



PHOTOS BY KEVIN JOHNSON — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Luke Taylor, co-owner of Corralitos Brewery, pours a beer from the tap during the brewery's grand opening on Saturday.

## Breweries More local brewery arrivals on tap

By Jennifer Squires

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Santa Cruz County's beer scene is about to get even more bountiful. In addition to Corralitos Brewing Co., which opened earlier this month, three new breweries could be open by summer, bringing the number of craft breweries in the county to double-digits.

New Bohemia Brewing Co., a craft brewery specializing in European lagers and West Coast ales, is on the verge of opening in the Pleasure Point neighborhood. Brewmaster Dan Satterthwaite has been professionally crafting beer for more than 15 years and "NuBo" has been in the works for nearly two years.

Co-founder Mike Hochleutner said they hope to have final confirmation of an opening date by the end of February.

"We are trying to cross a couple of big thresholds ... with our permits," Hochleutner said in an email.

Meanwhile, in early February, the Watsonville Planning Commission approved permits for Elkhorn Slough Brewing, an artisanal brewing company run by the husband and wife team of Michael Enos and Julie Rienhardt. ESBC specializes in wild barrel-aged ales, like Three Letter Acronym, a wild ale made using local yeast harvested from cider that won first place in the 2014 California State Fair in the Belgian and French Ale category.

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# Hoppy Days

After years of red tape and bureaucratic hurdles, South County's first brewery throws open its doors

By Jennifer Squires » features@santacruzsentinel.com » @santacruzfood on Twitter

Corralitos » On opening night at the much-anticipated Corralitos Brewing Co, the line stretched out the door and into the parking lot the entire evening. But if the overwhelming response to South County's first brewery was stressful for owners Luke Taylor and Mike Smith, no one knew. The two were all smiles as they poured pints and served sampler trays to the crowd, a mix of dedicated brewery fans and locals on their way home from work.

"It's kind of surreal," Taylor, 34, said a few days after the Feb. 4 opening. "I think I get more satisfaction out of watching someone drink my beer and having it put a smile on their face than just from drinking it myself."

Local beer lovers likely have imbibed Corralitos beer before: It's been poured at private events for years and, recently, has been on tap at area restaurants including Beer Thirty Bottle Shop and Pour House, 99 Bottles, The Hideout and Lúpulo Craft Beer House.

But the opening of the brewhouse, about a mile north of Watsonville on Freedom Boulevard in the Pacific Firewood building, marks the

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### AT A GLANCE

#### CORRALITOS BREWING CO.

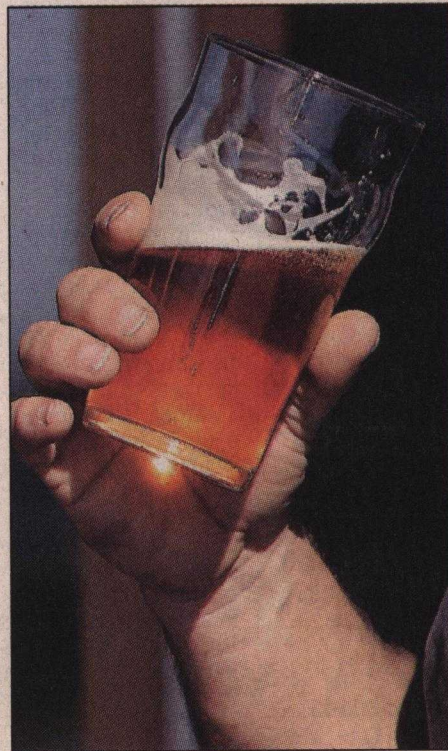
**What:** South County's first brewery, Corralitos Brewing Co. has been in the works since 2009. The brewery is kid- and bike-friendly, and dogs are allowed on the porch. Growler refills and keg sales are available.

**Food:** The brewery doesn't serve food, but customers can bring snacks. Food trucks sometimes set up in the parking lot.

**Where:** 2536 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville

**When:** Open 5-8 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and 1-8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

**Contact:** Call 831-728-2311, find them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/corralitosbrewingco](http://www.facebook.com/corralitosbrewingco) or follow them on Instagram at @corralitosbrewery.



Taylor and Smith began homebrewing together a decade ago. What began as a hobby, though, quickly took over their psyches, and soon they were brewing two or three times a month.





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The wood-paneled tasting room uses about 800 square feet of the brewery's space. Taylor milled almost every piece of wood in the tasting room from local sources.

## Corralitos

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first time all of the Corralitos beers have been served up in one location. The 10-tap system featuring five year-round beers — IPA, blonde, pale ale, red ale and oatmeal stout— as well as a rotating lineup of seasonals, Belgians and barrel-aged brews.

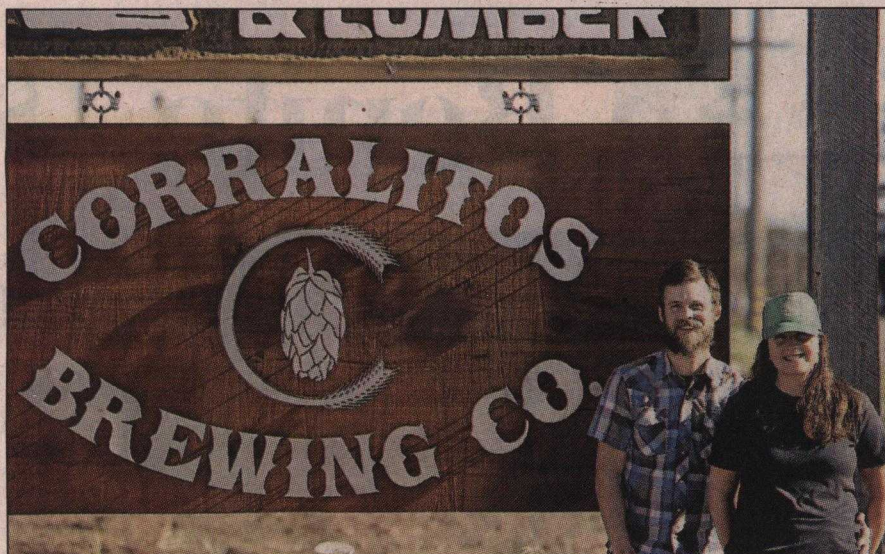
"We've been working on this a long time," Smith, 33, said. "It feels good to get it open."

### A long time coming

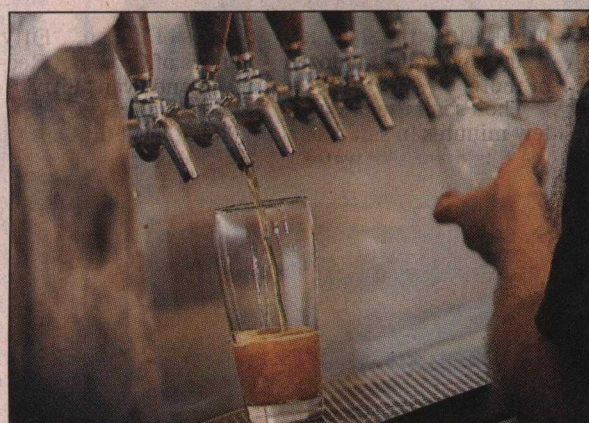
Taylor and Smith began homebrewing together a decade ago. What began as a hobby, though, quickly took over their psyches, and soon they were brewing two or three times a month.

"I just fell in love with the process of making beer," Taylor said, explaining that he started doing research into ingredients and developed his own recipes. "It was a creative way for me to express myself."

Smith, too, became immersed in brewing. He completed the six-month Master Brewers course at UC Davis, worked at Seven Bridges Cooperative, a homebrewing supply store in Santa Cruz, for seven years, then spent a year as a brewer at Boulder Creek Brewery.



Brewery owners Luke and Natalia Taylor stand next to the Corralitos Brewery sign on Freedom Blvd. By 2008, the pair had decided they wanted to open their own brewery together and identified a space at Pacific Firewood, which is owned by Taylor's family.



The 10-tap system featuring five year-round beers — IPA, blonde, pale ale, red ale and oatmeal stout— as well as a rotating lineup of seasonals, Belgians and barrel-aged brews.

to be able to expand," Taylor said.

The wood-paneled tasting room uses about 800 square feet of the brewery's space. Taylor milled almost every piece of wood in the tasting room from local sources: madrone bar tops, black acacia ceilings and wainscoting, Monterey bluestain pine walls and Douglas fir floors.

Sparsely decorated with historic Pajaro Valley hops-farming images and two maps where customers are encouraged to add a pushpin to their hometown, the brightly lit tasting room feels warm and welcoming. Bar stools line the walls and a community table occupies the center of the room.

Customers who choose to sit at a table on the porch on a sunny day can take in views of the fields and orchards, and may catch a glimpse of Peaches, the brewery pig, while they enjoy a cold one.

"We wanted to create a space where everyone feels comfortable ... and a great place for people to come drink local craft beer," Taylor said.

It took a while, but mission accomplished.

regulations, Corralitos Brewing Co. must grow a crop, so Smith and Taylor planted hops on a portion of the 5-acre property a few years ago and intend to make a fresh-hopped beer during harvest season. Other plans including barrel aging beers in 10 white-oak chardonnay barrels and, down the road, adding additional tanks to the brewing system.

Corralitos Brewing Co. can produce up to 100,000 gallons a year under county permit, though the owners don't expect to hit that quantity yet.

## Breweries

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The owners said they hard at work developing the brewery space, located at 65 Hangar Way, and hope to begin brewing their first batch in late May or early June. It will be six to nine months before their signature beer is available, but they plan to brew California table beers such as a California Common, a California Red and, of course, an IPA that will be pourable much sooner.

Meanwhile, work remains ongoing for Steel Bonnet Brewing Company. The owners hope to open this year at 20 Victor Square in Scotts Valley. The family-owned brewery, with the slogan "California Brewed with Scottish Attitude," will serve up small batches of beers in styles ranging from traditional cask-conditioned British ales to American IPAs.

The surge of local beer in Santa Cruz mirrors a national trend: the number of craft breweries and beer pubs in the U.S. has doubled in the past decade to about 3,000, according to the National Brewers Association.



ing supply store in Santa Cruz, for seven years, then spent a year as a brewer at Boulder Creek Brewery.

By 2008, the pair had decided they wanted to open their own brewery together and identified a space at Pacific Firewood, which is owned by Taylor's family, they felt was ideal for the operation. But when Taylor sought permits a year later, he learned the county didn't have provisions for opening a brewery in a commercial agriculture area, beginning a time-intensive and costly effort to navigate the permit process.

All the while, Taylor and Smith brewed beer in the basement of Taylor's house, perfecting recipes and making plans. They designed not just their brewery, but how to increase capacity in the future and add a can-

The 10-tap system featuring five year-round beers — IPA, blonde, pale ale, red ale and oatmeal stout — as well as a rotating lineup of seasonals, Belgians and barrel-aged brews.

ning or bottling line.

"We had plenty of time to plan it out," Taylor said.

They anticipated brewing in the Pacific Firewood space by 2011 and opening the tasting room in 2012, but delays and costs piled up. The pair was left searching for investors to complete the project.

"There was a really dark time when we didn't think we would get funded," Taylor said.

But a silent partner eventually stepped forward to fully fund Corralitos Brewing Co. just as Taylor and Smith considered pulling the plug. From there, everything cranked up. It took the pair 10 months and 14 days to build the brewery

and open.

"It feels great. It feels like I'm finally doing what I'm meant to be doing," Taylor said.

## The brewery

The four-vessel, five-barrel brewhouse occupies 2,100 square feet in the 15,000 Pacific Firewood warehouse, an old apple packing shed once owned by Mann's Apples. The guys brew about twice a week, using three 10-barrel fermenters and three 10-barrel brite tanks. A 24-by-14-foot walk-in built into an old apple cooler serves as keg storage.

"We're getting to do a lot of the fun things we always wanted to do," Taylor said.

To comply with county

permit, though the owners don't expect to hit that quantity yet.

"We've built ourselves out

## AT A GLANCE

### SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BREWERIES

**Boulder Creek Brewery:** 13040 Highway 9, Boulder Creek. Visit [bouldercreek-brewery.net](http://bouldercreek-brewery.net).

**Corralitos Brewing Co.:** 2536 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville. Visit [www.facebook.com/corralitos-brewingco](http://www.facebook.com/corralitos-brewingco).

**Discretion Brewing:** 2703 41st Ave., Soquel. Visit [discretionbrewing.com](http://discretionbrewing.com).

**Elkhorn Slough Brewing:** Opening planned for summer 2015 at 65 Hangér Way, Watsonville. Visit [www.facebook.com/Elkhorn-SloughBrewingCo](http://www.facebook.com/Elkhorn-SloughBrewingCo).

**New Bohemia Brewing Co.:** Opening planned for spring 2015 at 1030 41st Ave., Santa Cruz. Visit [www.nubobrew.com](http://www.nubobrew.com).

**Santa Cruz Ale Works:** 150 Dubois St, Santa Cruz. Visit [www.santacruzaleworks.com](http://www.santacruzaleworks.com).



Beer kegs marked with the Corralitos Brewery logo fill the back area of the newly opened brewery. A 24-by-14-foot walk-in built into an old apple cooler serves as keg storage.

**Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing:** 402 Ingalls St., No 27, Santa Cruz. Visit [www.scmbrew.com](http://www.scmbrew.com).

**Sante Adalrus Rustic Ales:** 103 Kennedy Drive, Capitola. Visit [www.rusticales.com](http://www.rusticales.com).

**Seabright Brewery:** 519 Seabright Ave., No. 107, Santa Cruz. Visit [www.seabrightbrewery.com](http://www.seabrightbrewery.com).

[seabrightbrewery.com](http://seabrightbrewery.com).

**Steel Bonnet Brewing Company:** Hopes to open in 2015 in Scotts Valley. Visit [www.steelbon.net](http://www.steelbon.net).

**Uncommon Brewers:** 303 Potrero St., Santa Cruz. Visitors by appointment only. Visit [www.uncommonbrewers.com](http://www.uncommonbrewers.com).