

MORGANTON, N.C. – The State of Origin Beer Festival expands its reach this June while remaining true to its “drink local” philosophy.

The fifth annual event, which takes place Saturday, June 9, in downtown Morganton, will showcase craft breweries from across the nation that specialize in brewing with local ingredients. In past years, the focus was on North Carolina breweries that sourced ingredients locally.

“We started off inviting North Carolina breweries, then all the beers brought to the festival needed to be made with North Carolina ingredients,” says festival organizer Brit Josa, “but over the years the festival evolved to inviting breweries from other states. Now we are focused on breweries that brew with local ingredients on a daily basis.”

This year’s festival sports a lineup of 31 breweries representing 14 states. The list includes breweries from such locales as Portland, Maine; Austin, Texas; Denver, Colo.; and Gilbert, Ariz. North Carolina remains well-represented with 14 breweries, including host brewery, Fonta Flora of Morganton, and its neighbor down the street, Catawba Brewing Co.

“It is important for us to raise awareness about using local ingredients,” Josa says. “What may grow locally here doesn’t grow in other areas of the country, so it brings something unique to the table to have breweries bring in these different ingredients from different states.”

Another change this year is the timing of the festival. It has been moved from a midday time slot to a late afternoon/early evening time slot to avoid the warmest part of the day and allow people to have dinner via the festival’s five food trucks. The new hours are 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

“All food vendors that come to State of Origin have to adhere to our principles as well by providing food that is sourced from local ingredients,” says Josa.

The festival will also include music from Momma Molasses of Johnson City, Tenn., SOLIS of Charlotte, and headliner Niecy Blues of Columbia, S.C.

Several participating breweries have won medals at the Great American Beer Festival, including host brewery Fonta Flora.

The following breweries are scheduled to attend: Allagash Brewing Co., Portland, Maine; American Solera, Tulsa, Okla.; Appalachian Mountain Brewery, Boone, N.C.; Arizona Wilderness Brewing Co., Gilbert, Ariz.; Birds Fly South Ale Project, Greenville, S.C.; Black Project Spontaneous & Wild Ales, Denver, Colo.; Burial Beer Co., Asheville, N.C.; Carolina Bauernhaus Ales, Anderson, S.C.; Casey Brewing & Blending, Glenwood Springs, Colo.; Catawba Brewing Co., Morganton, N.C.; Creature Comforts Brewing Co., Athens, Ga.; Fonta Flora Brewery, Morganton, N.C.; Free Range Brewing, Charlotte, N.C.; Fullsteam Brewery, Durham, N.C.; Harvest Roots Ferments, Mentone, Ala.; Haw River Farmhouse Ales, Saxapahaw, N.C.; Homeplace Beer Co., Burnsville, N.C.; J Wakefield Brewing, Miami, Fla.; Jester King, Brewery, Austin, Texas; Jolly Pumpkin Artisan Ales, Dexter, Mich.; Legion Brewing Company, Charlotte, N.C.; Lenny Boy Brewing Co., Charlotte, N.C.; Little Fish Brewing Co., Athens, Ohio; Newgrass Brewing Co., Shelby, N.C.; Oxbow Brewery, New Castle, Maine; Plan Bee Farm Brewery, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Salud Cerveceria, Charlotte, N.C.; Scratch Brewing Company, Ava, Illinois; Steel String Brewery, Carrboro, N.C.; TRVE Brewing Company, Denver, Colo.; Wooden Robot Brewery, Charlotte, N.C. and Zebulon Artisan Ales, Weaverville, N.C.

“One nice thing about attending this festival is people can definitely expect to try some unique beers that are made in smaller batches and not widely available to the public,” Josa says.

State of Origin Beer Festival tickets are \$50 in advance and \$60 at the gates. Designated driver tickets are available at the festival for \$20. For event details, visit www.FontaFlora.com. To purchase tickets online, go to: fontaflora.com/event/state-of-origin-2018.

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