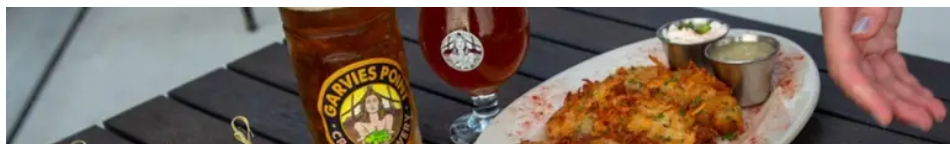


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Oktoberfest on Long Island: 3 places to celebrate


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The "Giant Pretzel" with beer cheese sauce and spicy mustard, potato pancakes and schnitzel sliders at Garvies Point Brewery in Glen Cove. Credit: Linda Rosier

By **Corin Hirsch**

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As far as parties goes, it's hard to top the hedonism of Oktoberfest, the mega beer bash that unfolds in Munich each fall. Millions of people swill beer, elbow to elbow, and sing "Ein Prosit" (a song played every 15 minutes) — a party that has swelled in scale every year since the wedding celebration of Ludwig I and Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen in 1810, which kickstarted the entire thing.

For a time, the pandemic took away many things, and Oktoberfest was one of them. The massive tents in Bavaria went dark for two years and closer to home, plexiglass and social distancing ruled at bars and restaurants that still put on events.

The beer is flowing again this year in Bavaria (albeit at higher prices, because...inflation) and here, too, where there are dozens of celebrations on an island with a hearty German population. Munich's Oktoberfest began Sept. 17 and ends Oct. 3; most of the local events run in tandem. Merrymaking aside, there's another purpose behind the debauchery, especially for breweries.

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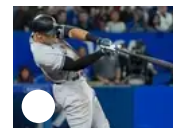
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“Traditionally, it was meant to be the time of the year [brewers] could brew lagers again, because the weather would start to turn cooler,” said Mark Scoroposki, co-owner (with Ben Kossoff) of Garvies Point Brewery in Glen Cove. (Lagers brew for longer periods of time, at cooler temperatures, than other styles). “It’s a celebration of being able to brew lager beer, a change of seasons and getting into fall and winter and changing the flavor profiles.”

In the fall, the reigning amber lager style, marzen, is the signature Oktoberfest beer. At Garvies Point, the brewery’s spin, called Tauktoberfest, is named for a local band, Tauk. “We’re an American brewery, and we like to foster different styles from around the world and make them uniquely American by putting a twist on them,” Scoroposki said.

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Of course, Long Islanders might riot if there were no pumpkin ales, so these are also a necessary part of the mix, with each brewery putting their own twist on the style (Garvies Point does a pumpkin saison, for instance) and rolling their rims in proprietary spice blends that almost always include cinnamon sugar.

Whether with a pint pumpkin ale or bratwurst, here are three places to still celebrate Oktoberfest.

Plattduetsche Park Beer Hall and Garden

1132 Hempstead Tpke., Franklin Square

WHEN: Weekends Sept. 30 to Oct. 15

Every year since 1901, thousands of people have flocked to this sprawling Franklin Square beer hall and garden for the most epic local Oktoberfest, a shingdig that spreads over several weekends and is a festive clash of spaten, sauerbraten and oompah bands.

In 2020, a sharply reduced number of revelers had to reserve, and stay in, individual spaces. Temperatures were checked upon arrival. Dancing together was a hard nope.

That stretch of dour days is now a memory at Plattduetsche, and the streamer-decked biergarten, with its tables and outdoor bars, has swung back into action. At Ompahfest, the traditional kickoff event on Sept. 18, thousands of people showed up, as did German bands fresh from New York City’s German-American Steuben Parade.

“The energy, the attendance was back which is a great feeling, because obviously our industry was affected by the pandemic,” said general manager Matthew Buck. “Last year, we were open and things were almost normal, but we weren’t quite there. This year, the energy was back.”

Planning for Oktoberfest goes on all year long, and mindful of supply chain issues — the garden can go through hundreds of kegs a day in the beer garden — staff worked for months in advance to make sure they’d have enough for the event. “We secured containers just for us. There was no way we’re going to run out of anything.” That includes Spaten Lager and Maerzen Oktoberfest, beers from Krombacher and, for the local choice, Greenport Harbor Brewing Co.’s Leaf Pile ale.

Food-wise, it’s a German hoedown of wursts, Bavarian pretzels, schnitzels, sauerbraten and, for meatless eaters, snacks such as potato pancakes and Beyond Bratwurst.

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Classic dishes like Little Bavarians, bratwurst, and homemade potato pancakes at Plattduetsche Park in Franklin Square.
Credit: Jeff Bachner

Oktoberfest at Moriches Field Brewing Co.

1 Wilcox Ave., Center Moriches

WHEN: 1-7 p.m., Oct. 1

Owner Rich Flynn's charming microbrewery opened in late 2020, and the brewery runs a robust schedule of events that include Trivia Nights and live music. The highlight of the one-day Oktoberfest celebration is a beer-spiked cook-off contest: "Taste the Taps" pits the home-cooked dishes of amateur cooks, all cooked with some form of Moriches Field beer, against one another. "One person is going to roll his smoker up the hill," to the brewery, said Flynn.

Flynn brewed his version of marzen, Moriches Field Oktoberfest, during the summer and released it a few weeks ago; the brewery is also pouring It's Too Soon, a malty pumpkin ale, which a cinnamon-spice rim.

The event is \$15 to taste all of the dishes in competition, with beer sold by the pint or glass; there's also a costume and stein-holding contest, with proceeds from the day going to the Moriches Bay Little League.

More info: 631-909-4404, morichesfieldbrewing.com

Oktoberfest at Garvies Point Brewery & Restaurant

45 Herb Hill Rd., Glen Cove

WHEN: 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., Oct. 9

For the first Oktoberfest (and their second ever) in their brand-spankin-new [brewery and tasting room](#) on the Glen Cove waterfront, the crew at Garvies Point is hosting a single afternoon event whose highlight could be, depending on who you ask, either mini-schnitzel sliders, pints of Tauktoberfest or the liter stein-holding contest.

"You have to hold the one liter mug up as long as you possibly can without bending your elbow and lowering your arm," said Mark Scoroposki, who owns Garvies Point with his childhood friend, Ben Kossoff, of the contest that pits drinking buddies together in wobbly armed competition.

The unlimited German food, including wurst platters, giant pretzels, and potato pancakes with apple sauce, mustard and sour cream, will be served buffet-style as a band called the Apple Strudel Gang belts out tunes.

Besides the brewery's version of a marzen, there's also Crescent Kolsch and Pumpkin Licker Saison, the brewery's spin on the seasonal marker of fall.

Tickets range from \$28 to \$70 (with options for children and designated drivers), and besides food earn some bearers three 16-ounce pours of beer. The brewery proper will be open for people who want to drop in for a la carte dining.

More info: 516-277-2787, garviespointbrewery.com

The schnitzel sliders at Garvies Point Brewery in Glen Cove. Credit: Linda Rosier

By Corin Hirsch

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Corin Hirsch writes about restaurants and drinks for Newsday, and has a keen interest in oysters, tacos and late-night dining.

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