

# Heavy TABLE

## Heavy Table Tap Newsletter | April 2, 2021 | The Rise of Quiet Cat Bakery, The Big Idea Behind Stay'd, a Surly Beer Hall Timeline and More

Welcome the Tap, Heavy Table's biweekly guide to restaurants and culinary industry news for Minnesota and beyond. We're here doing this work only because of your support - thank you for your support of this independent journalistic enterprise. And if you've been forwarded this email, [check out our Patreon page](#) and consider subscribing.

I hate to lead a newsletter this good with an apology, but I am sincerely sorry to those of who have offered feedback that these newsletters are too long, and they therefore stack up like issues of the New Yorker. You can, of course, have too much of a good thing, and if any of the four longer stories in this edition had been less than timely, I would have gladly kicked it down the road for a future edition.

But Surly is on a lot of minds right now, and Quiet Cat Bakery and Stay'd are both new and interesting as hell and we're pleased to be the first to share their stories. **[1]** In lieu of a shorter newsletter, you have my word to do better next time... unless, of course, circumstances warrant otherwise. - *James Norton*

## THE SURLY BREWING BRAND TAKES A RIDE THROUGH THE FIRE



**surlybrewing** @surlybrewing · 13h



Thanks to the remarkable progress being made on the vaccination front in MN, the Surly Beer Hall and Beer Garden will tentatively reopen on June 1st. This date may change as public health guidelines evolve. More updates as they become available. We look forward to seeing you.



185

173

430



Twitter screenshot

In the sometimes supportive-to-a-fault Minnesota marketplace, it's fairly uncommon to see a major brand take a full-on pantsing. Folks in the Upper Midwest are far more prone to cryptic silence than open hostility, and disagreements often take place off stage (or inside the sweaty confines of our buttoned-down minds.)

So it was with some surprise that I read on Wednesday night the feedback on Surly Brewing's **feel-good Twitter announcement** that the company's beer hall is due to reopen June 1. The numbers start to tell the story (see image, top.)

Likes ran a little more than 2:1 versus comments, rarely a good sign on anything but a interactivity prompt post. When comments run beyond likes, you're getting "ratioed" - bodyslammed online. We're not there yet, but 2:1 isn't good news, especially if the comments trend negative.

The comments here trend negative. I found that the story was uniform: nearly everyone was disappointed, or angry, or downright livid about how Surly had taken an adversarial stance against its potential union before shutting down in late 2020. This is a reflective screenshot:

**in haggadah da vida** @BSchorshy · 10h  
 Replying to @surlybrewing  
 hire back the staff you cleared out when you pretended you weren't union busting!

1 51

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**Bethany Gladhill** @bethanyg · 10h  
 Replying to @surlybrewing  
 Hey, guess what! Fair State Brewing is open now! You don't have to wait AND you get union staffing — seems like a win, huh?

1 3 92

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**Caroline** @carolanxious · 2h  
 So many great breweries nearby that do so much more good and great staff fairly. Take the LRT one more stop and hit Dual Citizen, another great option invested in the community and it's team.

3

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**Soon to be Vaccinated Adam** @arburnside · 9h  
 Replying to @surlybrewing  
 Union-busting beer is bitter. Union-busting brisket is rancid. Union-busting apparel is irritating to the skin.

3 21

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**Heather** @HeatherHGus · 7h  
 There are so many other places to go too

1 4

⋮ [Show replies](#)

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**Ursa Minor** @aBearNamedMinus · 12h  
 Replying to @surlybrewing  
 I was a huge Surly supporter, got the t shirts, the sticker on my car, went to all the shows. They won't get another dime from me until they allow their workers to unionize

81

Twitter screenshot

Clapback was limited to a couple of posters bringing up the post-firing union vote that fell one vote short of the number needed to certify a union (despite being a strong majority of workers making the votes, 56-20.) There were few if any defenses of either the company's essential goodwill or the quality of the beer (which also took some glancing blows amid all the union-related carnage.)



**Joel Wolf** @wolfmanjoel · 12h

Replying to @surlybrewing

And when will the vote for the staff to unionize occur? Or was this closure really just an attempt at union busting?



4



107



**J Mac** @Doooolia · 9h



**Surly hospitality staff's union vote falls one short**

The company says the results of the vote will not affect plans to close the Beer Hall indefinitely starting Nov. 2.

[kare11.com](https://www.kare11.com)



Twitter screenshot

And things get still more heated in the comments buried from the thread, with most explicit references to “union busting” earning demotions into “More Replies” exile:

## More replies

 **Miss Appear** @brwnandmad · 12h ...  
Replying to @surlybrewing  
And we look forward to hearing how you are gonna repair the harm you have caused your workers when you failed to recognize their rights as human beings, Union busters!!!!

 62

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 **Laura** ✨ @laurjahnic · 12h ...  
Replying to @surlybrewing  
Between the obvious union busting that occurred last fall and now hiding the replies of people calling you out on it you are cowards through and through

 1 46

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 **weird girl** @kalierinn · 12h ...  
Replying to @surlybrewing  
will you be bringing back the employees you fired and allow them to have a fair vote and chance to unionize? or will you continue to be against workers' rights and stay in ur union-busting, scabby ways?

 24

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 **Elliot** @elliotonopka · 12h ...  
Replying to @surlybrewing  
I love your space. I will return once Surly workers have successfully unionized. If not, then, oh well, I'll go elsewhere.

 23

While it's wild to see a brand with as many ride-or-die supporters as Surly take such a strong public hit, it's worth keeping in mind that there are many, many, many more beer drinkers than the group you'll find active on Twitter. Moreover, perceived union busting is likely to be popular with a certain percentage of drinkers, too - **as of last year, 55% percent of Republicans didn't approve of unions**, which, even in a blue state, might be a kernel to build a constituency around.

But then size comes into question - both the physical size of Surly, and the size of the market its beer hall now swims within. Surly's Beer Hall isn't built to cater to a small band of die hards - it's built to take on swarms of big groups pounding beers and scarfing brisket. It may be that only two or three out of a dozen people will have strong views about unions, but if that's enough to steer that group of 12 to another brewery, the financial implications are significant.

When Surly plunged into the beer hall market in 2014 (see Jerard Fagerberg's excellent timeline further down in this newsletter) it wasn't the only game in town, but it was one of the titans, and things stayed that way until the field began to flood in the late teens. Now drinkers have dozens of viable alternatives, even if there are few that can equal the size and bombast of the Beer Hall.

Knowing what this means for Surly is impossible. The brewery could mitigate the damage by working as partners to help a union get established (prognosis: unlikely) or it could try to change the subject by launching a PR initiative focused on feel-good public outreach (battling hunger? Ending homelessness? Donating craft beer to college students otherwise drinking macro-brewed swill?) And the brewery may be sitting on a pile of cash and other assets, in which case it can confidently stroll through any temporary bad image slowdown, or it may be cutting it close to the bone, in which case we can look forward to some wild backpedaling when the bill for the bad vibes comes due.

Regardless, the next few months may well be formative for the brewery as consumers set their patterns and hospitality begins to reopen in earnest. Will a reputation as an anti-union shop keep drinkers (and quality employees) out? Or will it be a blip on the radar screen for a giant of Minnesota brewing? Stay tuned. - **James Norton**

## THE TAP

The Tap is the Heavy Table's ongoing biweekly account of noteworthy Minnesota restaurant openings, closings, and future openings. Please send any tips to [editor@heavytable.com](mailto:editor@heavytable.com). All dates are approximate based on best information available; opening dates, in particular, tend to shift around a lot.

## NOW OPEN (Up to 3 Months)

**Dock & Paddle** and **City House** (reopening) ■ Dock & Paddle at Como Lakeside Pavilion reopened on March 19; City House along the Mississippi River in Saint Paul reopened March 20.

**Sanjusan**, 33 North First Ave., Minneapolis ■ An Italy-meets-Japan fusion partnership between Daniel del Prado (Martina, Colita) and Shigeyuki Furukawa (Kado No Mise). Sanjusan replaces the former Kado No Mise (which has now moved upstairs, occupying the former kaiseki dining room). Opened March 19.

**Brit's Pub (Reopened)**, 1110 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis ■ Shut for months due to the pandemic and looting, this jumbo-sized British Isles-themed establishment is back in business. Reopened March 18.



Becca Dilley / Heavy Table

**MB Foodhouse**, 3346 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis ■ Tex-Mex food (including some ambitious breakfast options) in a radically diverse and welcoming space. Opened March 4. Interview with owner Kristen Martinez in the March 5 edition of the Tap.



Victoria Campbell / Heavy Table

**La Boulangerie Marguerite**, 1279 Randolph Ave., St. Paul ■ Neighborhood mainstay bakery PJ Murphy's has rebranded and re-opened with a new French identity and some ambitious croissants. Opened February 11. Interview with the owners in the February 19

edition of the Tap.

**Boludo (second location)**, 530 S. 4th St., Minneapolis ■ The very small (and very popular) South Minneapolis Argentinian pizza and empanada spot has opened a second location in part of the cavernous former McKinney Roe space. Opened January 27.

**Galapagos Bar and Grill**, 3508 East Lake St., Minneapolis ■ A new Ecuadorian restaurant in the former International Cuisine Bar and Grill (also Ecuadorian) on East Lake Street. Opened January 27.

**Thai Pepper (Minneapolis location)**, 2820 E. 42nd St., Minneapolis ■ A second location of the St. Paul-based Thai restaurant is now open in the former Flag Foods spot in South Minneapolis. Opened January 23, 2021.



Screenshot from Instagram

**Arepa Bar**, 3509 W. 44th St., Minneapolis ■ A new Venezuelan restaurant in the former Mama D's space in Midtown Global Market, by Soleil Ramirez, former chef de cuisine at The Lexington. See the January 22 edition of the Tap for an interview with Ramirez. Opened January 6, 2021.

**Café Cerés**, 3509 W. 44th St., Minneapolis ■ The former Linden Hills location of Penny's has reopened under a partnership between pastry chef Shawn McKenzie (formerly of Penny's) and restaurateur Daniel Del Prado (Martina, Colita). Opened December 29, 2020.

**Sooki and Mimi**, 1432 W. 31st St., Minneapolis ■ A new spot from Ann Kim's restaurant group focused on tacos wrapped in handmade, traditional tortillas plus a basement bar. Opened for takeout meal kits on Dec. 23, 2020. Grand opening upcoming.

**RECENTLY CLOSED (Up to 3 Months)**



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table*

**Burch** ■ The Isaac Becker and Nancy St. Pierre-helmed steakhouse and pizzeria is one of the biggest giants to fall during the pandemic; the food was well-regarded, the atmosphere lively, the customers loyal, and the check totals high. It leaves behind big shoes to fill. Closed February 17, 2021.

**Cargo Food Authority / Bus Stop Burgers and Brewhouse** ■ These co-owned Minneapolis restaurants, located in Target Center and the Wells Fargo Complex respectively, declared bankruptcy and permanent closure this week. Closed January 19, 2021.

**UPCOMING (Most Imminent to Furthest Out)**



*Warsame Warsame (L) and Amina Deble of Oasis Mediterranean Market / Courtesy of Midtown Global Market*

**Oasis Mediterranean Market and Deli**, Midtown Global Market, 920 E Lake St, Minneapolis ■ A new spot in the Market offering groceries, butcher services, and a Mediterranean grill in a 2,500 square-foot space, with an emphasis on East African and Middle Eastern fare. Opening April 9, 2021.



Becca Dilley / Heavy Table

**Café Cerés** (Second Location), 5401 Penn Ave. S., Minneapolis ■ A second location of the popular Linden Hills cafe project by Daniel del Prado and Shawn McKenzie is coming soon to the former Lucky Oven space. Opening April 20, 2021.

**Stalk & Spade**, 740 Lake Street East, Wayzata ■ A former Starbucks will become Stalk & Spade, a plant-protein driven burger restaurant designed by the Crisp & Green team and destined, they say, for national franchising. Opening April 22, 2021.

**Revival** (new location), 8008 Minnetonka Blvd, St Louis Park ■ The consistently popular BBQ and fried chicken restaurant pioneered by the team behind the second incarnation of Corner Table is coming to the Texa-Tonka Shopping Center in St. Louis Park. Opening April 2021.

**Fuzzy's Taco Shop Taqueria**, 701 Washington Ave., Minneapolis ■ The national taco chain (with 150 locations in 16 states) comes to Minnesota with a smaller, quick-service-focused version of its menu. Opening April 2021.

**Mi-Sant** (second location), 1881 W Highway 36, Roseville ■ The new and popular Brooklyn Park croissant and banh mi shop is opening a new location in Roseville. Interview coming in

the Jan. 29 edition of the Churn. Opening Early Spring 2021.

**Josefina**, 739 Lake Street East, Wayzata, MN ■ A new Italian spot with takeout woodfired pizza window by Daniel Del Prado in the former Bellecour location. Opening Spring 2021.

**Rok**, The Rathskeller at Keg and Case, 928 7th St W, St. Paul ■ A mix of Japanese and Nordic-inspired recipes (distinct, not fusion) by Adam Prince, formerly of WA Frost. Opening Spring 2021.

**The Get Down Coffee Shop** ■ A black-owned coffee shop in North Minneapolis to be opened with support and partnership from Dogwood Coffee. Opening Spring 2021.

**Vinai Hmong Kitchen**, 1717 NE 2nd Street, Minneapolis ■ The Kickstarter-backed bricks-and-mortar Hmong cuisine-focused restaurant by Chef Yia Vang and former Birchwood mainstay Chef Marshall Paulsen is due to pop this early next year, after more than a year of planning. Spring 2021.

**Fresh India Deli & Grocery**, 441 Commerce Drive, Woodbury ■ Three immigrant couples have pooled their resources and knowledge to open a major new Indian grocery store and deli this year in Woodbury. Spring 2021.



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table*

**Owamni**, On the Mississippi River, behind the Mill City Museum ■ A restaurant focused on American Indian cuisine as imagined by Sean Sherman, The Sioux Chef. Spring 2021.

**Herbie Butcher's Fried Chicken**, 735 East 48th Street, Minneapolis ■ Vegan "fried chicken" biscuit sandwiches are the marquee offerings at this, the second brick-and-mortar location for the Herbivorous Butcher team. Opening late Spring 2021.

**Malcolm Yards Market**, 501 30th Ave. SE, Minneapolis ■ A food hall that will capitalize on its proximity to Surly's massive brewery/restaurant complex. Vendors (including Wrecktangle Detroit-style pizza) are beginning to surface, opening may be in the next few months.

**Hot Pot City**, 12160 Technology Drive, Eden Prairie ■ The anchor restaurant for the new Asian Plaza shopping center, which will also include a major new pan-Asian supermarket. Late Summer 2021.

**Breaking Bread** (re-opening), 1210 W Broadway Ave, Minneapolis ■ The beloved modern soul food spot in North Minneapolis will be reopening later this year after a hiatus. Opening delayed; currently serving 1,000 meals to neighbors and healthcare workers.

**StormKing Barbecue**, 618 N. 5th St, Minneapolis ■ A revival of the popular but short-lived Texas BBQ joint operated by Jordan Smith (Black Sheep Pizza), in the former ONE Fermentery and Taproom space in the Warehouse District. Their brisket was second-to-none in the Minnesota, hopefully the new iteration will continue that proud tradition. Opening in 2021.

**The Bundt Cafe**, 5005 County Road 25, St. Louis Park ■ The Nordic Ware building and factory store is planning to open a restaurant called The Bundt Cafe. Opening in 2021.

**Butcher and the Boar**, Location TBD ■ Jester Concepts (P.S. Steak, Parlour) has acquired the Minnesota rights to the name and recipes of Butcher & the Boar, a one-time downtown powerhouse that still operates a location in Charleston, South Carolina under its original ownership. Chef Mike DeCamp is slated to develop the menu. The restaurant's original 1121 Hennepin Avenue space is now under development by Kaskaid Hospitality, and its name and concept has not yet been disclosed. Opening in 2021 or 2022.

**Khâluna** (formerly Spice Market), 4000 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis ■ A new restaurant by Ann Ahmed (of the well-regarded suburban spots Lat14 and Lemongrass Thai). Opening in the former Harriet's Inn space in 2021.

**El Travieso Taqueria** (second location), 17603 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka ■ A second location of the taqueria concept developed by longtime restaurateur Hector Ruiz. Opening 2021.

**Dayton's Food Hall & Market**, 700 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis ■ Major new 40,000-square-foot food hall curated by Andrew Zimmern. 2020.

## RISE OF THE CAT

### The Bootstrapping, Eye-Catching, Flavor-Layering Story of Quiet Cat Bakery

By Cecilia Johnson



*Emmet Kowler / Heavy Table*

OK, maybe the cat isn't that quiet.

When Zainab Youngmark founded **Quiet Cat Bakery** two years ago, her gray tabby preferred to stay out of the spotlight, ceding attention to the other cat in the house. But just two minutes into my recent conversation with Youngmark, I heard Honey meowing in the background. "She has gotten more outspoken," Youngmark said, laughing.

Aside from the misnomer, Youngmark's bakery is the real deal. Operating under Minnesota's **Cottage Food Law**, she sells pies, cookies, and custom cakes out of her home in North Minneapolis. If you follow [@quietcatbakery](#) on Instagram, you'll spy her monthly **menus**. To place an order, text her or DM the account, and Youngmark will send you her Venmo handle and a pick-up address.



Emmet Kowler / Heavy Table

Since encountering Quiet Cat on Instagram a couple months ago, I've made more than one trip to Youngmark's house. First, I tried her **showstopping chocolate tart**: a rose-pistachio shortbread shell with ganache and berries. Since then, I've sampled several types of cookies — preferring the crunchy, classic peanut butter flavor — and a super-sweet, mini-size **bean pie**. I've noticed that beyond taste, Youngmark has a strong sense of beauty, whether she's decorating a cake or taking pictures of her cat.

Although she's only 24, Youngmark has a long history of working with food. When she was a kid in South Minneapolis, she attended programs at **Youth Farm**, a Twin Cities-based organization that teaches kids how to grow and cook food. "We would do this thing called Farm Camp," she said. "We would drive out to [a] farm and milk the cows and get the eggs from the chickens, and then later, we would do farm work." She paused. "It sounds like child labor," she said. "But it was fun, and they would feed us, and it was like, here's a weekend to be on the farm."

When Youngmark was in middle school, her family moved to Fridley, but she kept bussing down to South Minneapolis. She worked at Youth Farm as a teen and ended up running their Powderhorn program. However, after budget cuts closed her chapter, she struggled to find a job. She said, "I was trying to find work at bakeries, but they wouldn't accept [me] unless I had experience, and how do you get experience without — you know, the whole circle of nonsense."

### **A ONE-WOMAN BUSINESS, BACKED BY A TEAM**

The small-world South Minneapolis community came to the rescue. Youngmark knew her friend Emily Kastrul through Youth Farm. Emily's sibling Abby owned the cottage business **Bakery Box**. Abby coached Youngmark through starting her own bakery, and several

months later, Youngmark was selling treats next to Kastrul at the 2019 MayDay parade. Throughout 2019, Youngmark set up shop at various events around the Cities, and in 2020, she ended up basing operations out of her own home.



*Emmet Kowler / Heavy Table*

The good thing about working from home is that Youngmark doesn't have to pay two rents. But she says the tough part is carrying flour up three flights of stairs. "Those 50 pound bags...oof. Every step is just so oppressive."

During busy weeks, Youngmark sometimes asks her siblings to help her bake — especially her youngest sister, Salmah. "Over the holiday season, we made, like, a mountain of boxes of pies," Salmah said. "It's not like [Quiet Cat] has blown up completely, but it's much bigger than it used to be. And I think it'd be really cool to see it go further. Like, she just got this new bakery rack, which is cool, because then she can let more things cool at a time instead of just the space in her fridge."

Quiet Cat Bakery is still picking up steam, but it's just one facet of Youngmark's 20-year plan. The ultimate goal? Her own farm. "I don't know if I want it to be my primary source of income," she said, "where I'm relying on a crop, which can fail." She asked herself: "What would be a good other income that would support me while I lived on a farm? And I thought, 'I could be a baker,' 'cause I like doing it anyway. And I was good at it."

## **LAYERS OF FLAVOR**

When I dug into Quiet Cat's chocolate tart, I relished the complementary flavors: deep, creamy chocolate and zingy berries against a floral rose-pistachio shortbread crust. According to Chef K. Taylor of [K's Revolutionary Catering](#), marrying flavors is one of Youngmark's specialties. "She made this delicious rosemary bread loaf," Taylor said. "With a loaf of bread that's supposed to have rosemary in it, sometimes you don't really get that rosemary [to come] through. Then when you do, sometimes the rosemary can be kind of

piney.” Youngmark’s, she said, was perfect.



*Emmet Kowler / Heavy Table*

Taylor, a 25-year veteran of the restaurant industry, supervised the kitchen at Youth Farm while Youngmark worked there. “[Zainab] is just an extraordinary young lady,” she told me. “Working with her over the years, whenever there will be times where I would need to leave the kitchen, she would be my first person that I would leave the kitchen [to], because she’s so responsible.”

Twenty-year-old Salmah Youngmark describes her sister as “very creative.” Not only does Zainab dream up menus and custom cakes, she also has an associate’s degree in photography. Salmah adds, “She can be shy and anxious at times, but she’s able to move past that. And in general, she’s a positive person and fun to be around.”

Even Youngmark’s parents have also gotten on board with Quiet Cat. “They are proud of me,” she said. “For a while, my dad was cracking jokes, like, when are you going to get a real job?” Youngmark laughed. “Now I pay my rent with my bake money. So I’m good, thanks.”

## **DELIVERY’S NEW START WITH STAY’D**

### **A New St. Paul Brand Aims to Change the Hospitality Factor for Delivered Food**

**By James Norton**



Becca Dilley / Heavy Table

One of the most frequently shared insights I've heard from chefs and restaurant owners goes like this: one of the lesser-known casualties of the disease has been hospitality itself. A large percentage of restaurant value is built upon making guests feel welcome and cared for, and that goes right out the window when soggy / jumbled / cold food gets delivered 80 minutes after an order is placed by a chronically underpaid and poorly trained third party delivery service courier.

The premise of **Stay'd**, a new St. Paul-based delivery-only restaurant concept by **Maadaadizi Investments** (a **Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures**-owned hospitality company that also owns **Rival House** and **Citizen**) is simple. The group makes food engineered to travel well that is also deliberately designed to feel comforting and caring. Stay'd works as a ghost restaurant via the Rival House kitchen and while it's delivered by third-party services, it's also engineered to address some of those services' shortcomings.

"We kind of felt like the - everybody was sort of connecting more at the very beginning of the pandemic, spending more time with family and things, and obviously utilizing more takeout and delivery, but it seemed to be that the hospitality aspect was missing a little bit," says Maadaadizi CEO Jeff Castillo. "We started to think: What would happen if we created something completely for delivery? We were feeling like: Let's spend a little bit of money on the bags and the way things are packaged, let's make them eco-friendly. Thinking about cleanup, thinking about the quality of the bag when you see it..."

Stay'd launched late last month and is aiming to open a second location in St. Louis Park this summer to serve the western suburbs. Castillo says that he believes the concept has legs beyond the pandemic and says that Stay'd is looking ahead to continued growth.

"We're continually exploring partnership opportunities to expand - we'd like to connect with other folks who have similar thoughts on delivering on that [quality] food and drink experience," he says. "Whether that be through licensing agreements... we're looking at all

the avenues to see what fits best for us.”



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table*

The food we tried largely backed up the concept. We've probably ordered a half dozen mediocre Caesar salads since the beginning of the pandemic, salads that fail due to wilted produce, bad balance of ingredients, mediocre dressing and a host of other problems. But Stay'd's Grilled Buttermilk Chicken Caesar (\$14) was a winner. The thinly sliced chicken came packaged separately from the salad (a cool side cool / hot side hot kind of thing that was thoughtful and appreciated), the greens were incredibly crisp, and the combination of Kalamata olives and fermented fish sauce gave the dish some much appreciated depth and umami. Best of all, the chicken had a legitimate touch of intense char that added considerable interest.



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table*

We straight up loved the Heavenly Hot Dish. Seemingly expensive at \$18, it was a terrific bounty of food (two diners could split one order for dinner) and the inclusion of grass-fed beef and wild mushrooms elevated a classic tater tot hotdish flavor profile without corrupting or overcomplicating it. The tots were crispy and the dish was (shockingly!) not overly salty. Correct seasoning will make or break this sort of dish, and here a light (but not stingy) hand on the salt was a great choice.



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table*

Stay'd's Wood Fired Chicken (\$23) was simple and straightforward - a properly cooked, crispy skinned whole chicken plus mashed potatoes and veggies. We found the chicken tasty but basic, but also a perfect vessel for just about any random sauce you want to hit it with; we went with a homemade pineapple habanero sauce from our fridge and very much enjoyed the dressed up result. The accompanying Garlic and Gold Potato mash was excellent - rich, creamy, and comforting without being stodgy or overly rich, light enough to enjoy but substantial enough to bring real substance to the plate.



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table*

The only shortcoming was the dessert; our slice of Chocolate Turtle Layer Cake (\$8) looked great but tasted like it was decanted from plastic at any given exurban casual sit-down chain restaurant, with generic, sugary chocolate notes dominating the package. A tub of delicate, vanilla-kissed whipped cream tasted housemade and improved the cake considerably, but couldn't save what was ultimately a mediocre last course.

Stay'd puts effort into its packaging, and many consumers will appreciate the result: stackable, compostable containers that are clearly labeled with brightly colored paper wrap-around bands. It's a palpable step up from many of the plastic containers we've received over the course of the pandemic.

*Stay'd currently delivers to St. Paul, Cottage Grove, Lake Elmo, South Saint Paul and Inver Grove Heights; [its menu is available online](#).*

## **TIMELINE**

### **The Tumultuous History of Surly's Beer Hall**

**By Jerard Fagerberg**



*Becca Dilley / Heavy Table / File*

Surly Brewing's taproom was not the first in Minneapolis, but it came to be the most significant. It's the one that put Minnesota on the map, delivered as a promise by Surly in return for legalizing taprooms in the state. The Beer Hall has been a destination for craft beer tourists since it opened in 2014.

But in the past seven years, the Beer Hall has also become the center of several controversies, culminating in its indefinite closure last November. Now that the brewery has surprisingly announced that **they will reopen in June**, we're revisiting the seesaw of events that have led us to this moment.

#### **Dec. 17, 2014: Surly opens their destination Beer Hall**

In 2011, Surly sponsored a bill to make it (finally) legal for breweries to operate taprooms in Minnesota. The law, known now as the Surly Bill, spurred a windfall of growth in statewide breweries. Three years later, Surly opens the doors on the **destination Beer Hall** they'd envisioned when lobbying for the Surly Bill.



Becca Dilley / Heavy Table / File

The Beer Hall includes full-service tables on the main level, serving a menu developed partially by Linda Haug, wife of **Surly head brewer Todd Haug**. There's also a **fine dining establishment called the Brewer's Table** located on the top level helmed by renowned local chef Jorge Guzmán. (The restaurant snagged Guzmán a nomination for a James Beard Award and was among Food and Wine's 10 best new restaurants of 2016.)

### **Nov. 16, 2016: Todd Haug leaves Surly**

In February 2016, Linda Haug was let go from Surly, **ending an 11-year relationship**. Nine months later, **Todd Haug makes his exit**. Both announce their plans to move to **3 Floyds Brewing**, where Todd will help with brewing and distilling, and Linda will consult on the Indiana brewery's restaurant.

Todd's chief gripe with Surly is that he **never received an ownership stake**, despite serving as Surly's de facto mascot and namesake of **their most lauded beer**. He also cites the treatment of Linda as a contributing factor.

"When I saw what they did to Linda, after she never had a bad performance review or one word of warning, I had to ask, could they do the same thing to me?" Todd **told Minneapolis-St. Paul Magazine**.

### **March 30, 2018: Surly Pizza Upstairs opens**

Guzman and the Brewer's Table **last only two years at Surly**. In 2018, the brewery relaunches the space as a New Haven-style pizza joint. **Surly Pizza Upstairs is incredibly popular on its debut**, but its opening comes two days after Surly **settles a \$2.5 million class-action lawsuit** for illegally pooling employee tips. The lawsuit had been initiated by former Surly bartender James Conlon in February 2016, growing to include 140 current and former Surly servers and bartenders. Following the settlement, the brewery stops accepting tips for staff.



Karsten Steinhäuser / File

### **Aug. 31, 2020: Staff announces intent to unionize**

Ten days after distillery Tattersall **voted to become America's first unionized craft distillery** and five days after **Spyhouse employees announced their intent** to do the same, Surly's front-of-house staff notifies management of **their intent to join Unite Here Local 17**.

A group called **Unite Surly Workers** is formed to lead the effort. Unite Surly Workers' concerns are **mainly related to staff safety** during COVID.

"Once we heard what service was going to be like, we sent a letter expressing concerns about safety and pay," Unite Surly Workers' Natalie Newcomer **told October**. "This jump-started the idea of being like, 'Hey, we actually don't agree with this, can you please listen to us?', asking in the most respectful way if we could be part of the process. And they basically said, 'No, we're not changing anything about our plan to reopen, whether it's in terms of safety or financially.'"

When contacted at the time of the unionization movement, Surly's press team responds with a statement they'd **posted to social media earlier that day** :

"Yesterday, some of Surly's hospitality employees notified management of their intent to unionize. We're working on determining next steps."

### **Sept. 2, 2020: Surly announces closure of Beer Hall**

Days after the union news went out, Surly front-of-house staff are notified that they would be laid off effective Nov. 2, in compliance with the **Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act of 1988**, which requires 60-day notice for plant closings and mass layoffs of employees.



Becca Dilley / Heavy Table / File

Surly's public announcement comes soon after. The statement cites an 82% decline in revenue stemming from COVID-19 closures and the cancellation of big events, such as the July Tame Impala concert. ProPublica reports that Surly had been granted a \$2.8 million PPP loan the prior April to cover payroll, corroborating founder Omar Ansari's statement that 2020 was a "lost year" for Surly. The brewery insists the closure is not in reaction to its staff organizing.

"The timing of this announcement is not ideal," Surly wrote. "On Monday, some hospitality employees notified us of their intent to unionize. We respect their decision to turn to an outside organization for representation and will continue the dialogue. That does not change the fact that our plans to close the Beer Hall were put in place weeks ago with the announcement planned for this week."

Local 17 are quick to call their actions retaliation, which would represent a violation of the National Labor Relations Act. Local 17's Sheigh Freeberg estimated that 110 employees who signed union cards were included in the firing.

"Surly sent out a WARN notice letting employees know they will be laid off Nov. 2," he told City Pages. "This is a clearly illegal and disgusting action from the employer retaliating against them for exercising their rights to form a union."

An employee walkout and consumer boycott are discussed by Unite Surly Workers but are never enacted. Local 17 withdraws their unfair labor practice charge after Surly agrees to let the workers hold an election.

"We, the union and Surly, agree to support a free and fair election so that everyone can make the right decision for themselves," they told the Star Tribune.

**Oct. 7, 2020: Surly's union vote fails**

While Surly was bargaining with their staff, **Fair State Brewing Cooperative** voluntarily recognized their employees' bid to join Local 17. The day prior, Stilheart Distillery and Cocktail Lounge and Lawless Distilling Company also signed cards.

The momentum would not carry over. Surly's union vote was stipulated on the fact that 50% of the brewery's hospitality employees must vote in favor to ratify the union. Of the 112 eligible voters, only 76 voted. 56 voted in favor, 20 against, meaning **the bid failed by a single vote**. Ansari and head of hospitality Dan Dinovis are **seen out celebrating** shortly after, according to Unite Surly Workers.

"The results do not affect the Beer Hall's stark financial reality that led to the plan and the need to close indefinitely," Surly said **in a statement**. "We'll continue to provide guests with exceptional service and the highest safety measures until our final night of service."

### **Nov. 2, 2020: The Beer Hall closes indefinitely**

As planned, the Beer Hall closes the first week of November. No announcement is made by the brewery or Unite Surly Workers.

### **March 31, 2021: The Beer Hall announces plans to reopen**

As vaccinations are distributed and COVID restrictions relaxed, Surly announces they have plans to reopen the Beer Hall on June 1. The announcement comes after months of the brewery's vocal support of **the Free the Growler bill**, which would allow Surly to sell to-go beer from their taproom again.

Surly's marketing team confirms they're hiring an executive chef, general manager, hospitality-focused HR generalist, and digital marketing manager who will "help define what the Surly beer hall looks, feels, sounds and tastes like when guests are welcomed back." **A coinciding statement** elaborates that "qualified candidates and former employees are encouraged to apply to any open positions."

Heavy Table reached out to Unite Surly Workers for comment, but the request was not returned before press time. Instagram stories published on March 31 indicate that they're not going to stay silent, though they've made no public statement yet.

## **ELSEWHERE ONLINE**

This week, the **Heavy Table** gave the almost certainly doomed **Liquor Lyle's** an **Andy Sturdevant** **history-rich send off**. **Bill Lindeke** writes **a story** over at **MinnPost** about **Mickey's** and **Al's Breakfast** and how these classic diners are faring amid the pandemic. (Our own **Amy Rea** wrote about Al's staff meal a couple of newsletters ago.) **Eater** writes **about** the re-opening to in-person dining of numerous area restaurants amid context positive (vaccines!) and negative (possible new COVID surge!) and **spotlights** restaurateur **Gavin Kaysen's** upcoming restaurants in the 2022-slated **Four Seasons** hotel in downtown Minneapolis. The **Star Tribune** **looks at the big expansion** to New Richmond, Wisconsin by partners **Big Watt** and **Lift Bridge**, which looks like yet another loss for Minnesota thanks to our restrictive liquor laws and **Rick Nelson** writes about restaurants including **Savory Bake House**, **Manger**, and **Union Hmong Kitchen** and others that are fighting food

insecurity in Minnesota. (The **Growler** documented **Savory's efforts** just before shuttering in 2020.) And **Chef Yia Vang** writes about anti-Asian hate in **Sahan Journal**.

## FOOTNOTES

[1] **Editor's Note:** To the best of my knowledge, anyhow. We actually debut quite a few fresh faces around here, as we're always ready to talk to the new, the up-and-coming, and the undeservedly obscure rather than chasing down the same big names.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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