

Second Hand

Colorado's breweries trade beer equipment like baseball cards.

Starting a brewery is an expensive proposition: You need loads of space, tons of ingredients, and thousands of dollars in equipment. Hence, the hot secondhand market—when breweries outgrow their tanks, bottling lines, and silos, they often sell off their gear to upstarts and smaller breweries. As Colorado's largest craft brewer, New Belgium Brewing Company has handed down enough gear to start several breweries; co-founder Jeff Lebesch's original brewing equipment actually cycled through four other breweries before returning home as a piece of the company's history. Stories abound: Five years ago, Avery Brewing bought a couple of 80-barrel tanks from New Belgium, which had outgrown the equipment. "We got them for dirt—we basically stole them," says Adam Avery, the brewery's founder. Avery left the plaques on the tanks, hoping there was a little New Belgium business magic left inside. "Now we rub them for good luck," Avery says. —PD

