built in its 250,000-square-foot manufacturing facility on Mare Island, is opening a “Design Center” on Mare Island. The center will provide potential clients with an up-close-and-personal experience of all Blu Homes have to offer. As a way to celebrate the Design Center’s grand opening, Blu Homes will be hosting a series of public events on Mare Island in late April and early May.

What: Design Smart, Live Beautifully Blu Breezeshouse Tour & Design Center Grand Opening

When: Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27 – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, May 3 and 4 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, May 10 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: 1205 Club Drive, Mare Island, Vallejo

Please RSVP at bluhomes.com/events

The Mare Island Design Center is a 2,300 square foot Blu Homes Breezeshouse, featuring three bedrooms, two baths, a state-of-the-art kitchen, a library, rear court, and an entry court with a large deck. At the Design Center, clients will be able to work with Blu Homes’ on-site staff to design their future Blu Home and receive help with planning budgets and financing, land searches, and any other questions that clients may have about the Blu Homes. The Mare Island Design Center is one of seven design centers Blu is building in cities across the United States in 2014 and 2015.

The grand opening events are being held in connection with the Design Smart, Live Beautifully Home Tour presented in partnership with Real Simple and This Old House. For more information on Blu Homes, email info@bluhomes.com. Or, visit www.bluhomes.com, follow Blu on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/bluhomes>) and Twitter (@BluHomes).



Blu Homes erects a Breezeshouse on Mare Island to serve as a Design Center.

“Mare Island Brewing Co.”, continued

The two are also opening a tap room just across Mare Island Strait at the Vallejo Ferry Terminal. Their first beer, Saginaw Golden Ale, is now available at select locations, including the Mare Island Golf Course. Their second beer, Coal Shed Stout is anticipated to be released soon.

Fortner said their business showcases Mare Island’s history while promoting its future. “This is a special place and we hope to honor it with our efforts and our ales,” Fortner said.

The Mare Island Brewing Company Tap and Tasting Room, anticipated to open in early summer of 2014, will be located at the Waterfront Rotunda at the Ferry Building. Fortner says the beer garden on the water should be a fantastic spot to take in the views of Mare Island while waiting for a ferry to the Giants game.

“This is something that we think a lot of people in this community are really going to enjoy,” Fortner said.

More information regarding the Mare Island Brewing Co. is available at www.mareislandbrewingco.com.

