



The holidays often spark creativity and we see an influx of new movies, books, specialty items, and yes, even specialty beer. But in 1996, Jeremy Cowan noticed that there was no Jewish celebration beer and decided to try to make one as an experiment. He went to a tiny brewery in Northern California and asked for help with his project. With 100 cases of his new Genesis Ale packed in the trunk of his grandmother's Volvo, Jeremy hand delivered the beer to the San Francisco Bay area and thus began Shmaltz Brewing Company. He never expected the idea to take off.

Jeremy is originally from Menlo Park, California and was 26 years old when he started Shmaltz. A graduate from Stanford with a degree in English, Jeremy had no experience other than his love of great beer and hanging with his friends at bars, but he thought the idea was worth trying out. Now, 19 years later, he has a whole line of beers that are distributed in 36 states with about 5000 retailers around the country and his own 40,000 square foot warehouse.

"Most people don't realize how the beer business really works – the business side. We just grab a 6-pack or a pint at a bar and don't give a lot of thought to the suppliers, the workers, the distribution. We just want a beer!"

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo Photos by Niki Rossi

Meet the Makers of HE'BREW

Gourmet Kosher Beer Including Messiah Stout and Genesis Ale



whole project come together. Having the flavors match the packaging and seeing the product on the shelf or at the bar is incredibly gratifying."

The microbrew market is seeing a trend toward local products, and Jeremy has been excited to see the enthusiasm

It's great to see so many people come to the brewery and really see how much time, effort, materials, and hard work it takes just to offer a

bottle or pint of beer. It's enlightening and inspiring," says Jeremy.

So what is the process of creating a new beer?

"It usually starts with a punch line or a completely new type of beer that we don't currently make," explains Jeremy. "I approach my lead brewer about potential recipes, ingredients, and flavors. I talk to my art director about graphics and brand names. The most fun part is seeing the



here in the Capital District for their new brewery and tasting room, which is open to the public. Offering samples of their fresh beer, Shmaltz also includes a learning experience with each visit. You'll learn about the Shmaltz brand and the wide variety of beers they sell, but you'll also get a behind the scenes experience of how the beer is brewed, packaged, and distributed nationwide. The tasting

room can be used for a fun night out, trivia night, special event, beer festival, mixer, fundraiser or private parties.

Despite building his one man show into a thriving, national business, Jeremy also decided to write the book *Craft Beer Bar Mitzvah: How it Took 13 Years, Extreme Jewish Brewing, and Circus Sideshow Freaks to Make Shmaltz Brewing Company an International Success*. "I thought it was a great time in the history of the business to show a small company and an entrepreneur still in the middle of all of the hard work with varying amounts of success and a healthy bit of heartache," says Jeremy. "I wanted to show a much more true to life business book than most."

Jeremy also spearheaded the creation of the non-profit New York City Brewers Guild in 2012, and now serves as its president. The guild represents over 200 small brewers in New York, and has been working together to offer some exciting new products.

Jeremy's time is pretty booked up these days, but he has still managed to get out and find some adventure in the Capital District, exploring the tasty spots around the region, as well as all of the hidden outdoor gems. "We are very grateful for the warm welcome Clifton Park and the surrounding communities have given us since we've opened. Hosting friends and regulars in the tasting room and at our big anniversary party or at the smaller seasonal festivals makes all the hard work worth it to share these exceptional beers. We are happy to see that so many neighbors like them as much as we do!" ■

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.