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BeerBeing

 BA Since: Sep 18, 2003 | [not on-line](#) →

On Vacation (out Of Town) Till 07/10, Pennsylvania

Posted: Jun 07, 2007 - 12:45:28 UTC (4 weeks ago)

Sly Fox's John Giannopoulos forming KEG-MANUFACTURING partnership

Sly Fox Managing Partner John Giannopoulos is taking a "do-it-yourself" approach to the cooperage problem which is plaguing brewers of all sizes these days, especially smaller craft breweries such as his own.

Or, more accurately, "make-it-yourself."

The rising price of stainless steel, an increase in stolen or non-returned kegs by customers who then sell them for scrap, the loss of the major US manufacturer of kegs last year and the demand arising from the growth of the craft beer segment in recent years have made it both expensive and difficult to buy additional cooperage for breweries trying to keep up with demand.

Now, Giannopoulos and partner Christian Messmacher have formed Geemacher LLC and entered into an agreement with an ISO-9200 certified stainless steel manufacturer in China to produce 1/6, tall quarter and half kegs in that country for American breweries. The plant is located in Penglai in northern China.

"I have 12 years experience as a manufacturer's rep sourcing both plastic and metal component parts and products out of China," explained Giannopoulos. "We see ourselves as an alternative source for both the mainstream brewers and for smaller craft breweries, for whom we will offer the opportunity to purchase smaller quantities at fair and reasonable prices."

For the last year, virtually all kegs purchased by US breweries have been imported from Europe after South Carolina's Spartanburg Stainless, the major US manufacturer, decided to withdraw from the market and focus on its core products. Spartanburg's keg division was acquired by the Switzerland-based Franke Group in November 2006. Manufacturing was relocated to Louisiana and executive offices relocated to Hatboro, Penna. The company plans to return to the market this summer with half kegs and to add 1/6 kegs to its line in December.

Geemacher is on roughly the same schedule. The company launched at the Craft Brewers Conference in April and Giannopoulos expects to have the first 1/6 keg production samples available by the end of this month. Quarter and half kegs should be available by Fall and the company hopes to begin producing firkins before year's end. "Larger orders will be embossed at the manufacturing plant," Giannopoulos said, "but we will also maintain unembossed inventory in the US and expect to be able to do quick embossing here for lower minimum orders by year's end."

Geemacher is in the process of developing a website where contact information is already posted; John Giannopoulos can be contacted via email or by phone: 610.948.3700.

<http://www.slyfoxbeer.com/news.asp>

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PMR



BA Since: Mar 31, 2005 | on-line ->
Irvine, California
Posted: Jun 07, 2007 - 14:31:51 UTC (4 weeks ago)

This is good news. Keg costs are through the roof so hopefully another supplier will help drop the price a bit. I don't think there are many, if any, suppliers out of China for kegs. I know for stainless brewing equipment, especially fermenters, Chinese manufactured equipment is becoming the status quo as it is so much less expensive (30-50%) than American or European made equipment. Even though I don't feel good about supporting a Chinese manufacturer over a American one, I'm ordering equipment from China because I can't afford not to given the high stainless prices these days.

--

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[rayjay](#)
BA Since: Nov 15, 2005 | not on-line ->
West Sacramento, California
Posted: Jun 07, 2007 - 14:46:37 UTC (4 weeks ago)

I've never heard of people selling stainless kegs for scrap, but that is a big problem, esp in Europe, where people are scrapping aluminum kegs.

--

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[therealbeerfly](#)
BA Since: Jan 08, 2003 | not on-line ->
Lips To The Zwickel, Pennsylvania
Posted: Jun 07, 2007 - 17:16:02 UTC (4 weeks ago)

re: rayjay ^

Happens a LOT. Major problem, particularly on your coast, where scrap stainless prices are higher due to demand from Asia.

--

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[syrbeer](#)
BA Since: Dec 12, 2001 | not on-line ->
Syracuse, New York
Posted: Jun 08, 2007 - 12:39:03 UTC (4 weeks ago)

re: rayjay ^

huge problem I had an account say kegs have started to go missing and they couldn't figure out why. When I told them about the scrap value it all made sense. I've personally experience kegs getting stolen and it sucks. the 10\$ dep don't cover jack.


--

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[Scoats](#)
BA Since: Sep 17, 2002 | not on-line ->
Northeast Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Posted: Jun 08, 2007 - 12:53:29 UTC (4 weeks ago)

re: syrbeer ^

 Maybe it's time to think outside of the box. Would making kegs out of a composite material was ideal for beer but was tough to break down into scrap help the situation?

--

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 **syrbeer**

BA Since: Dec 12, 2001 | [not on-line](#) →

Syracuse, New York

Posted: Jun 08, 2007 - 12:58:41 UTC (4 weeks ago)

re: Scoats ^

There is a guy on the left coast selling a hard plastic keg. kinda like the firkins that some of the UK beers come in.

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