

Black Star Co-op Pub & Brewery

By Elizabeth Decker, Lifestyle Editor

The Black Star Co-op is brewing up business opportunities as it's North Lamar location has quickly become one of Austin's coolest spots to hang out. What is the idea behind the Co-op? The mission statement of the Black Star Co-op is to foster an environment in which member-owners, as well as the general public, may realize the principles of co-operative ownership, worker self-management, education and community action through the responsible enjoyment of great beer and food.

Jeff Young is the brew master who's brought to life his vision of opening up a different kind of brewery. Within a week of moving to Austin in 2006, he got an email about someone wanting to open a pub, which led to an initial get-together of 17 people. In December, 2010 the sustainable, 'LEED Certified' Black Star Co-op doors officially opened to the public and created an open business opportunity for everyone to become part of a unique cooperative model where employees are treated fairly. Jeff explains, "Our employees earn \$12 an hour the first three months then \$13.50 and 80 percent insurance. After a year they get \$16 and voting power and then they become a manager. No hierarchy. Ideally, everyone here is a manager so you're making \$20 an hour even if you're busing tables." One of the challenges expressed by Jeff is to educate the community about who we are, why we are different. That conversation no doubt becomes engaging when the patron realizes tips are not accepted. Jeff states, "It's interesting how different people come in and what they get out of it. Wow, this food is really good. This beer is great! Gee, I've got to leave a great tip. What, they don't accept



Black Star is located at 7020 Easy Wind Drive, Austin, TX 78752. (512) 452-2337

tips? Then we turn you onto the business model where everyone and anyone can become a shareholder/member. Getting people to feel comfortable, getting people to talk with each other, that's what it's about".

The other cool aspect of the Black Star is that it's not trying to be anything else in Austin other than who they are right now. Aesthetically, it's like a blank canvas. Don't expect a theme like an English Pub or Tex-Mex. "We wanted it to be raw and defined by the people rather than creating a scene. If you really want to be relevant to a time and space you can't mimic another time and space. In general, let's try and figure out what our members want". The food is all locally sourced produce and protein; seasonal so if it's not growing here, now, it won't be on the menu. What can you expect? Fresh fish, burgers ground in

house, authentic red chili, salads, always fresh and always a great value! You can also look forward to approximately eight Black Star beers brewed on site complimented by another host of on-tap beers with a majority of them local. They also serve an assortment of special bottled domestic and international beers and some great wines.

It's an easy destination from most hotels and if you didn't know, Austin has a light-rail train. The Redline is an efficient commute from the Hilton hotel or Austin Convention Center to the Crestview Station and if you present your train ticket, you get a discount on your beer!

So come on in and find a spot to keep cool while enjoying some great beer, tasty food, and warm and genuine company. It's going to be HOT for the next few months and who knows, you might just leave owning a piece of the action! 