

Anchor Brewing workers trying to save 127-year-old San Francisco institution

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The recent announcement of the shutting down of Anchor Brewing in San Francisco — considered a pioneer of the craft beer movement — crushed many patrons.

But now there might be a chance to save the 127-year-old institution: Its unionized workers have launched a bid to buy the brewery and run it as a co-op.

Sam Singer, a spokesperson for the company, told The Washington Post on Thursday that the union of about 40 workers had sent a letter of interest to the company.

“We are not asking for a handout or charity,” the letter sent by the union said, according to [VinePair](#), an industry media outlet. “All we want is a fair shot at being able to continue to do our jobs, make the beer we love, and keep this historic institution open.”

The decision to close the brewery, [announced July 12](#), came after the company failed to find a buyer amid declining sales and broader economic headwinds. It gave employees a two-month notice and promised separation packages.

Anchor is owned by Japanese beer giant Sapporo Holdings Ltd., which bought the company in 2017.

“Time to put everyone’s love of this brand to the test,” the Anchor Union tweeted, asking for [public support](#) of their offer. “Let’s work this out together and bring back what we’ve almost lost,” it said, sharing the VinePair story.

In another [tweet](#), the union said it will release more details to the public “when we get our ducks in a row.”

Welp. Here ya go. Time to put everyone’s love of this brand to the test. Let’s work this out together and bring back what we’ve almost lost. <https://t.co/sENSAf39qZ>

— Anchor Union (@anchorunionSF) [July 20, 2023](#)

The union had earlier criticized Sapporo for failing to understand how to run a beloved local brand with a great product.

The workers' bid is among nearly two dozen expressing an interest in acquiring the company, Singer, the spokesperson, said in a statement. All the offers will be handed over to the liquidator for a final decision.

“It is heartening to see so many stepping forward to possibly carry on the tradition of an iconic San Francisco company and beer,” Singer’s statement said, adding that the company was hopeful of a purchase.

Investor Mike Walsh, who lives a few blocks away from the brewery, told NBC Bay Area that nearly 30 people are interested in joining him to make a compelling bid. “I wasn’t expecting to have this outpouring of interest and just of emotion from a variety of people,” Walsh told the outlet.

The brewery first established in 1896 has fallen on hard times on multiple occasions but survived. It was destroyed in the blazing fires that spread in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco that wiped out large swaths of the city. It shut down for 13 years during Prohibition, reopening in 1933.

While the brand was founded and established by German brewers, Anchor heralded the craft brewing revolution after it was purchased by Stanford graduate Fritz Maytag in 1965.

More recently, Anchor had stopped production of its famed Christmas Ale and ceased distributing its beers nationwide.

The demise of Anchor had been mourned by experts and fans alike. While a trade group hailed the company’s contribution to U.S. beer history, others recalled its inextricable ties to San Francisco.

Patrons have since flocked to the public taproom, Anchor Public Taps, which will remain open until July 31.

“It’s one of my favorites,” one native San Franciscan told the Associated Press, “and it’s like losing an old friend.”