

Crafting a Community Business: The Grain Cellar Celebrates One-Year Open

A lot can occur in one year of business ownership, and that is exactly what has happened for Preston Brown of The Grain Cellar. Humble, and Northeast Houston's, lone homebrew and winemaking shop, The Grain Cellar, celebrates its first anniversary this October.

For the craft connoisseur of beer, cheese, and wine or the new-to-the-fermentables-scene novice who has yet to drop by the quaint store nestled in the corner of a shopping center off Humble's First Street, Brown invites you to "Come on in!" Preston graciously boasts the uniqueness of his shop comes from its inviting nature that encourages guests to stay awhile and feel comfortable discussing their craft food and beverage endeavors. Whether you're working to perfect your homemade wine's flavor profile, or you can't decide which grains and hops to use on your first batch of homebrew beer, Preston provides a judgment-free, incredibly knowledgeable, and always friendly, experience.

A casualty of downsizing in the oil and gas industry almost three years ago, Preston put aside this year and a half long search for employment and instead hesitantly decided to embark on following his passion for homebrewing. "If you can't find work, make work," he proudly shares. With the support of his wife, Mindy, Preston transformed his dreams into reality. After acquiring the keys to The Grain Cellar, formerly a tailoring and sewing shop, he worked day in and day out, sometimes sleeping in his truck, to ensure he opened in time for "brewing season". The rest is history.

With years of practice and refining the craft of homebrewing under his belt, Preston felt confident sharing his abilities, tips, and wisdom with the local community. His resume overflows with accolades proving his dedication and adoration for brewing. As a self-proclaimed "restless social butterfly who needs to always be doing something", Preston keeps his word. For almost two years, he co-owned and hosted the radio show "Drink of Ages" with Jon Denman, which featured interviews and performances by some of the local food, beverage, and music scene's royalty. He is deeply engrained in the local industry partially because of his exuberant presence on the show.

When he isn't preoccupied running a self-sufficient business, or artfully producing his own homebrew, he finds time to enjoy the community of other homebrewers. Once you have a chance to speak with Preston, you can easily understand why the local homebrew club previously elected him as their president. A multitude of other homebrew clubs host their monthly gatherings at his shop, not only because they can pick up much-needed supplies for creating and improving current recipes, but due to the cozy, communal atmosphere The Grain Cellar offers.



When you first enter The Grain Cellar, you find yourself in "The Closet", a plush sitting area filled with leather couches and chairs, reminiscent of your childhood living room. However, unlike the living room formerly ruled by your parents, this area begs you to rest your weary feet on the wooden coffee table and to try samples of small, local brewery's beer and homebrew (Preston's own, of course). While The Grain Cellar is not licensed as a brewpub, and thus cannot sell alcoholic beverages to the public, small, complimentary samples are available from the four taps in the shop. Truly a man of the people, Preston attempts to keep the taps as democratic as possible when deciding what he pours. "I try to keep one cider, two homebrews, and one industry beer on tap at all times," he says. When asked about his favorite local brewery, he remains diplomatic yet opinionated. "It depends on the style of beer," he expresses, "so for a pale ale I'd go with Back Pew, for an IPA, Brash, and for New England IPA's it's SpindleTap."

Preston shares his love of the craft through a variety of programming held at The Grain Cellar. Unlike other homebrew shops, Preston offers a selection of completely free classes such as Basic Brewing 101, Advanced Brewing 301, and Cheese and Winemaking 101. The classes deliver a laidback atmosphere to ask questions and gather with people who share similar interests, while still giving structure through hands-on demonstrations and taste tests.

Moreover, he lets the community enjoy his industry connections by bringing brewers live and direct to customers in monthly "Meet the Brewer" talks. These casual, fun sessions feature brewmasters from established community breweries from all reaches of the Houston metropolitan area, such as Goliad, SpindleTap, and Back Pew Brewing. The brewers share stories of their struggles and successes navigating the world of beer and how they learned to concoct the perfect brew.

As the city and surrounding counties begin to regain a sense of normalcy after Hurricane Harvey, be sure to attend The Grain Cellar's fun-filled One Year Anniversary Party on Saturday, October 7th. The party will feature special sales, brewing and wine demonstrations, meet the brewer chats, delicious food and drinks, and the inviting charm and customer service Preston Brown is notorious for. Do yourself a favor and stop by! You may just come for the advice and beer, but end up leaving with a new friendship. If you cannot attend the anniversary celebration, drop by The Grain Cellar at 240 1st Street West in Humble at your convenience, and tell Preston "Hello!" For more information regarding up classes and talks, go online to thegraincellar.com or [facebook.com/thegraincellar](https://www.facebook.com/thegraincellar).



OWNER:
Preston Brown



The Grain Cellar

OPENED DOORS:
October 8, 2016

FAVORITE QUOTE:

Worst case scenario, you'll have beer.