



From Bar Owner to Brand Owner

Wisconsin Entrepreneur Serves a Slice of Success

Travis Hasse is the founder and owner of Drink Pie LLC, the company that produces Travis Hasse's Original Pie Liqueurs, a brand that was first served in the Missouri Tavern, a bar which Hasse also owns.

The entrepreneurial itch started early. As a child, Travis would draw smiley faces on rocks and sell them to the neighbors as paperweights. Little did he know this was the first of many business undertakings he would see in his lifetime. From bar owner to brand owner, at the young age of 33 Travis Hasse is living his dream.

Travis comes from a modest background. He grew up in Monroe, Wisconsin, where he was a star athlete, playing football, hockey and baseball and rarely losing. He began his college career studying Exercise and Sports Science, but soon realized his true passion for business and got his BA in Business Administration and Marketing from Winona State University.

Shortly after graduating while marketing insurance, he heard the local watering hole, the Missouri Tavern, was for sale. He knew it was time to follow his true calling. The Missouri Tavern had been closed for just over a year after the passing of the original owner, Mae Mefford. "It already had a great reputation and my wife and I thought we could reopen the bar with the same ambiance Mae had created. We cleaned it up a little and were able to keep the same historic charm," says Travis.

Acquiring the Missouri Tavern was the perfect opportunity for Travis to introduce his homemade Apple Pie Liqueur to patrons, a recipe handed down from his dad. With an overwhelming response, Travis thought the unique spirit could do well on a much larger scale, so he launched Travis Hasse's Original Apple Pie Liqueur in 2008. In celebration of its one-year anniversary, he launched Travis Hasse's Original Cherry Pie Liqueur in 2009. "Cherry Pie was the first suggestion from fans for the next flavor," Travis said. "I just gave the people what they wanted."

As it turns out, both bar ownership and brand ownership are the perfect fit for Travis. The friendly atmosphere of a bar setting has always appealed to him. When asked what delights him most about owning the Tavern he replies, “Every person who walks through the door is looking for a good time and a few good laughs with some friends in a place as comfortable as their own home.” That’s the same feeling Travis tried to capture in his original pie liqueurs. It’s not about style or prestige. It’s about good times with good people.

The business certainly has its challenges though. Travis quickly discovered getting that fresh homemade taste in a mass produced product would be difficult. This “Sara Lee Syndrome” as Travis calls it, was the biggest challenge he faced since he decided to bring Travis Hasse’s Original Apple Pie Liqueur to the shelves in 2008. But he was willing to take a risk. Of course, with great risk comes great reward. Travis’ reward? “Walking into another establishment and seeing my bottle displayed. Someone believed in my story and product and decided to share it with their customers. Every time I see my bottle displayed I smile like I’m seeing it for the first time.” With sales projected at 15,000 – 20,000 cases this year in over 20 states, Travis should be smiling quite often.

