

The Biggest Move to Save Time & Money

By Tom Hennessy, Colorado Boy Brewing

The majority of breweries in America are in fact brewpubs. If you are planning on building a brewery it goes without saying it will probably be a brewpub (a brewery that serves food) but could also be a simple brewery and tasting room that isn't planning on packaging. If this is the case, pay attention here.

Find yourself a restaurant that you can lease or buy. Don't start with a warehouse, or some other building if you want to save some serious cash. Here are my simple reasons.

1. Restaurants fail all the time, so chances are pretty good you can find one to lease.
2. A restaurant most likely is already zoned for alcohol so getting a brewery license should be simple, depending on your local laws.
3. A restaurant already has; restrooms up to code, HVAC, floor drains, walk in coolers, parking, office, music system, bar, signage and plenty of refrigeration.
4. If you are doing a simple remodel you will not need an architect or engineer.
5. Grease traps
6. Hoods with fire suppression systems.

With an existing restaurant, a simple remodel and picking out the right kind of brewing equipment, there is no reason you couldn't open a brewpub for under 150k. Heck, less than 100k if it's the right location.

Find them on Craigslist by searching under Office/Commercial, or under Business. Also check LoopNet for rentals. You can also go to BizBuySell to see what restaurants are for sale in your area. By the way, when you buy a business you usually only give them 20% down and they carry the loan, so no bank is involved. Finally, you can just drive the streets and look for vacant restaurants. They may be listed through realtors or just sitting there.

This works, plain and simple. Not only will you get your brewery up and running much quicker than starting from scratch, but you will spend a whole lot less too, which saves you money for more brewing equipment. Good times!



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Tom Hennessy has opened seven breweries of his own and helped open over 100 more with his Colorado Boy Brewery Immersion Course. His video Frankenbrew, from 1995 has become a cult classic in the brewing world. His three brewing books include The Brewery Operations Manual, and Colorado Boy SOP, and The Affordable Brewery. Tom lives, brews and writes in his mountain town of Ridgway, Colorado.