



HOME OF MONTEITH'S GETS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR MAKE-OVER BRINGING GREATER EMPLOYMENT TO THE COAST

The home of Monteith's is to get a multi-million dollar make-over befitting the iconic West Coast brewery's long-standing reputation for producing award-winning beer and cider.

The redevelopment of the 143-year-old brewery will firmly stamp Greymouth on the New Zealand and world tourism maps and offer a visitor experience that fully reflects the heritage and personality that is unique to the West Coast and Monteith's.

Currently 16,500 people visit the Greymouth brewery each year but Monteith's Brewery manager, Tony Mercer expects that figure to rise to 40,000 by 2014.

The redevelopment is expected to be complete by February 2012.

"Our intention is to create an experience that does the original home of Monteith's justice," says Mercer. "The current site has been untouched for many years yet the popularity of Monteith's, and interest in its origins, continues to grow. Our vision is to bring current consumer expectations into line with a more modern offering. That includes creating a great Kiwi food experience, enhanced tour and merchandise shop and of course, great beer."

The redeveloped brewery will ultimately employ more staff than it currently does although final numbers are yet to be confirmed.

Mercer says existing staff have been informed of the redevelopment plans and the new roles that will be created.

"We currently employ nine full and part-time staff but after the redevelopment we hope to increase this to 13 full and part-time jobs. Because of the new structure, and the differing work requirements it is possible there will be some redundancies due to job roles changing but we hope to minimize this through the redeployment to new roles."

Mercer has also shared Monteith's plans with Greymouth District Council mayor, Tony Kokshoorn, who says the redevelopment will be extremely positive for the West Coast.

"I'm delighted Monteith's is investing in the West Coast and creating more jobs as a result. The redevelopment has the potential to have a significant impact on visitor numbers to the area which will be hugely positive for tourism operators through to retail stores."

Mercer says he and his team are working on ways to encourage visitors to Greymouth to stay longer and experience as much as possible.

“We hope develop a *Beer Trail* around Greymouth with visitors and locals encouraged to get a Greymouth passport and collect ‘stamps’ at bars around town including the brewery over a few days. Currently, visitors do the ‘Rock Hop Route’ from Nelson to Greymouth then onto Franz Joseph in two days. We want to encourage visitors to stay more than just overnight and spend more money in the town. We’re confident our redevelopment plans, and proposed work with community stakeholders, will deliver financial benefits for everyone on the West Coast.”

News of the redevelopment has been warmly welcomed by Matt Ewen, general manager Tourism West Coast.

“The West Coast is New Zealand’s fifth biggest tourism area but like many areas it has suffered with falls in visitor numbers due to the recession. Fortunately visitor numbers are slowly starting to grow again and developments such as this by Monteith’s will play a huge role in ensuring that growth continues. The Monteith’s brewery has long been regarded as an iconic visitor experience on the coast and its redevelopment will further cement its reputation while providing additional revenue for the region overall.”

The first stage of the redevelopment will commence in July with the decommissioning of the existing brewing equipment which will be replaced with modern, more energy and water efficient technology. The tasting room and merchandise shop will remain open while the brewery is rebuilt.

The final offering will provide Monteith’s greater flexibility in terms of brewing production including the ability to create innovative beer styles in a range of bottle sizes and packs.

Production of the Monteith’s range, including cider, will move to sister brewery, Mainland Brewery, near Timaru in July until the new brewery is up and running. The goal is to use the redeveloped Monteith’s as an innovation and development centre where brewers can create and test new brews and beer styles.

“The short-term shifting of all Monteith’s beer and cider will eventually allow us to create some really interesting beers here in Greymouth,” explains Mercer. “As has long been the case, some Monteith’s is brewed at our sister breweries but our core innovation will always come from the West Coast.”

The site will be redeveloped by Monteith’s and Mawhera Incorporation but remain in the ownership of Mawhera Incorporation.

John Wheelans of Mawhera says the Incorporation has enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the Monteith’s site and it looks forward to working with the Monteith’s team during and beyond the redevelopment.

Monteith's intends keeping the community fully informed of all stages of the redevelopment including onsite displays of the redevelopment, advertisements in the local newspapers and printed material for tourism outlets.

Monteith's is also interested in preserving key historical artefacts and is encouraging members of the community to drop off any items that are Monteith's related which they no longer want or need. Anyone donating items for possible use in the brewery tour experience will receive a \$200 merchandise voucher if they are used in the yet-to-be-built museum.

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Backgrounder

The Greymouth brewery dates back to 1868 when the original Monteith's family-owned Phoenix Brewery was founded. Soon after the West Coast brewery became well known for its strong tasting, full-bodied ales. The Phoenix Brewery later merged with a group of small breweries to form Westland Brewing Company which later became Monteith's Brewing Company. Like their predecessors, Monteith's brewers continue to nurture brews by hand in small batches to create quality craft beer experiences.

Ends

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