

THE NEW ENGLAND BOTTLE BATTLE

by Jim Bender

Photographs by
Scott Selenak



Michael George (show co-chair) dressed in period costume and directed the event.

It was a hot July summer night in the largest city on the New Hampshire map.

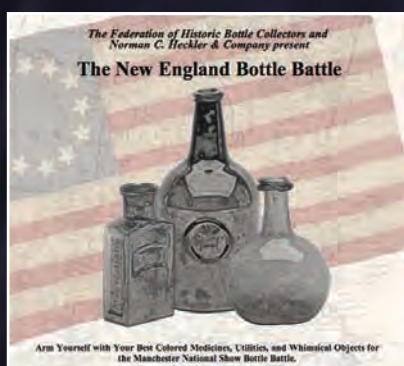
Manchester is a city rich in history and more history was made on the 19th of July when great pieces of glass all arrived to battle it out as part of a weekend-long event known as the FOHBC National Antique Bottle Show. This was just the start of many events to follow on this weekend.



A very efficient process to register the bottle submissions sign the liability form. Security was present in the room. Pictured from left to right is Janet George, Dana Charlton-Zarro and Maureen Crawford (show co-chair)



Nice example of a smoky-puce Utility Bottle submission. Each bottle was tagged and inspected by the registration group.



The Bottle Battle was sponsored by Norman C. Heckler & Company.



Nicholas Wroblewski was the youngest contestant at the Bottle Battle and bottle he did, entering every one of the categories.



The three judges, Steve Swiechowicz, Tom Marshall and Eric Correia, were faced with having to make a choice in the Whimsical Objects category.

After a history-making shootout that took place nearly a year ago in Reno, Nevada, it was decided there had to be another. So right after the fantastic banquet, the lines were formed and the contestants got ready. Janet George, Dana Charlton-Zarro and co-show chair Maureen Crawford signed them up as fast as they came. There were three great categories in which to compete in the much anticipated New England "Bottle Battle".

The first to be judged was to be the Whimsical Objects category. There were nine entries, some of which this writer had never seen before. As each piece of fantastic glass was handed up to the judges, the crowd pushed closer and closer, only to be held back by Co-Chair Mike George, who was dressed in early colonial clothing. Flashes were firing off like cannon fire would have some 250 years ago.

The three judges, Steve Swiechowicz, Tom Marshall and Eric Correia, were faced with having to make a choice. One by one they took pieces out. Then there were just three left -- a large handled pickle bottle owned by Jeff Noordsy, a most unusual turtle owned by Chris Davis and an E. Waters ink handled, expanded and with an applied foot owned by Kevin Sives. Every piece was of museum quality. The smoke cleared and there was silence in the room as the announcement was made that Kevin Sives of New York had won with his incredible E. Waters Ink.



Then there were just three left - a large handled pickle bottle owned by Jeff Noordsy, a most unusual turtle owned by Chris Davis and an E. Waters ink handled, expanded and with an applied foot owned by Kevin Sives.



Final inspections. The smoke cleared and there was silence in the room as the announcement was made that Kevin Sives of New York (pictured to the left with his award plaque) had won with his incredible, handled E. Waters Ink.



Three new judges took their spots - Jimmy Chebalo, Holly Noordsy and Mark Yates all watched as one by one beautiful bottles started filling the counter in front of them. Every color from aqua to cobalt blue was there.

It was now time for the second category, Colored Medicines. There were 13 bottles staged to take battle. Three new judges took their spots -- Jimmy Chebalo, Holly Noordsy and Mark Yates all watched as one by one beautiful bottles started filling the counter in front of them. Every color from aqua to cobalt blue was there.

Once again the crowd pushed closer and closer and Mike George held his own, pushing them back so all could see. The judges looked and talked things over for several minutes and one by one bottles were eliminated. Then there were just three bottles left. Two were owned by Steve Swiechowicz. One was a Maseker's Balm of Gilead in beautiful olive amber. The second bottle was an incredible emerald green Anders and Fosdick Iodine Water. The third bottle to make the cut was a half gallon Dr. Wynkoops Sarsaparilla bottle in an always favorite blue owned by Dr. Charles and Jane Aprill of New Orleans.

There was a long discussion between the judges and it was then announced that the color and size had won. The half gallon Wynkoops bottle had won the hearts of the judges. It is not always about how rare a bottle is, but what lights up the room. With the legendary Aprill's in attendance, it was certainly an honor for many of us to see this bottle and Charles hug it so dearly when he won the award.



Though tough to see at times, the crowd watched intently as the judges inspected each piece.



The multi-sided bottle of Rick Ciralli of Connecticut won in the Utility Bottle category.

The silhouette of Mark Yates as the three finalists in the Colored Medicines were placed in the light box.



Brian Wade, Greg Bair and Jeff Noordsy were the judges for the Utility Bottle category which had 19 entries.

Time on the clock was growing later by the minute and the third and last battle took form. This was the largest group of all. The Utility Bottle category had 19 entries. There were many shapes and sizes to choose from. The last three judges all took their spots. Brian Wade, Greg Bair and Jeff Noordsy all waited as one by one all the bottles were handed to them. This was a task for real early glass experts to handle. And handle it they did. One by one, they carefully weeded the bottles down to the final three. Faced with three bottles all about the same color it now came down to shape and condition. Two bottles were owned by Tom Marshall and one by Rick Ciralli. Once again it took the judges a while to decide. Then the announcement was made. The multi-sided bottle of Rick Ciralli of Connecticut had won.

After a long night of great glass, the Bottle Battle was over. Everyone there agreed that they had seen some great glass that they may have never seen if not for the FOHBC Bottle Battle. This event is more than a battle over who has the best bottles. It is a chance for people to visit about bottles as they wait for the all volunteer judges to make their decisions.

Norman Heckler & Company sponsored the event and supplied tables of cheeses, veggies and dips for all to share during the event. There was enough to feed an army. There



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Tough decisions as the judges start the elimination process

was an army there all right, about 200 collectors and dealers filled the room right until the very end of the show. Norm and his crew also handed out the best bottle boxes I have ever seen to collectors and dealers. Many of the bottles in the bottle battle arrived in a Heckler box.

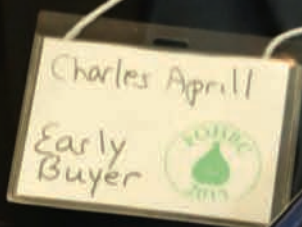
I want to mention one more collector who I hope everyone gets to know. Nicholas Wroblewski was the youngest contestant at the Bottle Battle and battle he did, entering every one of the categories. Nicholas represents the future of our hobby and at just 13 years old, he joined the FOHBC. As membership director, I was so happy when I learned the news. You see, I was just 13 when I started collecting some 42 years ago.

Welcome aboard, Nick, and when I am 70 or 80 years old, I will enjoy the stories you are writing.





The winning Colored Medicine. A Dr. Wynkoops Sarsaparilla bottle owned by Dr. Charles and Jane Aprill of New Orleans. Charles is holding his award.



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BOTTLE BATTLE
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