Who Are We?

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For the longest time this page was simply Who am I. Well now that my partner has officially been added to the team, the question now becomes Who are We? More importantly, how the heck have we ended up at this point where we are starting a brewery in Vancouver!

Officially we are Iain Hill and Aaron Jonckheere, but that doesn’t necessarily mean much to you. What really matters is what has transpired in our lives to risk our own money and time to follow a passion? Well like most people who follow a dream, it started from an early age for both of us.

For Aaron it is pretty simple. He loves beer, as he was raised on beer, and it runs in his family. His grandfather came to Canada from Belgium in the 1950′s, and was immediately struck by the lack of quality beer. As such, he wrangled up all the pieces necessary to be a home brewer, and started making his very own beer. Aaron can remember seeing all his grandpas brewing equipment and being strangely interested in what was happening. Eventually his grandpa taught his father to brew beer, and then his Dad eventually taught Aaron to brew when he was barely 16. Aaron would help his father with various stages of the brewing process (depending on his attention span at the time), and they still brew together to this day. So opening a brewery is really the culmination of a lifelong genetic and habitual passion for beer.

As for Iain, he has been part of the craft beer scene in Vancouver for about 20 years. Iain first fell in love with the idea of brewing at University, where he was trying to decide what he was going to do with his degree in Biochemistry. A career in a lab seemed boring, and life working for a big company seemed strangely wrong. So Iain ended up landing a job at the independent brewer Shaftebury, where his passion for beer really became entrenched. Within a couple years, he started working at Yaletown Brewing Co. where he has spent the past 18 years of his life, refining and plying his trade as a Brewmaster. Iain has always enjoyed the interaction and intimacy a brewpub provides, as he was able to engage with consumers. This connection with craft beer drinkers motivated Iain to brew a wide variety of beer styles, resulting in a deepening passion for both Old World and West Coast beers.

It was about 2-1/2 years ago that Aaron and Iain met, and discussed their passion and their interest in beer. Friends first, the 2 talked about what they loved and what was next in their lives. Eventually this friendship turned into what you are reading and seeing today. The start of a brewery and the fulfilment of a dream that both have long waited for.

I hope you like the information you find here and I look forward to hearing from you. If you prefer, you can email us directly at startingacraftbrewery@gmail.com. If there is something you want written about, or other information want us to discuss, please send us a note and we will put our thoughts on paper. Thanks for checking in and I hope we can share a beer sometime.

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6 thoughts on “Who Are We?”

Christopher McTurnan

January 23, 2014 at 2:49 am

I am a southern neighbor in the good ole USA and I too am not impressed with beer selections we have available down here. There are tons of craft breweries but they are few and far between given the size of the United States. The farther away from a brewery you get, the more expensive the beer becomes. I can relate to passion for beer and while my family are not brewers (moonshiners), I have had to start making my own beer to fill my need for quality beer. I homebrew right now and have had some pretty great compliments from the beer I make so we will see what my brewing future has in in store.

Reply ↓

locuswest Post author

January 23, 2014 at 10:34 pm

Just go with it, and one day you will have a great choice to make. With a military pension, you will have nothing to loose. Good luck and I hope that my blog is at least a little bit of a help.

Reply ↓

Nicole Simpson

March 5, 2014 at 6:26 pm

Good luck Aaron. Always follow your passion & you will always be on purpose.

Reply ↓

locuswest Post author

March 15, 2014 at 7:07 am

Hey Nicole, How are you doing my friend! I love what you have said, and it has been my guiding light for the past 7 or 8 years. Hopefully your family is doing great and all is well in your life. If you are ever on the West Coast, you have to call me. AJ

Reply ↓

Andre

May 20, 2014 at 12:33 am

I am reading this from sunny Singapore and I am thinking of starting a micro here. I am right at stage 2 at the moment and was wondering on your advice on the business plan. Any particular format/website on writing business plans you would recommend?

Also, I’m still pretty far off from that stage, but regarding the equipment to space point, shouldn’t your equipment you are thinking of procuring determine the space you rent as well?

Reply ↓

locuswest Post author

May 23, 2014 at 7:58 pm

Wow, you are a lucky man to be in Singapore.

I am not sure how the government is to deal with in Singapore, but that will be the biggest concern you should have. As far as equipment, you need to rent a space first, and then order the equipment in Vancouver, as warehouse space is at such a premium. In your neck of the woods it may be a different scenario. With regards to business plan, I have no specific advice, only that it will be a lot of work but worth it in the end.

Is Singapore ready for craft beer? Have you raised your money? I am sure you will do great, just make sure whatever you make fits with the marketplace and expectations. In other words, if the market isn’t as evolved as others maybe a more transition type beer will suit the local taste buds. Best of luck.

For those of you who care, this was the full list of names that we were drawing on for our brewery. We had run a little contest where people sent their name into us, and if we used it we would offer compensation to that person. However, we ended up going with our own selection, and after it has set in, we really like the name. You see, picking a name is kind of like trying to get someone else to like your musical taste. Some people like it and some people don’t, and everyone has something to say. We had several names that looked like they were free, but after getting our lawyer to do a name search, we realized that there were similar sounding names, and that would put a trademark in jeopardy. So to all new breweries out there who are dealing with a name, hopefully this list can inspire you a little.

Here are the list of names that were submitted.

Murder Overhead Brewing

Clark Drive Brewing

East Van Brewing

Strathcona Brewing

Woodland Brewing

Asynchronous Brewing

Boxcar Brewing

Abstraction Brewing

Notch 8 Brewing

China Creek Brewing

Knotted Brewing

Deckhand Brewing

Arbutus Brewing

Old Fox Brewing

Reynard Brewing

Acorn Brewing

Juniper Brewing

Roundabout Brewing

Tandem Brewing

Hummingbird Brewing

East Side Brewing

North Down Brewing

Folken Brewing

Neighbourhood Brewing

Borough Brewing

Colony Brewing

Outpost Brewing

Foundation Brewing

Kindred Brewing

Origins Brewing

East Village Brewing

Orange Brewing

Hubbub Brewing

United Brewing

Hawthorne Brewing

Roadhouse Brewing

Atelier Brewing

Geist Brewing

Kilderkin Brewing

Woodland Brewing

Guildhouse Brewing

Fairhaven Brewing

Uninhibited Brewing

Unity Brewing

Grey Skies Brewing

Puddlejumper Brewing

Chestnut Brewing

Treelined Streets Brewing

Urban Forest Brewing

Chieftan Brewing

Vulpine Brewing

Tempest Brewing

Collaboration Brewing

Snowberry Brewing

Old Fox Brewing

Down and Out Brewing

Lapse in Judgement Brewing

Two Friends Brewing

Kitsune Brewing

Bedlam Brewing

The District Brewing

Kith and Kin Brewing

Hieronymus Brewing

Terminal City Brewing

Veronus Brewing

Strange Fellows Brewing

Western Front Brewing

Saltwater City Brewing

Craft Dodger Brewing

Craft Wood Brewing

Hastings Mill Brewing

Lost Creek Brewing

Lands’ End Brewing

False Creek Brewing

Muse Brewing

East of Main Brewing

Ampersand Brewing

Wet Stew Brewing

Seven Eves Brewing

OuestMonk Brewing

Jonquille Brewing