

As seen in **FOODSERVICE MONTHLY**...

Evolution Craft Brewing Company

by Michael Birchenall

You have to love a company that has the tagline: "Drink the future."

There's a new brewery ready to throw the yeast into its first batch of beer ... and it's not your grand-dad's brewery. Evolution Craft Brewing Company is a modern concept of brewing which has a Web site (www.evolutioncraftbrewing.com), a blog (evolutionbeer.blogspot.com) and for up to the date happenings, you can "follow" them on Twitter (twitter.com/evolutionbeer).

The two brothers who have created Evolution also head up Southern Boys Concept. Tom and John Knorr already own the Red

Roost, Boonies Restaurant, So Bo Wine Bistro, and a restaurant in Guatemala. John Knorr is also a vice president of national accounts and franchising for Phillips Seafood Restaurants, while Tom handles the operations of their other interests locally.

The original plan was to build the brewery in Salisbury but when bureaucracy got in the way, they moved into nearby Delaware and purchased an empty IGA building in Delmar. Voila ... a microbrewery is born.

On the way to Ocean City for the annual Spring Expo, I stopped in Delmar to meet with Tom and the brewmaster Geoff deBisschop. The two were sweeping and cleaning behind the plumbers and construction crews as the facility read-



Geoff deBisschop and Tom Knorr



ies for an April 1 opening. John Knorr told me before I left for Delmar, "We are building this company from a unique prospective through our experience as restaurateurs, much in the way Steve Phillips charted the course of Phillips Foods in the beginning."

Since my visit, they have their Federal approval and can now buy yeast. They still have a couple of local approvals to receive, but the hard licenses are in hand.

One of the keys to success is a Maryland distribution link to get product to their restaurants in the area and to Phillips restaurants throughout the state. They have finalized a contract with FP Winner which makes them a viable resource in the craft beer market.

Brewmaster deBisschop said that the first brew to be brewed would be their "Primal Pale Ale."

It's going to have those expected characteristics of a refreshing pale ale: assertively hopped with a toasty malt backbone. Geoff talks in terms of American hops that "throw out the citrus," and "piney notes that work so well in a pale ale." His first beer will aim to be well balanced at 4.8% abv and focused on food compatibility (remember the restaurant connection.) The other two core beers to follow will be the Exile ESB (evolution-style beer) and Lucky 7 Porter.

As the brewing begins, I'm following them on Twitter ... and plan to make another stop on the way to the Ocean City Hotel Motel Restaurant Association meeting on April 16. I think I'll be feeling a bit parched on that trek to the beach ... a pit stop will be in order. Stay tuned.