



Oktoberfest USA 2014 button design comes from first-time contestant

(La Crosse, Wis.) – Like many visitors, he was inspired by the scenic beauty of the La Crosse area. So when the annual Oktoberfest button design contest was announced, Alex Pichette put his graphic design skills to work. His interpretation of the theme “Munich on the Mississippi” was selected as the winning design for Oktoberfest 2014.

Pichette is a part time graphic designer at Strawberry Fields Design in Green Bay and also works part time at Stadium Bike. He attended Oktoberfest in 2012 with friends from the La Crosse area and has remained connected to the festival via Facebook. It was on the social media site where he saw news about the button design contest. His 2014 entry was his first contest submission.

“I’ve always loved La Crosse, it’s a beautiful city. I have great friends there. So when I saw an opportunity to creatively express and represent the city and the Oktoberfest celebration, I couldn’t turn that down,” says Pichette.

It was after a trip to La Crosse that he started his sketches. “As everyone knows, the bluffs are beautiful and inspiring, but I thought, everyone submitting a button design would try to capture the beauty of the Mississippi River because of the theme for this year. So, I decided to recreate Grandad’s Bluff and incorporate it into whatever design would unfold,” said Pichette.

Pichette’s thoughts led him towards a design with a heavy German influence: the German hat indicative of those worn by Festmasters, the old German-style text, and what he calls “the epic mustache” -- perhaps channeling 1971 Festmaster Walt Hammond and his iconic silver handlebar.

“I worked through several sketches, some of which included pretzels, bratwursts, and lederhosen. I decided to make the text into an abstracted German caricature,” said Pichette. “The intense



2014 Oktoberfest USA Button



2014 Button Design Contest Winner
Alex Pichette

clear blue sky fading into an early dusk sunset—projecting an orangish-brown hue onto the bluffs—calls out to its viewers a festive fall evening.”

Pichette’s design was selected from a field of nearly 60 entries by a vote of the Oktoberfest USA Board of Directors. The winner receives a \$100 cash prize and two complimentary tickets to the Festmaster Ball, which will be held on Friday, September 26, 2014.

While commonly considered a “button-design” contest the winning image is used in many forms, sizes and media to promote Oktoberfest each year. As the new button for each year eventually becomes a collectors’ item, through the years the designs have become a part of the overall history and tradition of Oktoberfest USA.

This year the selected design was unveiled on May 1 as part of the first annual Forks and Corks fundraiser for the Gemutlichkeit Foundation. Founded in 2001, the Gemutlichkeit Foundation is the charitable arm of La Crosse Festivals, Inc. and manages funds used for scholarships for the Miss La Crosse/Oktoberfest Pageant and students at the nine greater La Crosse area high schools.

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