

802 BWS: All In The Family

You'll have to forgive Jason Beaudoin, the owner of 802 BWS, in Burlington, for his baseball allegiance if you're not a fan of pinstripes. After all, he comes to it honestly — through family.

"We have Yankees stuff hanging up in our store," Beaudoin says from the New North End liquor agency. "My wife is a Yankees fan. Her father got her into the Yankees and Giants and I followed suit. We've gone down to MetLife Stadium with a group of people and we've gone to Boston the past couple of years to see the Yankees and the Red Sox."

Step inside the lively, gleaming North Avenue shop and it becomes clear fairly quickly that family plays an important role at 802 BWS (a shortened version of 802 Beverage, Wine and Spirits.) A collection of Beaudoins — including two sons, Zachary, 18, and Cody, 23, and his wife, Karen — make up a good portion of the nine-person staff that helps keep the shop running.

"We're known for our customer service," Beaudoin says. "And it's my staff that keeps the store alive. They handle the majority of the customers and I take care of the inventory, pay the bills and the overall back-office operations."

In fact, the entire operation can be traced back to Beaudoin's mother, Diane Hazen, who owned the shop, which operated as Merola's Market, until she passed away in 2010.

"I like the atmosphere in Vermont," says Beaudoin, a Colchester native and current St. Albans resident. "I did move away for 10 years, but I came back and I really like it. It's where I'm from, and it allows me to keep my mom's business going. She always dreamed of owning her own store, and being back home is where my friends and family are."

Walk into the store and visitors will note that the 10,000-square-foot store features a massive, 32-door L-shaped cooler that goes down one side of the store and offsets the 10 racks holding more than 1,500 bottles of wine. The 2,000-square-foot liquor agency sits to the right, highlighting specials and a variety of Vermont-produced spirits.

802 BWS moved to its current location nearly five years ago, and in doing so, doubled



Store Owner
Jason Beaudoin

in size. With 20-plus years in big-box retail experience behind him, the 42-year-old Beaudoin played an integral part in preparing the location, spotting the store when it became available nearly a year and a half before moving in. He communicated with the landlord, laid out his plan for the spot and began the design process.

"We went from 3,500-square-feet to nearly 10,000," Beaudoin says. "We have probably 80 linear feet of liquor alone in the agency."

It's part of what the store had become known for. A dazzling array of beer and a wide variety of liquor attracts new customers, and the ability to track down hard-to-find items brings them back.

"We're known as a place that can find things," Beaudoin says. "We've located oddball brands of brandies, scotches and whiskies,

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which are key right now. If there's a small-batch bourbon someone wants, we'll get it in. We were able to get the 'Game of Thrones' themed scotches — everyone wanted them. We went through two cases of them."

Beaudoin hosts a number of tastings each month in the liquor agency section of the store, including a number of national brands as well as locally produced products.

"We've had everyone from Southern Comfort and Hooker Mountain to Caledonia Spirits — who does one quarterly — to Old Route Two," he says. "We do a lot of Vermont tastings here."

Visitors to the store, and the liquor agency, find a much larger, more roomy destination in which to browse. Wider aisles create an easier shopping experience — a deliberate detail added by design.

"There are no tight aisles — everything is very well spaced out. People always tell me, 'you could play football in here,'" Beaudoin says.

That may be the case, but inside 802 BWS, it'll be Giants-style. 

802 BWS
1127 North Ave., Suite 5, Burlington

Always drink in moderation.



SMOOTH TEQUILA. CITRUS TWIST. SHAKE.

CLASSIC MARGARITA

- 1 ½ parts Sauza® Signature Blue Silver 100% Agave Tequila
- ½ part DeKuyper® Triple Sec Liqueur
- 1 part lime juice
- ½ part simple syrup

Add ingredients to an ice-filled shaker.

Shake and strain into a margarita glass with ice.



THE HEART OF THE COCKTAIL

DRINK SMART®

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BARREL FINISHED
WITH OAK STAVES

KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON
WHISKY
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