



Staff photo by Kate Whittle

Jennifer and Adam Gregory stand in front of their brewing tanks in the shed where they hope to start Dragon's Gate Brewery in Milton-Freewater.

Couple planning to open Milton-Freewater brewery

By KATE WHITTLE
East Oregonian

In a rural Milton-Freewater neighborhood dotted with vineyards, one couple is hoping to make their mark with barley beverages.

Wednesday afternoon, Adam Gregory, 45, a tall, sturdy man wearing a grey sweater, utili-kilt and black boots, opened the door to a shed bearing the handwritten "Dragon's Gate Brewery" sign.

Inside the spare, bright room on Sunquist Road, a suit of armor watched over gleaming stainless steel tanks.

"We're just starting small, for now," he said.

His co-brewer and wife, Jennifer Gregory, wearing a cat-eared cap over her bright pink hair, walked in the door after putting her two enormous black Friesian horses in for the night.

They've thought about

opening a brewery ever since they discovered a passion for fermentation about 10 years ago, when they were living on Catalina Island, Calif. Since Adam retired from work as a sheriff's deputy and they moved to Milton-Freewater four years ago, they've had more time to put into starting a company. "It's kind of a passion, so it's been fun," he said.

Now, they're ready to take it to another level. The two want Dragon's Gate to open as a small-time "nanobrewery," brewing no more than 30 or 40 gallons at a time.

Jennifer, manager of the Ash Hollow Winery in Walla Walla, Wash., brings years of experience in the beverage industry. "It helps that I have a day job," Jennifer said with a laugh. She gets a kick out of riding as the headless horseman mascot for Ash Hollow's Headless Red brand.

The Gregorlys are well-versed in the ways of marketing and branding, and envision a label with four or five flagship beers, like a Belgian strong ale, porter and India pale ale, all with medieval "legends" to accompany each one. Jennifer plans to host beer-pairing dinners and print up logo t-shirts and growlers.

Friends keep pestering the couple about when Dragon's Gate will be able to sell its wares, but it all depends on when they become fully licensed. Opening a brewery requires going through county, state and federal bureaucracy. So far, Adam said it's been fairly simple, but they still don't think they can open until February at least.

"In Oregon, everything about here lends itself to craft brewing," Adam said. "We thought we'd run into more obstacles, but we really haven't."