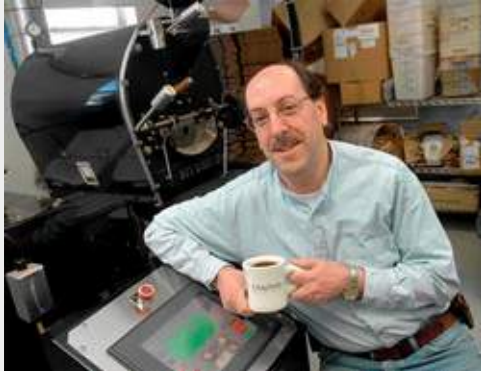


# Nashua Telegraph

Roaster waking up to specialty coffees

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Staff photo by Don Himsel

King David Coffee Roasters of Hudson was born when Samuel Brest saw a need out there for kosher coffee for Jews, like he and his family, who keep kosher homes and businesses.

HUDSON – Samuel Brest is a one-man specialty coffee roaster who, like the legendary monarch for whom his company is named, is bravely going up against a lot of giants in the competitive world of coffee roasting.

Like so many small businesses, the idea for the kosher King David Coffee Roasters was a matter of serendipity. Brest had owned and ran Spinelli's Cafe – a sub shop – in south Nashua for about nine years when he took a trip to Portland, Maine, and saw a

coffee roaster in a cafe. About that time – seven years ago – he moved Spinelli's Somerset Plaza on Amherst Street (now Cedar's Cafe) and put a small coffee roaster in the shop.

"That became my exit plan from the retail food business," said Brest. "By that point I'd had enough of it."

Three years later, after learning the ins and outs of roasting, Brest rented space in a 100-year-old mill building on Bridge Street – the outskirts of town – and established King David Coffee Roasters, but he didn't give up his day job right away. "I'd go to Spinelli's in the morning, set up for the day, then come here to work on the roasting business, then back to the sub shop for the lunch rush."

But early year Brest decided to take a gamble, sell the sub shop and roast coffee full time. It was a scary prospect going from a sure-thing business to a new venture, but Brest – like David slaying Goliath – was willing to trust in his proverbial slingshot – in this case a 12-kilo roaster – and make a niche for himself in the competitive, giant world of specialty coffee.

"I brought in my little roaster and just set it up," he said.

Brest knew there was a need out there for kosher coffee for Jews, like he and his family, who keep kosher homes and businesses. He hired a local artist to design the company's logo – a jaunty little coffee bean, carrying a scepter and wearing a golden crown

"I have yet to come across a specialty roaster who is kosher and kosher for Passover," he said. Hence the name King David, who, according to the Bible, was known as an adept warrior and writer of Psalms who ruled Israel for 40 years – from about 1005 to 965 B.C. after his child celebrity as a giant slayer.

But Brest is not just targeting the Jewish consumer. "If you're Jewish you'd probably know what the name referred to. But if you're not, it just seems like another name."

His coffee, about 15 different varieties made from the top 6 percent – top of the crop – coffee beans in the world (hence the label – specialty) under his label and others' labels, is being sold in grocery stores locally and throughout the country.

When the beans arrive at King David's they're in 70 kilo burlap bags filled with hard, dry green coffee "peas." He then roasts each type of bean individually – using either a light, medium or dark roast, depending on what flavor he's trying to bring out. Because he micro roasts, he can produce as little as four ounces to as much as 30 pounds at a time. Once packaged into plastic bags with one-way air valves, the King David label is affixed as is the names of the coffees which sound like an itinerary for an exotic trip around the world: Guatemala Oriflama, Costa Rica Tarrazu, Tanzania Zanzibar Peaberry and Hawaiian Kona Extra Fancy, to name a few.

In addition to wholesaling his product, Brest also has targeted fundraising as a market for his specialty, micro-roasted coffee.

A variety of schools in the Nashua area have sold bags of King David Coffee with personalized labels on them, including one for Hudson's Hills Garrison Elementary School featuring its mascot gorilla and Broad Street Elementary School's bulldog. King David is able to sell it to the school at a price that allows for a \$2 profit on every bag sold.

Nashua High School South's art department had a contest to design labels for their school's fundraising coffee.

On a recent day, Brest poured himself a cup of Costa Rica Tarrazu and

one for a guest. There isn't a container of cream or packet of sugar in sight. Brest said even though he puts a little milk in his cup at home, "coffee here is always taken black so I can truly taste it." It's true that the black brew has a distinct freshness and richness to this freshly roasted beverage that would seem to put half and half to shame.

The deep, roasted taste stays with you, long after you leave the old mill building that houses King David in the same way the scent of roasted coffee clings to your skin and clothes.