

2022 ISSUE 3

VERMONT BREWVIEW

What's New, What's Good, and What Goes With It

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**TWO HEROES
BREWERY**
EXPANDS THEIR
TAPROOM

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Two Heroes Brewery in South Hero is About to Expand



WELL WORTH THE WAIT
After several years of planning, partners Daren Orr and Matt Bartle are expanding their taproom, Two Heroes Brewery, in early 2023. When they first came up with the idea for a brewpub five years ago, they had no idea their plans would be derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pair was perfectly

poised for a successful venture. Daren was a home brewer for much of his life, earning a certificate in advanced brewing theory from the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago. Matt has a B.S. in mechanical engineering and has been the proprietor of Wally's Place since 2008, with connections to some of Vermont's many venerated farmers.

A LOCAL TAPROOM
In February 2021, the pair pivoted and opened Two Heroes Brewery, a pilot taproom located at 1 Ferry Road in South Hero, the original home of Wally's Place, as a temporary space until their new facility was completed. It bills itself as "a small island brewery that seeks delight in malt and hop modification." Daren is the



head brewer, and his wife Danielle serves as the taproom manager.

The brewery produces 200 barrels annually, with 5 to 9 beers on tap on any given day. It also offers a limited menu, as well as cans and growlers to go. Two Heroes has gained a large local following and is a must-stop destination on Vermont's burgeoning brewery trail.

A WIDE VARIETY OF BEERS
Daren believes the brewery's ability to produce a wide variety of beers sets it apart saying, "We pride ourselves in a lot of different styles of beer, so that all types of beer drinkers can come here and find something they like." There are typically IPAs, two different types of lager, a stout, and two Belgian ales including a sour on tap. Daren continues, "About half the time, we offer a double IPA." Two Heroes also produces specialty beers such as an altbier, a German ale produced with top fermenting yeast which is fermented in cooler temperatures.

In a unique move, Two Heroes also makes its own hard cider, produced with apples from local farms. As Daren explains, "We use the same equipment to make the cider—and the apples are prepared and pressed by local orchards."

In addition to its indoor and outdoor tasting spaces, Daren and Matt make deliveries to a faithful following in Grand Isle and Chittenden counties, with plans to expand to the Plattsburgh, NY area where a lot of their regulars are from.

A NEW BREWPUB
Finally, Daren and Matt's dreams of opening a brewpub are about to be

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realized. They hired AES Northeast, an architecture and engineering firm in Plattsburgh, NY, and Hayward Design in South Hero to construct a 4,200 square foot building that will house both the expanded brewery and a 50-seat restaurant, to be named “Two Heroes Public House.” Designed as a monitor, or raised center aisle (RCA) structure, it is modeled after a traditional Vermont barn design that features a raised center section. The new facility will have the capacity to produce over 1000 barrels a year.

The brewpub will offer unique pub food made with local ingredients. As Daren describes it, they will soon be serving up “simple pub food that goes well with beer.” The focus will be on creating an experience, not just a place to drink beer, for individuals and families alike.

“We’ve been keeping an eye on the brewery market for over a decade,” Daren concludes. “We believe that a small town nano-brewpub is a great model for producing beer and running a restaurant. The community is the most important aspect of South Hero, and our goal is to fill the void by creating a local gathering place for both members of the community and visitors from all over.” 🍻

INTERESTING FINDS
BY MERYL SIEGMAN



A FAMILY AFFAIR FOLEY BROTHERS BREWING Goes from B&B to Winery

New Englanders Bob and Rhonda Foley purchased the Neshobe Inn in Brandon in 2006 as a bed and breakfast. A classic Vermont farmhouse built in 1786, it sits on six lush acres at the foot of the Green Mountains. A year later, in a quest to establish a niche for themselves, the couple created

a small vineyard and opened a winery: Neshobe River Winery. This was a natural direction for them to go in, since the family had spent a significant amount of time visiting and working in wineries and breweries in the US, Europe, Africa, Canada and New Zealand. Offering wine made on the premises from regional

grapes, the tasting room soon became popular with the Inn's B&B guests as well as with local folks from Brandon.

Meanwhile, Bob and Rhonda's sons, Dan and Patrick, had other plans. Both were involved in the wine-making business from the start, but after five years they began to experiment with



beer-making, starting with a ginger wheat and brown ale. In 2012, the pair opened Foley Brothers Brewing.

A BREWERY IS BORN

While Bob, a professor of business planning and marketing at Rochester Institute of Technology, lent his business expertise to the start-up, he remained focused on wine making, and continued to operate the small-scale winery, which shares its space with Foley Brothers Brewing on the grounds of the inn.

Patrick and Dan learned their wine making skills during their travels and various apprenticeships, and quickly figured out how to turn their knowledge of equipment and the fermentation process into brewing beer. As Bob Sr. says, "They were always good wine makers, but they are excellent beer makers. They turned their beer production into something much larger than I had ever imagined."

The business took off. Bob explains, "When the boys started 10 years ago, there weren't many breweries in Vermont



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- maybe 20 at most. They got into the industry right at the beginning and established themselves very quickly." He attributes their success and solid customer base to excellent brewing techniques and the quality beer they produce, as well as a superb distribution plan. Currently selling in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont, they recently entered the Scandinavian market, and have plans to add Asia as well.

THE BREWERY TODAY

The tasting room is located in a charming, early 1800s barn, creating an authentic Vermont experience. A popular destination for tourists on the Vermont brewery trail as well as for locals, the brewery has regular visitors from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Pennsylvania. They include parents whose sons and daughters attend nearby Middlebury College, families gathering for the

holidays, and skiers eager for something to do when they get off the mountain. The inn no longer functions as a bed and breakfast, but from May to October, the entire farmhouse is available for rent.

The family also runs a spinoff: Foleys Taco and Bean on Park Street in Brandon in a beautiful federal style building with outdoor seating. As Bob explains, "Brandon didn't have a lot of options for dining, so we decided to fill the void." While the restaurant opened at the height of the COVID pandemic to a rocky start, today it is thriving. The locals affectionately refer to it as simply "Taco."

Back at the brewery, the art of making craft beer is in full swing. "We brew small batches in our 15-barrel brewery. We're always experimenting with new recipes," Bob tells us. Its annual production is 2000 barrels, with the capacity for 3000. He goes on to explain, "We don't see the need for a larger facility. Our market right now is exactly where we want to be." But with many more craft breweries opening up in Vermont and throughout New England, one of their goals is to keep up with market trends to ensure their brand continues to stand out.

Foley Brothers is known for its IPA, but based on demand for beer with a lower alcohol content, it is introducing lager as well. When asked what the brewery's "secret" ingredient is, Bob doesn't hesitate. "It's the water. After all, beer is 95% water. Brandon's water, which comes from an aquifer and is not chemically treated, is some of the best quality in the world."

When the family isn't at the brewery perfecting their craft, they're on the road, attending beer trade shows, conferences and festivals. It certainly is a family affair. 🍺



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