

work

With Me

Deb Carey

Keeping the good times flowing at New Glarus Brewing Co.

Their beers are only found within Wisconsin's borders, but that hasn't stopped New Glarus Brewing Co. from making a name for itself nationwide. In the world of craft breweries, it is a force to be reckoned with.

While their famed beers, including the top-selling Spotted Cow, continue to set New Glarus apart, it's been president and co-founder Deb Carey's astute business acumen that has helped propel the company from producing 3,000 barrels a year to the more than 100,000 they churn out annually today.

Carey began running the brewery's business operations alongside her husband (and brew master) Dan in 1993, becoming the first woman in the United States to launch and operate a brewery. Since then, she's become an innovator in the field.

"Nothing I do is typical," explains Carey, who previously ran a successful arts and antiquing business in Oregon while her husband spent years designing and building breweries. "But at the end of the day, that works to my advantage."

From negotiating business loans to structuring her own contracts, limiting distribution and striving to offer their growing workforce a livable wage and great benefits, Carey continues to do business her own way. It's a management style that has earned her recognition both near and far.

At a brewery that has won more awards for their brews than you can fit in a beer barrel, Carey has received impressive kudos of her own, including being named the 2011 Wisconsin Small Business Person of the Year and first runner-up for the National Small Business Person of the Year, both awarded by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Despite the accolades, Carey is quick to credit her army of nearly 65 workers for keeping the brewery hopping (sales are up 20 percent from last year and have doubled in the last five years).

"My goal has always been to take care of our workers and just make good beer," she says.

We'll drink to that.

Why New Glarus?
While living in Colorado, the Careys decided to relocate to Wisconsin (Deb's home state) to start their own brewery, but hadn't settled on a locale. While scouting real estate around Wisconsin, Dan stopped in New Glarus for gas and stumbled upon the warehouse that would later become their famed brewery.



Photo by Shanna Wolf