



Moussalli's Prime Is Winner Of Successful ARTini Event At Edwardsville Art Fair

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - On Friday evening, September 23, a special fundraiser was held to benefit the Edwardsville Arts Center called an ARTini competition. The event took place at the Edwardsville Art Fair. Six local restaurants were challenged to create a

unique cocktail inspired by works of art. Attendees sampled the creative drinks and voted for who should be named ARTini's Best Cocktail 2022.

"All of the drinks were amazing, but Moussalli's Prime "Melons" drink was voted by our attendees as ARTini's Best Cocktail 2022," Colette Poettker, one of coordinators of the event, said. "Taking inspiration from both the subject matter and the colors found in "Melons" by Daoud Corm, their drink was made with Witness Distillery vodka, compressed watermelon, lemon juice, Aquafina, simple syrup, and sesame seed garnish with a slice of fresh watermelon."

The Arts Center capped the event at 100 attendees, and it quickly sold out.

The competitors were Blue Violet, Cleveland Heath, Foundry Public House, Global Brew, Moussalli's Prime, and Peel Wood Fired Pizza. Each restaurant provided a 3-ounce sample of their cocktail and appetizers.

Witness Distillery, from Vandalia, IL, was the presenting sponsor, and they were a great partner for the event, Poettker said.

"I had recently gone on a tour of Witness Distillery and was really impressed with their products," she said. "Our restaurants were impressed as well, and while Witness Distillery makes vodka, whiskey, and rum, most of our restaurants chose to use Witness vodka in their cocktails," she said.

Other sponsors who helped make this event happen were Dean's Liquor, Social Grace Vodka, McCracken Law Firm, Stonecreek Staffing, and Aquilant Advisors.

"This was our first year of ARTini, and we are so pleased with the success of the event," Poettker said. "People had a great time, and really seemed to enjoy the friendly competition between the restaurants in our community. We are already planning ARTini 2023 and will be choosing a larger venue that will allow us to grow the event.

"We are so thankful to the restaurants that participated and donated their time and manpower to help make this event a success. They were great to work with and we couldn't have done it without them."



Colette had this conversation with Zachary Robinette Beverage Director / Bar Manager for Moussalli's Prime:

Robinette had this to say about the Arts Center event:

“I was tremendously excited when I learned of the opportunity. I have been creating craft cocktails for over 20 years, and the opportunity to challenge myself and put myself out there are few and far between. It was really exciting to get to do this. Once I learned the challenge was to base my drink on the artwork, I really dug into it. My inspiration was just to represent the restaurant and who we are, in terms of the drink and the painting I chose.

“The Moussallis’ father was Lebanese and came to this country, and they are very proud of that part of their heritage and it shines through in a lot of what we do...a lot of our cuisine, we have wine and spirits from Lebanon, and it’s something we’re proud of and want to showcase. The painting I chose as inspiration was a brilliant still life called *Melons*, by Daoud Corm, who was one of the fathers of the modern art movement in Lebanon. I really wanted to honor the Moussalli family, and the restaurant family, because we’re a small tight-knit staff and it’s just a really great environment to be in.

“For the drink, I knew sort of visually what I wanted it to be, but I also wanted it to showcase other elements of cocktail making, and I chose to make it a version of an egg-white drink, but instead I used Aquafaba, which is chickpea brine, as an emulsifier and I compressed watermelon and it turned out just as good as I could have hoped. I will say it was a lot of work, but I was willing to put that amount of work in because I wanted to win.”

Robinette concluded with the following comments: “It was an honor that members of the community, and people I see in the restaurant all the time, were out there and they supported us and they enjoyed the drink and they gave great feedback and it’s just really neat that not only do I get to compete against my peers, but it’s the community that judged that, so I really liked that aspect of the event and I hope moving forward that it continues to grow and really bring more people into the fold, and make me work to defend the title. The Witness Distillery Vodka was amazing and made for a great mixer, and they were a very good sponsor.”