The number of craft breweries in Austin has nearly quadrupled in only five years

- Prior to 2013, Austin was home to just 18 craft breweries, totaling 247,896 sq. ft. of mostly industrial space. The city’s oldest brewery is Draught House Pub & Brewery, which opened in 1995, followed by Austin craft beer institution Live Oak, in 1997.

- Today that number stands at 77, according to NAI Partners’ Research. That’s 59 new breweries in 6 years, or a 328% increase!

- The past two years in particular have witnessed remarkable growth, with Austin’s brewery count increasing by 23 since 2017.

- The city’s 702,177 sq. ft. across 77 craft breweries is but a small fraction of the citywide industrial inventory total of 78.8 million sq. ft.

Austin’s craft beer scene has continued its feverish growth pace in 2019. When we first published our Austin Craft Beer Market Insight a year ago in October 2018, we noted that Austin was home to 62 craft breweries totally 612,932 sq. ft. of space.

One year later, those figures are 77 total craft breweries and 702,177 sq. ft. That’s 24% growth on the brewery side, and 15% 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 Austin’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 went into effect on September 1.

New breweries entering the fray in the past calendar year include Vista Brewing, 12 Fox Beer Co., Beer Ranch Project, and Hold Out Brewing.

Last year we noted the paradigm-shifting popularity of the Hazy IPA while also commenting on the fact that—despite the style’s extraordinary success in Houston—Austin breweries have been mostly content to ignore it.

However, things have shifted a bit on that front in the past calendar year, as breweries like Zilker and Hi Sign have made efforts to slake the thirst of Austin’s hopheads with their own versions of the Hazy IPA. And perhaps most notably, extremely highly regarded Pinthouse Pizza finally began to can and hold semi-regular releases for their Hazy IPAs this past year, providing local fans with some valuable currency on the national beer trading market.

Though even with Pinthouse taking steps toward placating those afflicted with Haze Fever—and Austin’s outpacing Houston in total number of breweries—many a dyed-in-the-wool beer geek would likely agree that Houston is currently ahead of Austin in the production of highly sought-after beer.

Lastly, the case remains that cities in Texas in general 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.

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