



THE LOCAL MOTIVE

COLLEEN AND TYLER WITTIG ARE 'SYKED'

WRITTEN BY TEDDY DURGIN | PICTURES BY ASHLI MIX PHOTOGRAPHY

Husband-and-wife entrepreneurial team Colleen and Tyler Wittig were on staff together at the Market Tavern in Sykesville for seven years before they decided to make their pitch and take over the business from the previous owners. They re-opened in January 2023 as **The Local Motive** with help from younger brother-in-law Mike Wittig, and it's been all aboard and full steam ahead ever since.

"We are a cocktail bar in Sykesville," Colleen declared, in a recent phone interview with the Beverage Journal. "It's a cute, little town and there is not too much around like us, except for a staple restaurant and pub, E W Beck's that has been around for 30 years. We just thought our charming Main Street needed a little more! There is a distillery and a small wine shop. But having a cocktail bar that serves light fare like sandwiches and salads just adds to the whole vibe of the street, I think."

Sykesville has been trying to prove its "vibe" ever since Colleen was a kid. She grew up in Eldersburg, which is just a few minutes from Sykesville. "We never went down to Main Street growing up!" she said. "There just wasn't much there. But now that it is becoming a more hap-

pening place, more visitors are coming in. So, we are getting some new people and new faces in addition to the regulars that we have.”

But it is her regulars, her core customers, who are the lifeblood of The Local Motive. Wittig states, “We have a lot of people who come in every day, and we know their name and know their drink. Everybody knows everybody, which is kind of cool. But Sykesville has indeed been blowing up for the past five or 10 years or so. I think it was 2016 that Sykesville won Coolest Small Town in America [by Budget Travel Magazine]. Since then, it’s really come along.”

With this being the latest in our ongoing series of feature articles spotlighting bars, restaurants, pubs, and taverns in and around Maryland featuring fun, funny, or quirky names, we asked for the story behind The Local Motive name. Wittig replied, “Sykesville is a train town. There is a railroad running right near us. The train can be super load when it goes by. We wanted to do something with the train, and we also wanted to play off that we have a lot of local patrons. It was my husband who thought of the name. The locals are our motive and having the bar’s name sound like ‘locomotive’ definitely goes with train theme.”

In terms of The Local Motive’s beverage menu, the drink offerings lean heavily on such popular classics as the Old Fashioned and mar-



UPDATES = MORE SALES

Call today for your Assessment!



- ✓ New Doors
- ✓ New Lighting
- ✓ New Shelving = More Facings
- ✓ Serving the entire Mid-Atlantic region



Like us at
facebook.com/CAREYSALESANDSERVICES



CAREY SALES & SERVICES

Serving the Local Beverage Industry since 1933

3141 Frederick Ave., Baltimore, MD

410-945-7878 or 800-848-7748 • careysales.com



Tyler & Colleen Wittig (with daughter, Lucy) owners

The Local Motive

Witting was quick to answer: “I love the smiles. I love seeing the regulars who come in and continue to enjoy our space. It was also fun designing the interior. When you come in, you see a cool and quirky atmosphere. We’re a little different than the typical pub. The Local Motive is very cozy.”

Any downsides? “I think people think that owning a bar is a lot of fun. And, don’t get me wrong. It is! There are a lot of fun parts about it. But there is a lot of behind-the-scenes stuff that is less fun – the scheduling, the payroll, the taxes. When I would rather be sitting with the people, instead I have to be sitting in the office cranking away.”

She continued, “I went into this knowing that I had to be present for my staff and the bar and the business. Have fun, yes. But do all of the other things, as well. To run a good business, you have to be there and do all of the not-so-fun stuff, too. Also, in this business, things always take longer than you think they’re going to. But that’s OK. Don’t be afraid of change. Sometimes you make a decision, and it ends up not working. It is OK to switch it up and change it.”

In the end, it is the Wittigs’ optimism that has perhaps served them best as still fairly new business owners. Wittig said, “You have to be a realist to a certain extent. But it’s a lot easier to get through the days if you have positivity in mind. Obviously, there are going to be good days and slow days. It’s more fun to look forward to the good ones.”

But the biggest challenge for Colleen is a relatively new one. But a blessed and wonderful one. When asked what that biggest test currently is, she adjusted the phone on her end and answered, “Well, I am holding my six-week-old daughter, Lucy, right now as I talk to you!” ■

garitas. Additionally, there is a variety of craft beers and fine wines. “We also have some fun drinks,” Wittig noted. “We infuse marshmallow into vodka, and that’s really popular. It’s just lime, simple syrup, and marshmallow vodka, but it’s super refreshing and delicious. And we serve it with a marshmallow on top.”

So, what’s the favorite part of co-owning a small town cocktail bar?





**SHOW MORE
TO SELL MORE**

- ➔ Solid Shelves
- ➔ Maximum display
- ➔ Edgeless Doors
- ➔ Maximum efficiency

3141 Frederick Ave. Baltimore MD | 410-945-7878 or 800-848-7748 | careysales.com