

Local Business

Mantorville beer returns to market

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By Mike Dougherty

Post-Bulletin, Rochester MN

After a lengthy absence from the market, Stagecoach Amber Ale is now back for beer drinkers, rekindling a fledgling beer first created by a group of Mantorville home brewers more than 10 years ago.

But unlike the ale's first go in the market when customers could only find it on tap at area taverns, this version is packaged in six packs, a key element that the small brewery's new owner thinks will help make it successful as the only locally affiliated brew in the area.

"They had a good beer when they produced it, but for a lot of people, if you drink it at a bar, you eventually like to take some home with you and that wasn't part of the equation before," said Tod Fyten, a St. Paul brewer who bought the Mantorville Brewing Company in 2002.

Schott Distributing began delivering the six packs last week to liquor stores in the area, said Greg Windschitl, brand manager at Schott in Rochester. Windschitl said the local nature of the beer -- although it's now brewed and bottled in Black River Falls, Wis., it carries the Mantorville name -- will help catch beer drinkers' eyes.

"It's local and I think there was an interest when it was just in kegs, so we expect people to give it a try," Windschitl said. "I think the small brewer market is going to get bigger before it gets smaller."

Stagecoach Amber Ale was started by six Mantorville area home brewers in 1995 and made its way in a number of area bars on tap. Fyten, who's worked with a number of brewers and is a partner in publishing a national beer publication, became a partner in the Mantorville operation in 1999 before buying them out in 2002.

He has big plans to get the beer distributed through the region and the Twin Cities before moving ahead with more beers from Mantorville. A golden ale and a smoked porter are both in the works. The golden is a lighter beer that will use honey malts from Canada, Fyten said.

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Mantorville Brewing Company owner Tod Fyten shows off Stagecoach Ale, which is now available in liquor stores in southeastern Minnesota and the Twin Cities.

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