



## community development partnership

*Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape*

### **Snowy Owl: Overcoming the odds to find success**

**“We stay open year-round partly to provide stable employment opportunities.”**

Manuel Ainzuaín  
Owner, Snowy Owl Coffee Roasters

The COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmingly affected the way businesses on the Lower and Outer Cape operate. Many had to find creative ways to stay afloat, meet health and safety regulations, and keep their customers and employees safe. While many businesses experienced financial losses during this time, some businesses were able to maintain their profits over the past year, including Snowy Owl Coffee Roasters in Brewster. In fact, they recently announced their plan to open a new location in Sandwich!

Snowy Owl’s main location in Brewster has been a staple in the community since opening in 2015. Owners Manuel Ainzuaín and Shayna Ferullo had a goal to provide ethically sourced, freshly roasted and freshly brewed coffee to the Cape Cod community. “We are not a café,” says Manuel, “We are a coffee company with locations where people can come to taste and sample our coffee.”

They also wanted their new business to be a responsible member of the community. After moving to Cape Cod, they identified housing and year-round jobs as two major challenges for the region. Part of their mission is to provide well-paying year-round jobs for the community. “We stay open year-round partly to provide stable employment opportunities,” he explains, “Our operations managers started here as a barista!”

Between them, Shayna and Manuel brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the business. Manuel handled production while Shayna managed the business operations. In 2018 as their business continued to grow, they received a professional service grant from the CDP to hire a Salesforce consultant to upgrade their [inventory system](#).



Owners Shayna Ferullo and Manuel Ainzuaín

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By the end of 2019 they were looking to expand into a bigger location. The Brewster location serves not only as a café, but as their roasting facility. As the business grew, they approached the limits of their current space.

They began to search for another location to move production. “We looked all around Brewster for a place,” says Manuel, “but there weren’t a lot of options available.” When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, all of their plans for expansion were put on hold. “We didn’t know how this would affect us financially, so the project was paused indefinitely.”

Manuel and Shayna had been closely monitoring COVID-19 long before the stay at home order was issued for Massachusetts. As concern began to grow in the Lower Cape community, they made the decision to completely shut down a week before the governor’s order. Unfortunately, this meant laying off almost all of their staff. On the decision Manuel said, “It was an extremely difficult decision to make, luckily everyone was able to receive unemployment early.”

They shifted all of their business online, and started a subscription service where customers can sign up to have bags of coffee delivered directly to their home each month. They also started a new program which allowed people to order care packages delivered directly to healthcare workers, first responders, grocery store workers, postal workers, and teachers when school began in the fall. “We really wanted to try and do something to support the community,” says Manuel.

With new health and safety protocols in place, and a Paycheck Protection Program Loan, they began to bring back staff and prepare for reopening. They remodeled the front of their building to create a socially distant walk up window, and gave customers the option to call in orders a head of time. As things began to cool off in the fall they opened the inside of their store for takeout only.

Despite all of the challenges Snowy Owl faced this year, they ended the summer in a strong financial position. They returned to their expansion project in the fall and were able to identify a location on 6A in Sandwich. The new building will allow them to expand their production capacity and move into new markets on the Upper Cape and over the bridge. “We have had people tell us they come to Brewster from Sandwich for our coffee, so we are nervous but believe it will be a success,” says Manuel.

The new building is currently being renovated to suit their needs, and is expected to open in the late summer or early fall. We wish the Snowy Owl team the best of luck in their new endeavor.