

# The first-ever Crushies are, um, in the can

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By GREGORY ZELLER //

A little later than expected – but still fresh – the first national competition saluting the best in craft-beer marketing has announced its inaugural champions, including clever campaigns based on Long Island.

The 2020 Craft Beer Marketing Awards – a.k.a. “The Crushies” – were presented live June 16 in a virtual ceremony on Facebook. Billed as “the first of [its] kind in the USA,” the competition began accepting entries from smaller local brewers in the fall, with a panel of “100 industry-recognized judges” ultimately selecting platinum- and gold-level winners in 32 different categories.



Among them: Riverhead’s North Fork Brewing Co., which took one of three Gold Crushies in the Marketing Wild Cards/Most Creative Signage category, and the LIBeerGuide, a multimedia steward of the Island beer scen and one of three runners-up in the Best Use of Social Media/Beer Influencer of the Year category.

The national competition – which was actually international, with entries arriving from Canada, Mexico and across the United States – is the brainchild of Jim McCune and Jackie DiBella, craft beverage executive director and account manager, respectively, at Melville’s EGC Group, with winners collecting platinum and gold versions of The Crushies, statuettes created by New York City designer Society Awards.

The idea, according to DiBella, was to raise a frosty one – publicly, but professionally – to all the creativity and hard work playing such a pivotal role in the crowded craft-brew sector.

“There is a clear need for these awards to recognize the critical and increasing contribution that marketing efforts play in the competitive craft beer industry,” DiBella noted.

And there was clear enthusiasm for the first-ever Crushies, with entries pouring in from coast to coast and beyond. Even the global pandemic didn’t quench interest – although it did scrap the original plan, an April awards ceremony at a Texas craft-brewer conference, in favor of last week’s virtual ceremony.

“We’re honored to have received so much interest in our first year, with entries from both big and small breweries all across North America,” DiBella said. “We were so impressed with what was submitted.”

Top winners of the inaugural competition included Oakland Park, Fla.’s Funky Buddha Brewery, which took the Platinum Crushie for Best



Jackie DiBella: Terrific response.

Bottle Design (12 oz, 12.7 oz, 16.9 oz); Newport, Ore.'s Rogue Ales Brewery, Platinum Crushie for Best Bottle Design (22 oz, 25.36 oz); and Portland, Ore.'s Gigantic Brewing Co., Platinum winner for Best Packaging Design/Bottle.

Other Platinum Crushies went to lot 9 brewing co. of Bluffton, S.C. (Best Can Design/32 oz), LUKI Brewery of Arvada, Colo. (Best Logo Design) and Bridger Brewing of Bozeman, Mont. (Best Website Design).

A total of 130 Platinum- and Gold-level awards were presented by the contest creators and multinational logistics expert Hillebrand, the CMBA's presenting sponsor. The full list of winners is [available here](#).

With the first-annual Crushies down the hatch, organizers are already brewing up ideas for Year 2, with the competition planning a weekly podcast, starting in July, to start building momentum.

"We look forward to seeing even more amazing work next year," DiBella added.