

From: 2009Inc5000Info
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2009 2:25 PM
To: Kate Harris
Subject: Inc. 500|5000 newsletter

Inc. 500 | 5000 Newsletter

Produced by IncBizNet, online home of successful private companies and the Inc 500 | 5000



Volume 1

COMPANY SPOTLIGHT: STONE BREWING

No Advertising. No Discounts. Just Amazing Beer.

It's safe to say that few entrepreneurs pitch their product like this: "You probably won't like it. It is quite doubtful that you have the taste or sophistication to be able to appreciate an ale of this quality and depth. We would suggest that you stick to safer and more familiar territory..."



But those words appear on every bottle of Stone Brewing Co.'s Arrogant Bastard Ale. "Most companies approach their business by asking 'What do customers want want?', and then trying to do that," says Stone Brewing CEO Greg Koch. "We don't. We ask 'What do we think qualifies as amazing?' Then it all boils down to our ability to execute—and to being right."

Koch and crew do seem to be getting it right. Since it was launched in 1996, Stone Brewing's revenue has increased an average of 47% a year, hitting \$26.1 million in 2007—enough growth to land the Escondido, California company at number 2,635 on last year's Inc. 500|5000 list of the fastest growing companies in the U.S.

Koch and co-founder/brewmaster Steve Wagner met in Los Angeles in 1989. Koch had opened a rehearsal space for musicians and Wagner's band was one of his first customers. They reconnected a few years later at a UC Davis class called "Sensory Evaluation of Beer," and soon decided that their mutual passion for beer should be the basis of a business venture.

From the start, their iconoclastic marketing practices went well beyond the labels of Arrogant Bastard Ale. Koch and Wagner are proud that they've never advertised or discounted their beer. Instead, Stone Brewery salespeople seek out retailers whose customers are willing to pay for quality. Not surprisingly, Koch doesn't believe the maxim variously attributed to H. L. Mencken and P.T. Barnum: "No one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people"

"I'm not buying it," Koch says. "We do not make our beer for the willingly uneducated customer." He's looking forward to making the Inc. 500|5000 again this year. Stone cold evidence that his is a business philosophy that works.

IncBizNet Blog Highlights

RYAN BUCHANAN | CEO | [eROI](#)

"I know I'm supposed to be writing about how the economy is going to tank and that you should buy a year's worth of rations to store in your basement. Instead, I'm going to tell you about having the audacity to grow in uncertain times..."

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Has your company grown since 2005? If so, it may be one of the fastest-growing companies in America. One of the most prestigious entrepreneurial awards in journalism, the Inc. 500|5000 list ranks the top 5,000 fastest-growing companies based on revenue growth over a three-year period, from 2005 to 2008.

If you apply for the award before 11:59 pm, E.S.T., on March 22, 2009, you will be entered into the Inc. Insider Daily Double drawing for two complimentary registrations for Inc.'s 500|5000 elite [Conference and Awards Ceremony](#), held in Washington D.C. from September 23rd - 25th, 2009. Questions?

Send an e-mail to feedback5000@inc.com, or call 800-248-0308.

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This Guy...



**Ray Velez, CFO
BACKYARD X-SCAPES**

...applied early for the Inc. 500|5000 and **WON FREE** airfare, hotel accommodations, and admission for the **2009 Inc. 500 | 5000 Conference**.

Backyard X-Scapes was founded in 2002. The company sells decorations for backyards, often with a Polynesian theme: artificial rocks, fountains, statues, tiki torches.

JOHN TANTILLO | President | [Marketing Department of America](#)

"The biggest threat to your brand is the belief that it is indispensable and will 'be around forever.'"

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BARBARA WELTMAN | Owner | [Big Ideas for Small Business](#)

"The stimulus package does not appear to create any significant direct incentives for starting businesses and hiring employees, two key ways to get the economy back on track."

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Posted by IncBizNet Members

Thursday, March 26
9:00 am - 05:00 pm
[EntConnect - Denver](#)
Lakewood, CO
Meet people who run their own companies.

Tuesday, April 21
9:00 am - 05:00 pm
[Specialty Retail Entrepreneur Exposition and Conference](#)
Las Vegas, NV

Thursday, April 23 - Saturday, April 25
[Women Presidents' Organization Annual Conference](#)
Loews Coronado Bay Resort
Coronado, California
For more information e-mail
info@womenpresidentsorg.com

Every Thursday
9:15 am
[The New York Open Coffee Club Meetup](#)
Taralucci E Vino
15 E. 18th St.
New York, NY
A regular weekly meeting for entrepreneurs and investors. Inspired by the London OpenCoffee Club.

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