BrewMonitor® at City Built Brewing Company

Real-Time Fermentation Monitoring Supports Cutting-Edge Beer Strategy by Streamlining Quality Control, Reducing Risks, and Saving Tank Time

Exciting Beers in the Heart of Grand Rapids, Michigan

As City Built's social media profile explains, "We take pride in making the strange familiar, and the familiar fresh and bold!" Over the past 6 months they've taken this philosophy even further by focusing on bringing cutting-edge beers to the Grand Rapids area, as a complement to their Puerto Rican-inspired menu. The constraints that COVID has added to their business impacts their approach to the market, but not their enthusiasm for creating memorable flavors. Exciting beer tastes has always been center stage in City Built's business, and that passion continues to fuel their ongoing success.

> "Detecting problems earlier with BrewMonitor can save us up to a couple of days in tank time. And this is really important to us because every day and hour matters."

CITY BUILT BREWING COMPANY

Benefits

- BrewMonitor simplifies the management of difficult fermentations, helping to reduce risk

- BrewMonitor's graphs can alert a brewer to stalls much earlier than possible through manual sampling

- Real-time fermentation monitoring helps avoid failed beers, potentially saving over $13,000 dollars in lost cost and revenue per batch

- Real-time visibility can help save up to 2 days of tank time for certain beers, increasing production capacity and saving cost
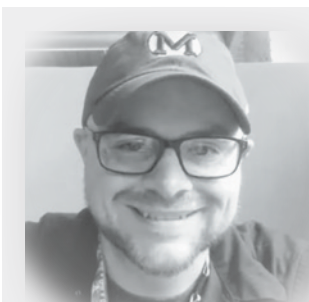
The Challenge: Managing the High Risk of Modern, Trendy Beers

Head brewer Rob Qualls and his assistant brewer David Murphy work hard to make every beer count. Producing about 1000 barrels per year, mostly canned, and with limited distribution around the state of Michigan, they enjoy creating flavors that excite customers. "Go big or go home, is our attitude," said Rob. "We want to create interesting beers for the market. In order to get more customers, you have to take chances." These interesting beers include riding popular trends as well as creating twists on traditional flavors. He explained, "I always say we're making 'non-beer beer.' We're falling in with all of the trends: heavily

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>
> *- Rob Qualls, Head Brewer, City Built Brewing Company*

BREWMONITOR® SYSTEM

fruited sours, IPAs that are not bitter at all, massive pastry imperial stouts that are like 18% ABV. We kind of push the edge on what we can do here."

Managing cutting-edge beers adds some risk and stress, and because the progress of the fermentation is the key to success, Rob has adopted an extremely hands-on approach to quality checks, especially as the per-beer investment levels have increased. As he put it, "Each one of these beers are my babies and we're basically throwing a ton of money at each one, so I have to make sure that they turn out alright. With the manual labor and the amount of attention that has to be paid – it can be very stressful."

The Solution: How Real-Time Fermentation Monitoring is Helping City Built

Rob started using the BrewMonitor System in early 2020, and as City Built settled into their business strategy for success during COVID, BrewMonitor has played a key role in operations. The hands-on approach required by constantly innovating can be very labor intensive, but it is much more effective and efficient using real-time fermentation tank visibility. Rob commented, "Before, it was all manual readings. I'd leave at night, and just hope that when I get back in the morning everything was still doing alright. What I really love is that with BrewMonitor I can just pop up my phone anytime and see what's happening with my fermentation. Watching the gravity trends is really important to me, plus monitoring the pH and fluid temperatures — it is all so helpful. BrewMonitor is just a great tool for what I do."

BrewMonitor recently provided the minute-to-minute insight that Rob needed to avoid major problems in a particularly tricky fermentation. He explained, "The high-gravity imperial stouts have been notoriously difficult for us to pull off. There's a lot of timing and skill involved, as we manually stop the fermentation and kick it off again, and watching the graphs in BrewMonitor really helps me figure all of that out. Recently, when one of these beers stalled, I saw it as it happened, in the BrewMonitor Console. It stalled at 1.056, and I needed it to get down about 20 more points. I was able to pitch more yeast into it to get it back on track, but watching the gravity graph further, I could see the new yeast was consuming too much, so I was able to see that I had to take steps to stop the fermentation."

The ability to catch these problems earlier provides critical production advantages that help City Built thrive. He explained, "I'm good at making beer work if there's a problem, but detecting it earlier with BrewMonitor can save us up to a couple of days in tank time. And this is really important to us because we don't have a ton of wiggle room in our production schedule. Every day and hour matters."

And, in extreme cases, this mean major cost savings. "During this COVID time we're taking a high risk-high reward approach. So, if one beer doesn't turn out, we've got about $3,000 flushed down the drain, plus there's about 90 cases coming out of that, which we're selling at $20 a four pack. So, losing one beer would be a pretty significant fiscal hit. BrewMonitor makes it much easier for me to make sure that these beers work."

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