

Drink Award Winners

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RI BrewFest (PVD, January)

Favorite Brew Fest - Brew Fest used to take place at the Pawtucket Armory and has been at the WaterFire Arts Center since 2019. Taking a two-session approach, it's usually on a Saturday in late January or early February. 2023 dates haven't been announced yet, but it sells out fast, so keep an eye on ribrewfest.com

With around 50 brewers for a typical showing, this fest emphasizes regional and especially local participants. Perhaps it's also because it happens in the RI-event-deadspace of deep winter, but this fest certainly warms our readers' hearts. Or gullets. Or both.

- MR

Linesider

Blonde Jovi won best label art - Blondes. Everyone has a favorite. Linesider Brewing is no exception. As they posted on social media after the event, "Your favorite blonde took home some hardware last night. Blonde Jovi took home the Favorite Can Art category at the 2022 Motif Magazine & and Drink awards! This award means something extra to us because it was a write-in category which means to win it, voters had to specifically think of the can and vote!"

I can't help but sing some of the lyrics of the 1980's band Bon Jovi. We all know and love the song "Runway" and the words, "Guaranteed to blow your mind." The imperial pale ale is "Easily our most talked about label," agrees **Kyle** from Linesider, "So this was really a great one to win."

The '80s hair band look - and highschool yearbook photos from the era - were the muse behind this can art created by artist **Stephen Lloyd Drake**.

Linesider Brewing Co is located in East Greenwich. The co-founders are **Jeremy Ruff** and **Dan Koppen**, a former New England Patriot.

- KLC

Smug Brewing

Traitorade won Favorite Clever Name - "The name came when we were canning another beer. It was the day Tom Brady got Buckaneer'd, and that was all over the radio as we worked." says Michael Huftalen of Smug. "We started to speculate on what a beer inspired by Tom Brady would include. It would be salty, because we were feeling pretty salty about the whole thing. Key limes brought the Florida connection, and sour ... well, that's just obvious. The name was sort of a 'Eureka moment.'"

The brew became emblematic of the new, mostly-friendly rivalry, and was in fact featured in a segment on the local news in Tampa. Smug's not officially distributed in Florida, or outside of Rhode Island, but

when the news crew dropped by the brewery, they might have taken a few cans - and definitely some Traitorade shirts and hats - back to the peninsula. "We were pretty surprised," admits Huftalen, "When a news crew from Tampa showed up in the brewery."

Traitorade isn't currently available, but it proved very popular during its run. Will it be back? "I think that depends on what Brady does, going forward," says Huftalen. Meanwhile, you can snag similar flavor profiles from Smug's Summer Series or Be Fruitful series, both of which have numerous sours.

- MR

Newport Vineyards

Rhody Coyote won Favorite Cider - Rhody Coyote hard cider is made from a family recipe with fresh Rhode Island apples that are juiced and then "kiss the juice with champagne yeast." In addition to winning the Motif Favorite Cider award, it also won RI best cider at The Big E up in Massachusetts. It is 7% ABV and considered drier than your average cider. No word on whether it's caught that road runner yet.

You can sip this delicious cider inside or out while overlooking the beautiful grounds of Newport Vineyards.

Located in Newport and also home to Taproot Brewing Company, the vineyard also offers beer from the brewery in addition to wine. There is also a farm-to-fork restaurant, a setting for live music during the summer and great views all year long.

- KLC

Whalers

Drift won favorite seltzer, RISE won favorite Pale Ale - Whaler's American Pale Ale, RISE, has become one of the locally crafted goodies you're most likely to be able to find outside its brewery of origin. It's actually tied into Whaler's origin story - "It was the first collaboration between our two head brewers," explains Turtle from the tasting room. "They weren't sure if things were going to work out. Josh [Dunlop] is a former marine from the West coast with a taste for heavy, strong beer to drink with his buddies, while Wes [Gatsky] is more of a chemist, a college-grad from Boston with a science degree and a love of lighter, more refined taste. He really likes sours, for example. But they met in the middle somehow with the RISE. Our regulars all gave really positive feedback, they told us we hit a home-run. This was the one we needed to make more of. Now it's really the brew that keeps the doors open."

RISE is "an everyone beer," Turtle says. Mainstream tastes that might be drawn to Bud or Miller also like this - you don't have to be a fan of craft beers to appreciate it, but if you are you'll find flavors that make it distinctive.

RISE also pursued a different strategy during the pandemic - instead of trying to expand the geographic footprint of the popular beer, they focused on getting product consistently to the places that wanted to carry it.

"When supply issues were hitting everyone, we didn't want to go into new places, we wanted to make sure our customers had enough, to maintain our shelf space," Turtle says, explaining why RISE can be

found in so many spots, but only in RI, MA, CT and a few specialty bars around NU and the rest of New England. “We also don’t get cans and put on labels like most breweries – we get custom printed cans. When there was a big can shortage last year, it didn’t really affect us the way it did most smaller brewers. We were able to keep getting the product out there,” Turtle reveals.

Dunlop and Gretsky continue to collaborate, of course. Their newest collab is Muse, a cloudy NE style IPA with lighter drinkability at only 7%. “Seltzers [like Drift] have also exploded in the last few years – we have all these flavors with no additives, just fresh fruit purees, like our new cucumber lime,” Turtle tells us. “At the end of the day, it’s about handing out beers and having a good time – you want to make what people want to drink.”

- MR

Sons of Liberty

Honey Chamomile Flavored Whiskey won for Favorite Whiskey and True Born Gin won Favorite Gin/Vodka – Sons of Liberty (SoL) in Kingstown is a staple in the liquor landscape of our lil’ state. They began dedicated to producing whiskey from some of the quality beers they loved. Since then, they’ve moved on to rye, gin, vodka, cocktails in cans, craft beer, seltzer ... you drink it, they probably make it.

SoL has received national attention for their commitment to well-executed American single malt whiskies. Having recently won Craft Distiller of the Year for 2017 from *Whiskey Magazine*, the company has appeared in many stories about their products. So it’s not a big surprise that they were selected as favorite Whiskey, although it’s a little unexpected that their Honey Chamomile prevailed over their more traditional blends. Infused with local honey from Woods Farms, this seasonal blend has floral notes and a slight caramel aftertaste.

The True Born rests in an oak barrel for three and a half years. It tastes a little citrusy, and picks up flavor – and color – from the barrel, producing a gin designed “for whiskey drinkers who want to step out of their comfort zone.”

- MR

RI SPIRITS

Rhodium Coffee Black Walnut Vodka won in “other” spirits – “We seek to make spirits that could be made nowhere else.” Goal achieved, RI Spirits! The home of Rhodium brand premium gins, vodkas, and liqueurs is the brainchild of **Cathy Plourde** and **Kara Larson**, who serve as founders, owners, and distillers. Their commitment to providing gluten-free, organic, and kosher products truly makes this company a community star, and their refreshing focus on partnering with local farms and suppliers for ingredients has served them well when it comes to their award-winning Coffee Black Walnut Vodka.

Featuring cold-brewed, decaffeinated Guatemala Antigua coffee that was sourced and roasted by their Pawtucket neighbors Downeast, with a touch of cardamom and a mellow infusion of foraged black walnuts, their unique twist on flavored vodka has the power to convert new fans – the writer of this blurb, who genuinely dislikes coffee, had three samples at the *Motif Awards*!

- HB

Six Pack Brewing

Ollie won Favorite “Misc beer;” Lennie Favorite Pilsner; Ruby Favorite Kolsch - Six Pack Brewing is coming up on its two-year Anniversary this November. They are among five breweries and a cidery in their immediate area. Despite this local competition, they were nominated in three categories this year and won awards for all three.

Mark Papi, owner and brewer, told me that he was honored to be nominated and was happy to have one beer win in a category. “I was surprised to be nominated for three beers and even more so to have each beer win an award.” Three different beer styles were represented, Ollie, a Grisette Belgian Farmhouse Ale, Lenni, an Italian Pilsner and Ruby, a Kolsch.

In case you were wondering about the names, each of the beers is named after a dog. Ollie and Lenni were part of Mark’s original dog family of six. Ruby was named after a beer naming contest Six Pack had. She was a police dog who sadly had to be put down, Mark stated “We couldn’t think of a dog more deserving.”

Six Pack Brewing is located in Bristol, RI. They are, not surprisingly, dog-friendly. They offer six beers that maintain their original styles and vary in hops. Mark is soon adding two more beer styles to the original six line-up, as well as a hop water. “We wanted to have a non-alcoholic drink for those who don’t want to drink. Although we offer non-alcoholic beverages, this is something that our customers have been asking for.” Let me ask you, is there anything better than pints and paws?

- KLC

Lops Brewing

Pumpkin Spice Ale won Favorite Flavored Drink, Espresso Peanut Butter Porter won Favorite Porter, Favorite Overall Brewery - Lops Brewing had its grand opening in 2019, just in time for COVID’s impact on the landscape and the world. Located at 122 North Main St, near the Stadium Theater in Woonsocket, the brewery is still very much in the small batch phase, but its results are promising for founder Sean Lopolito’s wish to “translate my love of beer, brewing, friends and family, into a profession.”

The seasonal Pumpkin Spice Ale is the top seller for Lops, and the Espresso Peanut Butter is also a fall release, so now really is the time to drop by, say hi to Sean and his co-owner and wife Sarah, and sample away!

Lops not only took Favorite Porter and the coveted Pumpkin Spice prize, the brewery received more votes overall, across all categories, than any other participant.

- MR

Tilted Barn

Sunrise Over Sea won Favorite Sour, Summer Sol won Favorite Wheat, Is This Still Lawn Boy won Favorite Lager - *Motif* has written about Tilted Barn quite a number of times over the years, and words like “rustic,” and “charming” keep coming up in those reviews. Despite being in middle-of-nowhere-by-RI-standards Exeter, fans of the Tilt have definitely found their hearty, flavorful brews,

made with hops grown on the premises, are worth the drive, the wait, and well worth voting for online.

Owners **Matt** and **Kara Richardson** live on and manage the gorgeous (and rustic, and charming) property, which has been in Kara's family for over 50 years. To marry their mutual passions of farming and quality beer, in 2007 they founded Ocean State Hops, which supplies hops to both commercial breweries and home brewers. The logical next step: brew their own beer. Enter the Tilted Barn Brewery, RI's first farm brewery, in 2014. Since then, they've become a rare but appreciated staple of the local beer culture.

Sunrise over Sea is a milder fruited sour made with cranberries and tangerines. Is This Still a Lawn Boy is a czech-inspired darker lager, a relative of Tilted Barn's popular Lawn Boy. Summer Sol is a wheat - and a seasonal, so don't expect to find it now.

- MR

Ravenous

Coffee Milk Stout won Favorite Stout - "Rhode Island is coffee milk - and Ravenous is Coffee Milk Stout." Whether you're from Woonsocket or up from Westerly, you'll be thirsty, nevermore, when it comes to trying this signature Ocean State beer.

When **Dorian Rave** launched his brewery in 2012, one of the first concoctions was the malty homage to coffee milk, and it's been in regular rotation since, even making the tap trek when Ravenous moved to its new, larger location in 2019. A nano-brewery that champions the motto of "Brewing quality ale, one small batch at a time," their warm and wood-filled space with plenty of long tables was designed to encourage strangers to sit closer and connect over a common passion for good beer. Often, there's at least one person at a table who is earning their badge of honor in trying Coffee Milk Stout for the first time!

- HB

Narragansett

Fresh Catch won Favorite Light Ale, Musik Express IPA won favorite IPA, 2nd place for Overall Favorite Brewery - "Made on Honor, Sold on Merit" has been the tried and true slogan for **Narragansett Beer** for well over a century. The local mogul has made headlines for decades and has struck gold yet again pulling in 3 awards from the *Motif* Drink Awards.

'Gansett beer is largely known for their lager, a beer that has stood the test of time, and has a claim to fame for being featured in the 1975 Spielberg classic *Jaws*. But the brewer is making waves with their take on other styles of beer, winning best in category for Favorite Light Ale, and Favorite IPA. Light Ale winner **Fresh Catch** is a go-to for many thirsty Rhode Islanders including 'Gansett CEO **Mark Hellendrung**. "This is my go-to beer, crisp, easy drinking with lots of citra and hops."

Musik Express (favorite IPA) was the first IPA to be brewed at the new India Point brewery in 2021. "I just love brewing this beer...it's great to know people enjoy it as much as I do." - says head brewer **Lee Lord**. The new brewery built in 2021 was also the 2nd place winner for overall favorite brewery. Events manager **Ezra Juskewitch** comments - "We've had such a diverse gathering at the brewery over the last year - the people, events, the waterfront location and wide open feel really make this place special."

- GM

12 Guns

The Meg Blonde Ale won Favorite Blonde - Twelve Guns in Bristol, RI takes its name from the early Rhode Island Naval vessel, the U.S.S. Providence, which served in the Revolutionary War under the Continental Navy.

The U.S.S. Providence was proud to boast about having twelve guns on board, but this brewery only needs eight taps on rotation to make some serious waves in the Rhode Island beer world. It's no surprise that their signature brew, The Meg, blasted through the blonde ale competition, giving this often-overlooked beer style some well-deserved attention! Easy-drinking, well-balanced, clean and refreshing, with moderate malt and little to no hop bitterness, this classic style might be your most well-rounded ale experience ever. If you're curious to grab a can, their brewery on 549 Metacom Avenue has the same mellow vibe, with a communal indoor space, frequent food trucks in the parking lot, and at least one well-behaved dog that's used to lots of attention from the friendly crowd.

- HB

Crooked Current

Neapolitan Brown Ale won Favorite Reds & Browns - The infamous 'ice cream beer' reigns supreme again! The Crook strikes gold again with its extraordinary take on melding chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry with beer - and yes, it really does taste like all three! But anyone who's ever paid a visit to the smallest brewery in the smallest state (at one point) knows this kind of impressive creativity happens every day, thanks to the extraordinary brain of brewmaster **Nichole Pelletier**.

Nestled into a tiny space in the Lorraine Mills, off Mineral Spring Avenue in Pawtucket, Crooked Current is a popular post-work stop for Pawtucket workers eager to relax after a long day - there's often lines out the door! But tasting their amazing flavor combinations? It's worth your while to make a trip to the 'Bucket.'

Grey Sail

Captain's Daughter won Favorite DIPA - Head Brewer of Grey Sail Brewing, **Rich Welsh** has been brewing for five out of the seven years he has been working there. The award winning beer he brews, Captain's Daughter, "...is based off of a home recipe of the owners that was tweaked until it got to its current form. The recipe is more or less untouched," with "some procedural tweaks" said Rich.

In a world with so many DIPAs available, what makes Captain's Daughter stand out and why did it win Favorite DIPA? Rich says, "I think it stands out because it's able to walk the line between old and new school IPAs. It has that initial bitter punch with a dry finish that leaves you wanting more, but still has plenty of hops aroma and citrus from heavy amounts of Citra and Mosaic."

This perfect description of Captain's Daughter is why I and many others have it on draft often, and as a staple in the beer fridge. Captain's Daughter is also getting a new variation that will soon be available: a year-aged, whiskey barreled version.

- KLC

Buttonwoods

3RD PLACE for Overall Favorite. Although they didn't take any of the individual categories this year, Buttonwoods fans voted them up to second place for several brews and overall.

Buttonwoods Brewery had four beers nominated in four different beer styles: IPA, Light Ale, Golden Ale & Blondes, Pilsner. In addition to amazing beers, head brewer **Morgan Synder's** creative outlook, charismatic and comedic personality make this brewery easy to love.

"It's always an honor to have even one beer nominated, let alone 4! To know people enjoy our beer enough to nominate is really all we can ask for!"

What contributes to Morgan's talented craft brewing beers? "My favorite part of brewing would have to be the tinkering; every batch is an opportunity to improve. Which is probably why my favorite beer to brew is our Pilsner because every little change feels like it's shouted through a megaphone"

Morgan has created a brewery atmosphere to bring people together "Community is one of the key components of beer. Drinking has such a strong social aspect that's super important to us... to create an environment that matches that tone and sentiment." That also motivates the many evening activities Buttonwoods likes to host, from horror movie screenings to vendor fairs to trivia nights.

There are always plenty of beers and a variety of styles on draft, canned and bottled at the brewery. New beers are featured on the brewery's instagram via video that are definitely a must watch. Buttonwoods Brewery is located in Cranston and has been open since 2017. They are dog-friendly, have inside and outside seating and a pop up kitchen.

- KLC