

**NORTH BREWERY**

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Yes. I went to UE. Then I went to BCC and BU, and graduated from BU with my masters in graphic design. I always liked the idea to create stuff, to create things for other people. So I did a lot of artwork, a lot of paintings, graphic artwork for other people. After I graduated I was applying to a lot of places, and the only place that called me back was Walmart for an assistant-manager position. And I did that for three years.

**There wasn't much graphic design involved being an assistant manager at Walmart.**

No. They were just looking for people with degrees. But I wasn't happy at all with where I was at; I really hated working there. I didn't like working for somebody else; I'd rather have worked for myself. And a little before I'd turned 20 I'd convinced my dad to teach me how to brew beer, because he's been brewing for like 25 years. So he finally taught me how to brew. And after that first day when he told me how to brew, Joe—my long-time friend—and me have been brewing every weekend since then.

**How long ago was that?**

That was around three-and-a-half, four years ago. After the original first time my father showed me how to brew, I got together with my friend Joe who also went to BU and graduated with me. He has a background in chemistry and a chemistry degree. So he and I have been brewing every single Saturday to this day. We like to experiment a lot with beers and we will continue to do it. We like to brew new beers all the time. So after we both graduated and we'd been working at our separate jobs—and brewing—one day I came home and I brewed this beer called Cerberus; it's a chocolate oatmeal milk stout. And that's one of our biggest selling beers. I've had people travel two-and-a-half hours away to come get it. The head brewer from another brewing company came down just to try it. After I brewed that, that was the defining moment where Joe and I were brewing beers that were really really good. And we finally convinced my dad—because I had money saved up from working at Walmart, and so did my father because he's been saving for a while—to open a business with me. So my father and me bought a building, the Elk's Bakery, and he did most of the work remodeling. He remodeled a lot of the building. And right around February is when we got our license to sell our beer, and we've been selling it ever since. It's been very very good.

**You said people from another brewery came down to sample your beers. Can beer recipes be patented? Is that something you can protect?**

Yes, they can. They can definitely be patented. My recipes aren't patented. I don't see the point because it's just beer, and you need the person who brewed the beer to brew that particular recipe. I could give my recipe to another brewer and they wouldn't be able to do it. There's something about brewing a beer that it's hard to replicate exactly what the brewer of that beer does. You can go on websites, there's BeerRecipes.org, and you can clone recipes for like Dogfish Head 60 Minute and it won't ever come out the same, because you need the touch of the person who originally brewed that beer. **Like being a great guitarist. A proficient guitarist could use all of Eric Clapton's equipment and settings, but will never sound quite as good as Clapton.**

Exactly. I have a really strong feeling towards that. Like Joe brews beers that I can't replicate. I brew five days a week, but every other Saturday we rotate on whose recipe it is. He has a beer called 110 Hop Blvd, and when I try to brew it myself it doesn't come out the same. There's always something off. You need that touch of

what that person is. I look at beer more as art than anything else. It's definitely art.

**So at some point, between you and your dad, you decided you could make a business out of this.**

I wanted to be at a point where I could make a living off of just brewing beer. I never looked at beer as a way to get rich. I looked at it and said "I really wish there was a way for me to brew beer and just make a living. That's all I want to do." And I've been really blessed, and everybody else here has been really blessed and lucky because our beer has been taking off. I really appreciate the community; they've been really responsive to everything we've done. I never thought it would turn into a lot of money, but it's been really great so far.

**And you opened in February.**

We opened in February to start selling our beer. The home-brew supply shop has been open, but just on weekends here and there. The home-brew supply shop is for home brewers, and there's really not a lot of them around. And a lot of them do buy online. But I've been noticing an influx of home-brew supply shops since we opened the brewery. A lot of people are like "Would you be able to teach me how to do this or teach me how to do that?" And it's really worked. I've been really happy so far.

**So what kind of licenses did you need? Because it's not like an actual bar.**

No. We're not a bar at all. We're licensed as a production brewery out of the like 3,000 that are in America. So we can do samples; we can brew as much beer as we want; we can sell our beer in growlers or growlettes; we can also distribute ourselves.

**Growlers and growlettes are?**

Growlers are a 64-ounce bottle that has a cap on it. A lot of people have their own. We fill other people's growlers too. So you bring your growler down; we'll fill it up with beer; we cap it. It's draft beer, but in a huge bottle. So you can take it home.

**You can't consume it on premises though.**

No. You can't consume the beer on premises. You have to take it home. There are some restaurants locally that let you bring it in. We are on tap at a few places around the area too. Feliz Wine and Tapas right around the corner has our beer. Very awesome restaurant. Every Friday night they have jazz, really good jazz. And Brothers 2 has our beer, the Old Union Hotel—which was just renovated—has our beer, and soon The Ale House will have our beer on tap. And I'm trying to get into the Ithaca Ale House very soon, and I would be happy to get on tap at Cyber Cafe. For The North Brewery, it's kind of how Ithaca Brewing started off or Ommegang started off, where they just had a small tasting room, and their beer was distributed to restaurants and bars. And bottles; we will be bottling soon.

**And then word of mouth takes off....**

Yes. We really didn't advertise at all for opening weekend. Because I felt like if we advertised that opening weekend what would have happened was we would have seen an increase in sales and then a lull. We didn't see that. All we've been seeing is a steady increase all the way. There's definitely things Walmart taught me about marketing and sales. I take that with me wherever I go.

**Not long ago most people only knew or cared about the big breweries. But over the years people's thinking has changed to the point where now they expect a variety of beers from small brewers.**

Yes. I love how that's happened in America. I have a belief that in 10 years every town will have its own brewery, and that will be like the taste of the town. It's already started to happen; in Colorado most towns have breweries. In

North Carolina most towns have breweries, and have more than one actually. So I can't wait till that ends up happening.

**Who else brews in the Greater Binghamton area?**

Water Street brews. Galaxy will be opening in September, maybe late August, in downtown Binghamton. Those are the people that I know of. Also Birdland just opened up in Elmira. Endless Brewing down in Montrose just opened up. They opened probably three or four months before us. John down there is a really good guy. He and I plan to do a collaboration as soon as one of us has some time. We'll go down there. We'll call it "Endless North" or something.

**What's your philosophy or approach to beer-making?**

Joe and I follow the ideas of the Danish when they make beer, from Mikkeller. Our idols are Mikkeller, Evil Twin, and To Øl. What they believe is they brew a lot of one-shot beers where they brew one beer and they won't rebrew it again until the following year. So they end up having like 500 beers on their résumé. I really like that idea, so I'm going to keep pushing that idea on us. We're up to about 35 different beers. By December I want to have at least 80 under our belt. But there are beers we will brew again; there's a lot of beers we keep rebrewing, like American Dream, False Prophet, Cerberus, and Black Donald our porter. These are beers that we constantly rebrew, as well as our breakfast stout Inspirational Beer Breakfast.

**And these are the most popular? That's why you keep rebrewing them?**

Not necessarily. Two of those are very popular, American Dream and False Prophet. There are beers that are one shots. Our one-shot beers are very popular, like Big Phat and Shingergirl. There are some beers that are extremely popular, but I won't rebrew them because I want them to stay that way, go out on a really high note.

**Once you start rebrewing something like American Dream, can you replicate the exact same flavor, etc.?**

They all replicate with slight differences in each. And that happens on every single scale, like even if you're brewing on a 7-to-50 barrel scale. It depends on what you're brewing; I've talked to breweries that brewed on a seven-barrel scale like Ithaca and there are slight differences in each. False Prophet varies every time because of the astringency of the rye and everything that we put in it. Customers really can't tell the difference. But the guy who's brewing it or someone who's tasting it every single time can tell slight differences. But it still tastes like False Prophet; it still tastes like American Dream.

**Are your customers mainly from Endicott? Greater Binghamton? Outside Broome County?**

We get a lot of BAE people, like when they get out of work on Friday. A lot of customers from Endicott and Binghamton. I've had people from Ithaca come down to check us out. I'm really happy with that and thankful. We also get a lot of people from BU. A lot of students come over who don't want to go and drink down on State Street. You know, Bud Light, Coors Light, and all that stuff. Students who want to spend their money wisely and get better beer. They seek it out, whether it's coming to us or coming to Water Street, or even traveling. I have loyal BU customers who come every Friday; they stop here first and then go up to Ithaca. A lot of people are looking for different tastes now.

**What are some of your prices?**

It varies. Our 32-ounce bottles, I usually fill them up for between \$7.50 and \$8.75; fill ups for our 64 ounce are either \$12.50 or \$15.00. And they're really reasonable with everything else, the same with Endless, the same with Ithaca.

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