

↑ **S&P TSX**
13,864.72 + 116.19

↑ **DOW**
13,358.31 + 92.84

↑ **NASDAQ**
2,583.28 + 21.04

↓ **Dollar**
93.59¢ U.S. - 0.58¢ U.S.

↓ **Oil**
76.79^{barrel} - 0.21^{barrel}

↑ **Gold**
664.10^{roy oz} + 1.60^{roy oz}

Thirsty for cold spring water?

Confident pair sells jugs of it

By Martin Cash

IT'S always risky starting a new business, but the owners of Manitoba's newest spring water company figure having a product that experts rate as the best in the world ought to help.

That's why Chris and Laryssa Garrick were confident spending close to \$1 million building a state-of-the-art processing plant for their new company, Jackson Springs Natural Spring Water.

Chris Garrick is a natural salesman and his enthusiasm for his water is infectious.

"A lot of people will say water is water, but you wouldn't believe how many unsolicited comments we get from people who say our water tastes fantastic," he said.

While most expert marketers can find enough satisfied customers, the Garricks have experts to back up their claim. The spring water that is now bottled in five-gallon Jackson Springs jugs comes from the same source that won the gold medal in the 2001 Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting.

It was a bit of a circuitous route that led the Garricks to open the new plant earlier this summer. In 2004, the couple, who own the successful white-label cash-machine business in Manitoba, called Laser Cash, were looking for a new business.

They became customers of the Jackson Springs predecessor, which was called Simply Natural Canadian Spring Water at the time, and they liked the water so much they became the exclusive Manitoba distributor.

But after a number of ownership changes and disruptions in supply, the Garricks decided to take matters into their own hands. They bought the 40 acres near Middlebro in the southeast corner of the province where the spring is located, changed the name to Jackson Springs earlier this year, and in June completed installation of a high-tech, super sterilized five-gallon jug bottling operation on Keewatin Street.

Not only does Jackson Springs own the spring and the processing plant, but also the 36,000-litre stainless steel tanker that makes the six-hour, two-way trip two or three times a week from the Middlebro spring to the Keewatin Street plant, as well as two delivery trucks (soon to become three) that deliver throughout the Winnipeg.

"We now control the entire operation from the ground to our customers' lips," Garrick said.



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Laryssa and Chris Garrick produce water from a spring, not a tap.

Water, water... what's the diff?

Jackson Springs water — Contains potassium, calcium and magnesium, minerals essential to good health. The presence of those minerals also provides good taste to the water.

Processed tap water — Typically undergoes a process called reverse osmosis, which filters out just about everything with larger molecular composition than the water. Unfortunately, that includes virtually all the beneficial minerals. The World Health Organization has reported that consuming demineralized water compromises the mineral and water metabolism of the body.

North American sales of bottled water are worth more than US\$10 billion a year and are growing by 10 per cent annually. But there is increasing concern about the environmental impact of so many plastic bottles, many of them going into landfills.

Also, consumer advocates have been complaining for some time that many bottled-water brands do not make it clear that they are selling only processed tap water.

Although those processed-water brands might sell clean-tasting water, the processing strips out almost all the nutritious mineral components.

Jackson Springs, on the other hand, can boast that it is all natural, with a mineral content better than any other North American spring water.

It is so rich in nutrients that natural-health consultants in Manitoba recommend Jackson Springs to their clients.

"We give all our clients a 500-millilitre bottle of Jackson Springs and include their brochure in a package we give all our new clients," said June Bari of Nutritional Sciences.

Jackson Springs is available only from the company's location or via delivery, and though it also sells the water in a 500-ml bottle, Garrick said they are phasing that out for practical and environmental reasons.

They are so confident of their product that new customers receive their first five five-gallon jugs free.

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