

# BOBBY MASON

## Innovation in Beer! Michigan Brewing Company puts Webberville on the map as the fifth largest brewer in the state

By Douglas Elbinger



The bottling line is a mesmerizing array of hi tech wizardry.

Photo courtesy of MBC

Next time you're on your way to Detroit or points east on I-96, do yourself a favor. Get off at the Webberville exit (exit 122, the one just after Williamston, headed east) and look behind the Mobil station. Surprise!! Its' a brewery!! Family friendly. Ya. Bring the kids. Michigan Brewing Company is not just about beer, although I admit from extensive product testing, that is its strong point. Using a combination of innovative marketing, cutting edge packaging, traditional brewing craftsmanship, and teamwork, Bobby Mason, of Webberville is taking advantage of the growing mar-

ket for 'craft' beer. Bobby points out that "national market research indicates that the craft beer and soda 'phenomenon' is growing rapidly and becoming a significant percentage of beverage sales nationwide." Did Bobby discover the market or did the market discover Bobby? Continuing a thirty year family tradition in the food service business, Bobby feels that being in the right place at the right time with the right stuff is what it's all about. This is all happening just a few exits down the road.

If you salivate at the mention of amber, lager, pilsner, stout, ale, or porter, then you'll enjoy studying the beverage list. Notice that the Michigan theme is pervasive. Names like Mackinac Pale Ale and Petoskey Pilsner are sure to invoke a consumer's passion. If you're not into beer, then this is a good place to start. It's OK to ask for samples and discuss the finer points of the brew. Help yourself to peanuts, throw some darts, meet some friends. If you're still not into beer, try Bobby's special recipe Big Wheel Orange Creme Soda or Miners Brew Root Beer. If you stopped drinking root beer because you think it's just for kids, or it doesn't hold your interest, then try this stuff. When was the last time you tasted



Bobby Mason looks over plans for his new brewing and restaurant facility.

photo by Doug Elbinger

home made root beer? Bring home a six pack and see how long it lasts. An integral part of Bobby's grand scheme is following the development along the I-96 corridor. In case you haven't noticed ...it's happening fast. Manufacturing, shopping malls, subdivisions, all replacing cornfields. Bobby envisions enlarging the capacity of the brewery and adding a restaurant (seating 200) featuring Michigan produce on the menu. A gift shop featuring Michigan crafts is also in the works. Will brewery tours be next? Will there be a line of tour busses in the parking lot? So far the flavors coming out of Webberville are making a big hit and showing up on store shelves all over the state. I just get a warm fuzzy feeling when I'm walking down the beer aisle in Meijers and I see hometown products on the shelf. If this isn't enough, Bobby can help you learn to make your own beer and wine at home. Check out this website ([www.thingsbeer.com](http://www.thingsbeer.com)) or visit Things Beer in downtown Williamston, to get started. Bottoms Up. V



Brewer Craig Thompson samples his latest brew while sitting in the brewery between 'input and output'.

photo by Doug Elbinger



Huge stainless steel tanks and scientific instrumentation control the brewing process from raw ingredients to finished product.

Photo courtesy of MBC



Michigan Nut Brown Ale  
 High Seas India Pale Ale  
 Sunset Amber Lager  
 Mackinac Pale Ale  
 Wheatland Wheat  
 Peninsula Porter  
 Premium Lager  
 Superior Stout

Pub Hours:  
 Sun. - Thurs. 12-9  
 Fri. & Sat. 12-11

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