

# INTRODUCING THE BLIND BAT BREWERY

By Alexandra Martinez

A man and a woman met when they signed up for a CPR class together. After falling in love, they spent time making wine together for their wedding. Nearly 20 years ago, the woman bought the man a beer making kit. He made a stew to pair with the beer and *voilà* - the early start of one man's food pairing dreams began. Lucky for us, this self-taught home brewer is none other than Paul Dlugokencky, owner of the relatively new Blind Bat Brewery Bistro & Take-Away at 94 Washington Drive.

Dlugokencky has been homebrewing, or "cottage brewing," as he aptly calls it, since 2002. The original owner of the Dlugokenckys' cottage was a Mr. Hoffman, who worked for Robert Moses, and was a very handy man who built the garage of the cottage first to store his tools, car, and even use as an extended sleeping area for warm summer nights. This 340-square foot building is the birthplace of the Blind Bat brews. If you walk into the brewery at 94 Washington Drive, you won't see the brewery immediately... or at all; Dlugokencky turned this building behind his and his wife's cottage on Harrison Drive into a brewery. They established Blind Bat Brewery as a part-time brewery in 2008. After years of planning and research, Dlugokencky signed the bistro lease in May 2018 and it took almost a full year to open their little bistro and takeaway to the public. Playing on the names of speakeasies during the Prohibition era (Bling Tigers for the upper class, Blind Pigs for the lower class) and the fact that Dlugokencky is nearsighted as well as color blind, the Blind Bat Brewery name was born.



According to Dlugokencky, brewing beer is a lot like cooking: "You can play with different ingredients, amounts, ratios and time." Just like any creative chef may tinker with a new recipe, Dlugokencky tinkers with ingredients to create interesting new flavors. As of December, some brew flavors included their Sweet Potato Saison (instead of pumpkin, and with nutmeg and cardamom), their Long Island Potato Stout (organic potatoes) and a sour red IPA; there are always different offerings and their website is consistently updated with new items to the food and beer menu.

The brewery bistro aims to use organic items as much as possible while still meeting margins and keeping pricing affordable. The menu offers a selection of soups, sandwiches, burgers, knishes, and vegan/vegetarian items and is inspired by foods the Dlugokenckys' eat at home. Regina, Paul's wife, grows fruits and vegetables from seeds in a greenhouse in their backyard. Sometimes Paul will even brew with some of the herbs from their garden. This past summer, Regina's specialty menu item was her homegrown cherry tomato tartes.

Still in its early stages of establishment, the Bistro & Take-Away had a soft-opening the last weekend of June, officially opening in July of 2019. In 2020, the goal is to ultimately be in operation Wednesday through Sunday. Long gone are the days when Dlugokencky would be personally distributing his home brewed beers to bars, beer stores, and restaurants from his sedan all across Long Island as well as into Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. Having "literally looked everywhere from east of Riverhead to Valley Stream," Dlugokencky alluded to the fact that much like Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz, this is all happening right in his own backyard. "Life is a journey and you don't always get to where you want to go when you want to get there or at all," Dlugokencky shares. "So, I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to actually finally be open here. 10 minute walk. 3 minute drive."

Dlugokencky used to say what he did for fun was brewing because he was working at his other job. Transitioning completely to work on his business, he still enjoys brewing and feels very fortunate that he now brews and cooks for both work and pleasure. Be sure to stop by and support this homegrown Huntington Beach Community business owner. Grab a knish (he taught himself how to make them watching YouTube videos) or get a growler refill of some alternative ales! Either way #supportlocal #eatlocal and visit [BlindBatBrewery.com](http://BlindBatBrewery.com) for updated beer and food menus.