



Holy City Brewing guests of oysters

Holy City growing opening

By Connelly Hardaway

Kevin Joseph, the “master” behind omakase raw bar at the Raw Lab, knows a good one when he sees one. And after years of living, breathing and serving raw seafood, he knew that his business model would thrive in one of Charleston’s many area breweries. He just needed someone to join in on his plan.

“I’ve been soliciting breweries for a long time,” Joseph said. “I [told them] I could offer an elite raw bar. I can do the marketing and promoting and hiring. Holy City [Brewing] picked up on that.”


After several successful pop-ups in Holy City Brewing (HCB)’s expansive backyard, HCB co-founder Chris Brown knew that a raw bar would make a great addition to the 10,000-square-foot brewery.

Since opening at its Aragon Avenue location in 2019, Holy City has continued to expand its on-site offerings, from adding an outdoor bar and food truck to making plans for a dock that leads through the property’s marsh.

The location’s proximity to the water informs the menu of its permanent food truck, the Crafty Crab, which serves up everything from crab nachos to lobster rolls.

Raw bars

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love for oysters that’s readily apparent in the city’s proliferation of raw bars. 

Charleston’s raw bars

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a raw bar is “a bar or counter which sells raw oysters and other seafood.” For this informal list,* we focused on restaurants that have dedicated raw bars — seats that face a bar where shuckers and servers are serving up fresh seafood.

- The Darling Oyster Bar
- 167Raw
- NICO
- Amen Street
- Pearlz
- Delaney Oyster House
- Charleston Oyster House
- The Ordinary
- Eleve
- Fleet Landing (coming 2024)
- Bowens Island
- Holy City Brewing
- The Quinte
- The Harlow

*We cannot say for sure that this list is complete;

Are there ever enough raw bars?


It’s no secret that fresh seafood is a popular snack in coastal Charleston; what’s somewhat surprising, though, is that one of the city’s favorite raw snacks continues to grow in popularity.

According to an informal *City Paper* search of area restaurants, with the addition of HCB’s bar, there are currently 14 dedicated raw bars in the city, including a brand-new raw bar now open in the Grand Bohemian Hotel’s restaurant, Eleve, and one slated to open inside of longtime waterfront restaurant, Fleet Landing, in early 2024.

The HCB raw bar will have 16 seats. “I’m hard pressed to think of another raw bar that has 16 seats, anywhere in the United States,” Joseph said. Bigger isn’t just better, though — Joseph promises that the raw bar experience will focus on quality, with an emphasis on what he calls “edutainment.”

“People like to eat and forage and stand and learn and be educated at the same time,” he said. Joseph has deemed eager eaters “bivalve curious,” acknowledging an earnest

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Photos by Rūta Smith

The Moyes said kombucha “doesn’t have to taste crazy.” Cat Moye described Fizza as a drink that is “medium-bodied and complex while still being smooth.” Transparency is the name of the game, with the few ingredients in Fizza printed clearly on the cans: filtered water, kombucha culture, cane sugar, organic black tea and organic ginger oil.

Unlike kombuchas made further afield, Fizza can be experienced fresh and is kept cold from production to final destination.

One popular final destination for Fizza is Jack of Cups Saloon on Folly, which was the location of the hard kombucha’s launch earlier this fall. “They’ve been flying through products,” Mac Moye said of the drink’s popularity at the Folly Beach bar and restaurant. “Chris [Johnson, general manager] is open-minded and really embraced us,” he said.

“The product really spoke for itself,” said Johnson. “Ian (our bar manager) can be skeptical about certain hard kombuchas, but when I saw his face after he tried a taste, I knew it was good stuff.”

In addition to selling Fizza as is, Jack of Cups’ bar manager has created a cocktail

