

Foodways Texas Craft Brewery Oral History Project
Interview with Fritz Rahr - Rahr & Sons Brewing Company
Date of Transcript: 02.09.2013

1 [Interviewer requests and receives permission to record the interview and to use the
2 information gathered]

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6 **NIKO TONKS:** This is Niko Tonks for Foodways Texas, I am here in Fort Worth, Texas
7 at the Rahr and Sons Brewing Company, with Fritz Rahr, and just for the record would you
8 state your name, your official title, or your position at the Brewery, and your date of birth, if
9 you're willing to do so.

10

11 **FRITZ RAHR:** Fritz Rahr founder and president of Rahr and Sons Brewing Company,
12 born June, twelfth [12th] nineteen-sixty-seventh [1967].

13

14 **NIKO TONKS:** Alright, so, my first [1st], my first [first [1st] - - questions - - is about
15 the Rahr family history, which we were just talking about, a little bit, and I don't know where
16 a good point to start is. I know that - - there is brewing history in the United States that goes
17 all the way back to, to the eighteen-forties [1840's], or earlier, that in Wisconsin. - - So, can
18 you tell me a little bit about your family history in brewing?

19

20 **FRITZ RAHR:** Absolutely - - my great, great grandfather - - William Mathias Rahr,
21 came over from Germany in eighteen-forties-seven [1847], and he actually set up the very first
22 [1st] lager Brewery in the state of Wisconsin - - that was in Manitowoc, which was a great
23 little town, it's between Green Bay and Milwaukee, along the coast, and he brought over his -
24 - brothers son's, as well, so, his nephews came over to help him start up this new Brewery
25 plus a Malt House. They made their own malt, and - - in that whole process of opening up the
26 Brewery. The name of the Brewery was the Rahr Brewery, it was better known as the Eagle
27 Brewery in eighteen-forties-seven [1847], and - - right around the eighteen-sixties [1860's] - -
28 the Brewery burnt down, and they had to rebuilt it from scratch, and - - they didn't really
29 have a lot of money to do that. But since Rahr employed most of the people in Manitowoc at
30 that time, the people came together, and rebuilt the Brewery for my great, great grandfather,
31 so, that's a pretty neat little story. Right around that time, that same time - - those two [2]

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35 nephews, which was Henrico and Carl - - they left, and they went and actually opened up their
36 own Rahr breweries - - the Rahr Brewing Company in Green Bay, and a Rahr Beverage
37 Company in Oshkosh, and those two [2] facilities actually operated, and made beer up into
38 the early nineteen-forties [1940's], and fifties [50's] - - Unfortunately, I think it, after
39 prohibition, it changed hands, it wasn't a Rahr family, but they were still brewing those beers.
40 Now the Brewery in Manitowoc, and the Malt House, they made so much malt that they
41 actually sold malt to the surrounding breweries, and very soon the malting side of the
42 business, became an actually real business. I mean, they actually went out, and improved,
43 and expanded their malt capacities to where, you know, by the eighteen-sixties [1860's], late
44 sixties [60], and the seventies [70's], you know, we were now a malting company, as well.
45 And by the eighteen-eighties [1880's], one [1] of our largest customers was actually Anheiser-
46 Busch. So ,we have long traditions to ties to the Busch family, and the Busch Brewing
47 Company, which is pretty cool. And before long, we became the largest malsters in the, in the
48 country, as well. - - We had patients for malts, we were the first to make black patient malt in
49 this country, and had the - - patient to do so, with the equipment that we designed - - we
50 actually also made black malt for coffee soaps too, that was sold throughout the world, as
51 well. - - In eighteen-eighty [1880], my great, great grandfather actually had an accident, and
52 fell into a brew kettle - - I am not sure if they were brewing beer or not, I don't think they
53 were. But he was a, he was an eighty [80] year old man, by that time, and - - he died from his
54 injury, and the company at that point in time, changed its name - - to the William Rahr Son's
55 Company. And they did that, because of the three [3] boys, who took over the company, and
56 that was, William Jr., -- Max Rahr, and Ryan Heart Rahr. Now over the, over the years, Max
57 and Ryan Heart ended up leaving the company, and they started up their own malting
58 company in Manitowoc, called - - which was it called - - North, Northwestern Malting - - in
59 Manitowoc, and - - that didn't last too long. And eventually I think Max actually came back to
60 Rahr, to, to William Rahr and Son's Company. And William, - - he did not - - Ryan Heart
61 became the driving force behind the whole Brewery, and Malt House, and that was actually
62 my great grandfather, that was Ryan Heart Rahr, and right around prohibition turn of the
63 century, they kind of saw the brewing community changing, and they saw prohibition coming

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64 down the road. And they decided that, it was time to make a decision, of you know, do we
65 want to be maltsters, or do we want to be brewers? And they decided to
66 00:04:55
67
68 get out the brewing business altogether, and just make malt for beer, and other cereal
69 products. So, when prohibition did hit, they were kind of positioned very well to kind of make
70 that transition, and the William Rahr Son's Company, as its name went away, and they
71 changed the name of the company to Seapro - - and made - - of course, malt for the Canadian
72 breweries - - maybe some Mexican breweries, as well, and also made cereal food products
73 during, during that time. After the repeal of prohibition, they decided to not go back in to
74 brewing at all, but just continue on making malt for beer, and that's where the name Rahr
75 Malting company came up. as the - - as the, the new name for the company. and - - they were
76 producing - - malt in varies location. We had malting companies, we had a malt facility in
77 Chicago, we had a malting company out on the west coast. and they eventually spun those
78 off. and think one [1] of the, the Malt House actually became part of Great Western Malting
79 Company out west. But our Manitowoc facility became our, our driving force it, it was quite a
80 facility in its day, and right around the nineteen-sixties [1960's] - - the company made the, the
81 decision to start maybe finding a new location, because all the grain and the barley seemed to
82 be moving west it wasn't, they weren't growing barley any more in Wisconsin, they were
83 growing corn, and other things, and so, they decided at that time, to be closer to the grain
84 harvest, the barley harvest, so, they moved the operation, or they created another operation
85 in the Minneapolis area, a little town of called Shakopee, just on the south side of the
86 Minnesota river - - just south of the twin cities. And that became - - the world's largest single
87 facility for making malt - - They still ran the Malt House in Manitowoc, but very soon they
88 decided to go ahead, and sell that property, and they sold the Malt House to Anheuser-Busch.
89 And Anheuser-Busch continued to - - make malt there, they are still making malt there today,
90 although I think they are going to be shutting the plant down. They have been operating it at
91 minimal capacity levels for years, just for the cost of, of running the, the facility and our
92 capacity kept growing in Minneapolis, we've got five [5] Malt Houses there now, and they
93 decided to actually expand a little bit further, and now we have malting operation up in Alex,
94 Alberta, which in between in Edmonton and Calgary, servicing the Far East, and - - a lot of the
95 west coast Craft Breweries, as well. So, that's the malting history of Rahr - - you know, I grew

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96 up in the brewing family, I worked my summers in the malting facilities, since I was probably
97 fifteen [15] years old, and worked there every summer, and - - just loved the beer business.
98 Was around it twenty-four
99 00:08:10
100
101 [24] seven [7] with my family. - - So, again - - I grew up in the malting in the beer industry, so,
102 it's something that I, something that I always wanted to do - - I graduated from TCU with a,
103 with a business administration degree, and - - wanted to go into brewing, so, I went up to the
104 Siebel Institute, and attended - - a couple of classes up there, and a brewing technology, and
105 then after that, I went overseas, and worked in Germany for the Durst Malting Company, for a
106 period of time, and I had to come back, because I couldn't get my green card. I had to, to
107 prove to the government that what I was doing, no other German's were really qualified to
108 do, and I think - - the beer industry, anybody you're born into the German community you're
109 qualified to make beer. So, I came back and decided that, I needed to go back and get my
110 master's in business, if I wanted to continue down this path, which I did at TCU, and then
111 somehow, for some reason I got railroaded into the railroad business for about twelve [12]
112 years, and - - I mean, it was great, if a guy had to pick two [2] different careers to, to do, I got
113 to play with trains, and now I get to play with beer. Hopefully not at the same time, but - - So,
114 I worked for the railroads for twelve [12] years, it was a lot of fun. But it really wasn't. How
115 shall, I say, floating my boat? So, my wife asked me; what I wanted to do, and I said, you
116 know, I have always just wanted to make beer. And at that time, you know, we were living in
117 the Houston area, and we were going down to the Saint Arnolds tours, and really, really
118 enjoying that, and - - you know, we just decided, you know, we can do this, we can do this up
119 in Fort Worth, and have Brewery and open it up in Fort Worth. I've got the background, I've
120 got the family connects to ask questions, and at least get support in what we were trying to
121 do. So, in two thousand and three [2003], we made a decision to move from, from the
122 Houston market, Houston area back to up Fort Worth where, of course, where I went to
123 school, and where my wife's family is from, and where she grew up. And - - we decided to put
124 a plan together, and by January of two thousand and four [2004] - - we had raised the capital
125 we thought was necessary to, to, to get it kicked off, and started, and we went out in
126 February, and purchased the old Abita Brewery - - from them, which was their start up
127 Brewery - - they upgraded to new wonderful standard Kamerlin [sp] system, and so, we

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128 purchased their old Brewery, and their bottling line. And we purchased six [6] fermentation
129 tanks from some Brewery out of Saint Paul, Minnesota and - - came back here, found a
130 warehouse, installed it all, and by that June we were brewing beer. So, went through all the,
131 the federal - - permitting,

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133

134 the state permitting. We got everything done in about four [4] months, and next thing you
135 know, we were, we were making beer, and we sold our first keg to the Flying Saucer. I think it
136 was August twelfth [12th] of two thousand and four [2004]. Now we came out with two [2]
137 brands to begin with; which was the Rahrs Blond and a Munich style Helles, and the Rahr's
138 Red, which is now called the Texas Red, and that's an America Amber style Lager beer, and by
139 the end of that year, we came out with our third [3rd] product; which was our Ugly Pug Black
140 Lager or Traditional Schwarzbier.

141

142 NIKO TONKS: So what, what prompted you to coming back to Fort Worth in
143 particular, as opposed to staying in Houston, or moving somewhere else?

144

145 FRITZ RAHR: Well - - there a, actually quite a few reasons, one [1] we knew the
146 town - - even though we had lived in Houston - - we didn't know the people that well, we
147 didn't know the culture that well - - My wife's family, they are all from Fort Worth. I spent,
148 you know, eight [8] and half [1/2] years in school here, and a few extra years here in the Fort
149 Worth area. And to be perfectly honest, the Dallas/Fort Worth area was very similar to where
150 I grew up in Minneapolis/Saint Paul area. With Dallas being a lot like Minneapolis, and Fort
151 Worth being very, very similar to Saint Paul. Kind of a little bit more easy going, a little bit
152 older in culture, from a stand point of just historical and family, and be just more traditional,,
153 and we just loved it and the biggest reason was. We knew, if we opened up a Brewery, it was
154 going to be twenty-four /seven [24/7] working, working, working, and we had two [2] small
155 boys, at the time. I think they were five [5] and seven [7], and we needed the family support,
156 we relied heavily on my wife's side of the family - - to help us out with that, because that
157 seemed to work very well, because we were always going and blowing, and doing something
158 related to beer. Our poor kids - - will look back at their lives, and their childhood, and their
159 adolescent and young teen age years, as spending most of their time in bars and restaurants,

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160 but you know, if it all works out it, it will be a good thing. So, we moved to Texas, it's a big
161 state, we thought about Minneapolis/Saint Paul- - But my parents were at an age to where
162 they enjoyed grandchildren, but they didn't want to be responsible for grandchildren, and - -
163 we

164

165 **00:13:17**

166

167 thought Texas provided a little bit more flexible - - situation for us, when we considered all, all
168 the aspects. So, that's why we came back to Fort Worth.

169

170 **NIKO TONKS:** And, and the name of the Brewery is Rahr and Son's, is it going to be
171 and sons, you think?

172

173 **FRITZ RAHR:** Hopefully I won't fall into a brew kettle, but - -

174

175 **[Laughter]**

176

177 Hopefully it will say Rahr and Son's, and - - the boys both have a really big interest in brewing
178 beer. I think they made their first [1st], they both made their first [1st] batches of beer when
179 they were like eight [8] and ten [10], so, I guess I can officially call them sixth [6th] generation
180 brewers. So, - - no, I think they, they both enjoy it, I hope they get involved with the Brewery,
181 as they get older - - I don't think it will ever change to just "And Son's". Hopefully it will just be
182 Rahr and Sons, so, they will keep it the same.

183

184 **NIKO TONKS:** Oh, I wasn't, wasn't saying it to be anything other than Rahr and Son's
185 there was just emphasis on the Sons.

186

187 **FRITZ RAHR:** Yeah well, hopefully they both will be very, very involved. They, they,
188 they enjoy being around the beer industry.

189

190 **NIKO TONKS:** So, I have a, I have a sort of basic question. We were talking a lot
191 about malting, and I was wondering, and, and this is kind of a think, and a little bit of an

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192 opaque process, for a lot of people who drink beer, so, I was wondering, if you though you
193 could give a sort of a quick description of what it means to malt barley?

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196 FRITZ RAHR: Certainly - - The malt kernel, or actually the barley kernel - - is
197 something a maltsters will take through a certain process, to convert starches and sugars, to
198 create basically a, a food pallet that the brewer will use, to - - use for creating beer, and for
199 the Yeast in particular. I and what we do is, we take - - barley that has been - - harvested most
200 likely from the previous year, so, it' had time to dry out, hopefully it's low in protein - - and
201 high in what we call carbohydrates and starches, and the process is a for any, any growing
202 plant that that seed, or kernel, or whatever you want to call it, once it starts to get rehydrated
203 again, it will start the growing process. And when it does that, it will for its own need to grow,
204 convert all those starches into carbohydrates, so, it can feed on itself, so, it can start to spout
205 and grow. And as maltsters that's what we want to do, we want to start that process, we
206 want convert all those potential carbohydrates - - for that kernel of grain, but we don't want
207 it to grow too far, and use up all those wonderful carbohydrates, and starches, so, we stop
208 that process. So, at first [1st] we will take that grain, and we will start soaking it in water to
209 rehydrate it. That is called the steeping process, and that will take up to a day and a half [1/2],
210 to two [2] days, and we want to take the moisture. Gosh, I am, I am reaching here. But you
211 know, like a two to four percent [2 to 4%] up to about nine[9] to eleven [11] moisture
212 content, and then we take that grain, and will put the entire batch of grain into what we call,
213 germination compartments. These are long rectangular boxes, now some of them are the size
214 of a football field, and we will layer the grain in that box, at a relatively low height - - maybe
215 not more than about a foot, a foot and a half [1/2], two [2] feet in that box, and we will
216 spread it out with helixes and augers, and so, it's nice and level and flat through the whole
217 field. And that process will take another four [4] to five [5] days, and what will happen is
218 there is a big helix that will run through that grain bed, turning the grain as that grain starts to
219 grow sprouts. We have to turn it, because if we don't turn it, it creates hot spots, and when
220 there is hot spot, the grain will over grow, and we don't have control, so, we try to keep the
221 grain nice and cool, temperature controlled, and keep turn the grains, so, we don't get those
222 hot spots. Once we, the maltsters determines that the malt has grown enough, has converted
223 enough, and they will be taking samples along the way, and checking the carbohydrates and

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224 starches, and proteins, and seeing how everything converting over - - they will - - then take
225 that malt, and to stop that growth, and to put it back in to state of hibernation, they will place
226 that grain into another similar rectangular box, and that is called a
227 00:17:38
228
229 Kiln, and that is where we dry out the grain slowly, and it will go from a temperature of, you
230 know, a hundred and forty [140], to hundred and fifty [150], to hundred and eighty [180]
231 degrees, and slowly dry that grain out. Now the neat thing about malting is; this is where we
232 come and do the step, of getting different varieties of malt. The hotter the temperature in the
233 Kiln will determine the different styles of malt that you get, and what I mean by styles. I am
234 talking about Pale malt verses your specialty malts in, in Crystal malts - - Red malts - - Cara
235 Munich malts; any. Those types of malts come at this point in the time; because, as you dry
236 that grain out, and as you apply heat. If you get the heat high enough, you can start
237 caramelizing or crystalizing some of the sugars that are in that malt, and when you do that,
238 obviously you destroy the ferment ability of those sugars, but you create what we call, body in
239 to, into the beer; - -because the sugars will be no fermentable, but the sugars will still be
240 present in the beer, as flavor - - and that's where you get a lot of your flavor, that's where you
241 get a lot of your mid malts - - Cara Munich and - - your crystal malts styles of malts, and we
242 take that process, to the point of putting the grain into basically a coffee roaster, and basically
243 creating one [1] big ash pellet, to where there is no fermentable sugars left in that kernel. It's
244 just a big black piece of malt that you use for, for flavoring and coloring in, in - - in the beer,
245 so, that's pretty much what we do at, that's what they do at Rahr Malting Company.—and you
246 can do it with rye, with, you can do it with wheat, you can do it with sorghum, and some of the
247 other specialty grains, for a making beer that is gluten free. It's the same process, nothings
248 really changed, over the hundreds [100] of years that we have been malting. - - It's just the
249 equipment and the size, to be perfectly honest.

250
251 **NIKO TONKS:** So, I have another a - - historical question. - - you said it, was your
252 great grandfather? - - In, in the eighteen-forties [1840's] was the very first Lager Brewery in
253 the entire country? And, and - -

254
255 **FRITZ RAHR:** In, in Wisconsin, Yeah.

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256 So, before Val Blatz, before Papst, before Hillerman and Miller - - there was the Rahr in
257 eighteen-forties-seven [1847].

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261 NIKO TONKS: So, what did it, what did it take to make Lager Beer in, in Wisconsin in
262 the eighteen-forties [1840's]? What - - was the big innovation there?

263

264 FRITZ RAHR: You know, to be perfectly honest, I have no idea. I don't know, I don't
265 know - - What they did - - What they did that was different from other people. But maybe we
266 were just the first one's [1's] brewing that style of beer, - - you know, I, I can't, I really don't
267 have a good answer for you. I just, I have just been told that we were the first [1st] Lager
268 Brewery in Wisconsin, and, you know, we, we held a lot of the patents at that time, and to be
269 perfectly honest, the Rahr Brewery, back in its day - - they were the driving force in the beer
270 industry, for that part of the country, they were the innovators, they were the ones making
271 the changes, doing different things, and creating kind of the - - the level of the quality, and
272 that people tried to achieve to, and, and follow.

273

274 NIKO TONKS: That sounds good - - It's amazing that it, it's the first in Wisconsin; such
275 a long tradition of, of making Lagers in Wisconsin. - - So, so, I have, I have another, a question
276 that I have been asking everybody - - and this might not apply to you, because you're from a
277 brewing family, so, it might have been in your blood from the very beginning.

278 But; It seems like most people that that get into Craft Brewing, or, or that want to start a
279 Brewery, have in their mind one [1], one [1] little moment, where it became clear to them
280 that beer was what they wanted to do, and a lot of times it comes from a particular beer that
281 they had, or a sensation that's, that goes along with beer, and I was wondering if there was
282 one [1] story that sticks in your head about that kind of? - - .

283

284 FRITZ RAHR: I, I think if, you know, the, the time for me when my wife and I, kind of
285 looked at each other, at the same time, you know, we, we can do this, this is what we want to
286 do. It was probably over at Saint Arnold's Amber sitting at one [1] of Broche's tours, and - -

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287 just enjoying the entire culture, and feel that he had created, it's something the we fell in love
288 with, and that, that we wanted to be a part of on a larger scale.

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290 00:22:03

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292 **NIKO TONKS:** So, you moved back to, you moved back to Fort Worth, and at the
293 time - - as far as I can see, you were the first [1st] production - - Craft micro-Brewery in the
294 Dallas/Fort Worth area; is that right?

295

296 **FRITZ RAHR:** You know, I don't think that's true - - there was Great Grains Brewery
297 that was in Dallas, at the time, and when we started up, they tried to move over to Fort
298 Worth, but that move didn't go well for them - - there was the Texas Beer Company, just on - -
299 on the north side of town here, and they tried to make a Texas light style of beer ,and they
300 were in business for a couple of years, and it didn't fly. - - There has been a couple of Brew
301 Pubs here in Fort Worth that haven't gone - - I know there has been numerous - - numerous - -
302 Brew Pubs in the Dallas area, as well, and there was actually - -. After I left brewing school,
303 there was, there was one [1] Brewery in Deep Ellum, that was trying to do a next track to
304 brew on a commercial basic, but I don't think they lasted very long. But - - I think on, on this
305 type of scale, and in this environment, - - you know, we've been one [1] of the first [1st] to
306 continue on, and be successful.

307

308 **NIKO TONKS:** So, that was, that was more, more my question is - - if you're, you're
309 the people, that are here you have, - - bottom line you're the only people in the area that,
310 that bottle? What did it take, what did it take to be successful in this area?

311

312 **FRITZ RAHR:** I'll tell you what it, it was a struggle. I mean, the first [1st] five [5]
313 years was a, was a real - - real piece of work. - - We weren't making it; we weren't making
314 money, we were - - we - - on, on a couple different occasions. We were close to show,
315 shutting the doors. One [1] particular time, we actually decided to shut the doors, and then
316 my wife, you know, I, I had laid off all my employees, and my wife and I, or she actually
317 convinced me; Hey let's go camping let's talk about this - - and we decided that we can't give
318 up, and we've got to figure out something, and at that time we were self-distributing. We

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319 were trying to do everything, and we had friends at the Coors distributorship here in town. --
320 The Anthens, the Anthem's [sp], I'm sorry, and -- I called them up and I said; "Hey Tim, are
321 you guys still interested in maybe distributing our beers?" And they said absolutely, and I
322 said; Okay, I said you can have
323 00:24:18
324
325 it. He goes; well, when do you want to start? And I said; yesterday. And I kind of told him the
326 situation that we were in, and he goes; absolutely. So, they brought over a couple of semi-
327 trucks; they bought everything we had, and handed me a check that day, and -- for the next
328 year and a half [1/2], I basically did everything in the Brew House. I did all the brewing, all the
329 packaging, all the cleaning. -- I had a group of volunteers that came in, and helped me bottle
330 beer. -- My wife had to go out, and get employment at another place, so, we had some
331 income coming in, and it was a real struggle. And, it was that way all the way up until about -
332 - the spring of, no, the fall of two-thousand and nine [2009], and we were just starting to see
333 the fruits of our labor. We started to see the light at the end of the tunnel, you know, we
334 were getting deals, big deals with -- a big chain accounts. That was really -- putting us in a
335 position that we could actually start budgeting for things, and, and think, thought, you know,
336 thinking about expanding, and we were able to hire some more employees. And right about
337 the time where we were really going to just, pop the bubble. -- We had a horrible snow
338 storm here in Fort Worth. And -- it was February of two-thousand and ten [2010], and
339 thirteen [13] and a half [1/2] heavy wet inches of snow fell on the Brewery. And I woke up
340 the next morning to a horrible telephone call from the alarm company, saying that my alarm
341 system was going off, and when I showed up; I had no Brewery. The entire twenty thousand
342 [20,000] square feet of the roof had collapse in on the Brewery, and -- everything was pretty
343 much destroyed. So, -- at that point in time, we didn't know if we were going to survive --
344 but I was quick to learn that we had really good insurance -- or, maybe I had just forgotten.
345
346 [Laughter]
347
348 And we had a willing crew here to pull ourselves up by the boot straps, and say "hey".
349 Then we're not brewing beer any more, we get to rebuild a Brewery from scratch, the way we
350 want to, and luckily we had from an insurance stand point , "A business interruption

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351 insurance”, and we had just landed a huge account with Costco, which - - allowed up to show
352 a positive bottom line to where that, “A business interruption insurance” became pliable, I
353 mean for us, and because of that, I was able to keep all my employees, and I didn’t have to lay
354 off anybody, and we actually hired a few more, during that period, and we basically took a
355 look at our

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357

358 Brewery, and out packaging, and started over. Said; Okay, if we could do it all over again.
359 What do we want to do, and we made huge changes in packaging, we rebranded everything,
360 for example the blond used to be just Rahr Blond with a longhorn on the front. Now it’s got a
361 picture of my beautiful mother. And there is a great story that goes along with that, so, - - We
362 were able to reposition ourselves from a packaging stand point, bring everything together, so,
363 we looked like a, a company that had brands out there, and not just a company that had all
364 these goofy different labels going off in all different tangents. So, that was one [1] thing that
365 we did, the other thing was we redesigned the Brew House. We took it to where it took us
366 eighteen [18] hours to brew a fifty [50] barrel batch of beer, to where we could brew it in
367 about seven [7] and half [1/2] hours. ,And that basically doubled out composite right off the
368 bat. - - very fortunate, in a weird kind of way for us, the roof kind of fell on top of our bottling
369 line, and crushed it. And - -

370

371 [Clearing throat]

372

373 We went through looking for new older, you know, new used kind of equipment. Could find
374 anything that was - - pretty much the same, thank god. And the insurance to gracious enough
375 to basically - - write a check for a brand new bottling system. Which was which was key;
376 because that was one [1] of our alkalis heel, was our bottling system. - - So, we, we got a
377 system - - that will produce a lot more beer quicker, and in a more timely fashion, so, to
378 speak. It allowed us to upgrade to twenty-two [22] ounce bombers, as well. Which has been a
379 really neat - - plus to our product portfolio. - - We did something else, at that time, that was
380 pretty fun and unique. We made a bunch of videos, I don’t know if you have seen them. - -
381 But if you go on to YouTube and Google: The Great Rahr Roof Collapse of 2010 two thousand
382 and ten [2010], it will come up with the nine [9] or ten [10] videos that we did, and it was

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383 basically, was; funny, little forty-five [45] second - - silliness of what do two [2] brewers do
384 when they are not brewing, and they are really creative, and they are a lot of fun? And we
385 even brought people like - - Matt Brynildson in from Firestone Walker, who's a friend of ours,
386 to be a part of one [1] of them, and we just did fun goofy things. We did it to keep our fans
387 and our supporters engaged in what we were doing - - instead of doing Brewery tours, during
388 those five [5] months here at

389 00:29:33

390

391 the Brewery. We went out, and we did off site events at various locations around town here
392 in Dallas and Fort Worth, and we continued to at least draft, package a little draft beer - -
393 during that during those five [5] months - - it was actually a lot of fun, it was the fun the day
394 we walked in - - but looking back on it - - the roof collapse was probably the best thing that
395 ever happened to us. It afforded us the time to really kind of take a step back, look at what,
396 what we were doing, from a process oriented stand point, and figure out what worked, and
397 what really didn't work and. And change it, and we would have never had that time, or
398 opportunity, if the roof had not caved in, because we were just too busy. We wouldn't have
399 that, we wouldn't have been able to take the Brew House down for three [3] weeks, and
400 reengineer it to where we want it, we just couldn't. We wouldn't have been able to do that,
401 so, - - after the roof came back on, we got back into production, you know, our sales tripled
402 over night. - - We went from a three [3] person Brewery, to a nine [9] person Brewery, and - -
403 planning new, wonderful, new exciting beers, and a new line of the two [2], the beer series in
404 a twenty-two [22] ounce format, and - - ever since then, it been growing, which is a great
405 thing. So, we are very excited to be where we are, we are very fortunate to be where we are.
406 I think we would, we would have gotten to this point, even if the roof did not collapse, but it
407 would probably taken a lot longer to get to this point. So, - - if anybody wants to have a good
408 successful business, pray for a roof collapse, and good insurance, and

409

410 [Laughter]

411

412 You can take it from there - - but the last twenty-four [24], twenty-four [24] months have
413 been pretty, pretty exciting here at the Brewery, so.

414

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415 **NIKO TONKS:** And you attribute that, jump in sales your, your opportunity to
416 rebrand, or, do you think it had something to do with everyone knowing where you were at,
417 with the trouble, or just being excited about it, when you came back on line, or both, or?
418

419 **FRITZ RAHR:** Well - - I, I think it, I think it, a, a lot of that - - I think if I could, maybe
420 point to two [2] or three [3] things; I think everybody loved the Rahr beer. Everybody really,
421 **00:31:47**

422
423 really liked it, and they were drinking it pre roof collapse, but I think when, you all of a
424 sudden, you like maybe something you took for granted. And - - realized what a really good
425 thing was to Fort Worth, and what it really meant to a lot of people when we came back
426 online, I think people really embraced that, and they want a made, and they wanted to make
427 sure that, that never really happened again. They wanted to make sure that we survived, and
428 the out pouring of support from our customers, and our vendors, and our clients which are
429 the bars, and restaurant, and liquor stores, and grocery stores, was over whelming. You
430 know, the grocery stores kept our spaces open on the shelves, which is lost sales, but they
431 wanted people to know that hey; these guys are coming back, and they are going to be bit
432 stronger than ever, and that was really very refreshing. - - The other thing was, we were able
433 to maybe produce a better quality product, just because of the improvements we made in the
434 Brew House. And then the third [3rd] thing was probably the rebranding. We kind of focused
435 on the message that we wanted to send out. We wanted all the packaging to - - have
436 different labels, but have a similar look and feel, so, when somebody saw it from a distance,
437 they would know, Okay that is Rahr beer, I know what that is, I am going to go over and check
438 it out. So, all those things compiled together. I think is what drove sales, not to mention that
439 we were on the news almost every other evening. So, we got a lot of free advertising, a lot of
440 free publicity, television, radio, print - - was always involved, and wanting to know, what was
441 going on at the Brewery? It almost became like a documentary, a doc-u-drama of, what was
442 going on at the Rahr Brewery, what stage are they in rebuilding, and then when we finally did
443 get rebuilt. - - We even got more press, because everyone wanted to come in, and see the
444 things that we had done, and the places that we were going, and the things we were doing.
445 So, - - it was a very interesting time. There were a lot of people going - - It was like watching

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446 the Kardashians on TV. I guess they wanted to know, what was going on, at the Rahr
447 Brewery? It was very exciting time.

448

449 NIKO TONKS: Well, I am glad you have those YouTube Video's, as the reality TV
450 analog, so, people will, there's a record of it now.

451

452 FRITZ RAHR: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

453 00:34:07

454

455 NIKO TONKS: I want to talk to, I want to talk about - - community definitely - - but
456 before we do that, you mentioned that. You mentioned that, there is a great story about the
457 picture of your mother on the, on the beer.

458

459 FRITZ RAHR: Right.

460

461 NIKO TONKS: And I was wondering what that story is?

462

463 FRITZ RAHR: The story is my mother - - and this is really gonna sound weird, or
464 perverted, but my mother was smoking hot as a young lady. I am sure Freud would have
465 something really weird to say to me about that. But to be honest, she was, she was a great
466 looking gal, she was Miss Minnesota in nineteen fifty-two [1952]. She was second [2nd]
467 runner up at Miss USA Pageant in nineteen fifty-two [1952], up at Long Beach. She was a
468 Juilliard opera singer graduate, as well, and she was just quite a looker, you can see right
469 there, those are all my mother right there. ,So, - - I always wanted to do that, but if we would
470 not have had the roof collapse. We would have never have had that time, or opportunity to
471 change out. So, when it happened, I asked; my Mom, I said; Hey, you know, I just, there's this
472 picture of you, I really want to put on our Rahr Blond label are, are you Okay with that? And
473 she goes; Oh dear, I don't think I am ready for that kind of attention, at my age. Well, she
474 said, yes, and - - so, we, we put it on there, and the sales of Rahr have almost over taken our
475 Ugly Pug sales, to be our number one [1], to be our number one [1] brand. But what was
476 really neat about it was; we're a family company, just like my families malting business, and
477 we've always wanted to keep it that way. We wanted people to come in to the Brewery, and

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478 feel a part of something, and be a part of the family. Well, this is just one [1] more way of
479 kind of creating that culture that we want. When my parents came down last Christmas for
480 the holidays, and they came into the Brewery tour. We actually had a line of people waiting
481 to have my mom autograph bottles, and six [6] packs carriers, and T-shirts, and everything
482 that we had that was Rahr Blond with her, with her, with her picture on it. And, you know,
483 she was just tickled. That was just great; she really enjoyed that, that was a lot of fun. And
484 again that just brought more people into our lives, in to our family culture, and history, and I
485 think that's what beer should be all about - -

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487
488 which was really a neat feeling, and a neat activity that actually went on. So, that's the Rahr
489 Blond, it' my mom on the label, and it's always fun. , Because, I always ask people; hey, what
490 do you think about that gal on the label? And, of course, their comments always come back. -
491 - Like, oh man, she, she's really good looking. Yeah, you know, I'd like to go out with, you
492 know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah with her, and some of them get even cruder than that. But
493 then it's always kind of fun. Because, I jump right back in at them; hey, watch it, that's my
494 mom. And they don't believe me, and then I go through the story, and tell them about it. So,
495 you know, it's, it's fun, it's a fun story to talk to people, it's a fun way to introduce the
496 product, that people may not have known before, and it's almost an instantaneous , you
497 know, giggle or laugh, or, you know, it breaks the ice a little too.

498
499 NIKO TONKS: So, it seems like - - from the stories you have been telling me, and
500 that, and the stories I have heard from people that have lived in Fort Worth that, that the
501 Rahr Brewery is really an institution in town, and people love coming here, and, and I want to
502 talk about that in a second [2nd]. But I'm, I'm curious as to whether, whether was it always
503 like that from the beginning? Or, whether - - you know, trouble with businesses and
504 distribution aside, whether the, the beer was always an easy sell? Was it always easy to get
505 people to drink your beer, or was it tough up here?

506
507 FRITZ RAHR: You know, I am thinking in any business. It's, it's very difficult to, to
508 sell a new product in an industry like the beer industry. Especially, when I was getting
509 involved in two-thousand and four [2004]. There wasn't this big push like we have now. I

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510 think it's a lot easier now to get into the beer industry. Because, Texas, in general, is a little
511 bit more educated on Craft Beer, and - - when I was doing it in two-thousand and four [2004],
512 it just wasn't like that here in Fort Worth, it was a very difficult, even though we were part of
513 the Fort Worth crowd, and scene, and getting into bars and restaurants was a real struggle.
514 They would try it once, but yeah people would really like it, but they had their deals with
515 Budweiser, they had their deals with Coors, or they had their deals with Miller, and they were
516 getting this kind of support, this financial support, or they were pulling these kind of deals,
517 and it was a very, very competitive industry to be a part of. Our biggest struggle was, if we
518 could get the product into

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520

521 the hand of the people. People loved it, and people went out and bought it. So, basically it
522 was really a grass root, grass roots approach from us, right from the beginning. - - We opened
523 the Brewery immediately up for tours, and they became a real hit, a real success right off the
524 bat, as I hoped they would, just like at Saint Arnolds they do the tours. And - - that is where
525 we did a lot of our selling, you know, that was our least expensive form of advertising. We
526 didn't have money to go out and do bill board, or TV spots, or even print media. We just
527 didn't have the dollars to do it. Hell, we were operating from a month to month basis. We
528 didn't know if we were going to have money to - - you know, pay the electricity bill next
529 month, so, we did that, and one [1] of the things, and incorporating that type sales mentality
530 was, we wanted everybody that walked into the Brewery, to feel like they were a part of the
531 family. To feel like they had ownership in the Brewery here in Fort Worth. We wanted to
532 make the Brewery here-- part of the community. So, when anytime anybody walked in that
533 door, they felt like they were part owners in it, and I think that's very important to
534 establishing a brand and a culture, and it kind of happened to be perfectly honest here. -- We
535 have never had an issue here, knock on wood, with people vandalizing, or doing stupid things.
536 Everybody, as a matter of fact, I will get comments all the time where people will say; hey,
537 you know, this looks like something's going on over here doesn't look right, not with people,
538 but maybe with equipment or something. There has been numerous times when just the
539 average stranger here in the Brewery, made a comment to one [1] of us, or a brewer, or
540 somebody, that potential saved us, A: lot of money, or saved a batch of beer, or was maybe a
541 safety issue that they pointed out. - - So, that's really neat, you know, you have couple

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542 hundred [100] people in here, and we really don't have to worry about somebody stealing
543 something, or doing anything. They are actually all looking out - - for the well-being of the
544 Brewery. And I think that's a really neat feel to have, because you can't go out and just
545 demand, or create that with a purpose. It just kind of formed over time, and that continues
546 on, and that is probably one [1] of our biggest areas that we are concerned about. We want
547 to make sure that we continue with that feeling of ownership, and that feeling of inclusion at
548 the Brewery, with everybody that that walks in here, because Rahr and Son's, that's what it's
549 all about, its feeling like your apart of the family, and to be perfectly honest, it's not just a
550 feeling. - - people are a part of the family. So.

551

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554 **NIKO TONKS:** And you, you do tours twice a, a week, I think. Can you just talk a little
555 bit about what is going on at those tours?

556

557 **FRITZ RAHR:** Sure - - Our Saturday tours are just a basic tour and tasting - - It's from
558 one [1] to three [3], and people come in, and they get a pint glass - - they get three [3] free
559 samples. And they get - - a tour of the Brewery, and a little bit about my family's history, and
560 how we make beer, and, and everything, and - - we provide live music at that venue, as well,
561 and then, because we want to support other local businesses here in town, we invite various
562 food vendors, restaurateurs to come in, and provide food for the tour goers - - So, one [1]
563 person will have the first [1st] Saturday of the month, and another person will have the
564 second [2nd] Saturday, and so on. And we will do that for, you know, six [6] to eight [8]
565 months, and then we will change over, and do some new people and bring people in. That
566 was a lot of fun, that's a lot more people - - normally than the Wednesday tour, and - - we
567 open up the back parking lot, it becomes a big beer garden, and it'd just s lot of fun. I mean,
568 we get - - a good group of people in here, and I'd say fifty percent [50%] are return people.
569 But I'd say the rest of them are brand new people every single week. And then our
570 Wednesday tours are a little bit more laid back, not as many people, and we don't have any
571 live music, at that time, unless some of us pick up our guitars, and we just have kind of a sit in.
572 But what we do is, we actually bring in other local businesses to sell, and promote their wares.
573 For example; this past Wednesday, we had Eagle Mountain Cheese people, and new local

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574 cheese manufacturer. We had a new -- bakery that was in here that makes -- bisques and
575 cupcakes, and cornbread, and that kind of stuff with our beer in it. And we also have a local
576 chiropractic firm that comes in, and does free evaluations for people. But they are all local
577 businesses, especially the local in this area of Fort Worth, where we are, and we want to give
578 back and support to the community in, in that way, so, we can promote another business to
579 be successful. Just because we had so much support especially, during the time when the roof
580 was down, that -- we felt that it was, it was our duty to, you know, to, to give back same way
581 that that we were received.

582

583 **NIKO TONKS:** And so, what is it-- This, this might be a tough question -- and I ask, I
584 ask this all the time. What do you think, what -- what does it mean to be local, and what's,
585 **00:43:41**

586

587 what's so important about, about keeping it, keeping it local and paying attention to local
588 business?

589

590 **FRITZ RAHR:** Well, I think you can take local on a couple of different levels -- maybe
591 three [3] different levels. -- Local for us: One [1]:

592 1. Would be this general Fort Worth South area where we're located, south side of
593 downtown this community, in general, the local businesses that are here. Now when
594 we opened up this business seven [7] years ago, this was basically a crack infested,
595 Cocaine dealing, Prostitute infested area, and -- over the years the people have been
596 treated, you know, the local community have been trying to clean it up. I like to think
597 that maybe having the Brewery here, and the people we get in for the tours, has
598 helped promote businesses coming here; because when people leave here, they are
599 going and having dinner, or lunch at the local restaurants around here. -- and now it's
600 really refreshing, it's a real urban village. -- It's a great place to come hang out -- do
601 we have some issues? Yeah, we have some issues in the neighborhood, but they are
602 fewer and farther in between, and hopefully they will be gone in a matter of time, as
603 this community keeps growing and more businesses come into play.

604 The second [2nd] local I would, I think it is:

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605 2. Is the Fort Worth Brewery, just Fort Worth in general, and Fort Worth is a very
606 interesting community in itself. -- They are very loyal to themselves, and I think they
607 really like having a business that's here, that creates a product that they like, and they
608 know that it's got a Fort Worth brand behind it, and then you have got the local aspect
609 of being Texas, and being a Texas brewer.

610 3. And that's where, as Texas Brewery's, we all come together and support one [1]
611 another.-- To promote the craft of beer industry, because the more people we can get
612 turned off. By let's say, one [1] of the major commercial brands to drinking, you know,
613 **00:45:44**

614
615 a Texas Craft Beer. That's, that's better for all of us. That means that all of our
616 sales are probably going to increase, because we are turning people on to a whole new
617 style of beer. Keeping it local, keeping it Texas, supporting Texas -- That's why we are a
618 part of the "Go Texan program", and -- everything Texas, and that's kind of our goal, so.
619 Local can be looked at in a couple different ways. I think three [3] ways you can look at
620 local.

621
622 **NIKO TONKS:** And one [1] of the other things we, we've sort of skirted around a
623 couple times, is the idea of -- building culture, and Beer Culture, and this is kind of a nebulous
624 question. But I was wondering if you, had any thoughts about what, what do you, what do
625 you think, constitutes Beer Culture, what is that, what, what does that mean to you?

626
627 **FRITZ RAHR:** Wow -- That's kind of a big question -- Beer Culture -- I think that a -
628 - that's a definition that is going to change with every single person that you ask; because
629 beer is, beer means something different to everybody. You could probably come in here on a
630 tour, and ask a hundred [100] people what -- their idea of the Beer Culture is, and you would
631 probably get a hundred [100] different unique answers. -- For us -- I think the Beer Culture is,
632 is creating a product that brings together people that enjoy spending time together, and
633 enjoying a similar product -- and celebrating over it. It doesn't hurt to have a hundred and
634 sixty-five [165] years of history, kind of behind the product, as well, -- everybody loves to
635 come in and sit down, and, and talk to me about -- not just the breweries history, but what
636 was my great grandfather like? I mean, I, I don't know, but I have got the stories, and

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637 everybody loves to hear a good beer story. For example: our Storm Cloud IPA, on the label, it
638 has a picture - - a depiction of a sailing ship. Well, that's the ship that my great, great
639 grandparents came over from Germany on, and it was named, Sternvoka [sp], and I think - -
640 loosely translated, it means storm cloud - - The Ugly Pug label, it's got my mother in laws ugly
641 - - pug dog, Oscar on the label, who just passed away a few months ago. So, people love to
642 hear that story, and how we came up, to hear how we came up with that label. So, you know,
643 through our labels and though our beer, we create a culture in Brewery that people want to
644 know about. They want to get involved, and I think - - as we talked about before. How we
645 wanted people to come in to the

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647

648 Brewery, and feel like they are a part of that family, and to become a part of that family that's
649 our Beer Culture, that's what we want to promote here. You will get a different answer
650 at probably every Brewery that you go to. But, in general, a feeling of inclusion, a feeling of
651 being a part of what's going on at the Brewery, is really what I think is our Beer Culture. And
652 we want to promote and propagate that, as much as possible.

653

654 NIKO TONKS: So, - - we've got, we've got your, your mom on the, on the Rahr Blond.
655 We've got the Storm Cloud, on the Storm Cloud ship on the IPA, and we have got the Ugly Pug
656 on the Pug bottle are there any other stories about, about beers? - - and - -.

657

658 FRITZ RAHR: Yeah, there's the October Fest, which is coming out with its, with its
659 new label - - the gentleman on that tapping the keg, is a picture of my father back from his
660 wedding day, when he was with his bachelors - - and grooms men, and we did a rendering of,
661 of him, and in, incorporated into him tapping the first [1st] keg for October Fest, so, that's
662 another one [1] that's got a really neat story behind of it. - - The - - Rahr's Barrel Aged Winter
663 Warmer label, which I am showing to you right now, it's actually a Christmas card that went
664 out, with the rendering of "The Two [2]"[?], the book which is a, a book my grandfather had
665 commissioned to celebrate the first [1st] hundred [100] years of Rahr Malting Company, and
666 this Christmas card was an illustration by Rockwell Kent, who did a lot of the illustration, in
667 the book, and that card, went out to customers, and we, we saw the card, and loved it, and
668 kind of created it into our own - - our own deal. And out of the same book, we got the

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669 Summer Time Wheat label, that's a rendering of Rockwell Kent that we've colorized, and
670 changed up a little bit, and the Storm Cloud actually came out of that same book, as well. So,
671 there are a lot of different things that we did to try to incorporate Rahr history into our
672 brands. We have a new beer coming out called, Angry Goat, and that will be in a twenty-two
673 [22] ounce bomber format in October, and it has that picture on the label. It's pretty cool; I
674 don't know, I probably have a picture around here somewhere of it. So, we, we do a, lot of
675 that, we try to incorporate that, as much as possible. The only one [1] we haven't, really done
676 that, is with the Texas Red, and that is kind of a stand along just, kind of a just Texas feel label.
677 But everything else, we try to incorporate some sort of fun aspect. We are coming out with a
678 Barley Wine next year, and it

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680
681 actually has a picture of our, our, rendering of our cabin, up in northern Wisconsin on it. The
682 reason why we did that; is because you know, a lot of our L.A. wines like to have the word,
683 foot, in to it. And the name of the cabin is called, Tenderfoot. So, we are coming out with a
684 barley wine called, Tenderfoot, and that will have a rendering of the cabin that's been in our
685 family, since the great eighteen-hundreds [1800's]. My great grandfather, Ryan Heart, went
686 up there and traded with the Indians, to get the land, and get supplies, and all that stuff. So,
687 there's another great story that, you know, if I sat down with some people, we could probably
688 talk about it for twenty[20] minutes, and they would ask questions, and it will bring them
689 into our family, and have them understand kind of where we come from. So, we try to do
690 that as much as possible, and that makes it fun, that makes it interesting. For everybody, and
691 it's fun for me, because I get a chance to promote my family, in a way that has a story behind
692 it, which, which I think is kind of cool.

693

694 NIKO TONKS: Yeah, Ab -- absolutely -- and I was wondering, if you could -- and I am
695 almost curious about this too. About, if you could talk about, if you have sort of a -- a
696 philosophy about beer making itself, and what, what the beer should taste like, and, and how
697 a recipe gets developed if you, if you don't mind, if there are no secrets to be divulged?

698

699 FRITZ RAHR: No, -- I think it's like everybody else -- everyone asks me, why do you
700 brew the beers that you brew, and then my answer is, well, we brew the beers that we like to

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701 drink - - which we, we hope are, is pretty normal for the Craft Brewing industry, and - - then
702 they ask how do come up with the recipes, and I go well, you know, it's kind of a crap shoot.
703 We kind of know what the style should be, and we kind of know how the malt will perform,
704 we hopefully know how the hops will react, and the big kicker is, the yeast, and hopefully we
705 do it all right. So, we have the basics of fundamentals of knowing what each individual
706 ingredient, and, and, and part of the beer should be, and how we get to that process, and we
707 go through that process, and hopefully the end product is something close to what we want to
708 have. - - And we have been very fortunate - - we have kind of done what we have gone out,
709 and intended to do so.

710

711 00:53:04

712

713 NIKO TONKS: Great, and so, my, my last set of questions is - - about, about Craft
714 Brewing in Texas, in general, and, and about, about the industry. - - I am wondering what,
715 what's your sense of, of Craft Brewers in Texas, and, and, and where do you hope the industry
716 is going?

717

718 FRITZ RAHR: Well. When I started in two thousand and four [2004], there was six
719 [6], or seven [7] of us total, from a packaging Brewery - - and there was handful of Brew Pubs.
720 When we had our first [1st] - - Texas gild - - or, whatever you want to call it, meeting - - There
721 was about nine [9] of us at the meeting - - we went down just for a "meet n greet", a monthly
722 deal in Austin. - - Where they invited everybody in with the Texas brewers gild, and I think we
723 had over fifty [50] people at this thing, so in a matter of seven [7] years, we have gone from
724 nine [9], to well over fifty [50], and there were still a lot of people that weren't there. - - The
725 Craft Brewing industry in Texas has exploded. I think it is incredibly, healthy for the industry,
726 and for our segment - - I think, if it were, we've been very fortunate, the people who are
727 opening up breweries are maybe past brewers from other breweries - - they all have the
728 competency level to make beer, it seems - - and hopefully, everybody will be producing a
729 quality that promotes - - that promotes the industry, as a, as a whole, you know. At first [1st],
730 I was thinking there is going to be all these new twenty [20], thirty [30] breweries opening up,
731 and, you know, maybe two [2] or three [3] will, will survive over, over, the over the next
732 couple of years to five [5] years. I don't think that anymore, I think a large percentage of

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733 these breweries are going to survive, just because, we now have a market to support it; - -
734 which is terribly exciting - - what a great feel, you know, pretty soon maybe, they, they won't
735 be talking about Portland, they won't be talking about Denver, they will be talking about
736 Texas, and all the wonderful breweries that are in Texas now. We have got a lot of great
737 talent here, and a lot of great young breweries that are opening up, brewing a tremendous
738 variety, and - - wide range of beers, that are all very, very good, so, I think it's a great thing, I
739 think it's a healthy thing, and I think it's incredibly exciting period, to be in Texas brewing
740 beer.

741

742 00:55:32

743

744 NIKO TONKS: So, - - from your experience - - there's, there's a pretty strong degree
745 of, of solidarity, maybe across brewers in this state. Do you have a lot of contact with other
746 Craft Brewers?

747

748 FRITZ RAHR: Absolutely - -you know, for me, I, - - whenever I have got a problem, or
749 question, my first [1st] phone call is to Broche, at Saint Arnolds. You know, he was the, he was
750 the pioneer in Texas, he was the one [1] leading the way, he's got probably the most
751 experience. - - We share information all the time, we get together as a group to discuss
752 policies, and issues that are going on from a legislative stand point, or a licensing stand point.
753 We get together and talk about different styles of beer, or some; you know, how do we do
754 this, how did you do it, did you have any problems? There is a lot of sharing of information,
755 and everybody is, seems to be very willing to do that, and to lend a hand. We have washed
756 kegs for new breweries, who didn't have the ability to do it, and - -you know, we get a lot of
757 support, and it's not just from Texas Breweries. The Brewery in general, in the United States,
758 the Craft Brewery industry is incredibly helpful. We send samples of our beers up to Summit
759 Brewery, in Saint Paul, where they have a really nice lab there, where they can really analyze
760 everything for us, and they will send us back; alcohol, IBU content, and, and, I mean,
761 everything.—and they just do it, out of the great, the goodness of their heart.—Just because
762 they want to promote beer, and they want to give back, because I can guarantee you,
763 somebody did it for them when they were starting up. So, there's a lot of that in, in the
764 industry - - it happens everywhere, it's not just in Texas, it's, all across the United States.

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765 There is that type of support, that type of brotherhood, that type of community, within the
766 industry, and I think that very refreshing, because I can guarantee you, you don't get that kind
767 of feel, when you get up to the mega brewers; the Budweiser's, the Coors, the Millers. There
768 isn't that kind of interaction, there isn't that type of, of industry support there, like you do at
769 our level. But maybe it's because we are all struggling, and trying to make it, you know,
770 maybe we are all in to it for the same thing, to create the best possible beer that, that, that
771 you can. So, - -

772

773 **00:57:52**

774

775 **NIKO TONKS:** **Alright. Well - - that's, that's the only, that's all the stuff I can think of**
776 **to talk about - - I wanted to make sure, before we stopped, that there isn't anything that you**
777 **are itching to talk about, that we haven't talked about yet./**

778

779 **FRITZ RAHR:** **- - Just that we are going to continue to grow last year, we did - -**
780 **forty-five hundred [4,500] barrels of beer. This year we will do right around thirteen-**
781 **thousand [13,000], and next year - - we are looking at being, hopefully somewhere between**
782 **twenty [20,000] and thirty thousand [30,000] barrels of beer. So, - -**

783

784 **NIKO TONKS:** **And that's, that's enormous growth, and you, you, and what do you?**
785 **We talked a little bit about this already; but what do you attribute that huge step up to?**

786

787 **FRITZ RAHR:** **Well, I think in, in the, in the breweries life cycle, you get to a point to**
788 **where, you know, you're struggling just to make bills, - - and just to make payments, and then**
789 **just like any business, the volume business. Once you get to a critical mass point, everything**
790 **beyond that is. Wow, we have got some money. I can buy that, that dissolve the oxygen [?]**
791 **meter. I can buy an incubator, I can buy another fermentation tank, and not have to**
792 **mortgage my three [3], you know, my, my two [2] children, and my wife, and my dog, and you**
793 **know, have the blood pressure raised to three hundred [300] points. You know, so, there is a**
794 **point in time where that happens, and it's, it's, it's nice. You still have to manage it, and you**
795 **still have to watch, watch out, from a business stand point, but you get to a certain point, and**
796 **things start falling in line. You have got a little extra cash to go do something, and to do fun**

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797 things. Which creates the, more excitement in the brand, and it keeps going that way, you
798 know, we are expanding into the new markets. - - We have got people calling us, from all over
799 the country, wanting our beer, and you know, if I could brew a hundred-thousand [100,000]
800 barrels of beer, I might be able to sell all of it, but I would have to have operations in
801 numerous states, and every single part of Texas, and we just don't have that infrastructure,
802 yet to do that, and we don't have the experience - - to go there yet. So, like with everybody
803 else in the beer industry, it may seem like a pretty aggressive growth rate, but most of the
804 beer that we sell is local, here

805 **01:00:05**

806

807 in the Fort Worth area, and so, - - that's where the majority of where our growth is, and
808 everything else is just kind of a slow methodical, conservative growth from here, from moving
809 outside, you, of your comfort zone, so, to speak. And, there has been a lot of great breweries,
810 and made a lot of mistakes, and - - they are no longer around, because of that. So, I think the
811 trick is, and I think most everybody would agree in the industry, that a slow methodical
812 growth, a conservative growth is, is what's needed.

813

814 **NIKO TONKS:** And what are your, so what are your, your goals for, for growth? I
815 know a lot of people will; will sort of set an arbitrary cape - - but do you see this - - how, how,
816 how, how big do you want to get?

817

818 **FRITZ RAHR:** We will get as big as we get. You know, I would never; I would never
819 stunt the growth. If we grow to be as, as big as Sierra Nevada, or as big as whoever, we will,
820 will continue to do that, as long as we can keep that family culture of inclusion, and - - what
821 we have here. You know, our goals are in five [5] years, to have a, a brand new Brewery built,
822 with state of the art equipment, and I think we are on that, we are on that time line to get
823 that done.

824

825 **NIKO TONKS:** Great best of luck. Is there anything else that you think we missed?

826

827 **FRITZ RAHR:** No, no, I think that's it.

828

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829 **NIKO TONKS:** **Alright well thanks very much.**

830

831 **01:01:34** **End of Audio Recording**