

Little Toad Creek expands business

Robert Gonzales, For the Sun-News 5:59 p.m. MST December 22, 2016



(Photo: Jane Janson)

Since the Little Toad Creek Brewery and Distillery moved from Mimbres to downtown Silver City in 2013, it has seen its popularity and business expand. And co-owners Theresa Dahl-Bredine and her husband, David Crosley, have been building on that momentum by expanding the number of craft beers and distilled spirits they are producing.

"Sales have steadily increased year by year, which is awesome," said Dahl-Bredine. "And right now we're distributing our spirits in limited amount in some retail stores in Albuquerque. You can buy our spirits at any Smith's, Total Wine or Kelly's."

Currently their production capacity is capped at about 300 barrels of beer a year because of their current equipment, which includes some hand-built pieces. Dahl-Bredine and Crosley plan to install new equipment that will drastically expand their production capability to almost 9,000 barrels of beer per year, though they expect it will take a few years to reach that production level.

The new equipment will have computerized control systems and temperature-controlled fermentation. The equipment has been ordered and is scheduled to arrive this month.

"When the new equipment arrives, we're not sure what the learning curve is going to be. Obviously there's going to be a lot involved in getting it up and running, but I would say that by January we should be operating and producing. With February being the very latest."

In addition to the new equipment, the couple is also going to begin offering three or four of their beers in cans. Right now, the only way to get their brews are on tap in downtown Silver City. The goal is to start offering the beer on tap at other bars across the state as well as in retail outlets in New Mexico and out of state.

Among the many spirits Little Toad Creek produces is a straight whiskey aged in five-gallon oak barrels. The smaller barrel allows the whiskey to develop and achieve its flavor faster because of the smaller surface area of a 5 gallon barrel vs. a standard 50 gallon barrel. Dahl-Bredine said Little Toad will begin to age the whiskey in larger barrels when they transition to the new equipment.

They will be producing only one or two more of the small barrels of whiskey before they begin using the larger barrels, which will require more aging time. Once that transition occurs, Little Toad will not have another batch available for a couple of years. Their drafts and other spirits will still be produced without any gap in production.

The best things in life, however, are always worth the wait.