

Drought could dry up Nevada's estate distilleries

By Mike Higdon, Reno Gazette-Journal

If El Niño doesn't deliver much-needed water this winter, the stills could run dry at two of Nevada's craft spirits makers: Frey Ranch Estate Distillery in Fallon and the future Bently Heritage Estate Distillery in Gardnerville.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed for a powerful El Niño," said Ashley Frey, owner of Frey Ranch along with her husband, Colby.

Frey Ranch and Bently, set to open in 2017, are two of just three estate distilleries in the United States. The third is in New York. An estate distillery grows 100 percent of its own ingredients, then distills, bottles and sells all the spirits on the same property.

Distilleries use rye, barley and wheat to make vodka, gin and whiskey. Without adequate water, nothing grows and no one drinks.

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