

Donnewald Distributing takes Battle of the Beers and Wine Off

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The Atrium Hotel, formally known as Holiday Inn, located at 3800 Homer Adams Parkway in Alton hosted the first *Battle of the Beers and Wine Off*, Jan. 21, at Lily's Lounge. 6 distributors battled it out to compete for the title of the best beer and best wine.

The 6 participating distributors from all around were Donnewald Distributing from Greenville, IL, Robert “Chick” Fritz Distributing originally founded in Mascoutah, IL, Stroller Wholesale Wine & Spirits from Elk Grove Village, IL, Southern Wine & Spirits based out of Miami, Florida, Wirtz Beverage Group that was originally established in Wisconsin and Koerner Distribution, Inc. from Effingham, IL. All distributors serve local establishments in the Riverbend area.



Each distributor had a table displayed a with various beer and wine selections for people to test and vote for their favorite.

“The idea was brought up by our bar manager, Annette, to organize and have everyone come out and taste different beers and wines from all of our distributors that we do regular business with,” said Patty Rotermund, General Manager of Atrium Hotel.

Over 75 patrons attended the event and had the opportunity to taste test roughly 50 varieties of beer and wine presented from the different vendors. Each attendee received a ballot upon entry and walked throughout the Conference Center, taste testing and taking notes on the offerings of their choice. After visiting each distributor, they placed their votes for their favorite beer and their favorite wine overall.

“This is kind of an educational event,” said Rotermund. “Now, when they go to the grocery store or next time they come in here, they are more educated in what they really like, other than your typical options that are offered everywhere.”

The purpose of this event is to expose people to more options than the typical domestic beer that establishments carry.

“So many people don’t know what to order because they haven’t expanded their options,” said Rotermund. “This is the perfect opportunity for people figure out what they actually like.”

The winner of the favorite beer get their beer on tap at Lily’s Lounge for a month and the winner of the favorite wine will be showcased in Lily’s Lounge as well.



“The turnout was fantastic,” said Rotermund. “We hope to make this a quarterly event, that way, the distributors will get to promote their seasonal beers.”

At the end of the night, after all the votes were in, it was announced that Donnewald Distributing took not just one but both categories. Strawberry Fruili was voted the best beer and Grafton Winery, Lost Barrels was voted best wine.

“It’s really exciting that we won both categories,” said Brett Hollinger, sales representative at Donnewald Distributing. “You always want to take at least one of them, but to go home with both awards is huge.”

The winning wine, Lost Barrels, is a product from Grafton Winery & Brewhaus, owned by Mike and Lori Nikonovich, who also attended the event.

“There is an enormous sense of pride with all of our products,” Hollinger. “We wouldn’t sell them if we weren’t proud of them. Having the Nikonovichs here along side with us makes it all the better.”

To taste the winning beer and wine yourself, make it on out to Lily’s Lounge at the Atrium hotel where they will be available the whole month of February.

