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Jarfly Brewing Co. Sees Growth Beyond Taproom

SOMERSET, KY – Somerset’s first craft brewery is experiencing growth beyond its local taproom, after only six months of operation.

Jarfly Brewing Company’s hand-crafted beers are being served in restaurants and at bars across Eastern Kentucky. The locally owned small business began regional distribution of some of its most popular craft beers in February.

Owners Del Stephens and Daniel Stroud say it’s all part of their business plan and in keeping with their target goal from the very beginning.

"We've been really fortunate to have a lot of amazing patrons supporting what we're doing since opening last summer," Stephens said. "Our taproom has given people a great way to experience Jarfly and get to know what we're all about. Now we are excited to provide more people across the region a chance to experience our beers."

Perry Distributors, based in Hazard, Ky., is handling Jarfly's distribution for the Eastern Kentucky region. General Manager Jeff Sandlin said he is proud to work with small craft breweries, like Jarfly, to meet an increased customer demand for craft beer.

"The craft beer industry has really taken off in the past three to four years, and we - as a large distributor - want to recognize and help as many small breweries as possible," Sandlin said. "Craft beer consumers are samplers, so we try to provide them as many different samples as we can. It's a good day to be in the beer industry, and we are glad to be working with Jarfly Brewing Co. and other small craft breweries across the state."



Owners: Daniel Stroud and Del Stephens

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Old Town Grill offers Jarfly beer on tap at all of its Kentucky stores: London, Corbin, Berea and Somerset (opening soon). Dino's, in London, carries the Baxters Coffee Stout. In Hazard, you can find Jarfly brews at Joes Sub Station in Jeff, Ky. and at the Sky Bridge Station at Pine Ridge in Wolfe County. Coming soon, Jarfly beverages will be on tap at a couple of Pikeville's best restaurants, according to Ron Combs, with Perry Distributors.

Last year at this time, Stephens and Stroud were spending all of their free time sanding hardwood floors and moving walls to renovate a 113-year-old storefront in downtown Somerset, Ky., that had been home to the Goldenberg Furniture Store since 1904. It was a vision coming to fruition for the friends and self-proclaimed craft beer lovers and one they plan to share with as many people as possible.

Jarfly opened its doors, at 103 West Mt. Vernon Street, on August 4, and Stephens and Stroud haven't looked back.

"Jarfly Brewing Company is proud to re-open the doors of this historic downtown retail hub and begin a new tradition devoted to a traditional craft - brewing local beer," said Stroud. "Craft beer is made with the union of traditional ingredients like malted barley, hops, water and yeast. At Jarfly Brewing, we're expanding these traditions and fermenting distinctive flavors that satisfy the thirsts of our customers while challenging their ideas of how good a beer can be."

In the end, the young entrepreneurs know it's all about the product they sell. Beginning with a couple of well-developed and tested handcrafted beers, Stephens and Stroud have worked to create a wide variety of locally crafted beers and offer a number of guest taps featuring other Kentucky breweries. Among their offerings, patrons can find Jarfly's flagships always on tap: Kentucky Common Ale (a prohibition-style cream ale); Goldenberg's Golden Ale, Nice Day IPA; Baxter's Coffee Stout, as well as, small batch and experimental brews such as their Jalapeno Common Ale and Ballhoot Black IPA.

Back home in Somerset, they've developed a number of successful social media campaigns to keep customers' interest and local customers coming back.

The campaign called "Jarfly Loves" consistently gives back to the community. They open the first Wednesday (a day normally closed) each month to support a local, worthy cause.

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Patrons are encouraged to donate to the featured charity, and bartenders volunteer their time with 100 percent of their tips going toward the charity.

Through this program, the brewery has partnered with the Pulaski County Animal Shelter, the Young Professionals of Lake Cumberland, Somerset Junior Women's Club, the Pulaski County Human Society, The Shine House (a local arts community) and PRIDE, donating time and resources to these organizations that have helped find homes for animals, granted Christmas wishes for 81 local children and provided necessities for neighbors in need.

In addition, Jarfly regularly donates hundreds of pounds of spent grain each week to local farmers and producers to feed livestock.

They've also worked with the community's thriving arts community to offer a variety of entertainment each weekend. Different singer/songwriters and visual artists perform there weekly. In fact, Jarfly hosted one of the region's most popular music festival's lineup announcements in February. The Master Musician's Festival announced its hugely popular 2017 lineup event at Jarfly.

In addition, Jarfly Brewing has been recognized both locally and regionally for its successes. Stroud spoke about craft brewing in the region at the Appalachian Food Summit held in Berea last fall. In January, Jarfly was recognized as the 2016 Business of the Year by the Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce. The small business was recognized not only for its successful entry into the local economy, but also for the spirit of collaboration, community and revitalization it has embraced during its first six months, according to Chamber President Bobby Clue.

For more information about Jarfly Brewing Co., visit: www.jarflybrewing.com. Hours are Thursday through Saturday from 4 p.m. until midnight and Sundays from 1 to 7 p.m.

SKED worked with Stephens and Stroud to help them finance their new business. SKED's Small Business Administration (SBA) Micro Loan Fund provides both startup funding and technical assistance every new business owner needs. SKED staff also helped Stephens and Stroud apply for a coveted SBA Community Advantage Loan to give them an extra injection of capital.

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“We’ve watched Daniel and Del build this business from the very beginning,” said SKED Executive Director Brett Traver. “It’s been a real pleasure to see all of their hard work pay off and see this new growth taking place. It’s when entrepreneurs work together in our region that we see the most sustainable and consistent success. We are proud to have played a small role in seeing Jarfly Brewing Co. succeed.”

For more information about SKED, visit: www.southeastkentucky.com.

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Formed 30 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky, the economic development organization, based in Somerset, serves a 45-county region in Kentucky. Staff works with business owners, small and large, throughout its service area to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs.