

A Bond And A Brew

HOW TWO ARMY VETERANS ARE BRINGING THEIR LOVE OF GERMAN BEER TO TEXAS

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Lifelong friends Joe Hogge and Aaron Luelling went from Army buddies to business partners thanks to their shared passion for German beer.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF CRAFT BEER in Austin. From Real Ale to Austin Beerworks and St. Elmo, Austinites certainly have options, but a new kind of beer experience is coming from Germany to Dripping Springs this fall.

Backroads Brewing Company is the passion project of Joe Hogge and Aaron Luelling. The lifelong friends first met at basic training for the Army and were soon stationed in Bamberg, Germany, where their beer obsession began. "I grew up on Coors Light, Bud Light, Miller Lite and then I showed up in Germany and my palate for beer

completely expanded,” Hogge says.



After returning to the states, they were disappointed by the taste and quality of many American beers. They missed the fresh, chemical-free, no-hangover beer of Germany. Years passed and the men started their lives – marriage, children and careers followed. Hogge and his wife Stacey began to build wedding venues in Dripping Springs, while Luelling worked as an auditor, living in Las Vegas with his wife Melissa. Years passed but Luelling never stopped craving that German beer, so he decided to brew it himself. After reconnecting with Hogge, Luelling sent him a care package of his signature beers. Joe couldn't believe how authentic it was. “As soon as I drank the first beer he sent me, I literally got goosebumps and thought it was the first beer I'd had in 15 years that tasted like a German beer.”

Joe and Stacey are the owners, while Aaron brews and Melissa creates delicious baked goods using spent grain from the brewing process. Opening in Dripping Springs was a decision inspired by Stacey's childhood there. She says her family watched Salt Lick grow in what used to be 'the middle of nowhere.' "It created this mindset of 'build it and they will come.' We want to pave our own road here."



The first phase of Backroads' opening will be a tap room and beer garden, a German tradition that is sorely missed in the Austin beer scene. Plans include four standard beers on tap with seasonal brews in rotation, a small dog park area complete with Melissa's homemade dog treats, and eventually a full menu of authentic German food. But for now, the focus is on giving consumers a unique experience that can't be found elsewhere. Hogge says, "Aaron knows how to make beer and I know how to build things. Let's do this."

The Beers



We visited the friends behind Backroads Brewing Company in Dripping Springs to taste some of their brews and baked goods. Brewmaster Luelling says, "I really try to brew beer I want to drink. I don't want to make beer I don't want to drink. What's the point?"

Pilsner

A medium-bodied pale lager. Starts with a sweet Pilsner taste. Has a bit of a floral note and is a little bitter on the finish. Served with Spent Grain Beer Pretzels with Brotkäse (house-made beer cheese)

Trappist Single

Similar to the Pilsner with complex Belgian flavors. Has a taste of cloves and spice with some bitterness. Brewmaster blended different yeasts together to get stone fruit flavors as well. Served with Cinnamon Spiced Peach Cheesecake with Spent Grain Crumble and Cinnamon Whipped Cream

Fest Bier

Very malty with a toast flavor. Hops come in the very end and accentuate the heat of the butter. This is a special occasion beer. Served with Bacon Cheddar Spent Grain Beer Bread with Habanero Honey Butter

Scotch Ale

A full-bodied rich beer with kettle caramelization. Complex raisin and smoky flavor. Some heat on the backend. Served with Spent Grain & Oat Triple Chocolate Toffee Pecan Cookies

Backroads Brewing Company will be opening later this fall. Until then, they have several **upcoming events** in venues around Dripping Springs.