

Craft beer makers ride double-digit gains

By Bill Chappell, NPR

The number of American breweries topped 5,000 for the first time last year, with craft beer makers accounting for 5,234 of 5,301 U.S. breweries, according to new figures from the Brewers Association.

Just five years ago, there were only about 2,000 U.S. craft brewers, which the Brewers Association defines as small or independent beer makers. Last year alone, more than 800 opened for business.

Compared to those increases, changes in the overall American beer market were less dramatic, the industry group says. While craft brewers managed to capture \$23.5 billion of the money spent on beer last year – a 10 percent gain over 2015 – their volume share remained essentially flat, at 12.3 percent of the amount of beer sold in the U.S.

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