



Now Vetri brews beer in bigger premises in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province. — Ti Gong



The 12-square-meter microbrewery was where Vetri got started. — Ti Gong

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In Shanghai there is quite a big scene of craft beer, involving a lot of home brewers, both expats and locals.

end I had eight taps, two with nitrogen gas to push the beer and six regular taps. And there was a lot of fun,” Vetri said.

The pitfall of such a small brewing system was, according to Vetri, it made little to none commercial sense. The smaller the brewery, the less efficient the system.

On the plus side, it was perfect for experimenting. If you want to test a recipe and you make it, what do you have to lose?

“The brewery was inside a restaurant. The good thing was I could have very good feedback when I brewed a new beer and put it on a menu. People ordered a beer, and they didn’t know I was the brewer. I just looked at their faces and listened to what they said. Then they ordered again, and I felt happy. A little bit of stress and finally it went well.”

After two years, Vetri separated the beer from the restaurant and came



Friends and customers enjoy a new beer from Raph Vetri at a restaurant in Ferguson Lane. — Yang Yang

up with the idea of the logo of a floor plan resembling the same shape of the brewery and circling the number of 12 inside it.

Since he added the name, it’s been easier to target new customers.

“I also have the benefit of being a chef in the Shanghai food and beer industry. Maybe it’s easier to open doors,” he said. “I called my friend chefs or managers: ‘I brew beer now, is there a chance I can meet you?’ ‘Yes, come.’ ‘Have a sample.’ Hopefully I was quite supported.”

His first style of beer that won him a

gold medal in the Asian Beer Championship was a Session IPA with a Chinese local twist of Sichuan pepper.

“Sichuan pepper is very iconic of China and Chinese cuisine for me. I once received a pouch of it as a gift from Chengdu City. When I took the plane back, it was in the overhead compartment. And I could smell it. It was so fragrant all over the plane, and I was inspired that I might put it into the beer,” said Vetri.

Then he made two saison beers and one Belgian wheat beer.

“Saison beers are a style very particular from Belgium. Saison means ‘seasonal.’ Back in the days, traditionally on the farms the farmers would prepare some beer for their workers. When the seasonal workers came, they received it as part of the salary, like 5 liters of beer per day for working on the field. It is also called farmhouse in English,” Vetri said.

“The saison beers could be blonde, brown, clear or red, depending on whatever grains were added into them. Some were sour beers, probably because at that time sanitation was not that good.”

The original microbrewery in Yongping Lane was closed in 2022, but for Vetri, it was a nice place to get started and fulfill a dream of beer. Now Vetri is brewing his beer in bigger premises in neighboring Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province.

On January 25, 12SQM Brewing launched its new Belgian double “The Trap Is There” with a 7.8 percent alcohol by volume at the French restaurant in Ferguson Lane in Shanghai where Vetri is working as a head chef.

“I noticed that brown beer is not very popular in Shanghai. In the city, the best-sellers are the wheat beers, anything with fruits, IPA, these are the big trends. So brown beer is like a good addition to the line-up, but probably not the commercial drive for the brewery. And it’s also quite strong. After you do two or three bottles, you become very happy quickly,” he said.