

A chemist, a teacher and a chef walk into a brewery...

Calgary's Dandy Brewing Company is no joke ▶ DON TSE

LONGTIME FRIENDS DEREK Waghay (a chemist), Ben Leon (a teacher), Dylan Nosal (a chef) and a fourth anonymous partner have always wanted to open a brewery. Specifically, they've always wanted to open a very small brewery, so that each batch of beer is carefully crafted, reflecting the passion and attention that goes into brewing as an art form.

"The brewery idea has been going for quite a while," says Leon. "All four of us at various times discussed starting [a brewery]. A running theme was wanting to keep it really small.... We wanted to open something small enough that every batch is very hands-on and we are super involved with [the brewing].... The small batch size [will allow] us to make some interesting beers."

Until recently, this was an impossible dream because Alberta regulations effectively prohibited very small brewers — breweries were required to prove minimum brewing capacity before a licence could be issued. The Calgary quartet investigated many options to comply with the arbitrary government limit while maintaining a small size. They considered owning, but not even hooking up, fermenters so that they would have technically sufficient capacity to comply with the regulations, and they considered opening just across the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. Nothing was economically viable.

That changed late last year when the regulated minimum capacity requirements were removed. With this obstacle out of the way, the foursome has now founded Dandy Brewing Company (thedandybrewingcompany.com), which will be the first new brewery in Alberta to open directly because of the regulation change. Dandy will brew in 400-litre batches. By comparison, Wild Rose Brewery makes beer in 6,000-litre batches (and they'll often do double or triple brews to keep up with demand), while Big Rock's main brewing system brews in 20,000-litre batches.

Dandy Brewing plans to focus on British-inspired, bottle- and cask-conditioned beers where carbonation occurs naturally in the vessel from which the beer is served, rather than by using artificial carbon dioxide gas pressure. The beer itself will only be available at a small number of hand-selected pubs.

Dandy will hit the market with two beers, though they plan to have seasonal and limited-edition batches to complement their regular lineup. The first, Golden Brown Dandy Ale, is expected to be dark straw in colour with a solid malt foundation incorporating the flavour of biscuit malt, which contributes a light toastiness. This will be balanced against a complex hop schedule, providing bitterness and a gentle hop

fruitiness. The second regular beer will be Dandy in the Underworld, a sweet oyster stout. The beer will not be made with oysters, but will be designed to pair perfectly with them. It will have a roastiness to balance against its sweetness, with only a hint of hops.

Leon says all major hurdles have now been cleared, so Dandy Brewing beers should be available starting in mid-July. Follow them on Twitter @DandyAlesYYC to keep up to date and find where their beer will be available. ▶

