

BizHawk: Armada Wine & Beer Merchant Finds Niche Serving Up Drinks



Armada Wine & Beer Merchant owners Jaime Heer, left, and Tucker Huget say they've found a nice niche in a neighborhood of State Street that has lots of food options but fewer beverage-only options. The two have seen success at the business they recently opened at 1129-A State St. in the San Marcos Courtyard. (Gina Potthoff / Noozhawk photo)

The owners of Armada Wine & Beer Merchant in downtown Santa Barbara set out to offer a different type of drinking experience, and customers seem to be responding to the new niche.

Armada opened at 1129-A State St. in the San Marcos Courtyard a couple of months ago, a sufficient amount of time for word to have spread — especially about happy hour drink deals from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Owners Jaime Heer and Tucker Huget, former managers of Carr Vineyards & Winery, had been thinking about starting the business for at least a year.

They wanted to offer both beer and wine — by the glass and via tastings — and they picked products made locally and abroad.

Location was also key, so the pair laid roots in an area of State Street that offers tons of restaurant choices but fewer beverage-only options. The spot, which used to house Shine Blow Dry Bar, also gets good traffic from nearby Core Power Yoga.

“Most of them are wine,” Heer said of the competition. “It’s always been a dream.”

A patio is in the works, and the owners also hope to soon host events in the space.