

» MAINE GOODS



SEE ME, BUY ME, WEAR ME

Chris Avantaggio turned his annual pilgrimage to the Maine Brewers Festival into a hip, state-touting merch business.

CHRIS AVANTAGGIO HAD A PROBLEM. Every year, he and a group of his buddies would go to the Maine Brewers Festival at the Portland Expo along with hundreds of other beer lovers. Inevitably, the group would wander apart and have a heck of a time trying to find each other.

In 2009, Avantaggio came up with a solution—blaze orange T-shirts. A professional graphic designer (he works as an art director at The VIA Agency in Portland), Avantaggio created the now famous BeerME T-shirts for his friends. When one of his buddies sold the orange shirt right off his back at the festival, Avantaggio knew he was onto something. “I had no idea the shirts would be such a hit,” Avantaggio says.

What began as BeerME is now LiveME—a fun way to proclaim your love for all things Maine. “The idea to start the company came after I saw the enthusiasm for the BeerME design,” Avantaggio says, and adds that he gets lots of suggestions for new designs. Besides BeerME, the company also sells merchandise with LoveME, FarmME, and BikeME logos. “Natu-

rally, the ME possibilities seem endless, but four-letter words work best with the design.”

LiveME has a healthy following on Facebook and Twitter, and publishes a blog on its website. At the beginning of July, the blog posted its LiveME sticker series featuring SailME, SurfME, and HikeME, among others.

The Portland-based company currently sells T-shirts, hoodies, baby onesies, dog bandanas, stickers, hats, Frisbees, pint glasses, and more. They hand-print their designs in Maine on American Apparel T-shirts, which are 100% cotton and made right here in the USA. “LoveME and BeerME are the big sellers, and a lot of the other activity-based designs [like BikeME] have their niches,” Avantaggio says. “It just depends on what you’re into.”

What Avantaggio is into is continuing to share his love for Maine, one T-shirt at a time. “As we grow, we’ll be offering some new designs and look forward to exploring some new product offerings as well,” he says. Tweet your (clean) four-letter word suggestions to @livemaine.

BUSINESS PRESS

■ PULP+WIRE, a Portland design and marketing firm, is highlighted in the July issue of *Pack Odyssey (L’Odyssée Du Pack)*, a France-based trending publication, for its packaging design for Pleasant River Soap Company.

■ THE CITY OF BANGOR held its ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the new Bangor Arena and Convention Center on August 4. City officials were joined by representatives of Sink Combs Dethlefs, project architect, and Cianbro, contractor.

■ MPBN’S board of trustees has announced a nationwide search for a new chief executive for the network, conducted by Livingston Associates. Jim Dowe, Maine Public Broadcasting Network’s CEO since mid-2006, will retire at the end of 2011.

■ RUDMAN WINCHELL attorney Michael P. Friedman was elected unanimously to chair the Commission to Reapportion Maine’s Congressional Districts. The group is bipartisan and consists of 15 members.