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FEATURED

Friends tackle new business venture together in Beloit

By BRAD ALLEN Staff writer
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5Bar co-owners Levi Andersen, left, and Derrick Wessels are shown inside their new Beloit business on Wednesday. Photo by Brad Allen/Beloit Daily News

BELOIT—The latest addition to Beloit’s downtown business scene is intended to feel like home.



5Bar co-owners Levi Andersen and Derrick Wessels opened their brand new bar and lounge on Oct. 16, bringing longtime goals and dreams to fruition.

“Beloit’s been very nice to us,” Andersen said while seated on a couch at the bar area.

On opening night last weekend, Andersen’s dad drove across the country to be there, and a mix of family, friends and customers came out to offer cheers to the new business.

5Bar is open Wednesday through Friday from 4 p.m. to bar close, and also on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to bar close.

The new digs at 530 E. Grand Ave. looks and feels like a living room, Andersen said, with couches in place of bar stools, bottles kept on book shelves instead of cabinets and golden party balloons announcing its name.

Starting in June, Wessels said they worked daily to reshape the building from top to bottom. When the building inspectors came to check things out, he recalled their surprise at seeing the atypical bar interior.

The name 5Bar references a couple of business themes, Andersen said.

The first idea is that all five human senses are engaged—smell of food, sight of decorations, sound of laughter, feeling of comfortable seats and taste of drinks.

Secondly, 5Bar’s menu will continuously rotate in and out five special food or drink items each month, with humorous or unusual names to spark up conversations with customers.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, statewide orders in Wisconsin are limiting capacity inside bars and other places. But this is a blessing in disguise for 5Bar, Andersen said, as it gave them a chance to hold a soft opening and slowly grow their business over time as they find their groove and look to hire on a small staff in the future.

“It’s kind of the weirdest, best timing ever,” Andersen said. “It’s nice to finally have the doors open. There’s no fear jumping in.”

“It’s nice to have some time to get it up and going,” Wessels added. “It feels really good so far. It felt really good to be doing that kind of work again.”

Both Andersen and Wessels work full-time day jobs outside of their new business schedules. Andersen works with Kerry Ingredients & Flavours in Beloit, and Wessels is a water quality instrumentation specialist, which involves monitoring food and water quality for clients.

Despite the demanding hours, Wessels said it feels like fulfilling fun hobbies and business at the same time.

Andersen originally is from Seattle, and Wessels grew up in Normal, Illinois. Both have a number of years of experience in the food and beverage service industry.

They met a couple of years ago in Colorado after attending several national events and competitions that showcased various coffee vendors and brews. After realizing they shared similar goals after some time preparing, they decided to launch 5Bar together.

In the back of the 5Bar building, Andersen said they have an open space that could eventually be remodeled to accommodate comedy nights, a dance floor, public forums or other local events. They also aim to design an outdoor patio area.

Masks are encouraged inside 5Bar, and Wessels said the menus, glasses, surfaces and utensils are wiped down in between each use.

Brad Allen