

The Bald Brewer

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I was pretty excited when I saw a new brewing store that opened up in Longmont. Not that I'm about to start brewing beer and wine at home, but I figured there would be at least a few interesting things I could use for regular cooking.

The Bald Brewer didn't disappoint. Although it's a tiny building, there are plenty of interesting grains along with some specialty sugars and flavorings that could be very interesting to experiment with. But brewers will find even more, including specialty hops, yeasts, and hardware needed for brewing and bottling.

Owner Mark Miesel said that not only is beer brewing an inexpensive hobby, it can be economical. The cost of ingredients for making five gallons of beer is about \$35-\$45, "and after equipment, it's 30-40 percent cheaper than [buying beer] in the store."

Before opening the store, Miesel's career had been in psychology, but he said, "I needed a break." So he looked at other businesses. "I looked at coffee before I decided to do brewing," Miesel said. "I brew, myself." Miesel hasn't left his previous career behind, though, since he teaches a master's course online.

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Part of the decision to open a brewing store was that he wanted to "do his own thing" and meet interesting people."It's a very unique business," he said. "It generally draws scientifically-minded people."

Miesel opened The Bald Brewer in March, but he had been working in the building for much longer. He bought the building before Christmas last year, and did a lot of remodeling to get it ready. Although the store itself is small, there is plenty of storage in the basement for large quantities of grain for brewers who want to make larger batches.

Miesel explained that most people who brew beer fall into two categories, the "all-grain brewers and the extract brewers." He said that most people start with kits, then move on to brewing with extracts and then move on to brewing with grains.

It takes about five weeks to brew beer, and Miesel said that "basic beer is very simple." The only ingredients required are a mixture of grains for the desired type of beer, malt ex-

tract, hops, and yeast. But from there, the brewer can create new beers or find formulas that mimic commercial beers.

For beginners, Miesel sells beer and wine kits that include all the needed ingredients. He sells some commercial beer kits, but he is also assembling his own. For the summer, he created Get Yer Groove On Blonde from a recipe he really liked. Mindbender IPA and 8th Avenue Amber are also his creations.

For more experienced brewers, Miesel sells a large variety of grains ranging from very pale to very dark, including barley, rye and wheat. He also sells liquid barley malt from large drums, making it easier for the brewers to buy exactly the amount they need.

He's got an interesting array of sugars including a Belgian candy sugar, a selection of flavor extracts for specialty beers, and several types of hops.

Miesel said that one interesting advancement for home brewers is the availability of specialty yeasts for different types of beers, which he called "a super-specialized part of the formula."

But it's not all about beer. Miesel sells kits, equipment and supplies for making wine, and he said that some of his customers are also making mead.

The Bald Brewer is located at 651 8th Ave. in Longmont. For more information, call 303-682-4314. His website, currently under construction, is www.baldbrewer.com.



Photo by Donna Currie

Bald Brewer Mark Miesel creates his own beer kits for home brewers.