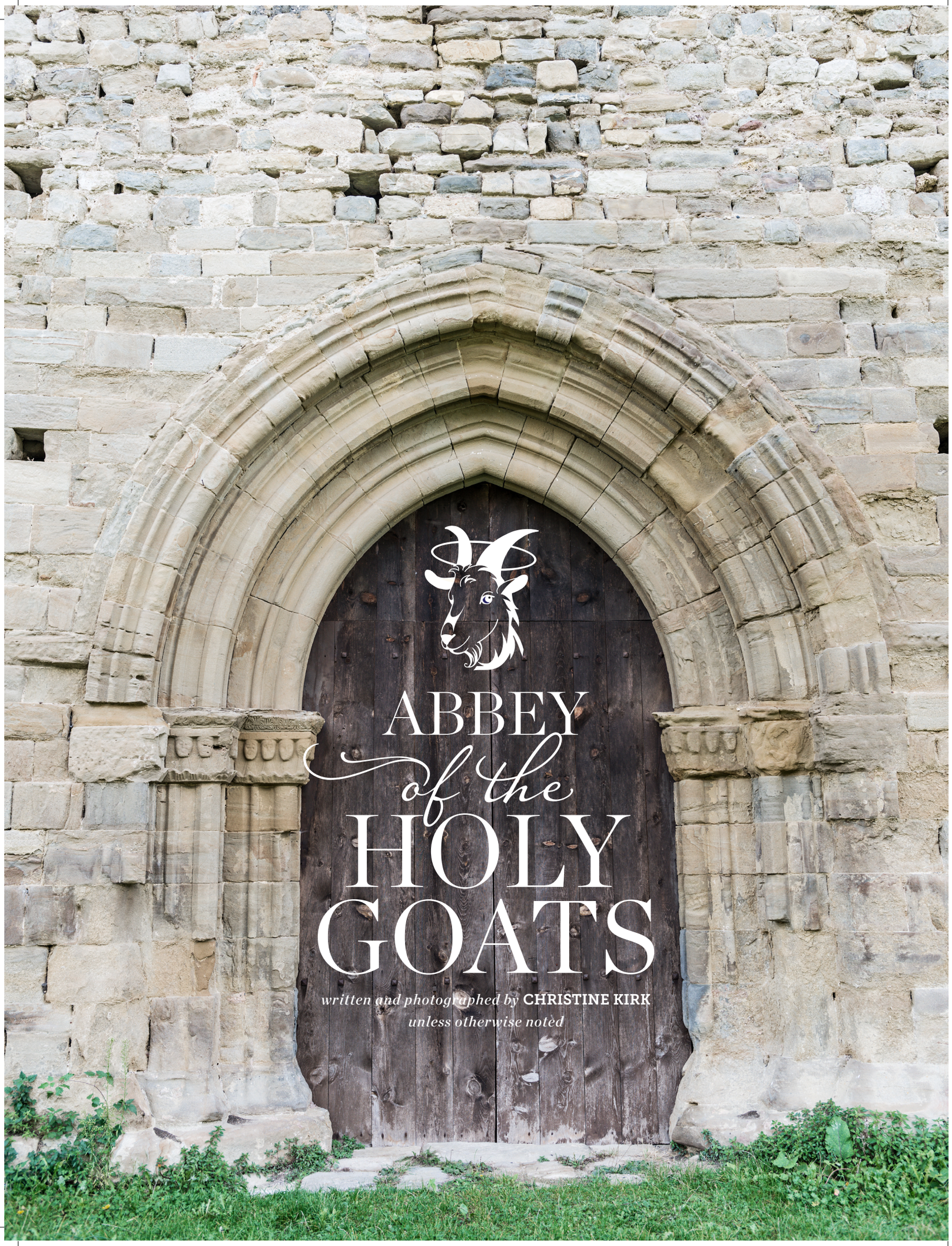


ABBEY of the HOLY GOATS

written and photographed by **CHRISTINE KIRK**
unless otherwise noted

[*Number*]

157



THE REFLECTIVE GLASS paneling of the business complex off Northfield Way in Roswell doesn't give much indication to its contents, but to find paper-lined desks or quiet waiting rooms within would be unsurprising. A brewery, however, is less expected.

This explains the signs, bearing the silhouette of a goat, throughout the parking lot that help you find Abbey of the Holy Goats, a small-scale craft brewery specializing in Belgian-style beers. The monastic interior of the tasting hall, which invites you to "commune with your senses," is an interesting contrast to its office-park exterior. It's also a reflection of owner and brew master Kathy Davis' multi-faceted professional (and personal) journey, which led her to embrace her passion and talent for brewing.

Davis has an air of quiet determination, a trait her family might lovingly refer to as stubbornness. Such determination fueled her tendency to explore unique interests and career paths. She's naturally curious, and her background proves she's no one-trick pony.

Davis began as a trained chef, something she had been interested in since childhood. "I started cooking really young. My mom was in the culinary industry, " said Davis. "Cooking is in my family, just as beer is in my family. I fell in love with cooking. I was cooking at age four. I just wanted to be a chef."

After some time as a chef, however, Davis admitted she got really fed up and burnt out. Some soul-searching led her to consider life as a Buddhist nun. Encouraged by her father, a deacon, to seek out her spiritual path, Davis felt strongly drawn to Buddhism. The interest was strong enough for her to take lay vows with the intention of joining a nunnery.

"I was moving to Nova Scotia to join a nunnery up there. Fortunately, my best friend took me to Brick Store Pub and convinced me that you can't get Belgian beers in the middle of St. Mary's in Nova Scotia. So I stayed here in Atlanta," explained Davis.

Belgian beers aside, Davis' search wasn't over. "After the whole Buddhist nun thing fell through, I kind of wandered around doing many different things. Around 2006/2007, a friend of mine said 'Hey, I want to open up a goat farm in Maine, there's this awesome property and you should come up and do it,'" she recalled.

A falling out halted those plans, "So the goat farm is up in Maine and I stayed here," she said. "I still love goats, but as a conciliatory prize, my parents gave me a brew kit. So I started brewing beer, and 12 years later, this came about."

GOTHIC PORTAL PHOTO COURTESY OF ADOBESTOCK.COM



After excelling in the home brewing field, Davis returned to business school at Georgia State University, developing a business plan for her brewery and winning second place in a business plan competition her senior year.

In her amateur brewing days, Davis won several home brewing awards for her creations, with Goats in the Garden being the most praised. This Saison is dry and refreshing, brewed with honey and elderflower. It was originally intended to be a beer with a different sort of complexity, which would appeal to someone who was more of a wine-drinker.

"I brewed it for my partner, who really hates beer. So I thought, 'Well I can brew a beer that tastes like wine, or has wine characteristics.' So that's what I designed," Davis explained. "I wanted a really dry, balanced beer; kind of similar to a Chenin Blanc, or a brut Champagne with elderflower liqueur in it."

Another key aspect to Davis' brews is the ability to pair her brews well with food. Her culinary background heavily influences her approach to brewing, and each of her creations is meant to complement the flavors and textures of a dish. Goats in the Garden can be paired with pork or pasta. "It actually goes with seared pork loin," Davis said. "The dryness of that beer will cut the fattiness."

It's not surprising that Davis is excelling in the brewing world, given her background.

"They're not that different. Cooking is chemistry. Beer is chemistry. The artistry is the same as well. It's learning how to understand the flavor profiles. You have so many ingredients in a beer, especially Belgian beer. So it's not just your typical four: malt, hops, water, yeast. It's also, 'Hey, can I throw that Belgian candy sugar in there? Can I throw honey in there? What about orange peel? What about elderflowers?' So there are so many more flavor profiles that can go in a Belgian style beer that really bring out food flavors as well," she said.

Another favorite is a brew Holy Goats just bottled, the Ascension. "It's a deep, beautiful complex beer with a lot of port-wine notes, vanilla from the oak," Davis described. "You'll still get the maltiness from the beer itself."

IPA fans can branch out with The Goat's Obsession, a dark double-IPA. "It's a very different IPA; it's not an American IPA at all," Davis said. "It has a lot more floral notes to it. It's



not piney at all. It's not citrusy. It's balanced to me. That's what I really like in all of the beers that we make — they're all balanced."

Davis left the boy's club of the culinary scene to join another in the brewing industry, but she hasn't had much of a problem paving her way. "For the most part, everyone in the beer industry is really nice," she explained. "They're willing to share and all that, but at the end of the day, it's a male-dominated industry."

Most of the challenge Davis faced stemmed from her reputation as a home brewer. "I got a lot of 'Well, you're a home brewer, every home brewer wants to own a brewery,'" she remembered. Alas her determination kicked in. "Quite frankly," she explained, "that's driven me to do more. Anyone that says 'You can't do it' is a huge driver for me."

Abbey of the Holy Goats is enjoying its successes, and isn't going away any time soon. Much like the 3-ton communal table that runs the length of the tasting hall. Built in segments with reclaimed wood by a local artist, the table was assembled inside the tasting hall to foster the kind of communal experience Davis hopes her beer offers. The table is topped with a variety of games, like Taboo, Catan, Cards Against Humanity and even one called Exploding Kittens. Classics, like chess and Scrabble are in the mix as well.

In addition to the current tasting hall, Davis plans to expand to 22,000 square feet, hopefully by February. She also intends to eventually build a stand-alone brewery, one that comes complete with her beer's mascot. "I want some pygmy goats running around," she said.

abbeyoftheholygoats.com

Serving our friends in Johns Creek since 2007

Authentic Italian family recipes from Italy and New York

- Open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday
- Dinner reservations are strongly encouraged





DINNER RESERVATIONS: 770.772.6456

Parties and Catering: Your Place Or Ours? Call Maria at 678.520.3336



11730 A Jones Bridge Road • Johns Creek • rosamiaitalian.com