

Small in size, big in taste

Glewwe Castle Brewery has made homemade root beer since 1994

BY TOM SCHARDIN
tschardin@swpub.com

What's better than home-made? Glewwe Castle Brewery has been brewing its own root beer since 1994. It started as a two-person operation, went to four, and now is back to two.

And you can get it in Spring Lake Township, just south of Prior Lake, courtesy of Mark and Laurel Glewwe.

"We make enough money from it for a vacation every year; we're not getting rich," said Mark, who added annual profits are around about \$2,500 per year. "If it wasn't for the social aspect of this making your own root beer wouldn't make any sense at all. We enjoy meeting people and the farmers markets."

That's where you can get Glewwe's root beer — farmers markets. It's been available at the Prior Lake Farmers Market since 2004. It's been sold at the Eagan Farmers Market since 2008 and now it's available at the New Prague Farmers Market.

Back in the early 1990s, Mark and Laurel went to England for a trip and were intrigued by the homemade ciders and beer. So they used that inspiration to make that own root beer, as well as other assorted sodas like cream and orange.

You can't find their root beers and sodas in stores or restaurants. That would take licensing from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Mark said that would change the game a lot.

First and foremost, it would require inspections from the MDA and additional costs. Second, more work — a lot more.

"We've thought about it many times," said Mark. "I know there are markets for us. Several stores would like to sell our stuff. Would it be worth the time? I'm getting to the point where I'm looking to do less work, not more. I'm not getting any younger."

"Technically, we are a business. We're declared as a business," added Mark. "But we are not incorporated."

The Glewwe's two children used to help in the operation back in the day. But not anymore, since their daughter, Diana, is now 30 and their son, Erik, is 25.

"They helped a lot in the beginning, washing bottles or whatever little things needed to be done," said Mark. "But they've moved on. For us, this is basically



Last September at the 20th anniversary of Glewwe Castle Brewery, Mark Glewwe gives an presentation on how to make ginger ale.

Just the Facts

Business name: Glewwe's Castle Brewery

Address: 4620 207 St. East, Prior Lake

Years in location: 21

No. of employees: 2

Business/product: Homemade root beer, along with cream soda and orange soda.

Website/phone number: www.glewwe-castle.com/sales2/index.html; (952) 440-4558

"But they've moved on. For us, this is basically a hobby that's gone out of control."

Mark Glewwe

Glewwe Castle Brewery to the property.

Now, it's not a real castle — not like the logo depicts.

"My wife was getting tired of her feet sticking to the floor, so I had to move the operation," Mark joked. "It's right by the house."

"It took us a while to perfect what we were doing," said Mark. "It was a learning process. Not all our early batches tasted great. But we kept making it, perfecting it. People liked it. And now we are selling it. It sort of took off on us."

And just because Glewwe Castle Brewery is not licensed by the MDA doesn't mean Mark is cutting corners during the making process. All the brewing is done in National Science Foundation

a hobby that's gone out of control.

"We're not going to be Cargill anytime soon," added Mark.

So how did Mark and Laurel perfect their array of sodas? When the operation first started, it was run right out of the house and, for the most part, the neighborhood enjoyed their brews.

But as the years went on and their popularity rose, the Glewwe's added on, adding



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The inside of Glewwe Castle Brewery in Spring Lake Township in Prior Lake, which has specialized in making root beer since 1994.

materials. It's food safe.

How long does it take to make enough root beer for a day at the Prior Lake Farmer's Market? Mark said they make the root beer in 11 gallon batches, which comes out to be about five cases of 12-ounce bottles. He makes about 20 gallons per week.

"It takes about five days from start to finish," he said.

And don't forget, the Glewwe's make their own labels, too.

A small "to-go" bottle will cost \$2. A "mix-and-match" four pack costs \$7. A case, 24 bottles, will run you \$38.

Are you looking for a 5-gallon keg for a party? Glewwe

Castle Brewery also does catering. That will run you \$38, plus a \$5 set-up fee.

So how tasty is the root beer? Well, in 2008, Twin Cities Metropolitan Magazine ranked Glewwe Castle Brewery's product "the most flavorful" in a review of Minnesota-made root beers.



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