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John Haynes - Istrouma Brewing at Sugar Farms

A LIFELONG DREAM OF EMBRACING THE RURAL WAY OF LIFE. CREATING A FAMILY FARM LIFE EXPERIENCE WHERE MEMORIES CAN BE MADE.

A gentle breeze rolls across acres of farmland, reaching the front porch of the quiet country home nestled on top of a small hill. John Haynes adjusts his hat as he looks out over the fields, planning his day. His wife, Joanna, with two cups of coffee in hand and the couple's English cream golden retrievers, Sugar and Roux in tow, join John on the porch.

It had been a lifelong dream of the Haynes to move their two young sons out of the city to a more rural way of life. They searched high and low before finding the perfect site for Sugar Farms, a sprawling 14-acre location in St. Gabriel, Louisiana. Soon, city noise was replaced by the sounds of animals and nature.

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THE SWEET LIFE IS ON TAP AT SUGAR FARMS

Today, Sugar Farms is home to a Texas Longhorn steer, sheep, goats, chickens, and a horse named Firecracker. But animals have been a way of life since the beginning. “This wasn’t our first rodeo with animals; my wife and I bred English cream golden retrievers when we first moved to Sugar Farms,” says John.

John moved his office and creative space to a classic red barn on the property. The couple’s unique signature interior design mix of vintage furniture finds and John’s original art infuses life in their new home and John’s film company office.



Sugar Farms’ classic red barn and grain silo.

Like most filmmakers, telling stories and dreaming of “what may come” for Sugar Farms always danced around inside John’s vivid imagination. After a few years, they decided to share the experience. The couple reimagined Sugar Farms as a destination for craft beer tastings, farm-to-table food, art, and entertainment. Launched in 2020, the Haynes opened Istrouma Brewing where customers enjoy a wide selection of seasonal beers on tap. All brewed in-house, current samplings include sours, stouts, blondes, and farmhouse ales. Some of the more interesting brews are being aged in barrels along the back patio. Then came Feed & Seed, a farm-to-table dining experience featuring from-scratch pizzas and tacos. Working from

a stylized Airstream, the kitchen team sources every ingredient from the farm, other local farms, and local businesses.



John & Joanna Haynes

While visitors love to imbibe small-batch brews over tacos, John sees Sugar Farms as more than just a taproom. From the moment they arrive, John wants customers to feel the “art farm atmosphere” as an experience. “I got my start homebrewing years ago as just a hobby and now that hobby has turned into an experience,” says John. “We have opportunities for visitors to visit with farm animals and view art in the gallery, Gallerie Maison D’Art.”

In the coming months, the brewery will begin distribution of their beer to establishments across South Louisiana. The Haynes now employ a full-time brew master to focus on the expansion of the beer brand. Beyond craft beers, the farm also offers craft sodas, scratch lemonade, cheeses, and delicious homemade ice cream.

“We’re creating a family farm life experience where memories can be made.”

After customers order some craft beer and pizza, they can enjoy dining on an outside patio offering a family-friendly environment where one can enjoy a croquet court, oversized chessboard, bocce ball, ping pong, and cornhole games. Pets are also welcome.

LUBA provides the Haynes and Sugar Farms with workers’ comp coverage. “Many years ago, I had the pleasure of filming an internal sales video for LUBA Workers’ Comp that was a gangster period piece starring some of the executives. It was an amazing experience. That

experience stayed with me, so when my agent mentioned LUBA was an option, I went with them. LUBA has a well-deserved reputation as a fair company that focuses on customer service backed up with family values and professionals who treat their policyholders with a personal touch,” says John. “I remember being nervous the one time we had a claim, but, once I made the call, LUBA put me at ease and handled it professionally and in great detail. They were more focused on making sure my employee was healing and getting back to work when the time was right.”

“LUBA walked us through the entire process so we could focus on our business, as they handled theirs. At every step of the way, we were able to get in direct contact with LUBA and get our questions answered.”

We just didn’t know what to expect going into the workers’ comp claims process. We are very protective of our employees but once we made the call to report, we quickly realized that LUBA was part of our team and had our backs. We were assigned a LUBA representative right away who ran point on everything for us. LUBA walked us through the entire process so we could focus on our business, as they handled theirs. At every step of the way, we were able to get in direct contact with LUBA and get our questions answered. The entire process, from start to finish, was smooth. It was game time and LUBA showed up to play.



Grain used to make Istrouma’s craft beer.

So, what’s next for Haynes? “We are extremely blessed that our family found Sugar Farms for our growth and well-being. We are able to share our passions with visitors daily. It’s a dream come true and we hope to continue to expand our offerings and refine the experience for every visitor.”