

3 Keep good company Stoudt was not a homebrewer, and outside of her background in chemistry and microbiology and “a short stint at Siebel,” she “knew nothing” about making beer. Without experience of her own, she found brewing mentors in Karl Strauss and Greg Noonan. “I surrounded myself with a lot of expert people I could rely on,” she says. Strauss taught her how to brew lagers, and Noonan helped her approach beer-making like cooking. “I really was able to get some brilliant advice.”

4 Seek out new markets The inspiration for Stoudt’s Brewing came from the flavorful, fresh lagers of Germany, so unlike most breweries, Stoudt’s launched with a Helles, not an ale. A Viennese Lager and a Dark Lager quickly followed. “I thought it would be a natural thing,” she recalls. “I thought, this would be great for all the Germans remembering the lagers that they have at home.” She soon found that wasn’t the case. The older Germans who frequented the beer garden largely remained brand-loyal to “their Spaten, their Warsteiner, their Paulaner,” but her younger customers, accustomed to lackluster yellow beers, were floored.

5 Wal-Mart it ain’t The Stoudt family’s Adamstown, Pa., compound

includes Ed’s restaurant, an antique market and a bakery. A cheesery will soon follow. Carol’s brewery fits this portfolio because all the family enterprises share the same ethos—they all have a strong commitment to independence, craftsmanship and a sense of local identity. “We as a family have always liked small, family-owned businesses making high-quality products,” Stoudt says. “Kind of anti-Wal-Mart and McDonald’s, against having the same thing all over the world.” And because products are best when they demonstrate character tied to regional identity, Stoudt strongly believes that brewers must control their size. She says, “There’s a lot of room for quality brewpubs, and microbreweries, but there isn’t a lot of room for everybody to be in 50 states.”

6 Don’t fight a rolling stone Ironically enough, Stoudt’s locally focused DIY ethos fed her brewery’s marked geographical expansion. Judy Wicks, owner of Philadelphia’s White Dog Café, thought that Stoudt’s brewing philosophy was a perfect fit for the White Dog’s local, sustainable menu and convinced Stoudt to load some kegs in the back of her station wagon and drive them to Philadelphia every other week. Stoudt hooked on with a distribu-

tor, and because Philly was “very much an ale market,” she started brewing an ESB and a Pale. Both beers exploded in popularity—so much so that Stoudt had to contract out bottling production, and eventually overhaul her brewhouse, to keep pace with demand.

7 Take your time, make it right

It took Stoudt two and a half years to perfect her Pilsner. “That was the most difficult beer to make consistently and do it well—to get that long, dry finish,” she recalls. She demands that all her beers be flavorful and “special for the style,” but is effusive about how special a well-made Pilsner is. When Stoudt is judging a competition and comes upon a great Pilsner, “I automatically rise them to the top. A lot of people can make decent Porters and Stouts and ales, but to make that very delicate beer with that dryness, and that nice finish, and to keep it stable with that delicate carbonation, that’s the merit of a good brewer.”

8 Enjoy the contradictions

Carol Stoudt readily admits to running a traditional, style-oriented brewery. She wants to introduce light beer drinkers to quality handcrafted beer, rather than “appeal to beer geeks or the real beer connoisseurs.” She also brews

one of the country’s most sought-after Indian Double Bocks, Smooth Hoperator. The specialty beer was a compromise between her husband, who wanted to brew a Bock, and her brewers, who shied away from cloying sweetness and wanted to load the beer up on hops. Smooth Hoperator layers aggressive American hops on top of a traditional Double Bock malt bill, bringing pine and citrus notes into sharp contrast with sweet, biscuity flavors.

9 Evolve

The brewhouse at Stoudt’s is geared toward lagering bigger batches of beer, but four years ago, the brewery jumped into the big-beer market. They released a Belgian Triple, blew their IPA into a wickedly popular Double and dialed their Oatmeal Stout up to 9 percent ABV. Stoudt says she doesn’t necessarily enjoy brewing huge beers on her system, but says that extreme brews are the cost of entry into some markets. “Six years ago, I would’ve said, ‘We’re never going to do imperial this, double that.’ And an Imperial Pilsner? No way!” She laughs. “And maybe I have a young group in my brewery that’s kind of encouraging me.”

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