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## 4Js Farm and Brewery aims to be a community hub

By Aaron Wright Piedmont Journalism Foundation

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4Js Farm and Brewery owners Jessica and Jonathan Waldron. 4Js is located north of Warrenton off of U.S. 17 at 7595 Keith Road.

Photo by Aaron Wright

From the outside, 4Js Farm and Brewery is exactly what it sounds like: a brewery that grows its own ingredients and makes its own beer. However, what lies beneath the suds is a couple's desire to become a community hub for their neighbors.

The idea for the new brewery, which just opened in July, came when Jonathan and Jessica Waldron moved from Clifton to their 48-acre property in March 2020. Shortly thereafter, the pandemic hit, and they got to building their small-scale farm.

A year after, upon realizing that small-scale farming wasn't profitable, the Waldrons started talking with the Virginia Cooperative Extension to come up a ways to build a community and provide for themselves financially.



“We wanted to have a space that is also family friendly. Like we have small kids. We wanted to create a good environment for people to come and have fun and relax and enjoy themselves responsibly, but also let kids be kids,” said Jonathan Waldron, a full-time farmer and operator of the brewery.

From this inception, 4Js, named after Jonathan, Jessica and their kids, Julieanne and Jamison, was established in 2020. After three years of construction, planning, and some pushback from their neighbors over concerns about disturbing the peace, the brewery opened on July 1.

“It’s not (open) 24/7 and all hours of the night, and we’re not being loud or irresponsible because it is our front yard. I mean, our house is right up at the top (of the hill),” Jonathan Waldron said. “We take great pride and respect and responsibility for what we have.”

Aesthetically, the bar and inside dining has a country-family-diner style. Jonathan Waldron milled the bar from oak and black walnut trees that fell from a storm. The Waldrons also managed to fill a lot of their decor from antiquing and repurposing metal from abandoned houses.

“Really trying to reuse, repurpose and give things a new life,” Jessica Waldron said. “We’re trying to be environmentally conscious as well.”

In creating their beers, the Waldrons grow and use their own hops, with the spent grain from the beer going toward animal feed.

With a lot on his plate – running a farm, brewery and carving out family time – Jonathan Waldron hired Kirk Hurd, a brewer from the West Coast, to help with their two-barrel system. All of their beer is brewed on property, and a lot of their ingredients have been sourced from local farms in their area.

“Our peaches and cream beer has been topped with peaches from a couple local orchards,” Jessica Waldron said.

One of their flavors uses honey from Mike Wilson, a beekeeper on Cedar Run. In keeping with their desire to build community, 4Js has a honey IPA that also helps the local beekeeper.

“It’s also something that he’s proud of. He’s like, ‘Look, I was a part of this. This is my honey in this beer.’ He was super stoked, and the feedback on that has been great.”

Beyond beer, the Waldrons also sell local produce from their gardens. In addition, they host vendors who sell their goods at the Warrenton Farmers Market on Saturday afternoons.

The Waldrons say their entire operation – from the items they’ve reused in their décor to their locally sourced ingredients and family activities like board games and a bounce house – are examples of their community-oriented business ethos.

“We’re part of this community. We want to make sure we’re doing what we’re doing ... and using our resources and what we have in the community to help do some good,” Jonathan Waldron said.

*Reach Aaron Wright at [news@fauquier.com](mailto:news@fauquier.com)*