

# What's brewing in Humble? The Grain Cellar!

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A new shop, The Grain Cellar on First Street in Humble near Hwy. 59, has piqued the curiosity of more than one passerby as to what might be sold inside. Those who are on the lookout for expert advice and supplies for making home-brewed beer, wine, cheese and various fermented foods already know what The Grain Cellar, and owner Preston Brown, have to offer.

Inside the shop, Brown stocks everything needed for home brewing, including an extensive collection of equipment and many types of malts, yeast and hops, as well as supplies for making wine, cheese, yogurt, kefir, kombucha and other fermented foods and beverages.

The shop caters to both the newbie – looking to dip a toe in the creative beverage- and food-making waters – and the experienced – looking for supplies for their 100th batch. Brown has been a passionate home brewer for years and enjoys customers who take their time in the shop. “I don’t want people to feel they have to get in and get out,” he said. “I want people to come and sit at the counter if they want to and talk beer or whatever they are making and bounce ideas around.”

At least twice a month, Brown, together with his wife Mindy, teaches free classes on brewing, winemaking, cheesemaking and more at the shop. “I do a basic class and an advanced class each month. I love teaching the classes. Having fun doing this is paramount,” he said. The class schedule is posted on their website ([thegraincellar.com](http://thegraincellar.com)).

For beginners, the shop sells kits for different genres. For example, on the shelves is a beer home-brewing starter kit for \$85 that includes pretty much everything you need to brew a batch of beer in one box, (including fermenters, hoses and thermometers) minus the beer ingredients. One batch of beer yields two and half cases of bottled beer. The price of ingredients depends on the type of beer being made, but can be as low as \$20 or as high as \$160.

Brown said that by using the kit, a brewer can make “the best beer you’ve ever had.” He added, “Anyone can make beer, and the worst-case scenario is that when you are done with the process at the least you’ll have beer, but I can teach you how to make better beer. The great thing about the process is that you make what you want and what you like. Joe, ‘the mass producer,’ has to make a product that will appeal to many different people. When you make your own, you can customize it to your preferences.”

Part of the fun for some may be bottling and labeling their home-brewed beer. Brown said he sells labels that can be printed at home along with

bottles and tops.

He opened the shop four months ago, after spending many years working in the IT industry. Brown was born and raised in New Mexico and his extended family lives in the Roswell area. “With the shop, I’m really trying to distinguish myself. I’m not the cookie cutter home brew store. I am raising the bar for me and hopefully all the other similar shops in the industry. I am building a community.”

To facilitate community development, Brown set up an area in the store with couches and chairs and calls it “The Closet.” “It’s an area for getting like-minded people, who may be from different walks of life, together. The creative aspect of the process – regardless of whether you are making beer, wine or cheese – lends itself to people getting together. I’ve looked over at The Closet and seen people from all walks of life laughing and conversing,” said Brown.

The Closet sees quite a bit of action, including meetings by the Grain Cellar’s home-brew club, which meets on the last Friday of every month. We have a business meeting and we drink beer. It’s very fun,” said Brown. In addition, once a month the shop hosts a “Meet the Brewer” talk. In January, Bobby Harl of Back Pew Brewery was the featured guest. “Bobby actually gives us a keg of Back Pew beer to keep on tap here at

the shop, because he’s a great guy.” The shop also has Brown’s own home brews and other local brews on tap at the shop for sampling.

With respect to future “Meet the Brewer” talks, Brown said, “I’ve got all kinds of friends in the brewing industry and eventually we will have them all here for ‘Meet the Brewer.’”

Brown made a lot of contacts in the industry during the year-and-a-half that he co-hosted 86 weekly episodes of the local radio program “Drink of Ages.” Brown said each week he and his co-host, John Denman, would interview different movers and shakers in the Houston brewing scene. “We talked about beer, wine, cheese, yogurt, music and food. It was a blast and a very fun time in my life. I think my presence on that show is one of the reasons the shop has been so well received in the local community,” said Brown.

In addition to inspiring people to make better beer and other beverages and foods, Brown also has a charitable goal. “One of the other things I want to promote is being responsible for other humans. We collect donations and give them to a different charity each quarter. The home-brew club tracks all the donations. This quarter we gave \$350 to Food Crews Houston. It’s a great way to give back,” he said.

The Grain Cellar is located at 240 First Street West in Humble. More information can be found on their website and on their Facebook page, [facebook.com/TheGrainCellar](http://facebook.com/TheGrainCellar).



**OWNER:**  
*Preston Brown*



**The Grain Cellar**

OPENED DOORS:  
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FAVORITE QUOTE:

**Worst case scenario, you'll have beer.**