

## Cheers Charlotte : a Podcast for Beer Lovers

photos & words by: Amanda Dickinson [aBabeInBeerLand.com](http://aBabeInBeerLand.com)



Jay Brown, Ford Craven, and Cesar Leyva have a weekly ritual of grabbing some tasty beers while going over the notes for the current week's podcast. This jovial crew run down the show sheet and bounce ideas off each other all while throwing in a few jabs and jokes. Recently, I had the pleasure of sitting down with them for a flight at the Beer Growler on South Boulevard. These three friends came together about a year and a half ago and have recorded around 120 episodes, all available on iTunes and Stitcher. They share a mutual love of craft beers, stemming from different backgrounds. Jay and Ford are both North Carolina natives, and Cesar hails from San Diego. All are avid homebrewers, and each have a strong foothold on the Charlotte area brew scene. Each podcast runs about an hour long and covers recent news, a weekly guest, in studio music, a home brewer spotlight, and calls from the Draft line. They have quickly established themselves as a staple in the Charlotte Craft Beer scene.

Local is what these guys are all about. Weekly guests are almost entirely from the Charlotte area, as well as the in studio musicians, and hometown breweries. All three guys have been heavily involved with events such as, Charlotte Oktoberfest, The Moo and Brew festival (Cesar is one of the founders), and The Brewers Ball. Shout outs to Charlotte Breweries include, but aren't limited to, Heist, Free Range, and Wooden Robot. They are all about some local music, too. Some of their favorites are, Diarrhea Planet, Junior Astronomers, the Loudermilks, Of Good Nature, and Sinners & Saints. Justin Fedor, a solo performer and member of The New Familiars, was the studio musical guest for the episode I attended, to promote a benefit concert for the Levine Children's Hospital. Jay, Ford, and Cesar keep it close to home.

When asked about the current Charlotte craft beer scene, they cite many changes in the past few years to bring about its development. Watching small home brews develop into big breweries, the growth of Charlotte, and the vast creativity displayed by our local brew

houses, they know our city is nowhere near capacity. Improvements they would like to see are, letting breweries continue to self-distribute. House Bill 278 would prohibit breweries from self-distributing if their production reached over 25,000 barrels. This would discourage growth for our local companies. Some breweries have stated that they would stop production at just under the mark to avoid being forced into bringing in an outside distributor. They collectively believe that this decision should be left up to the individual company and not forced upon them. Cheers Charlotte also feels it's important to keep our small pubs around and supported. Growth in Charlotte has seen the destruction of many independent bars and music venues to make way for new housing and the light rail.

The future is wide open for the Cheers Charlotte crew. Although they have cemented themselves as a fixture in the scene, there are still plenty of people to reach. They are planning more live podcasts soon, as well as hosting more events. Keep an eye and an ear out for them to get the scoop on everything in the Charlotte craft scene. You'll be glad you did.

**Website:** [Cheerscharlotte.com](https://cheerscharlotte.com) | **Draft Line:** 1-515-4WE-Brew | **Follow on Facebook:** Cheers Charlotte | **Follow on Twitter:** @CheersCLT

Cheers Charlotte Recommends:

**Beer Exploring Day Trips from Charlotte:** Asheville | Charleston | Hickory | Morganton

**Favorite Beer Festivals:** Charlotte Oktoberfest | Black and Blue Beer Festival | Salud Funkfest | Fillmore Craft Beer Sessions

**Best Beer Bars/Stores:** Brawley's Beverages | Salud | Good Bottle | Rhino Market | The Beer Growler | Carolina Beer Temple | Lil' Robert's Place | Earl's Grocery