



Meet Jeff Carefoote

Leaside Business Park Association

Q: Tell me a bit about yourself?

A: Born and raised in Toronto, specifically Scarborough. I went to University in Waterloo and studied at Wilfrid Laurier University, afterwards I attended Ohio University for a Masters degree in Business Administration. When my studies were completed, I had realized I liked two things; drinking beer and sports.

I worked in professional sports in Toronto for a couple of years and then joined Molson Breweries. In 1989, I moved to Reston, Virginia to work for Molson and subsequently to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to work for the Miller Brewing Company. Later in 1998, I returned to Canada to work for Molson again and in the year 2000 decided to tackle the entrepreneurial life of Craft Brewing.

I have been married for a long time and have three daughters, two who work in the business with me and one who is attending school in the United States. We have been living just north of Leaside at York Mills and Bayview since 1998.

Q: How did you start Amsterdam Brewery?

A: Since early 2002, I have owned Amsterdam, I purchased it as a brew pub on King Street West. Prior to my purchase the Amsterdam was Toronto's first brew pub located on John Street and it was established in 1986. We moved to Bathurst and Front Street for six years and then to Leaside in 2012. We added the Amsterdam BrewHouse at Queen's Quay in 2013 and the Amsterdam Barrel House on Laird in 2016. This is the 35th year of Amsterdam doing business in Toronto.

I had watched the craft beer segment develop in the United States. I thought the two major brewers in Canada at that time were less attentive to consumer tastes and saw that as an opportunity to build a business. Amsterdam had built a decent reputation in downtown Toronto over 15 years and it seemed a good base to build upon so I acquired the business from the founder.





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Q: What challenges have you faced?

A: There have been numerous challenges but in Canada we have a lot of reliable government support programs that have helped. As well, I have a very supportive board of directors.

Recently, two of my daughters have joined me in the business. Owning a business is like being a farmer, there is always something you should do.

Q: What do you enjoy about being in Leaside and the community?

A: Leaside is a great community, they tend to treat their own with care and compassion and it is a great thing. The community is growing very fast, and changing; but to me, it seems to be able to maintain its history and personality, due to the many people who dedicate themselves to the multitude of activities taking place. We are proud to participate in the events when called upon but it is the tireless work of many that makes it happen. It is a place that I am grateful to work and reside closely.

Q: Any words of advice for the next generation?

A: I think three things are required for ultimate happiness. Your family, where you live and what you do. In working and living in the area it has provided me with the ability to achieve all three for which I am very grateful.