

Local brothers turn hot idea into coffee empire

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It has been 30 years since dairy farmers Dane and Travis Boersma started slinging coffee from their pop-up stand along the highway in Grants Pass, Oregon.

Since the early 1990s, Dutch Bros Coffee has grown to more than 500 outlets in 14 states. Dutch Bros continues to make a splash in small and big communities while growing its next generation of workers and leaders.

In 2004, Grants Pass native Tony Jantzer started working at a Dutch Bros in Woodland California.

“Growing up and seeing what Travis and Dane did in the drive-thru coffee business was amazing, especially since a lot of people were skeptical of it because it was such a new concept,” Jantzer said.

Jantzer knew once he started working there that becoming a franchise owner for Dutch Bros is what he wanted to do. After a few years of working to get the feeling right, Jantzer began working towards breaking ground on a site to open his own Dutch Bros in California.

“I used to ride my bike up to the original drive through. Dane and Travis Boersma “would be jamming out coffees as well as the tunes.”

Jantzer remembers that the brothers had a 100-disc changer system, a big deal in that time “That was a lot of CDs.”

It wasn’t long before Jantzer received a call from the corporate office to check out the Brookings Oregon, franchise. Jantzer and his girlfriend Natasha worked to get the feel for the shops and the area.

“It seemed like it happened pretty quick,” Jantzer said.

In June 2009, at the age of 26, Jantzer assumed the official position of franchisee for the Harbor, Brookings and Crescent City locations. The Crescent City store is located at 560 L St., at the corner at 6th St. and Highway 101 south.

Also in 2009, tragedy struck the Boersma family. Co-founder Dane Boersma passed away from ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. Dutch Bros and the Boersma family started “Drink One for Dane” as a way to bring awareness and support for research to find treatments and cures for the disease. To date, Dutch Bros customers have donated more than \$10 million to Muscular Dystrophy Association

Franchisee Jantzer states he stopped thinking that Dutch Bros was at a high, because the company would keep growing in massive ways.

“The coffee isn’t even the main business: we are in the business of people,” he said. “Anyone can open a coffee shop, but it’s the people that Dutch Bros have that create that unique experience”

The “stigma” behind being a barista is that it is a transitional job, a position that you have until you find a ‘grown up’ job. “This is a grown-up job,” Jantzer said. Dutch empowers the youth, growing leaders at just 19, 20 and 21 years old. “You don’t see many other places doing this.”

According to Jantzer, Dutch Bros’ success is defined by the culture that is learned through training and working, which is then spread amongst the community and all new employees.