



Mark Marnell's Beer Blog

Honey Hollow Brewing

Earlton New York, April 2015

BREW STATS



History: First Batch Brewed Feb 7th 2012, First keg shipped to The Parmer House Nov 2013

System Size: .5 BBL in 2012, 3 BBL by Fall of 2015, via NY/ MAP Grant and Loan (Microenterprise Assistance Program)

Founders Owners: Matty and Donna Taormina

Brew Crew:

Head Brewer: Matty Taormina, Assistant Brewer Donna Taormina

Production Stats:

Initial Approx. Barrel (bbl) Output 2012: 25 bbl

Projected bbl Output 2015 after expansion to a 3 BBL system: 100 bbl

Packaging: Sixtels, Quarters and Growlers

Distribution: Locally to the Cask and Rasher Pub & the Farmers Market in Coxsackie, The Palmer House Cafe in Rensselaerville and Sunny Hill Golf Course in Greenville, Looking to expand throughout Greene and Ulster counties

Biggest Selling Beer- Toss up between Hurricane Pale Ale and Ruby Red Ale

Brewery's Movie - Guardians of The Galaxy

Brewery Song - "Down South In New Orleans" by The Band

Matty's favorite Craft beer - Brown's Brewing Company's Whiskey Barrel Porter



Brew House with Bocce Court, note tree clearing for expansion

Small Brewery, Big Beers



Honey Hollow Brewhouse and Trellis on April 30

My car jig sawed through some rolling Hudson Valley hills just west of Coxsackie in Greene County. It was a road less traveled that led me to the quaint town of Earlton NY where there is a great little Nano-Farm Brewery. It was one of the first nice days of the year, a day shy of May Day and alive with little buzzing and biting black bugs screaming out that Spring had fi-

nally sprung! I strolled up a driveway, under a trellis that was not yet filled with flowers and back to a brew shed, through the strong smell of boiling wort that was sweet music to my nose. The sun was bright and warm and so was the reception at Honey Hollow Brewing Company. I was greeted by smiling Matty Taormina, a man with a big love for big beers, hard work and



Brewery Sign at Honey Hollow Road Entrance

on his days off, big fish at the end of his pole. The Farm Brewery's name is simply taken from the road that the place is located on, but honey does actual make its way into a seasonal beer and probably makes its way out of his mouth when talking with his brewing assistant and wife Donna. The brewery was started in early 2012 by the husband and wife team,

he a retired welder who started with Penn Central Railroad and ended his career with Conrail, and his wife Donna who works for the Post Office and is a certified Master Gardener with green thumbs that help with hops cultivation, brewing, books and the business end of things. The man about the brewery is a handy guy and his career skills helped him build, from scratch, his very own 0.5 BBL system to make beer that he sells on premises and self distributes in Coxsackie at the Farmers Market and to The Cask and Rasher Pub, to the Parmer House in Rensselaerville and to the Sunny Hill Golf Course in Greenville. After 3 short years, he is currently undergoing an expansion and may be not be so "nano" after this year.



Honey Hollow Brewing's Facebook Picture of the Brewhouse, used with permission, demonstrative evidence of just how green Donna's thumbs are!

From Etna to Earlton, bringing the Old World to the New World



Brewer, Owner and Fisherman Matty Taormina

If the brewer's story was a Shakespearean drama, the setting would start out in the Old World and it would quickly move to the New World, from the land of wine, to the land of beer. From the tiny island of Sicilia to the very large country of the US. It would be similar to that of other immigrant families who came, with a dream, a drive, a desire to give the children a better life and a hell

of a lot of guts. Matty was born in Giardini Sicily and came over as a very young child where his immigrant family settled in nearby Ravenna. Like most good Italians, they embraced fermentation to the fullest and so Matty was bitten by yeast, early on, as he watched his grandfather and his father, make the family wine. Americanizing his fermentation ambitions, he got a hold of Papazian's

classic, "The Complete Joy of Home Brewing" book in the early 90s and dove head first into his first batch of suds. He has been brewing the beers he loves ever since. With his love for brewing and some time on his hands post-retirement, it made perfect sense for him to transform his craft into a business venture. With a Master Gardener for a partner, a Farm Brewery was the logical direction.

He could make the kinds of beers he likes to drink, that he had refined over the years so others could like them too. His plan worked out. His Nano-Brewery is a one man endeavor and everything there from the Brewhouse to the outdoor bar has his hands in it, including his current expansion. Add in his wife's skills and her beautifying touches and what you get is a quaint and very cool small brewery with a big personality.



Matty enjoying his self made brew



Longtime friend, helper and customer Charlie Blenis

HH's Farm Brewery - From .5 BBLs to 3 BBLs in a few years



Matty homemade half beer barrel system

This licensed Farm Brewery currently has a 0.5 BBL System, and thanks to a MAP grant and loan, by the end of August will have a newly purchased 3 BBL system obtained from Stout Tanks and Kettles out of Portland Oregon. It is nice to see that the state is recognizing the importance of Craft Beer and it is nice to see the money go to a place like this! Clearing of trees on the property has begun to both expand the existing Brewhouse footprint and to add

a new Pole Barn that will become a new 20 x 24' tasting room. Currently Matty has no plans to bottle his beer. His preference is fresh kegs, growlers and pints, not beer bottles that can sit on the shelf until the beer is no longer appealing. Honey Hollow Brewing is open Fridays 4 to 7 and Saturdays from 12 to 6pm where his serving tanks offer up 5 dollar pints. There are 3 on premises events held each year that offer a festive atmosphere filled with flowing beer

and other home-made wares that are brought by other invited local crafters. These seasonal fests take place in May (Spring), July (Summer) and September (Fall) so check Facebook for actual dates. As you survey the digs, you will see his newly built outdoor bar that he was in the process of staining when I was there, a bocce ball court, some benches, chairs and vegetable and flower gardens. You will also see

over a dozen hop plants that yield whole cones of Cascade, Centennial, Chinook, Fuggles, Willamette, Galena and Neo1, all of which will go directly into his beers. Depending on the availability of hops and demand for the beer, he may end up adding a half acre of hops in the future but that will be determined by availability from the several local hopyards that are constantly popping up.



Fermenters



The Brew Master at work

Big Malty Beers classically balanced with home grown hops



Matty likes his beers **big and malty, and like Italian food done right, his beers are simply made with classical ingredients that meld together synergistically into something more complex.** It's the dirty little secret to fantastic Italian food wine and in this case beer! Simple and fresh ingredients equals complex taste. Being a great appreciator of malty beers, I was delighted to discover these malt forward liquids. All of his flagships have nice bodies, are classically styled, singly hopped and are quite large. These farm beers are made by sourcing as much NY grain as he

can get and they are formulated with at least a 20% NY grain bill as well as with 100 % NY hops, with at least 50% coming from his own yard. The spent grains end up in a local farmer's troughs for eventual consumption by cows and chickens. As I bellied up to the bar, we exchanged some knowledge about growing up Italian, laughed about it and set about to do what we like to do best, tasting some great beers. The flagship beers that he had on that day were: 7.4% abv. Fuggles hopped Oatmeal Stout, 6.8% Chinook hopped Arabella Nut Brown

(that takes its Italian sounding name from an interesting Ethiopian woman), 6.8% Hurricane Pale Ale hopped with Centennial, and 7.2% Columbus hopped Ruby Red Ale. I really genuinely enjoyed every one of these beers and wish that I could have hung out all day tasting and re-tasting until I crashed in a hammock for the night. I had to drive and after a few of these, it is good to have a DD on hand. There are other beers he makes that I now know I need to try like his 6.8% Mosaic hopped Angry Trout IPA, his Fuggles

hopped Porter, summer seasonals like one made with local Maple and another made with local Honey, his upcoming 100th beer batch that is a 100% NY State Farm Beer brewed with his hops and all grain obtained from nearby Germantown NY and his summer staple, Revolutionary Ale. Revolutionary Ale is based on a Thomas Jefferson recipe, made with Black Strap molasses, Wheat, Barley and Kent Goldings Hops and you can try pints of this colonial period ale at his summer shindig around the 4th of July served up by him, as well as other members of his family, dressed in period hats.



Growlers of his beer with motto, "Brew To Share" coined by son in law Ian Brand



Matty's son in law Ian Brand and Matty, serving up his Revolutionary Ale

My 2 Ounces: Rediscovering Old World flair in this New World of Beer

I had only talked to Matty on the phone before I met him, but just by the phone conversations, I knew he was a cool guy! Meeting him in person confirmed that. He is unmoved, uninfluenced and unswayed by the younger brand of brewers who like to use their breweries as experimental chemistry or souring labs. His attitude is refreshing and proof that you do not need to throw the kitchen sink in a beer to make it great. In his Ruby Red beer, Columbus in the form of Hops sets sail across your palate over a big malty sea of beer bringing with it a New World of discovery in a classic Old World way. His Pale Ale, as its name implies, hits your palate like a balanced hurricane swirling around hops and malt, hops and malt. Both his Oatmeal

Stout and Arabella are nutty, brown and stout on alcohol and flavor. All of these beers are big and strong but the balance is such that there is almost a session like illusion that you can drink them all day long. So what do you get when you put 2 people together who are dialed into "Italianhood", ensconced in the Beer World and appreciators of big malty beers. GREAT FUN! I treasured the time spent and I really dug the beers! Classic beers crafted with a classic work ethic and multilicious ingredients is a winning combination. As I enjoyed the beers, I was quick to think about the immigrant blood that built this country into the great place it became, the industrious immigrant blood that is more often

than not associated with very hard work and excellent craftsmanship and of course Matty's story and his immigrant blood that crafted these fine beers. The beer was pure and clean, simply and singly hopped with no crazy adjuncts, no pretension, no wizardry. It transplanted my mind back to the beers of old that helped craft my beer experiences in the eighties and nineties. The classic beers, that the pioneers built when they built this new industry, that Matty and I were groomed on. Classical yet in a class all their own and good enough to bring me back to a sleepy little NY town named Earlton to get some sweet beers like the word honey implies in the brewery name. I will be back soon

enough even though it is out of my way. I will gladly take the detour to a road less traveled where beer is made today with a classic style on a beer process trail less traveled. In this wide open beer world, replete with inventive and wild artistic flair that uses every conceivable ingredient that the world has to offer, feel free to re-embrace beer in a purer and simpler form. In this big, burly and bodacious world of new beer, you can travel to this small (for now) "Old World" nano- Farm Brewery and you will discover some great company as well as a brand New World of all singly hopped, simple and great tasting beers.



One of the "Springing" hop plants



Trees cleared to make way for for expansion



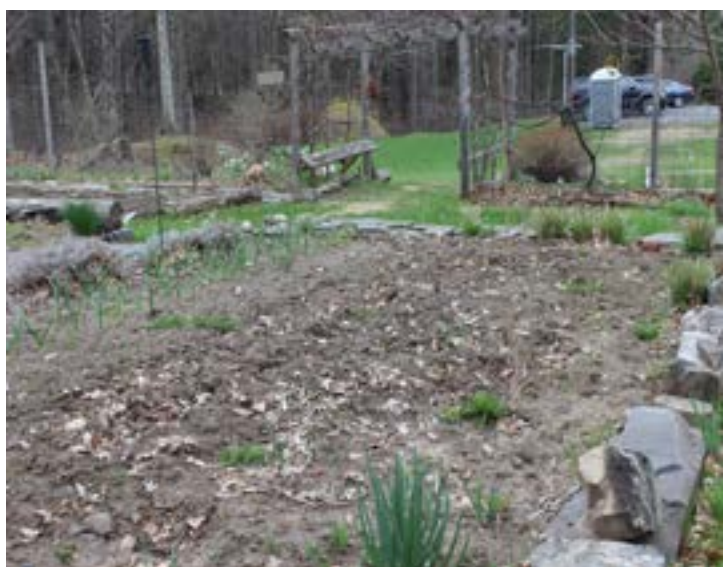
Bocce Ball Court



Hop Sprouts



Newly Built Outdoor Bar



Gardens on the Brewery Grounds