

The Beer ARTISAN



Tara Townsend

“Making soap with beer is actually an old concept. There is a resurgence recently ...”

by Laurel Brauns for
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Admit it, the college kid buried within still wants to take a cold one into the shower. Now you can, thanks to a new partnership between natural skincare enthusiasts and local breweries.

Tara and Shannon Townsend have been dabbling in the skin care business for the last three years. They have their own line of goat milk soaps, body creams and bath soaks made from the milk of the goats that they raise at Bantam Lane Natural Farms east of Bend.

Their newest creation is a batch of soaps made with beer from Deschutes Brewery and GoodLife Brewing. This collaborative opportunity “fell in their lap” and offered a great way to expand their line and join forces with local brewers.

“Making soap with beer is actually an old concept,” Shannon Townsend said. “There



is a resurgence recently because of the popularity of local beers.”

The soap is made using 20 percent beer. The hop oils, malts and sugars in the beer are naturally moisturizing and have a natural anti-bacterial quality. These ingredients both smoothen and soften the skin.

Goat's milk is also added to bring the PH level down to the natural level of human skin.

“In the past, our skin care

products have been most popular with those that have severe skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis,” Shannon said. “But two-thirds of our market for these beer soaps are men between the ages of 30 and 60. They introduce their wives to them, and pretty soon, they are buying them, too.”

“It's pretty funny when we sell the beer soap to women, because they are usually buying it as a

gift for a man in their life,” Tara added. “They know that men will use it because it's ‘beer soap’ after all. But they love the fact that it makes their men smell great, too.”

The idea to marry their passion for natural skin care products with their love of locally brewed beer came through a friend who started a small homemade beer soap business, but was soon overwhelmed by the demand.

She proposed the Townsends take over, and the couple felt up to the challenge.

“We love working with local breweries,” Shannon said. “This was a great opportunity to expand our skincare business.”

The Townsends use a cold process to make their soap, which means they mix liquid vegetable oils and beer and/or goat's milk together with sodium hydroxide.



This chemical reaction allows the soap to quickly harden and continue the process of saponification.

The bars need approximately six weeks to cure, which allows for the evaporation of any remaining liquids and assures the soap will last longer.

The soap doesn't smell (or taste!) like beer, but the Townsends add cosmetic-grade fragrances to the beer soaps to tie in the flavors of the beer.

For instance, Deschutes Mirror Pond Pale Ale has a citrusy kick to it, so that element was accentuated when adding fragrance.

The Black Butte Porter is well loved for its chocolaty roasted malts, so the Townsends added Cocoa beans to give the soap some body and texture.

The Obsidian Stout has a

strong espresso taste, and so a coffee fragrance was added.

For one of their Goodlife soaps, the Descender IPA, the Townsends actually mill down grains and barley and add them to the soap, again adding a textural element.

The Townsends' next big release will be a collaboration with Volcano Vineyards featuring soap made from their Bend Red and Bend White wine, which were both fermented using grapes from Monkey Face Vineyards at Ranch at the Canyons.

The beer soaps are sold on their website, bantamlane.com/beersoap, at the breweries and through Central Oregon Locavore, an online local food coop.

Retail locations include Dream Pebbles, Spa W, and Celebrate the Seasons in Bend; the Soap Box in Redmond; Urban Girl in Prineville; and Shibui Spa at Five Pines Lodge in Sisters. Whole Foods will soon carry their products, too.

"Anyone wanting to pamper their skin with natural nourishment will be very pleased with any of our products," Tara said. "We pride ourselves on the ability to tie in our dairy goat farm with locally made beer and wine to bring people healing benefits for their skin."



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