

US ROASTERS

Roasting the Market: OKC-based US Roasters puts high tech spin on new coffee roasting machines

Dan Jolliff clearly remembers the moment he fell in love with coffee. He was 6 years old and living with his parents in Oklahoma City.

“My dad pulled up in a 2-ton coffee truck,” Jolliff said. “He opened the back doors, and aroma of the fresh roasted Cain’s Coffee knocked me off my feet. I’ve been in coffee and around coffee ever since.”

Jolliff’s father, Dan H. Jolliff, was a route driver for Cain’s Coffee Co. in those days.

Eventually, the younger Jolliff son opened his own coffee business in Wilson.

“My mom and dad backed me on opening a coffee business in Wilson,” he said. “I wanted to roast my own coffee and be like Cain’s Coffee Company.”

The younger Dan Jolliff operated the Wilson business until turning it over to his brother and father in 1998 and subsequently founding US Roasters as an Oklahoma City-based coffee roasting repair business.

US Roasters is located in a 20,000 square foot building built in 1928 as a bicycle factory just west of downtown Oklahoma City.

Today, US Roasters is an innovative manufacturing business that designs and builds roasters for both the coffee and coco bean roasting businesses. It sells about 150 roasters annually, as well as associated support equipment.

“Here we build coffee roasters, cacao roasters, grinders and also conveyance systems,” Jolliff told me as he guided me through the US Roasters complex, which also includes an adjacent 100,000 square foot building (Old Harter Concrete Building).

US Roasters’ signature product is a patented, emission-controlled roaster known as the Revelation. It was developed with the help of a grant from the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) and engineering expertise from Oklahoma State University.

“With the help of OSU and funding from OCAST, we were able to design this machine, which put us on the map,” Jolliff said as he stood in front of a gleaming coffee roaster. “We think it’s the best a coffee roaster is going to get in my lifetime.”

US Roasters employs 40 people, including five engineers who are constantly developing new innovations that serve coffee roasters both large and small. The latest product is known as the Mini-Rev, a small, computer controlled 2-pound roaster that Jolliff says is perfect for Mom-and-Pop coffee shops worldwide



“The Mini-Rev is a game changer, because it allows small shops to simply download the coffee profile they seek from the Web,” Jolliff said. “They can roast coffee like a pro. Everyone understands this in the coffee industry and are super excited about it.”

In fact, US Roasters has a contract to supply 163 Mini-Revs to a customer in China. Jolliff expects to be producing Mini-Revs en masse in his current location later this year. He envisions building a more modern factory to produce roasting-related products within five years.

Another innovative product currently under development by US Roasters and OSU student engineer Jesse Bowser is a 1-pound, Internet-connected, home-use roaster called the Micro Rev 3000. A prototype is expected early next year.

Other US Roasters engineers include Matheus Barbos, Spencer Corry, Logan Woods Paul Maxwell and Jeff Bannon. John Barton is the company’s Fabrication Manager.

A relationship established with OSU’s engineering department more than a decade has been critical to the success of the emerging company, Jolliff said.

“I feel like it’s having big brothers and sisters that I can always depend on,” he said. “There is nothing like working with OSU to help with engineering, to help with patents, to help on mechanical problems. It’s great.”

Paul Weckler, Ph.D., associate professor in OSU’s Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department, said Jolliff has been open to new ideas brought to him by OSU’s engineering students as part of their capstone senior design class.

“When he has a problem that he can’t figure out, he’ll say ‘hey, do you have a student team that would be willing to work on it?’” Weckler said. “He is willing to devote his time to interacting with students, willing to cooperate on projects and try new ideas.”

The smell of fresh roasted coffee wafted across the US Roaster building as Jolliff escorted me into a company-operated coffee shop called Coffee Dan’s. Coffee roasted in test batches in the US Roasters equipment is sold at Coffee Dan’s.

“If it smells, it sells,” Jolliff said with a laugh. \

It’s the same aroma that lured Dan Jolliff into the coffee business over 50 years ago.

[See the story in the 4-26-17 Oklahoman](#)

[Watch the video](#)

[Go to the US Roasters website](#)