

Mobile Loyalty Passport Apps Keep Craft Makers Thriving Whether A Winery, Distillery, Brewery, Or Other Craft Product

From Texas to Rhode Island through to Maryland and Colorado Including Connecticut Farm Wineries to Taste of Nova Scotia; Daruma Tech Provides Economic Growth

BOCA RATON, FL, UNITED STATES, June 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When the COVID pandemic forced craft wineries, distilleries, and breweries to close their tasting rooms, craft beverage guilds and associations across the country turned to [Daruma Tech](#)'s award-winning mobile passport apps as a creative way to promote takeout sales and keep member businesses afloat. And thanks to the apps' ability to keep local craft beverage makers and their customers connected, organizations using the apps have not only survived, but are thriving.



Cheers from Distilleries to Wineries to Breweries

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*Rick Griswold; Director
DarumaTech*

The apps, custom-branded for each guild or association, are enhanced, digital versions of paper passport programs. Like their traditional counterparts, they incentivize users to shop and explore locally by allowing them to earn points towards prizes by visiting and checking in at participating wineries, distilleries, breweries, or other venues. Unlike paper passports, however, they also allow participating guilds or associations and businesses to send notifications to users about upcoming promotions and allow users to see tasting room hours and offerings right on their phones.

But the apps' biggest advantage over paper passports is that they can be instantly and seamlessly updated as the organization and number of participating businesses grows, said Gary

Richardson, executive director of the Rhode Island Brewers Guild. “The biggest difference between the [Local Explorers](#) app and the paper passports is the ability to stay current as we add new businesses,” he said. “In my four years, we’ve doubled the number of breweries, and are still growing. With the paper passport, we had to wait until we ran out of them before printing more. There was sometimes a six-month wait or a year before running out, and that delayed the new brewers, who are the ones who need the promotion more than any of them.”

While the Rhode Island Brewery Passport App was in the planning stages pre-COVID, it launched in 2020, at the height of the pandemic. But this did not stop craft beer fans from Rhode Island and neighboring states from embracing the app—Richardson said the app has had about 5000 downloads, a big jump from the 1200 downloads made when the app was first released. And so far, he added, around 100 power users have earned prizes—ranging from hats to curated beer collections—for checking in at all participating breweries.

The Texas Brewery Guild also launched its Texas Brewery Passport app in the wake of the pandemic. While the guild had originally envisioned the app as a cost-effective way to entice visitors to members’ taprooms, it soon recognized the app’s potential to help breweries stay afloat through take-out sales. The guild’s predictions were borne out—stir-crazy Texans used the app to plan socially distanced road trips to explore breweries across the state, even though it meant buying beer to take out and drink elsewhere. “We heard from several people over the pandemic, who really took the opposite tack to go out and visit as many breweries as possible and do road trips to different parts of the state they never visited before. So, it’s been fun,” said Caroline Wallace, executive director of the Texas Brewery Guild.

Today, Wallace said, the app has become a hit with state residents and tourists alike. “it’s been really successful. I have over 11,000 active downloads or so now,” she said. She added that 229 breweries from across Texas are currently participating on the app, and they’ve already had one user who’s visited and checked in at all of them, as well as about a dozen others who’ve reached the top tier of app users, visiting breweries all across the state. “This is no small feat in a state the size of Texas,” she said.

Brewers aren’t the only businesses benefitting from the apps. In Maryland, the agricultural product trade group Grow & Fortify has incorporated three separate passport programs—for craft beer, wine, and spirits—into its popular Maryland Craft Beverages app. This format has proven to be a hit with not only users and producers (about two dozen passport rewards at different levels have been shipped since the app launched last year), but with regional tourism promoters, said Jim Bauckman, Grow & Fortify’s director of communications. He added that the app was recognized by the Maryland Tourism Coalition with its award for Best New Large Marketing Project or Event of 2021. “They were impressed to see the work that we’ve been able to do to bring all of our members under one roof,” he said.

Post-pandemic, guilds and trade groups such as Grow & Fortify are using their apps to promote in-person events such as festivals. “During Maryland wine month, we had a couple of producers

who offered app-specific promotions,” Bauckman said. “So, check in during Maryland wine month and you'll receive an entry into a contest to win a free guided tasting from the winemaker or things like that.”

Other craft producers have also embraced the app as a cost-effective way to raise their public profiles and reach more customers. For the Colorado Distillers Guild (CDG), the app was a natural evolution of their original paper Spirits Trail map. According to Lee Wood, treasurer of the CDG, “not only does the CDG want to capture local business, but we recognize the majority of our business is from visitors, tourists, and out of town visitors and that we want to capture this business as well.”

“Brewers enjoy the app because it's not a giveaway,” Gary Richardson said. “Many of our events, like the Newport Beer Fest, involve the breweries donating or selling at a low price. We're conscious of not overdoing the programs that require brewers to donate.” And in Texas, the app has not only attracted new customers, but has even enticed a few breweries to join the guild. “We've gotten a few new members because of the app because customers have come in and asked why they weren't in the app,” Wallace said. “So that's been great.”

For more information, contact Rick Griswold: 561-990-1625.

Rick Griswold
Daruma Tech
+1 561-990-1625
[email us here](#)

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