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Home-brew store opens in Longmont

Tony Kindelspire, Longmont Times-Call

LONGMONT — Mark Miesel has gone from picking brains to picking hops. But his transition from psychology professor to owner of Longmont's only home-brewing supply store hasn't been as abrupt as one might think. "There's definitely a parallel," said Miesel, who owns the Bald Brewer at 651 Eighth Ave. "It's all about meeting people's needs — meeting the needs of the customer." Miesel recently opened his shop, having taken a temporary break from teaching. His background is sports psychology, and he worked at one point with the U.S. Olympic Team at its training facility in Colorado Springs. He's been brewing for five years and knows there are a lot of people around Longmont like him. Before, the only brewing supply stores in the area were in Boulder or Fort Collins. "This beats going to Boulder," said Paul Sicaras, who stopped in last week because he saw the Bald Brewer sign on the building. "It'll be a nice addition, because I think there's a lot of people that brew their own beer," Sicaras said.

Miesel calls home-brewing "a never-ending learning process" and said he's still learning from his customers what they want to see stocked in the store. But his goal is to have a mix of items that will satisfy both the novice and the more experienced brewer, he said. On a recent afternoon, he was hand-cutting the labels he'll put on his handmade custom brewing kits. He also sells kits made by a company but said his custom kits contain his own secret grain mixture. "I go huge with the grains because it improves the quality of the beer," said Miesel, whose appearance will clarify any questions about the name of his store. He also sells kits and other items for beginning winemakers.

"Basically, if you have all the equipment for making beer, you can make wine," Miesel said. "Basically, all the equipment crosses over." He also special-orders hop rhizomes, which will turn into hop vines for people who like to grow their own. And they don't look bad in the yard. "A lot of people like to plant them because they're beautiful," Miesel said.

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