

# SELLOUT 'WINE WALK' BRINGS CROWD TO DOWNTOWN BELOIT

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Photo by Debra Jensen-De Hart Lori Sturdevant pours a couple ounces of Wollersheim River Gold into a glass for a participant at Rindfleisch Flowers during the Fall Wine Walk in downtown Beloit Saturday.

BELOIT - The weather was cool and sunny and spirits were jovial as participants enjoyed the ambiance of the Fall Wine Walk Saturday in downtown Beloit.

"For an event like this we're always hoping for good weather," said Crystal Cribbs, a few days before the event. Cribbs is the Downtown Beloit promotions coordinator.

This was the second year for the wine walk, she said.

Patrons and business owners said they appreciated Saturday's event.

"We came last year too, it was a lot of fun," said Kris Fast of Milton as she sipped a glass of Wollersheim River Gold and browsed in the Rindfleisch Flower shop on East Grand Avenue.

"It's great, it gets people downtown," said Brenda Terrones, owner of Rindfleisch Flowers.

The wine walk was held from 2-5 p.m. as participants meandered through the downtown. Each could choose 10 places out of 16 to sample a couple ounces of the selected wine being served. Wine was not allowed outside of the venues, and patrons could empty leftover wine from their glasses before leaving each site.

Venues included shops, restaurants and galleries.

For Nathan and Amanda Elmer of Janesville, parents of a four-year-old, the event was an afternoon out in downtown Beloit, they said.

"This is a lot of fun. Beloit has a fantastic downtown so we frequent the area often," Amanda Elmer said.

Next stop for the couple was Northwoods Premium on State Street so they could take something back home. "Our son likes the Lego candy there", they said.

For some, the walk provided a meeting place for friends.

"This is a good way for us to meet," said Michele Durdan of Janesville who met her friend, Ranee Anderson of Roscoe.

It was their first time in the Turtle Creek Barnes & Noble Bookstore, they said.

As they looked at book offerings, they also said the wine walk is a good way to get people into the various businesses.

At the Beloit Art Center, Amy Zweifel of Shullsburg and Teri Pryce of Brodhead tried a medium bodied wine, Relax Noir, from Germany's Rheinhessen region.

"It's nice to taste different things and it's a nice afternoon out," Zweifel said of the event.

While all appeared to go well, if there's one thing that might change about the downtown wine walks in the future, it may be that more tickets are made available. Roughly 300 tickets at \$25 each were sold.

"The tickets were sold out weeks ago, it's so popular," said Shauna El-Amin, Downtown Beloit Association executive director.

"People come from far and wide and we are thinking about increasing the number of tickets," she said.

El-Amin appeared pleased with the turnout Saturday and said the weather was "great."

Proceeds from the Fall Wine Walk will be used for beautification projects for the downtown, Cribbs said.