

700+ nail techs gather at 14th Smokies Nail Show

More than 700 licensed nail technicians, salon/spa owners, beauty school students and instructors, and brand reps and educators, attended the **14th Nail Tech Event of the Smokies** in the resort town of Gatlinburg, TN. Many techs brought their families to the show, combining it with a vacation at the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which TripAdvisor ranked as the No. 1 U.S. destination for 2021 (nearby Pigeon Forge, home to Dollywood, ranked No. 4).

Dudley Beauty College owners chartered a bus from Washington, DC, to bring 17 students and three instructors to their first nail show experience!

Founded by nail tech **Jill Wright**, the show features shopping, networking, education and, most important, camaraderie with their fellow nail technicians. Excited nail techs filled their big rolling carts with show specials, and many of the optional hands-on workshops sold out months in advance. Many attendees drove to the show, so they could shop for the products they'll need for the year, convoying home with cars and vans overflowing with polishes, gels, tools, pedicure products and more.

The 25 optional Friday, Saturday and Monday Workshops gave nail techs the vital education they craved, plus the three additional Workshop days also allowed techs to customize their Smokies' experience to fit their budgets.

This nails-only show covered all the business, technical and product knowledge topics that techs need to be inspired and energized in a relaxing environment that's conducive to networking. It had no loud music, no hair product booths and no flea market booths.



left: Atlanta freelance educator KaSundra Anderson with show founder/coordinator Jill Wright. Photo by Apollo Wonex. right: Indiana nail tech/salon owner Sidney Stallsworth won the grand prize, a \$2,500 online shopping spree sponsored by American International Industries and their Tennessee distributor AML Beauty.



The bottom line is the Nail Event of the Smokies is all about nails—people, products and education.

The top sponsors included **Light Elegance, CND, Profiles, Freecoat Nails** and **Thistle Farms** (the Smokies Nail Show charity of choice). New this year was the **Light Elegance Lounge & Dessert Bar**, featuring a cash bar plus complimentary fresh-baked cookies and brownies—each individually wrapped for safety. Also new was the **Thistle Farms Hospitality Room** with complimentary water stations and spiced mixed nuts (also individually wrapped) sponsored by Thistle Farms, Profiles and Freecoat Nails hosted a non-toxic beauty bar and a job fair during the show.

Two ballrooms provided banquet seating for techs to relax and visit while comparing product purchases before embarking on another round of show floor shopping.

CND was the exclusive WiFi

Sponsor for the show weekend and also provided 500 CND swag bags for the attendees.

The 2021 grand prize was a \$2,500 online shopping spree sponsored by

American International Industries (www.aiibeauty.com) and their Tennessee distributor **AML Beauty.com.**

In addition, the show was a Swag-a-poolooza! Fifty door prizes were won before the end of the show.

Plans are already underway for the 15th Nail Tech Event of the Smokies. The 2022 schedule is as follows:

- Friday, July 8—Extended Workshops
- Saturday, July 9—Workshops
- Sunday, July 10—Show day!
- Monday, July 11—Workshops, which are at an additional cost to the show ticket

The Smokies Nail Retreat

In addition to producing the annual show, this past Spring, Jill coordinated the first **Nail**

Retreat for education and camaraderie in Pigeon Forge, TN, at the Moose Hollow Lodge. The second retreat takes place on Sunday, September 26, through Thursday, September 30, 2021. The cost is \$600 per person, which covers first and last nights' dinners plus snacks; all nail classes in the conference center; an evening of shopping with the educators to stock up on supplies;

the use of two large outdoor hot tubs on the deck and a private indoor pool with fireplace next to the conference center.

The sponsorship deck for the 2022 Nail Tech Event of the Smokies will be available in early 2022. Tickets go on sale January 1, 2022 at www.nailtechevent.com. Reach Jill Wright, event coordinator, at info@nailtechevent.com. Visit www.nailtechevent.com.



left: The Nail Tech of the Smokies VIP Gift Bag has become legendary. The 150 holders of the VIP tickets all received the bag, along with entry an hour earlier to the show. Each company's logo was featured on the show's home page with their website link embedded into each photo. Photo by Tiffany Clark. right: The show featured classes and workshops covering every nail service and answering business questions.



left: Lori Halloway aka The Meticulous Manicurist, a YouTube influencer with 592,000 subscribers, offered a class at the show. right: Designer Nail Products owner Pamela Thompson demoed a technique.