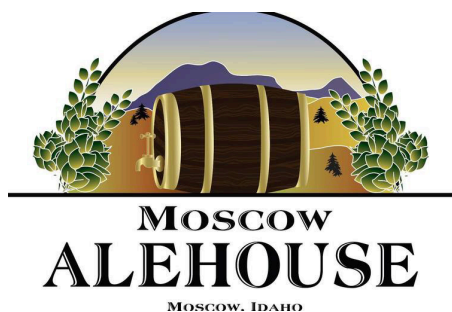




North Central Idaho

Moscow Alehouse

2024



Moscow Alehouse

Wendy Smiley Johnson
(Owner)

Moscow, ID

Started: 2013

moscowalehouse.com



When Wendy Smiley Johnson first came to the Moscow Alehouse in 2006 it was owned by the Coeur d'Alene Brewing Company and was simply called the Alehouse. Wendy had worked there as a daytime server/ bartender. A couple of years later, she took over the reins as manager, continuing to serve and bartend. The Alehouse closed its doors in 2010 and after sitting dormant for a few years was put up for sale.

That was Wendy's cue to become a business owner; she purchased the Alehouse in 2013 and renamed it "Moscow Alehouse." She thrives on direct customer relationships and even as owner continues to bartend and serve, referring to herself as "The waitress who pays the electric bill."

In 2021, Wendy purchased the liquor license and even the building itself. The Moscow Alehouse property is a part of Moscow history having been in a single family for over a century. "During a pivotal time, when many restaurants were closing, SBDC reviewed our operations and financials and was able to suggest helpful ways forward," Wendy commented.

Alongside restaurant ownership came a number of necessary menu and drink changes. She brought in a 24-tap rotating beer selection with a lineup of something for everyone including ciders, wines and beers on tap. The Alehouse introduced the "Vandal Burger," a double meat double cheese delicious burger topped with a University of Idaho's Vandal Meat Brat. She also has a full bar catering and a hot dog cart called "Wendy's Wieners" and she takes it to local events and serves Vandal Sausages.

Wendy says being a local business owner makes her feel more connected to the community, which is why she jumped at the opportunity to buy it. She loves to work hard to strengthen the connections between her business, the city, and the university that have kept the Moscow Alehouse in business through the years.

The Moscow Alehouse employs approximately 27-30 people year-round from part-time college students to full-time workers. She promotes a family work atmosphere: employees know Wendy as friend, mother, advisor and confidant, in addition to being their manager. She believes in nurturing her employees and teaching them life skills, how to be team players and leaders in life. Being a great team leader and working alongside her employees she says is the key to building a great team and great future leaders.

"I never ask anyone to do anything that I won't do myself."

Supporting local charities, employing future leaders, sourcing locally from the university, and renaming the business from the Alehouse to the Moscow Alehouse to emphasize its connection to the community, have been her way of fostering connections with the town she cares so much for.

"Being here has really allowed me to be a part of, and help support, this great community that supports each other. I'm happy and honored to be a part of it, and have SBDC on my side."

