

The Telegraph

It's Your Community.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **www.nashuatelegraph.com**

To print this article if a print dialogue does not open automatically, open the File menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Published: Wednesday, January 13, 2016

King David Coffee Roasters owner Sam Brest hits the sack

By KATHLEEN PALMER

Staff Writer

Sam Brest, you might say, is the local coffee king. But please, don't call him David.

Brest, 57, a Nashua native, is the owner of King David Coffee Roasters at 48 Bridge St. in Nashua. His business is on the second floor of a renovated building at the back of the parking lot behind American Fitness Center.

"Sometimes people will come in and say, 'you must be David,' and I'm like, 'um, no,'" he said, laughing. "I wanted a biblical name, since I'm Jewish and the coffee is kosher. But it's funny; sometimes think I'm named David."

Brest was the owner of Spinelli's Subs for 14 years - from 1991-2005 - but the business end of it was wearing thin on him. "I enjoyed the customers, but ... I was really looking for an exit plan," Brest said over a cup of his freshly brewed Costa Rican coffee. "I went to a coffee shop in Portland, Maine, in the mid-90s; they had this furnace-looking thing. 'We roast our own coffee,' they told me. I started researching that in 2000, and when I moved the sub shop from Daniel Webster Highway to Somerset Plaza (currently where Cedars Cafe resides), I began with a small roaster of my own."

In 2003, Brest started King David. He went to Roasting School in Sand Point, Idaho, established by the manufacturer of the machine he uses. Brest sold the sub shop in 2005.

He does everything, start to finish, at the 48 Bridge St. location, from the labeler - in addition to his own roasts, he creates private labels for churches, businesses, events, reunions, etc. - to the roaster, grinder, the weigh and fill station, and finally, the heat and seal.

One of his labeled products is especially near and dear to his heart. As a rescued-greyhound owner, Brest donates 20 percent of the sales profits of his "Fifty Shades of Greyhound" blend to various rescue centers - "not just greyhound adoption agencies."

Brest also owns Cohas Coffee Co., focusing solely on flavored coffee. He uses a simple cement mixer with a food-grade drum for flavoring the beans in a toss-and-coat method. "It's not rocket science," he quipped. But it's not cheap, either: High-grade liquid flavoring can cost \$100 per gallon.

Brest works with brokers in San Diego and New Jersey to obtain the 10-12 different kinds of beans he uses, which arrive in 132- to 154-lb. burlap sacks (which he gives away; some people use them for covering shrubs in winter, etc.) The coffee comes from all over; Brest uses beans from Costa Rica, Peru, Africa, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and more.

Then he determines which bean gets which level of roast. "Under-roasting produces an almost grassy taste; over-roasting and it's burnt," Brest said. "In between? That's the realm of your opinion."

Some beans lend themselves to a particular roast. For example, Sumatra needs a dark roast. But, perhaps counterintuitively, there's more flavor in a light roast.

Coffee tasting is much like a wine tasting; there are more "notes" than the regular drinker may know about. "You'll get different flavors from the tastebuds on the side of your tongue than if you, say, just chug it down," Brest noted. "If you sip and swirl, you may even get hints of citrus with some roasts."

His production method is pretty simple:

Diedrich roaster: The drum rotates, and the infrared bricks inside offer a more even heat.

De-stoner: This step removes pebbles and rocks that sometimes accompany beans.

Grinder: Does 7 lbs./minute.

Weigh and fill: This machine is accurate within a gram.

Heat and seal: The final step in the process.

King David also makes maple kettle corn. Brest wholesales it to more than 150 accounts here and out of state, including local tourist places like Sturbridge Village, Zeb's and Lull Farm. It's mostly seasonal, he said, but it's all made with local maple syrup.

"I got into doing kettle corn because I questioned my existing coffee customers about other potential products," Brest said. "I use a ratio formula of pure maple sugar and cane sugar - but I can't tell you how much; it's a secret," he said, laughing.

A lot of research went into creating the new product line. "I had to test four kinds of popcorn and five kinds of oil to determine what I'm using now. I liked coconut and sunflower oils, but since coconut oil is solid at room temperature, it wouldn't work with my equipment. Canola oil doesn't yield as crunchy a popcorn. So I use sunflower. I also had to find Monster Mushroom popcorn to get the best sized, round pop result (instead of "butterfly" shaped pops). The popped corn needs to be firmer to hold up to coating," he explained.

"It was actually a long process to get the best kettle corn."

Brest gets his maple from Bascom Farm in Alstead. Pure powdered maple syrup sugar goes for the hefty price of \$280 for a 40-lb. "bag in a box."

On a table is a collection of beautifully crafted coffee apparatus. "I call this my toy store," Brest said. These items are for purchase by the coffee connoisseur, who wants the best home-brewing experience. He's clearly proud of these hand-selected offerings, and makes no bones about the cost.

"You don't have to make excuses for quality. It costs what it costs. You won't be disappointed," he stated matter-of-factly.

Brest offers a heavy glass bean grinder for \$175. There's a Cona vacuum brewer - an iconic British device hand-blown in Germany - where the coffee only touches glass as the heat makes a vacuum and brews the coffee. That goes for \$279. There's a portable espresso machine for \$275, different size Chemex carafes from \$38-\$47, and various Melitas. Brest notes the ideal water temperature for brewing is 195°-205° F, which is difficult to attain at home without quality equipment.

Brest also rents out the commercial-grade kitchen in the other half of his space. The gleaming stainless steel tables await another local entrepreneur's endeavor. And I can assure you: Between the coffee roasting and the maple popcorn production, your work environment will smell fabulous.

Kathleen Palmer can be reached at 594-6403, kpalmer@nashuatelegraph.com or @NHFoodand Fun and @Telegraph_KathP.

© 2014, The Telegraph, Nashua, New Hampshire