

HOME BREWING

BY AARON DENTEL-POST

THREE SMALL SOMERVILLE
BREWRIES HAVE STARTED
MAKING BIG MONEY INSIDE
CITY LIMITS AND BEYOND

PHOTOS BY KELLY MACDONALD

Call it love at first sip. Dann Paquette and Martha Simpson-Holley met at the New England Real Ale Exhibition in 2004. Martha had dragged her roommates to the event. When she left, she'd gotten more than a look into the industry. She'd found a lifelong guide to American craft beer, who would happen to later become her husband.

It didn't take long for the freshly minted couple to start thinking long-term. On just their second date, Dann pointed to an embroidery sampling of a shield with a white tree against a red background made by Martha's grandmother. "That's going to be our brewery logo," he said.

"I've never spent a day with Dann when he didn't talk about opening his own brewery," said Martha, whose last name is now Holley-Paquette.

Four years later, Dann and Martha founded Pretty Things Beer and Ale Project with \$8,000 they'd saved in capital, and brewed their first batch of just 20 barrels of beer in Sept. 2008. In 2011, they saw over \$1 million in sales.

Their logo? The embroidery Dann pointed to on that first date. But while Pretty Things was the first brewing company to ply the waters of Somerville, it's not the only flourishing microbrewery with local roots.

Caitlin Jewell and Jeff Leiter of the Somerville Brewing Company – more commonly known as Slumbrew – have been home brewing for

Local ingredients help comprise both Somerville Brewing Company and Night Shift's brews. Both use chocolate nibs from Taza Chocolate and teas from MEM Tea, for instance.



a decade. And Night Shift Brewing, founded by Robert Burns, Michael O'Mara and Michael Oxton, is the first Somerville-based brewing company to own a nano-brewery.

Together, Night Shift, Slumbrew and Pretty Things have helped to establish Somerville as a hotspot for craft beer.

"I don't think we ever thought it would succeed," said Holley-Paquette. "Anybody would buy it as a novelty, but people started buying it again and again."

The three breweries are connected by more than just geography. They've all found ways to start breweries without half million dollar startup costs, and they're all interested in brewing artisan beer that's flavor and ingredient oriented. That is to say that, at heart, they're all hobbyists.

Aside from all living and playing in Somerville, the breweries founded their businesses here all consider the city their home.

GETTING STARTED

After Dann and Martha of Pretty Things met in 2004, they lived in Somerville for two years and in Yorkshire, England for three. While in England, Dann brewed for the Daleside Brewery and Martha worked as a biologist, but Dann began to tire of brewing British pale ales.

Inspired by a carving he saw in a Yorkshire cathedral, Dann sat at the table every night drawing a character named Jack d'Or — a grain of barley that would serve as the mascot and name-sake for his and Martha's future flagship beer.

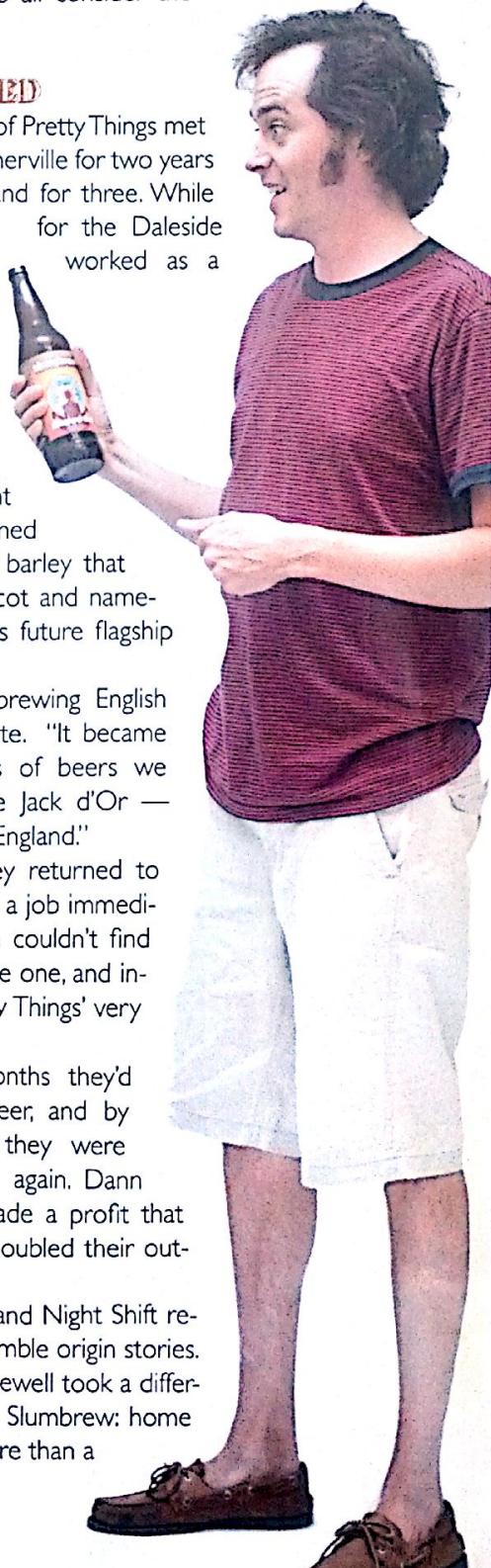
"Dann got sick of brewing English beer," said Holley-Paquette. "It became apparent that the kinds of beers we wanted to brew — like Jack d'Or — wouldn't do very well in England."

And so in 2008 they returned to Somerville. Martha found a job immediately, but Dann couldn't find one so he made one, and invested in Pretty Things' very first batch.

Within months they'd sold all the beer, and by January 2009 they were ready to brew again. Dann and Martha made a profit that first year and doubled their output the next.

Slumbrew and Night Shift re-cite similarly humble origin stories.

Leiter and Jewell took a different route with Slumbrew: home brewing for more than a



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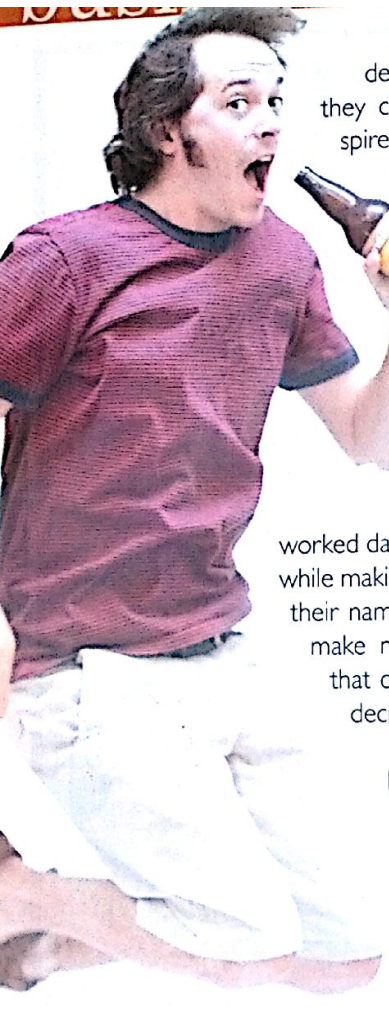
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decade in their garage nano-brewery, they circulated beers among friends. Inspired to tell their own story and share their beer with a wider audience, they incorporated as Somerville Brewing Company in Jan. 2011. The cost of their home testing nano-brew facility was just \$20,000.

In 2007, Night Shift founders Oxton, O'Mara and Burns began brewing as a post-college hobby while they worked day jobs. Brewing during darker hours while making a living during the day gave them their name. Thirsting for the opportunity to make more beer and the independence that comes with owning a business, they decided to expand in 2011.

"It was something we already loved doing, so why not do it all the time and share our craft with a larger community than just our friends?" Oxton said.

Oxton was the first to take the plunge and quit his job, making Night Shift his dayshift last fall.

"All in all, I think Somerville could be a great city for breweries," Paquette said.

The goal is for the others to follow, but for now O'Mara and Burns still brew afterhours.

It's been a serious transition for what started "as \$200 and some kettles," Oxton said; Night Shift's Everett microbrewery cost \$100,000 to renovate from what was once a World War II parts manufacturing facility.

Night Shift settled on Everett as the site of a nano-brewery because, while its offices are in Somerville, they found a cheaper and more industrial neighborhood readily available in Everett for brewing purposes.

"We only looked at a few places in Somerville," Oxton said. "But then we found this place in Everett, and it was all systems go."

GOOD TENANTS

While Night Shift opted for a nanobrewery, Slumbrew and Pretty Things have taken a cost-effective avenue; they rent space several times a week in a brewery and craft their own beers there. But both companies have offices in Somerville where they work daily.

Pretty Things beer is brewed in the Buzzard's Bay Brewery in Westport, Mass. Tenant brewing, Paquette said, gives the company the freedom to brew more eccentric and ingredient-focused beers. He said they mostly base their beers and market strategy on their own preferences and what they thought was fun.

Having been in the industry prior to starting Pretty Things, Paquette said he had grown tired of working for people who were using beer to make money. Now, he said, he doesn't have to focus on brewing popular, safety beers to pay a huge mortgage. "We love the idea that we don't have to make money for anyone," Paquette said. But tenant brewing, he added, comes with the disadvantage of having to play by the brewery's rules. "We can't do sour beers or wood-aged beers at our facility," Paquette said.

Slumbrew's Jewell and Leiter tenant brew in the Mercury Brewery in Ipswich, Mass. There, among a host of local brewing companies who do the same (including the Cambridge Brewing Company and Notch Session Beers), they mix their own ingredients into their concoctions like Happy Sol and Porter Square Porter.

Both breweries would rather make the trip to someone else's brewery and mix the ingredients themselves than contract brew, where they would have another company make their beer for them.

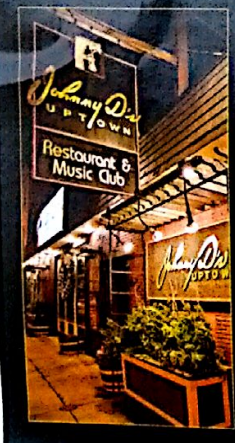
"Jeff and Dann are literally slashing open grain bags with knives," Jewell said. "They're gypsy brewers."

CRAFTED WITH CARE

Traditional beer ingredients, like malt, oats, rye, sugar, hops and yeast form the basis for all of Pretty Things' beers. "We're pretty old fashioned," said Paquette.

While the ingredients may be straightforward, a creative element plays into the production of Pretty Things. "We want to stimulate people's imaginations when they drink our beer," said Holley-Paquette. "Wouldn't it be cool to make a beer that tasted exactly like 18th century London?"

Local ingredients help comprise both Somerville Brewing Company and Night Shift's brews. Both use chocolate nibs from Taza



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Chocolate and teas from MEM Tea, for instance. "Two of our three beers use locally sourced ingredients," said Oxton.

Night Shift Brewing uses the Taza nibs, for example, in their Taza Stout. The beer is aged on the nibs, giving it a chocolaty finish.

THINKING BIG

The young breweries are also bound by the fact that they're looking forward to the next step in owning their own facilities and expanding their business. They would all like to build breweries in the future, and preferably somewhere within the city's limits.

Paquette said Pretty Things would really like to build a microbrewery sometime in the next two to five years. "I think cities are where beer should be made," said Paquette.

Holley-Paquette said that if Pretty Things is able to accomplish its goal of building a microbrewery in two to five years, it would most likely be in Somerville. "Our vibe and our brand kind of belong here," she said. "All in all, I think Somerville could be a great city for breweries," Paquette added.

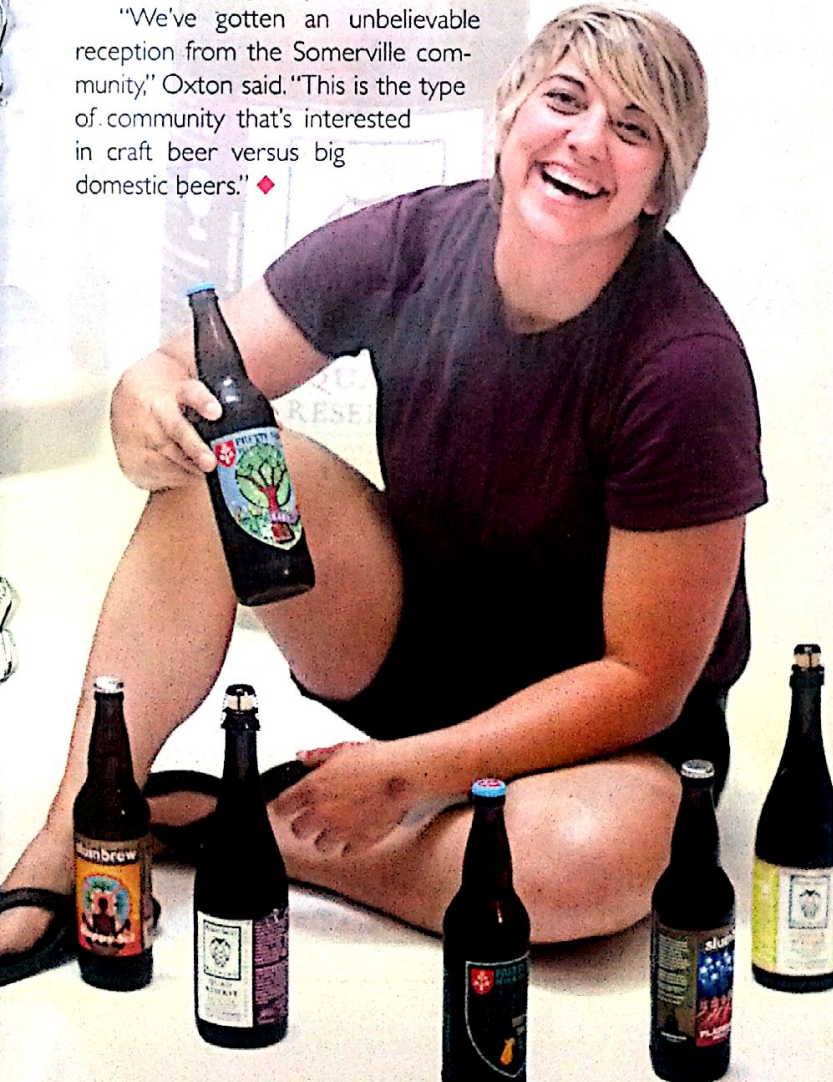
Oxton said Night Shift would be looking to upgrade their equipment two or three years down the road, and were considering locations and price tags. "We definitely wouldn't rule out Somerville," he said. "We consider it our community. It's where we live, it's where we go out."

THIRSTY SOMERVILLE

All three brewing companies said they'd received an enormous reaction in Somerville, and credited the populace's awareness of craft beer.

Paquette said that if you took a map and put pins in all the places that sold Pretty Things, Somerville would light up, and Night Shift's leadership agreed Somerville has been a great place to sell beer.

"We've gotten an unbelievable reception from the Somerville community," Oxton said. "This is the type of community that's interested in craft beer versus big domestic beers." ♦



It's that time of year again; Stores are fresh out of free boxes, the city is taped off with "No Parking; Moving" signs, overflowing pick-ups and low-riding U-Hauls lumber across Somerville. If you're a renter, you are waiting to get that security deposit check back from your previous landlord so you can slap it in the palm of your new one. But what if your former landlord refused to return some or all of your deposit? Can a landlord do that?

The answer is simple: "It depends." What tenants, and even landlords, might not know is that security deposits in Massachusetts are highly regulated and the rules on accepting, managing, maintaining and returning them are extremely strict.

When landlords violate the security deposit law they may be forced to return the deposit before the lease term has ended. Certain violations may even entitle the tenant to three times the amount of the original deposit. Why would a court award a tenant three times the deposit she paid? The law is meant to give tenants an incentive to get their money back and make it costly for landlords to break the law.

Security deposit laws protect tenants from landlords who arbitrarily withhold part or all of their tenants' deposits or neglect to manage their deposits properly. In many cases landlords are violating the law by doing this. If you think your landlord may have broken the rules with your security deposit, go to www.wheresmysecuritydeposit.com and find out. That website is owned and operated by the Law Office of Andrew J. Turco and www.turcolawyer.com.

The Law Office of Andrew J. Turco is a general practice law firm that handles landlord/tenant disputes in addition to a number of other practice areas.



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