Like-minded brewers’ Crafty merger

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Industry

Two brewers with a focus on quality, smaller-batch beers have merged, with Crafty Brewing buying Ridgeway brewery. Both have successfully navigated choppy waters during the pandemic, emerging stronger with a focus on specialist markets and innovation. The combined business can produce 100,000 litres a week with beers destined for export, supermarkets, clubs, pubs, restaurants and the British Army. Master brewer Peter Scholey, who founded Ridgeway in 2002, said: “Any business needs a succession plan, but with brewing it is far more than just finding a new manager. “You need someone who shares your vision of what good beer should be and I am pleased to have found that person in Luke Herman. I look forward to working alongside Luke as we explore the exciting new opportunities created.” Based in Oxfordshire, Ridgeway is known for its strong export focus for its beers including the bottle-conditioned Ridgeway IPA, Bitter and ESB plus a range of whimsically named Christmas beers such as Santa’s Butt, Bad Elf, Criminally Bad Elf, Lump of Coal and Reindeer’s Revolt. Crafty Brewing founder Luke Herman, who set up the company in 2014, said: “Having grown Crafty Brewing from a 100-litre kit in a lorry body to a 5,000-litre setup in a purpose-built facility, producing traditional beers with a modern twist, joining forces with Ridgeway was a natural next step. “Peter brings a deep understanding of the industry, expert brewing skills, and a portfolio of world-class beers. I’m thrilled to be working alongside him, learning from his experience, and maintaining the Ridgeway brand he has built with such dedication.” Based in Dunsfold, Surrey, Crafty Brewing produces award-winning beers such as Arctic Fox Pilsner, Wave Catcher Session IPA, Distant Horizon Hazy Pale, Loxhill Biscuit Gluten Free Golden Ale and Blind Side Best Bitter.  Crafty also received a SIBA award in 2024 for its range of personalised beers, where customers can design their own labels for gifting. Pictured, from left, Luke and Peter.