Craft beer in Houston continues breakneck growth pace as 12 more breweries have come online in the past calendar year, making the greater Houston area home to 64 total.

Since the end of 2013, 46 craft breweries have opened in Houston, representing a 256% increase.

- As of the end of 2013, the greater Houston area was home to just 18 craft breweries, totaling 225,272 sq. ft. of industrial (manufacturing/warehouse) space.
- Today that number stands at 64, according to Houston Beer Guide’s Brewery Map. That’s 46 new breweries in just over half a decade, or a 256% increase!
- Those 46 craft breweries added since the end of 2013 total 345,661 sq. ft. of industrial space (with a small portion classified as retail space), representing 153% growth!
- According to Houston Beer Guide data, there are another 13 breweries-in-planning, which would add an additional 144,676 sq. ft. to industrial inventory.

Houston’s craft beer scene has continued its feverish growth pace in 2019. When we first published our Houston Craft Beer Market Insight a year ago in August 2018, we noted that Houston was home to 52 craft breweries totally 506,295 sq. ft. of space.

One year later, those figures are 64 total craft breweries (per Houston Beer Guide) and 570,933 sq. ft. as of this writing. That’s 23% growth on the brewery side, and 13% in the square footage tally.

Last year we noted that a huge driver of the growth seen locally in the last six years was a new law passed in 2013 that allowed producers that held a brewpub license the ability to sell their beer to go, directly from the brewery to
consumers, instead of having to rely solely on the three-tier distribution system.

And Houston’s craft beer industry may be on the cusp of even greater growth, as earlier this year a new bill was passed enabling all craft beer producers—brewpubs and production-only breweries alike—the ability to sell beer directly to customers. The legislation is set to go into effect on September 1.

New breweries entering the fray in the past calendar year include Downtown’s True Anomaly; the Heights’ Astral Brewing; Megaton Brewing up in Kingwood; and Stovetop Brewing, a 1-barrel nanobrewery operating in the back of the Craft Beer Cellar beer store in Cypress.

As for what’s driving the market stylistically there seems to be nothing that can stop the Hazy IPA freight train, whose popularity we discussed in last year’s edition of this publication. Known for huge tropical fruit flavors and minimal bitterness showcased on a soft, creamy, hazy unfiltered body that often resembles a glass of orange juice and can even taste like one, the city’s leading purveyors of the style—SpindleTap Brewing, Baa Baa Brewhouse, B52 Brewing, Sigma Brewing, and Ingenious—have continued to release new crowd-pleasing versions of the style in limited edition 16-oz cans on a (mostly) monthly release schedule.

The Hazy IPA has also continued to evolve nationally and locally, with the aforementioned B52 leading the charge in Houston on a range of Hazy IPA variations—alongside strong efforts from other breweries as well—including increasingly popular “Milkshake” versions, whereby lactose is added to the beers to “round out” or sweeten the finish; and Sour IPAs, a flavor profile that marries the dense fruit-forwardness of the Hazy IPA with an acidity / tartness that can be arrived at via a few different methods, including through kettle souring, blending and/or aging.

Even with Houston’s evolution, both in number of breweries and sought-after styles, the case remains that cities in Texas are vastly underserved—consider that the state is unchanged from its #46 ranking of breweries per capita in the county, per the Brewer’s Association. Although despite that low national per capita ranking, the craft brewing industry still had a $4.5 billion economic impact on Texas’ economy, good for 3rd in the U.S.