

# A Night of Good Spirits: The 2022 Motif Bartender's Ball celebrated unsung heroes of happy hour\*

The 2022 Motif Bartender's Ball was truly an event to behold. Taking place at **R1 Indoor Karting** on August 1, the ceremony was a lively and colorful affair that highlighted the best of the alcoholic arts.

Immediately upon entering, guests were wowed by an unusual sight: aerialists, working with **Arielle Extreme**, gracefully danced and swung through the air, suspended by hoops and white cloth. It was a show-stopping sight, as the awards soon commenced.

With the room packed to the gills, some attendees socialized or took part in games while others waited in anticipation for each award to be revealed. Some awards were more serious, while many were just for fun, like "Best Social Media Presence," "Best Bartender as Therapist" and "Best Hair." Each nominee was loudly applauded by the crowd, whose support for every bartender in the room was palpable. MCs Paul Garcia, disguised as the Mad Hatter ringmaster and Bettysioux Tailor, dressed as ... something different every 5 minutes ... presided over the festivities while presenters **Thea Engst, Tammy Laforest, Mike Delehanty, Crimson Al-Khemia and Corinne Southern** kept things rolling along with grace and humor. The big winner of the evening, taking the mantle of "favorite bartender" was **Danielle Tellier**, primarily of Dusk Providence. Congrats, and thanks to all 1,531 local voters!

In addition to the online voted awards, there were awards for the winners of a series of challenges.

All three challenges showcased enthusiasm, energy and passion for the craft of bartending. The first contest was the Guinness pour. Each contestant stepped up to the tap and painstakingly poured Guinness into the glass, trying to get the level of foam just right. If you've seen *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, remember the scene where Indiana Jones has to replace the idol with a bag of sand, but he has to make sure the weight is just right? It was similar to that, though the stakes were arguably lower (and more fun!). The elimination bracket competition ended with a heavyweight pouring bout between **Sasquatch** of the Galactic Theater in Warren and **Steve Sharp** of PVD bars like The Sports Tap and Kimi's Bar. We'd had a few Guinness by then, but we're pretty Sasquatch took the cup with a quality pour and presentation.

Meanwhile, twenty feet away under the colored lights of R1's Dart Bar, contestants poured a bottle of wine into eight glasses as quickly and evenly as possible while making the smallest mess. Some were very poised about it, while others attacked the job with reckless abandon, completing the task quickly but drenching the table in wine. No matter how it played out, each attempt was a spectacle.

**Dominique Laren** ultimately outpoured the field, passing **Kyara Vargas** and **Bill Laliberty** by just a few drops.

The third and final contest of the night was the gin fizz shake competition. The goal of this challenge was to shake up (not stir) the best drink, with taste and, mostly, performance ratings decided by a panel of judges. Each cocktail, using locally distilled **Rhodium** gin, was shaken with gusto by everyone who stepped up to try it out, and the fun they were having was fully visible on their faces. First place in the

shaking went to **Max Prussner** of Kimi's Bar, a crowd favorite for coming in second place in online category after online category, but waiting until the very end of the night to actually take home a trophy cup.

Music added another dimension to the good vibes: **The Providence Drum Troupe jammed with the ascending and descending aerialists**, while the **Dust Ruffles** and the extraterrestrials at **Big Nazo** all brought the noise in the best way possible. And to top everything off, there were snacks by **Burrito Bowl** and cupcakes from **Cakes by Eboni!**

The event was sponsored by R1 Indoor Karting, Smoke Lab Vodka, Guinness, High Spirits Liquors, RI Spirits, Mancini Beverage and more

Overall, the Bartender's Ball was a heart-warming and gullet-warming event that proved that original ideas can thrive, alcohol brings people together, and great bartenders can truly make a night special.

*You can see all the winners here and a video of the event here.*

*\*Note that the phrase "Happy Hour" is actually illegal in RI. But you know what we mean.*