

Beer Builds a Community

By Gordon Woodworth

Dancing Grain Farm Brewery, a field-to-glass farm brewery on 308 fertile acres in Gansevoort, N.Y., has found its niche in the crowded craft brewery industry. “We completely exceeded expectations in every way in our first year,” brewery owner Rachel McDermott said.

So much so that McDermott announced before Christmas on social media that she had bought out the equity interest of business partners Bert and Christian Weber ahead of schedule. The Webers own Common Roots Brewing Company in South Glens Falls and are impressively successful brewers and restauranteurs:



They recently acquired the Albany Pump Station. They had invested in Dancing Grain to help McDermott launch the business.

After seven years as an investment banker, the Cornell-educated McDermott says she “traded in the patent pumps and Upper East Side apartment for shit-kickers and a pickup,” to start Dancing Grain, which established itself with a wildly successful Sunflower Festival and an array of other activities enhanced by local musicians, popular food trucks and dog-friendly activities. (Dancing Grain hosts its second annual Christmas Tree bonfire to benefit the South Glens Falls Fire Company on Saturday, Jan. 6, at 4 p.m.)

“We want people to feel like they are part of this,” McDermott said. “We want them to feel part of saving a family farm.”

To that end, McDermott is considering starting a “Founder’s Club” to allow customers to invest in agricultural initiatives like heritage grain trials and planting patches of native wildflowers to enhance pollination of their unique grains.

“It’s really a blank canvas, and being harmonious to the world around us is very important to me, so I’m looking at very specific initiatives to support the environment and enhance the experience at Dancing Grain.”

Meanwhile, the Webers celebrated 10 years in business in 2024 and just opened a new event space in South Glens Falls next to the original Common Roots. The new space holds up to 200 people for parties, receptions and special events and doubles as the Cafe at the Bierhall and Barrel House, serving home-brewed coffee and breakfast sandwiches.

The Webers plan to open a new brewery in the old Albany Pump Station at Quackenbush Square.