

# Cambodia Craft Brewers

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**We talk to some of the leading and new craft beer producers based in the Kingdom of Cambodia. There are more than a dozen breweries, microbreweries, nano breweries and taprooms now listed.**

**How easy is it for them to do business in Cambodia though, and how positive are these entrepreneurs about the growth of the craft beer industry?**

*In this two-part series, we look at the potential of the craft beer market in Asia as well as the growth in SEA and Cambodia. We assess the possible road ahead for local producers and speak to some of the Cambodian craft brewers to hear how they have set up in the Kingdom addressing the positives and negatives.*

## Cambodia Craft Brewery Industry: (Part Two)

We counted over 20 craft beer and cider producers in Cambodia in our research for these articles. In the past, some breweries focused purely on the export market, producing to order for the larger markets in Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia and others.

Himawari and Kingdom breweries can claim to be the first and oldest craft breweries in the Kingdom of Cambodia, but since around 2018 the competition has grown enormously and brewers are untapping the potential of the market in Cambodia.

You can read more about the market growth in [\*\*Cambodia Craft Brewery Industry: Part One\*\*](#)



Photo Credit: Stone Head Craft Beer

## Cambodian craft brewers

We reached out to a number of Cambodian brewers to hear about their businesses, their growth and experiences of doing business in the Kingdom. Some did not respond or want to be interviewed at this time.

### Cerevisia Craft Brewery

Having launched in 2013, **Cerevisia** is an old hand in terms of the relatively young Cambodian craft beer industry. They have expanded to have three of their own locations in 2020 and even rolled out a mobile beer tuk-tuk delivery system during COVID-19 to deliver craft beer to customers homes in Phnom Penh.

Cerevisia translates as Latin for beer, and we were informed by the brewer's owner and founder, American Erich Phillips, about the company's roots in Cambodia. "Like many craft brewers around the world, we start with a love of beer and end with the joy of sharing it with others. My story is no different.

***I DIDN'T COME TO CAMBODIA TO START A BREWERY, BUT I FOUND A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS WHO ENCOURAGED US TO TAKE OUR HOBBY AND TURN IT INTO A BUSINESS."***

Erich added "Our brewery started out of necessity, of sorts. In 2013, there were a limited few craft beers entering the market, and only 2 local microbreweries. I can recall the days of desperately visiting USA Donut in BKK for their rare bottles of New Belgium's Amber Ale, "Fat Tire".

The restaurant, Deco, had a secret stash of imported English Ales. It was a desperate struggle to find something that reminded us of home. In the first year, we brewed at home every Sunday just for the joy of brewing.

Oftentimes, we would host "Keg Cleaning" parties, which meant that we would invite a group of friends to the house and explain that the keg needs to be empty by the end of the night because we need it for the brew day tomorrow! Those friends around the kitchen table were the first to ask us to add our beer to their restaurants. We started our business by pure chance."



Photo Credit: Cerevisia

### **How easy was it to register the Cerevisia business and beer products in Cambodia?**

As I'm a guest in Cambodia, it's important to follow the laws. We are proud to be a fully compliant taxpayer, contributing to the growth of the economy. The process was straightforward and simple.

Much like most things in Cambodia, it takes time and the capacity to accept or tolerate delays, or problems, without becoming anxious.

To register new products, we bottled our beer and took it to the ministry for them to test. Its simple and straight forward.

### **How optimistic are you on the future growth of the Cambodian craft beer scene?**

Over the past 7 years, the food and beverage market has moved from a focus on expats, to a new and vibrant Cambodian middle class. Today, I see more Cambodian entrepreneurial spirit, franchises, and culinary curiosity. The blue ocean market is shrinking though. There are now 20 microbreweries in Cambodia and we receive imported craft beers from our neighbouring countries every day.

Let's talk about the elephant in the room. COVID-19. I'm tired of talking about the "C" word, but it is an honest economic concern for this country we call home. I have heard of economists reporting on the impact of consumers trending down market; opting out of fine dining and choosing more often a casual evening.

If you've been furloughed, you might reach for a \$0.50 lager, rather than a \$3.50 pint. I believe that Cambodia's economy will recover much quicker than her neighbours. Much like the global recession in 2008, Cambodia was less affected as a result of their comparatively fewer global market ties. Domestic consumers are travelling and buying, and as soon as travel restrictions are lifted, the tourism sector will rebound.



Photo Credit: Cerevisia Craft Brewery in Phnom Penh

**What products and services does Cerevisia offer?**

We serve Damn Fine Beer for Damn Fine People. Joking aside, we are proud to share local craft beer in bottle and draft to your neighbourhood restaurant and private parties. Our beers are all-natural, with local ingredients.

Recently, we added our “Beer Bar Tuk Tuk” to respond to the COVID crisis. Give our Tuk Tuk a call and we will take cold craft beer on tap, right to your door!

*The full range of over a dozen **Cerevisia beers is listed here.***

**What would you say are the main pros and cons of doing business in Cambodia?**

The boring answer is that breweries in Cambodia deal with challenges of supply chain and bridging a skills gap within an industry which did not exist a decade ago.



I love Cambodia, because of the community I see every day. I'm proud that [Cerevisia Craft Brewery](#) brings people together, either at Botanico, Odom Park, Craft Beer Garden on St. 144, or over a cold beer at your local restaurant.

If you know anything about the Muppets, all Kermit the Frog wanted, was to make people happy. As an owner of a brewery, I just want to be like Kermit.



Photo Credit: Cerevisia Craft Brewery

You can read more about the overview of the [Craft Beer Industry in Part One](#) or discover more about [Cambodian craft distillers here](#).