

springfling

Horticultural Society's 'Party of the Year' offers a variety of changes

RODNEY WILSON | CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

Flower shows and the young professionals crowd would seem to have as much in common as ... well, as flower shows and the young professionals crowd. But Spring Fling has been successful in mixing it up and introducing the younger demographic to the Cincinnati Flower Show for nearly two decades.

SPRING FLING

Now in its 19th year as a popular spring-time celebration, the party brings together young professionals from all over Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky for music and dancing, food, drinks ... and flowers.

"It's targeted at post-college through the young professional demographic," says Phillip Lanham, a co-chair of the annual event, which has been a part of the Cincinnati Flower Show since the Cincinnati Horticultural Society began in 1989.

"We aim to introduce them to the flower show and the Cincinnati Horticultural Society," Lanham says. "All of the attendees get a ticket to the flower show for the next day or Sunday - there are only two days left by the time we have our event. So it's a way to introduce the flower show to that demographic."

As a demographic more inclined to spend after-work hours socializing with friends than admiring the flora, young professionals could be something of a hard catch. Luckily, the event's committee is dedicated to keeping things fresh.

SPRINGTIME CHANGES

"We really focused on changing the atmosphere of the event at the core, from the signage to the kind of sponsors that we bring



GRAHAM LIENHART | CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

Karen and Eric Hall and Scott and Kisha Derkson celebrate at last year's Spring Fling. This year's party will feature live music, and there will be an online auction before the event.

in," Lanham says. (CIN Weekly is the media sponsor.) "Make it less of a bar scene, more of a slightly sophisticated event."

Changes also include the musical entertainment, which will include Paul Otten and Big Whiskey alternating sets throughout the evening, playing high-energy cover songs to get the crowd moving. And the venue itself is different from previous years.

"We're in Moonlite Gardens instead of Moonlite Pavilion at Coney," Lanham says. "The Pavilion is more of a shelter, while Moonlite Gardens has more of a structure with a Southern feel - there are balconies and it's an open dance floor. It's a closer feeling, instead of just being one big dance hall, for an event with a lot more character."

Other new twists to this year's Spring Fling include an online auction leading up to the event with items such as sports memorabilia, salon services and more.

The food offerings vary from last year, as well, with outside vendors Mitchell's Fish Market, China Gourmet and Busken Bakery contributing to the edibles.

"At midnight, good doughnuts are a welcome thing," Lanham says. "They absorb a lot."

One of the biggest changes to Spring

Fling, however, will be a voice familiar to many in attendance.

"The other big change this year is Holly Morgan from Q102 will be the MC," Lanham says. "Before, it was the chair's responsibility to MC throughout the event, and we thought having a radio personality would kind of be better for lots of different reasons - promotion reasons, but also to have the energy that they can bring to the MC role."

FUNDING THE FLORALS

At the end of the night, the festivities will have been a fun evening for partygoers, but it's really just the beginning for those who seek to improve the area's urban landscape - the funds from the event benefit the Cincinnati Horticultural Society.

"The Cincinnati Horticultural Society has a number of different areas, between education in the area but also beautification of the area through projects," Lanham says. "Their primary focus is the flower shows - there's one in the spring, one in the fall - just to bring people interested in horticulture together. But they also do, with any proceeds, help beautify the Cincinnati area."

JUST THE FACTS

WHAT: Spring Fling

WHEN: 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday, April 25

WHERE: Coney Island, Moonlite Gardens, 199 Penn Ave., Anderson Twp.

PRICE: \$50; tickets must be purchased online. No tickets are available at the door. Ticket includes unlimited beer, pop and hors d'oeuvres, plus four drink vouchers for cocktails and free admission to the Cincinnati Flower Show on Saturday or Sunday.

PARKING: Free in the East Lot at Coney Island. Free bus transportation is available from Coney to Mount Lookout and Hyde Park.

CONTACT: 513-872-5194 or CINWeekly.Com/springfling

ETC: The Spring Fling online auction benefiting the Cincinnati Horticultural Society can be accessed through CINWeekly.Com/springfling.

VISIT THE FLOWER SHOW

Attendees to the 19th annual Spring Fling will receive a ticket to the Cincinnati Flower Show, a renowned celebration of flowers, fine foods and more. In addition to experiencing breathtaking floral displays, attendees have opportunities to attend lectures from recognized experts, afternoon teas and more.

The Cincinnati Flower Show runs from April 18-27 at Coney Island. A two-day adult ticket is \$25. More information is available at www.cincyflowershow.com.