

MAKER STORIES

The Portland Shave Shop



Portland Made Member, [Portland Razor Co](#), recently expanded their business by adding on a new Shave Shop. We caught up with them to learn more about the new shop, how that came to be, and what's in store for the future.

The cover photo is of the new Portland Shave Shop, 3207 SW 1st Ave #204 Portland, OR 97239

Tell us about Portland Razor Co

Portland Razor Co. got started because Scott Miyako, our founder, had taken an interest in straight shaving. Scott has always been a tinkerer; old cars and trucks, bikes, motorcycles, guitars, speakers, vintage cameras, amplifiers, robots, the list goes on. Finding the right tool for any job is something he enjoys, and several years ago he decided it was time to find the best tool for shaving. He was tired of buying razors just to throw them away after a handful of uses. His research led him to the straight razor. The benefits to straight shaving are many, but the tool itself is very simple. A straight razor uses a single blade to cut the hair and the blade is maintained on a strop before every shave. This means the blade is clean and sharp for every use. Disposable blades are only clean and factory-sharp for their first shave, afterwards the user is going to experience diminishing returns no matter what they do. When Scott was looking to buy his first straight razor, he realized the only way to get a reputable straight razor was to import one from Japan or Europe, or get a restored vintage razor. Scott started experimenting with making his own razors and gave them to some friends for feedback. Scott decided to establish the company in 2014 and 3 years, 4 shops, and thousands of razors later, Portland Razor Co. is growing and enjoying what we do each and every day. Read more about the process making our razors [here](#).

Straight razors ready for surface grinding after heat treat

So you've recently opened a Shave Shop! Tell us about that?

Yes! Portland Shave Shop is our latest project and is the retail extension of Portland Razor Co. The shave shop offers goods for shaving, beard care, moustache care, and pomades and also hosts a single-chair barbershop. The Portland Razor Co. manufacturing space is in the back and we offer tours of this facility by appointment. We'd had the opportunity to meet many people in Portland who are interested in straight razors and shaving, and there really wasn't anywhere in the city that could be a hub to foster DIY shave

culture. Many shaving products are scented and best experienced in person, so it is difficult to order them online. A customer will waste money and time in return shipping trying to find a fragrance that best suits them. Our shop has many handmade goods, which are also more special when seen in person. Something awesome happens and the presence of the maker can be felt. Every detail of the product becomes personal and intentional.

What does the Shave Shop mean for your business?

It's been a great expansion of business! All of the moving parts flow into each other pretty seamlessly. Because there are so few straight razor manufacturers, we were already welcoming visitors into the shop regularly to see the process and our products. Developing Portland Shave Shop, a landing place for visitors who want to have that in-person experience, was the next logical step for us, so there hasn't been any feelings of spreading ourselves too thin with the opening of the shop. We are open on weekends now, so there was some slight adjustments to personnel and hours, but nothing too disruptive to our normal work flow.

Founder Scott Miyako teaches a Straight Razor Honing & Maintenance Class in Portland Shave Shop



What have you learned during this process and what resources did you tap into to help you out?

Keep working! Nothing gets a job done better than putting one foot in front of the other. We did the build-out ourselves and perseverance was important. We would work all week, then build out the shop on the weekends. Thankfully the weather made it easy on us; with so much rain, the best we could do was stay inside and put shoulder to the wheel. We took out a short term loan to help with the upfront costs of the build-out. Practically all of the fixtures in Portland Shave Shop are from Craigslist or [The ReBuilding Center](#), including our 1920s Koken Barber chair! We really like to give things longer life by repurposing and reusing. We have become friends with a few barbers and barbershop owners in Portland who consulted with us on the layout of the barber station and talked us through the health licensing process. We were also able to have Kyle D'Auria from [Deoria Made](#) do all of the finish carpentry in the shave shop. We have known him as a fellow maker since we started Portland Razor Co. and we were very lucky he was available to work with us on the build-out. Everyone's expertise and assistance were indispensable to the project.

What's next for Portland Razor Co and the Shave Shop?

We are developing a Portland Razor Co. line of soaps and aftershaves that we will be launching soon. Aside from that, we are looking forward to summer and welcoming out of town visitors into the shop! The shop will have giveaways and discounts for people who come into the store (all of our promotions are announced on Instagram). We hope Portland Shave Shop can be a destination for people from all over who want to see our straight razors in person or peruse the collection.

Lead Blade Smith Hunter Lea performs initial grinding on a straight razor.

Where can we find your products?

We sell our razors and strops online at www.portlandrazorco.com or www.portlandshaveshop.com as well as in our new brick and mortar, Portland Shave Shop located at 3207 SW 1st Ave #204, Portland, OR 97239. Open 10-5 Wednesday-Friday, 10-7 Saturday, 10-5 Sunday

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