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HOT

## DBA hosts sold-out Spring Wine Walk in boost for downtown shops

By BRAD ALLEN Staff writer  
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5Bar server Tatianna Latham pours a glass of sweet red wine for a participant in the Downtown Beloit Association afternoon.

Brad Allen/Beloit Daily News



BELOIT—For Mindy Koontz, the Downtown Beloit Association’s (DBA) 2021 Spring Wine Walk truly felt like a taste of home.

Koontz, a Janesville resident who works for the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation, is originally from the Portland, Oregon area, and she was excited to sample a wine Saturday that came from Washington state in the Pacific Northwest.

“It’s wonderful, having a beautiful day out here, watching the community coming together, it’s absolutely great,” Koontz said.

DBA Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said the organization sold out quickly with 300 tickets for the event.

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The 2021 Spring Wine Walk included 11 different stops downtown. Each participant got goodie bags with snacks and water, and the DBA office included a photo booth and live music.

El-Amin said the event included a good mix of sweets, non-sweets, red and white wines, and it drew in all sorts of different groups including friend circles, families, birthday groups and bridal parties.

“We’re just so thankful that we can have it again and that we’re able to offer a good time for our residents and a boost for our businesses with safety guidelines in place,” El-Amin said. “I’m just hopeful that we can continue things like this that are fun for the community.”

Last year, the 2020 Spring Wine Walk was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the DBA was able to offer a 2020 Fall Wine Walk.

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Kayla Doolittle of Machesney Park, Illinois and Cassandra Miller of Rockford, Illinois, were out enjoying the weather and wine samples.

For the two friends, the Spring Wine Walk was a chance to try something new and get out of the house.

“It’s refreshing,” Doolittle said.

Added Miller: “It’s nice to get out and know you can get back to normal.”

Autumn Moon, located at 412 E. Grand Ave., had a soft opening on Saturday. The shop sells items including stones, crystals, candles and wellness products.

Store owner Jan Jordan said the store is a safe space for anyone to stop by for a relaxing and welcoming environment.

“I’m really excited about the opportunity down here, it doesn’t get any better than this,” Jordan said. “Downtown Beloit is doing so much, there’s so much to work with here.”

Lori Hyser, from Belvidere, Illinois, said Saturday was her third time attending a wine walk in downtown Beloit with some friends.

“We love it, it’s one of our girls trips,” Hyser said.

Hyser said she enjoys sweet red wines and enjoyed a sample at 5Bar, 503 E. Grand Ave.

Among the samples at 5Bar was a sweet red wine from South Africa, said bartender Tatianna Latham.

Koontz said her first stop of the day Saturday was visiting a VIP lounge at the Ironworks Hotel in Beloit, where she enjoyed the wine sample that reminded her of home.

She later ended up at 5Bar with some friends and was happy to get to know the business owners and other participants in the wine walk.

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