

## El Segundo Brewing Co. releases Day One beer, bottled and trucked out the same day

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At El Segundo Brewing Co. on Wednesday, it was a calm before the storm. A lone brewer leisurely walked through the brewhouse while a handful of other employees met to go over the final logistics for the release of Grand Hill IPA on Friday. The fast-growing, 4-year-old brewery in the shadow of Los Angeles International Airport has earned a reputation with some of the best West Coast-style IPAs in the region, and Grand Hill will be getting the brewery's Day One treatment on Friday.

The Day One program means that the new batch of beer will be bottled and trucked to accounts across the Southland for sale on the same day.

Also available in bottles and kegs at the taproom on Friday, Day One ensures hopheads can experience the freshest possible beer.

Nearly every brewery employee is involved with the release, and the logistics of coordinating a dozen delivery trucks visiting bottle shops from Ventura to San Diego is a challenge, but El Segundo's sales director and "rainmaker" Thomas Kelley knows it's a worthwhile endeavor.

"It's the thought that we can get the absolutely very best quality product into the end consumer's glass," he says.

More stainless steel tanks are due at the brewery in the coming weeks, and owner and brewmaster Rob Croxall says, "we're pretty much maxed out here" after those additions. "Then it will be time to decide what we want to be when we grow up," he adds, alluding to the tough choices of taking on massive capital costs for expansion and the quickly rising rents in his hometown of El Segundo.

"I'm not hip on paying \$3 per square foot for warehouse space, but I'm less hip on [becoming] 'El Segundo Brewing of Gardena.'"

The brewery space on Main Street also recently expanded its tasting room, moving from the often cramped and stuffy bar, sometimes wall-to-wall with the brand's local fans, to a more spacious area carved out of the building next to the brewhouse. The taproom is a favorite hangout spot for locals, and one of the brewery's biggest revenue sources. Croxall says his ideal expansion plan would move the production brewery out of the Main Street building to make room for a much larger taproom and more one-off and experimental brews.

While ESBC is a local favorite among L.A.'s craft beer lovers, the brand's signature beers, such as Citra Pale Ale, Mayberry IPA and Hammerland Double IPA, have also earned the brewery national acclaim. Hammerland won Best in Show at the prestigious Bistro Double IPA Festival during San Francisco Beer Week last year, and user-submitted reviews on beer websites like Untappd and Beeradvocate show that bottles are making their way across the country in packages and trades between beer lovers. Kelley wants to capitalize on the national buzz by organizing occasional bottle releases in far-flung territories.

“I’m looking at doing boutique IPA on a national level,” Kelley says. “Go in [to a select market] and do three or five events in a week, and have bottles at 10 or 15 shops. Do the promotion, and see what happens. Tease the market. I think it’ll be fun and I think it will build our national identity.”

One local fan of the brewery, former WWE wrestler “Stone Cold” Steve Austin is also helping spread the word about El Segundo Brewing. He fell in love with the brewery’s flagship Mayberry IPA and became a regular at the tasting room before inviting Croxall onto a recent episode of his podcast. The interview covers Croxall’s start as a homebrewer looking for a way out of a job in finance, his experience at brew school at UC Davis, and what makes ESBC’s beers unique. Listen to the show here.

While Croxall and Kelley could talk details, they did say they are working with Austin on some special project, and details for the collaboration should be available soon.

Until then, get ready for Day One: Grand Hill, which will be released on Friday at the taproom and bottle shops across Los Angeles.

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