

Mason Dixon Distillery
331 E Water Street
Gettysburg, PA 17325
(717) 398-3385
masondixondistillery.com

Adams County

**Industries: Spirits,
Distilled, manufacturing**

Founded: July 2016

**SBDC Assistance:
Business Planning,
Financial Projections**

*“Cheryl, my business
consultant, was excellent.
She is an experienced and
knowledgeable individual.”*

-Yianni Barakos



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Craft and Conviction Build Mason Dixon

Yianni Barakos is a man with passion. He is a man with the gift of vision, the audacity to set big goals and the grit and work ethic to accomplish them. His father and now business partner, George, was a restaurant owner and Yianni grew up with an inside view. From the good and the bad he witnessed, he developed an insightful understanding of the challenges of business ownership. Yianni says, partially due to “seeing his dad work such long hours in his business,” that he is committed to working on his business, “not just in it.”



Yianni had a varied career prior to committing to the entrepreneurial path, with much of his work centered on building things and managing projects. Since childhood he has had an innate love of putting things together and seeing them work. He built his first still when he was eleven years old, based on a cocktail napkin sketch by his grandfather. Yianni’s love of distilling has persisted and, apparently, so have some family traits.

In addition to his personal distilling experimentation, Yianni received hands-on distilling experience apprenticing at “Smooth Ambler Spirits” in Maxwelton, WV. George’s background leads to exquisite creations in the kitchen, eliciting rave reviews from customers for the quality of the food served.

When Yianni leased the old Gettysburg Furniture Factory, it was in considerable disrepair. His vision and craftsmanship are evident in the rough-hewn antique woods from old barns that he re-purposed into interior finishes. The work involved in rehabbing a century-old building was not nearly as challenging, Yianni notes, as was dealing with the local municipal zoning and myriad licensing issues or securing financing – lenders were reluctant to back him.

This is one of the primary areas where SBDC assistance proved to be quite valuable. “Having an experienced set of eyes” reviewing his business plan and helping refine data-based financial projections was “key to getting someone convinced to finance the business.”

Yianni had the foresight to secure an agricultural lease on 47 acres of protected historic Gettysburg Battlefield land early in the start-up process where he is growing corn, rye and wheat. Mason-Dixon will be able to produce limited release batches of “Battlefield Liquors” with 100% locally grown ingredients. Business was a “bit slower ramping up” than Yianni had initially hoped, but traffic has really picked up in early 2017. He is hopeful that Mason Dixon will hit or surpass first year sales goals. And, Yianni is supporting the local community, currently employing sixteen folks and planning to add six more in the near future.

“End of the day, it was basic stubbornness, blood, sweat and tears that got it done,” Yianni says!