

Award-winning craft distillery to open first Florida location in Clermont

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By Tiffani Sherman



The Heritage Distillery will be one of the anchor tenants in the Heritage Square project. The businesses are planned for the vacant land at the intersection of State Road 50 and 12th Street. (Powell Design Studio)

The company that makes the “World’s Best Flavoured Whisky” will be opening a craft distillery and tasting room in Central Florida.

The Clermont City Council last week approved a zoning change from M-1 industrial to PUD, allowing the Heritage Square project to move forward.

The master plan for the development calls for up to six buildings with a maximum of 60,000 square feet of space at the intersection of State Road 50 and 12th Street. The project includes a distillery, restaurant, and tasting room.

“The Clermont City Council and I are excited that the developer has chosen Clermont for this multi-faceted commercial project, City Manager Darren Gray told **GrowthSpotter**.



Heritage Square will have up to 60,000 square feet of restaurants, shopping and an award-winning distillery. (Powell Studio)

“Not only would this be the city’s first distillery and tasting room, but also it would add more shops and restaurants, creating jobs and an experiential destination for residents and visitors alike.”

The owners and developers of the project are the Kovatch family, who also own the Fifty West office building project.

“The Kovatches don’t do average. We’re not here to do what has been built before,” Jimmy Crawford, an attorney representing the developers, said at the Nov. 19th council meeting. “We want to bring a project of regional significance and economic development to the city.”

Crawford told the council a partner in the project is Heritage Distilling Co., a Washington state craft distillery with six locations in the Pacific Northwest, but none in the Southeast.

The company’s web site says they are majority-owned by women and family operated. Heritage Distilling makes a variety of spirits including bourbon, whiskey, vodka, rum, and gin. Their BSB, or Brown Sugar Bourbon, has been named the “World’s Best Flavoured Whisky” two years in a row by “Whisky Magazine”.

“They are the most awarded distillery in the country,” Crawford told the council. “We’re not reinventing the wheel. We’re partnering with the best there is to bring this project in.”

According to the city, it is early in the project and neither the site plan review process nor the building plan review are underway yet.

The project will go on land that is currently vacant and will include many other businesses.

“What we’re actually envisioning here at Heritage Square is shopping, retail, restaurants, and we just happen to have a distillery as an anchor tenant,” owner Keith Kovatch said at the meeting. “This is really a project where people can come at any time of day to enjoy the square, not just the distillery.”