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Texas saw its newest craft brewery open this past Saturday as 903 Brewers held their grand opening at their location in Sherman, about an hour north of Dallas. A few hundred people showed up for the event -- mostly locals -- revealing just how robust the craft beer market is at this time, even in the somewhat low-density population areas.



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Taking its name from the regional area code, 903 Brewers is the venture of relative brewing newcomer Jeremy Roberts. This Sherman native and his wife decided to make the leap most avid homebrewers dream of and take his hobby to a commercial level. Assisted by mutual friend and brewing talent Austin Jones (Zio Carlo, Rahr & Sons) and with time spent volunteering at local Dallas microbreweries, Roberts set up shop in an historic, turn-ofthe-century cotton warehouse which, at present, dwarfs his actual brewing operation.



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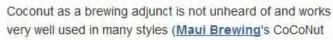
Location: 1718 S Elm St, Sherman, TX

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The informal term <u>nanobrewery</u> would be a better description for Roberts' current setup, with an output measured in kegs rather than barrels. A handful of small conical fermenters sit in a constructed cold room, and his staff consists of the traditional army of local eager volunteers, yet he is licensed and legal. Roberts desire is to proceed without the complications of outside investors, so his capacity naturally will be limited until he can arrange for a commercial brewhouse possibly later this year.

As for his product? Better than it should be, given his amateur status and piecemeal

brewing equipment. Roberts offered only two beers at his grand opening, Roo's Red Ale and The Chosen One (a coconut ale). Roo's Red Ale is a bit of a misnomer as at almost 7% ABV one would expect it to be approaching the league of Peticolas' Velvet Hammer or Martin House's Imperial Texan. Instead, the name is a nod to the local Austin College in Sherman (Go Kangaroos!) and is more a hoppy, style-bending amber ale, not bitter enough to be an IPA but malty, robust and very drinkable.



PorTer, <u>Kona Brewing</u>'s Koko Brown, and one of the now-defunct <u>Covey</u>'s best brews was an early toasted Coconut Brown Ale). The Chosen One is a departure from the norm as a golden ale, toasty pale malt with a light touch of coconut flavor that builds as you down a pint. The recipe for this beer is still in flux as Roberts plays with the perfect quantity of coconut to use, so expect some variations as the beer is test-marketed in select locations.

Other nontraditional beers are in the works as Roberts looks for style gaps left open by other craft brewers. As markets north of his location face a state border and with that a whole new set of Laws and Licenses, his primary focus will be Sherman, McKinney and Dallas/Fort Worth.

Availability: 903 Brewers plans local release events later this month at <u>Craft & Growler</u> in Dallas and at <u>Zio Carlo</u> in Fort Worth. Check their <u>Facebook</u> page for more details.



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