

[Fredericton craft brewers bring new meaning to friendly competition](#)

Maybee Brew Co., Grimross Brewing open doors to new Gray Stone Brewing as it waits for delayed equipment

By Jill English, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 09, 2016



Gray Stone Brewing gets a little help from its craft beer friends

Grimross Brewing owner Stephen Dixon has been coordinating his brewing schedule alongside competitor Gray Stone Brewing over the last few months, the latest good deed in Fredericton's craft brewing industry.

Perhaps more accurately defined as a community, the brewers are openly friendly to each other, lending and borrowing supplies as needed, and even sharing employees..

- [Gray Stone Brewery opens its doors on Canada Day](#)
- [Picaroons opens doors to new Fredericton craft brewer](#)

After a long delay on Gray Stone's brewing equipment that was expected months ago, the new brewery and tap house needed a plan B in order to stay on schedule.

"A lot of different ideas came in our heads, what can we do, how can we set this up?" said Gray Stone assistant brewer Ryan Placktis. "We contacted Maybee and Grimross and they both said they'd be willing to help us, and it's been a great experience."



While it waits for equipment to arrive, Gray Stone has been using Grimross equipment to brew beer before trucking it back to fermenters at its own facility.

Placktis estimated they've done five brewing days at Grimross and two at Maybee in the last three months. The favours allowed them to ferment and serve their own beer at the tap house.

"We would have been ready to open, but we wouldn't have had our beer," he said, of the July 1 launch.

Paying it forward

Dixon said the favour is in line with craft brewing culture, at least in Fredericton.



Grimross owner Stephen Dixon brews with employees on Tuesday, before handing facility over to Gray Stone, free of charge, this weekend.

"I think a lot of us began as hobbyists and home brewers," he said. "That social culture, that wanting to share and collaborate and everyone being exciting about what's happening in this industry is part of what makes someone like me want to help."

He said coordinating schedules isn't easy, but remembers being helped in a similar way when he got started.

Before getting its own set-up, Grimross brewed in the Picaroons' facility on Queen Street, which is now being used by up-and-coming brewer Matt Corey, owner of Half Cut Brewing.



Matt Corey brews his Half Cut beer out of Picaroons Brewtique on Queen Street as part of Picaroons' incubator program for new brewers.

"We're the underdogs of the brewing world," said Corey about craft brewers. "Helping everyone else is very important."

Rising tide

Dixon agrees that there is a sense of community amongst local craft brewers, since there is still so much of the market to conquer together.

He said the craft brewing industry in New Brunswick only accounts for three per cent of beer sales, and New Brunswick craft beer, only one per cent.

"There's just so much opportunity," he said.

"If someone tries a Picaroons or a Maybee or Gray Stone or Trailway and they say 'Wow that's good beer, that's craft beer,' the next time they're driving by Grimross they may say, 'Well I'll give that a try too.'"

Artists with a passion

General Manager of the King Street Ale House Jason Rooney has seen that growth.

"Now the majority of our sales are local draft and it's definitely taken off," he said. "When we started doing this, craft beer was very much like a growing trend in its very early stages, and now it seems like they can't get enough of it."



Jason Rooney of the King Street Ale House says New Brunswick craft beers account for the majority of draft sales.

He said the competition and collaboration will only better the products, and to the people who think it's strange that the brewers are so chummy he draws a parallel.

"It's people with passion," he said. "They very much are like artists and they're just trying to bring out something people can talk about and enjoy."

Dixon said the friendly relationship will continue, even when the market is getting saturated.

"The day may come when we're not brewing in each other's facilities," he said. "But I think there will always be a collaborative relationship between brewers ... I still believe that we're always going to want to share and collaborate to celebrate craft beer."

Gray Stone expects its equipment next week and will be doing its last brew day at Grimross this weekend.