

So, How Does One Get Started Home Brewing?

A Q&A Interview by Rachel Imming



As the daughter of Dave Imming, head brewer for JEDI BrewCo, and “unofficial” social media manager for JEDI BrewCo, I’ve truly grown up around the talk of craft beer and home brewing. As the craft beer industry has taken off, many have found interest in home brewing, whether the goal is to just try their hand at it or eventually start their own brewery. With the knowledge and expertise that my father has gained over the last 26 years, I felt he could be a great source to those looking to get started. So, I sat down at the table with him, with a JEDI BrewCo Atomic Wit in hand, and chatted about his start in home brewing, establishing JEDI BrewCo, and his advice for those that may be looking to do the same thing one day.

Q: How long ago did your interest in home brewing begin, and do you remember what kick started that interest?

A: Well, it started around 1995. Craft beers were starting to become popular, and home brew shops were starting to open then. I always liked science as an engineer, and I liked cooking, and home brewing was a perfect marriage of the two.

Q: What did you use to start home brewing? A book, a kit, a tutorial, etc.?

A: I used a book. It’s called The Complete Joy of Home Brewing by Charlie Papazian, and that was my bible.

Q: How long did you home brew entirely on your own?

A: Many people watched me brew, but no one really wanted to join in until Justin Eilermann came along in 2014. So about 19 years brewing on my own.

Q: Who was the first person to take interest in home brewing because of you?

A: A few family members and friends wanted to see how it worked, but Justin Eilermann and his friend wanted to move on from home brew kits to all grain and doing it entirely by yourself, created from scratch.

Q: Do you have an estimate on how many people have expressed interest in home brewing, specifically to you?

A: Probably about 10 to 15 people, and some of those have actually watched me brew in order to then share and expand craft beer, and others have just wanted to chat about it.

Q: When did the idea of JEDI BrewCo start getting brought up, and how was the topic approached?

A: It was when Justin and I entered the Breese Fall Fest home brew competition, and we needed to come up with a catchy name for it. So, we used our initials, J.E. for Justin Eilermann and D.I. for Dave Imming. But the starting a business part of it was brought up by Justin. Justin's initial idea was a micro-brewery, brick-and-mortar location, but we then started talking and thinking about getting into a partnership with Bill Meyer at Excel Brewing Company, and eventually were able to make that partnership official.

Q: When was JEDI BrewCo's official inception?

A: I kid you not it was May 4th, 2018 when JEDI BrewCo became an official LLC, but we came up with the JEDI name in 2014.



Q: Who are the official company partners of JEDI BrewCo, and have the partners changed since then?

A: Justin Eilermann and Dave Imming are the founders, but Justin Eilermann & Dave Imming, along with Steve Hutson and Brock Roberts are the original company partners. Since then, Brock Roberts has withdrawn his shares and sold them to our newest partner, Travis Lewis.

Q: What are each of the partners' roles?

A: Great question! I am the head brewer, Justin does more of the marketing, finance, and sales, Steve is our quality control and merchandise guy, and Travis helps with sales and retail communication.

Q: Are there any short-term goals and/or long-term goals for JEDI BrewCo?

A: Well, our short-term goal has always been the same, brew beer and have fun. If we ever feel like we're not having fun then we know we're not doing things right. In the long-term, we want to continue to build our brand, we want to seize opportunities when they come, but don't be foolish, and we want to see where this takes us.

Q: If someone is interested in starting to home brew, what would you suggest they do first?

A: One, go buy a home brew kit, and two, read as much as you can. Read articles, read books, go brew with others, join a brew club, go to local brew shops, all of these are great resources.

Q: Are there any materials you would suggest a new home brewer absolutely needs? (could be reading material, or physical brewing material)

A: I already mentioned it, but The Complete Joy of Home Brewing book. It really is considered the bible because it's so old. But the internet has a wealth of knowledge that didn't exist when I started so definitely use that. Also, when you first brew, take copious amounts of notes; what went right, what went wrong, how it tastes, what procedures you did, then tweak, tweak, repeat and learn from your mistakes.

Q: What kind of advice would you give to someone wanting to start home brewing?

A: Just do it. You don't have to home brew cause you want to start a business. If you just want to see your capability to make a good beer just go do it. There doesn't have to be an end goal. And the kits nowadays you can make really good beer with, it doesn't have to be all grain. Plus, it's not that big of an investment to get started either. I just expanded the equipment as I got more technical with it.



Q: What is the most exciting part about brewing beer to you?

A: I like seeing how the recipe that I build effects the outcome of the taste, the alcohol percentage, and the overall profile. I like following the process and if you tweak it or don't follow it, I like to see how that impacts the beer. Oh, and I like the anticipation. It isn't instant gratification; you make it and then have to wait to see how it really turns out.

Q: What is your all-time favorite beer, or your go-to beer if you can't pick a favorite?

A: For JEDI, the original gold fusion that we won grand champion with at Breese Fall Fest was my favorite at the time. Our smash (single malt and single hop) beer, Tropical Reactor, has been my favorite overall. Outside of JEDI, my casual drinking beer of choice is Bud Select, but for craft beers, that is tough. I would say Kona Big Wave on draft, and Dry Fly from Public House out of St. James in cans.