

'Art of Beer' returns to NACC next Friday

Annual fundraiser a community partnership that showcases NACC experience

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

A Buffalo Niagara favorite returns next week with the "Art of Beer."

Now in its 15th year, the annual fundraiser benefits the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center, 1201 Pine Ave., Niagara Falls. Geared for the adult crowd, this enjoyable suds-taste and arts happening opens at 6 p.m. Friday, March 3, and continues to 9 p.m.

That evening, visitors can look forward to "limitless tastings of beer, wine and cider, culinary pairings from local restaurants, live music, movie magic, and art experiences, plus an 'Art of Beer' souvenir glass – all for one low ticket price," organizers said.

Kelly Lang Buckley, director of development and marketing, said this event is part of the NACC's ongoing efforts to recover from the pauses associated with COVID-19.

"It's the community coming together again after the shutdown, to help revitalize the Arts Center that took a hit during COVID. ... And there's some amazing partners," she said.

Included are favorites from the area's IPA, craft beer, cider and wine scene. Names such as 12 Gates Brewing Co., 1911 Cider, 42 North Brewing Co., Aurora Brewing Co., Big Ditch Brewing Co., Blackbird Cider, Black Willow Winery, Blake Cider, Briar Brothers Brewing Co., Brickyard Brewing Co., Community Beer Works, East Aurora, Ellicottville and Flying Bison are expected.

Also, Hammer and Crown, McKenzie's, Niagara Craft Spirits, Pressure Drop, Prosper Brewer, Resurgence, Single Cut Beer, Southern Tier, Steelbound, Thin Man, Victorianbourg Wine Estate, Vizcarra Vineyards, and Woodcock Brothers are slated to

15TH ANNUAL
ART OF BEER
BEER & FOOD TASTING
March 3, 2023 @ 6pm-9:00pm



The "Art of Beer" returns to the NACC. (Submitted)

have products available.

Joining them will be the tasty culinary pairings from such establishments as The Archives Pub, Betty's Café, The Brickyard Brewing Co., The Craft Kitchen and Bar, Hard Rock Café, Niagara Honey Moon Sweets, Power City, the Red Coach Inn, Fortuna's, Judas Tree, Sweet Temptations du Jour and The Cadence: Seva.

Lang Buckley said this all-local partnership is "neighbors helping neighbors."

"This year, (it's) a little bit different than past years, which is interesting," she said. "In most of the previous years, all of my donations have come from larger places, like the hotels. This year, almost all of my donations are actually coming from small businesses in the community. The people who are supporting us are our neighbors."

"When you look at the 'Art of Beer' list from the restaurants and the breweries who are attending, they are all small and local. They're all privately owned, small businesses. I thought that was pretty amazing."

One that stands out to her is Betty's Café, found at 1715 Pine

Ave., Niagara Falls.

"Betty's is doing soul food, potato salad and corn bread," Lang Buckley said. "Betty's is owned by Edith Lawson. She is the woman who runs the Niagara Cheer youth group that's right in (our) building."

And there are others. "Brewed and Bottled in Lewiston, they're actually donating some of the kegs. The same thing with Fortuna's. And even Brickyard is donating beer and food."

Lang Buckley called such involvement one of the core reasons behind the success of this event.

"It's our neighbors supporting neighbors, which is extraordinary, actually," she said. The "Art of Beer" is for the community, but (its success comes from) the community. I think that's one of the reasons why (this) has been so successful."

She said this event will also showcase many other elements of the NAAC experience to visitors.

"There's going to be some 'Art of Beer' fashion!" Lang Buckley said. "The artisans are bringing their fashions this year. I'm hop-

ing for Mary Grace (to return). Mary Grace Orem is one of the best people for fashions! I'm definitely hoping she will be there."

Also this year, all of the music is local. The musicians will donate their time and talents. And some of the entertainment in the grand theater will be movies that have been recently filmed in Niagara at the NACC.

"We'll be opening the studios, so people can actually meet some of the artists in the building. We'll have plein-air painters, musicians," Lang Buckley said.

Expected performers, exhibitors and presenters include The X-Statix in the NACC Music Garden, plus Project 342, the Moxy Cleveland Cabaret, Bobby Skrzypek and The Pedestrians; the Simon Pure Collectors, Niagara Painters, the Greater Niagara Ballet Company, Brave Spirit Art, the BfloGALS, Barbara Keating Bird Houses and Rough Cuts by Joe. Plein-air artist Kath Schifano from Grand Island will

have an open studio.

The NACC noted it would have convenient parking and transportation arrangements available for "Art of Beer" visitors.

"The Discovery Niagara Shuttle is donating shuttle service, and local businesses are donating their parking lots; the VA is donating their parking lot at their (Pine Avenue) location," Lang Buckley said. "The Discovery Niagara Shuttle will be taking people either at the train station or designated stops. They will be running from 5:30 until 10 p.m."

In addition, Niagara Falls businesses will offer overnight accommodation packages for visitors – check out their "Art of Beer" listings on Facebook.

Tickets for this year are priced at \$40 presale and available at the NACC and area businesses, including Niagara Tradition Homebrewing Supplies, Brewed and Bottled Craft Beer Shop, Judas Tree, The Gold Bar, The Archives Pub and the Red Coach Inn. Tickets will be \$45 on the day of the event.

"This is a great community event," Lewiston musician Edward Perlman shared in a Facebook post. "Please come out to support it. The NACC is the only cultural center in Niagara Falls and its future depends on the success of events such as this. Come and lift a glass to renewing old friendships and making new ones."

For more on this year's "Art of Beer," visit www.thenacc.org, check out its Facebook page or call 716-282-7530.

IN THE NEWS

WNY's largest St. Patrick's Day party returns to Niagara Falls Convention Center

The 39th annual St. Patrick's Day celebration, presented by the Niagara Falls Ancient Order of Hibernians, will take place Friday, March 17. The area's largest St. Patrick's Day party – and 131st birthday celebration of Niagara Falls – will kick off with the "World's Shortest Parade" at 4:45 p.m. from the corner of Rainbow Boulevard and Old Falls Street. Family-friendly festivities will continue until 11 p.m. inside the Niagara Falls Convention Center at 101 Old Falls St.

Attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy traditional Irish food, drinks and live entertainment provided by the Restless Soles and the McCarthy School of Irish Dance. Organizers are asking attendees to bring a non-perishable food item to benefit Heart, Love & Soul, a nonprofit hunger-relief and social services

agency in Niagara Falls.

Tickets for the event are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Advance tickets are available online at bit.ly/aohtickets, as well as at the following locations:

- ✓ B&B Cigars – 2006 Main St., Niagara Falls
- ✓ Chéri Amour – 522 Center St., Lewiston
- ✓ Capitol Cleaners – 125 Portage Road, Lewiston
- ✓ Wellness Park Pharmacy – 8672 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls
- ✓ Always a Party – 2530 Niagara Falls Blvd., Niagara Falls

Discounted hotel rates are available for the Sheraton Niagara Falls, Hyatt Place Niagara Falls and Holiday Inn Niagara Falls, which are all within walking distance of the Niagara Falls Convention Center. Visit the Niagara Falls Convention Center

Facebook page for more details on booking.

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