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## **Hoplark HopTea Takes Home Top Prize at Naturally Boulder's Pitch Slam Competition – Company Wins Free Booth at Natural Products Expo East Trade Show in 2020**

*Community Gathers for 15<sup>th</sup> Annual, 2-Day Event to Celebrate Autumn Award Winners, Leaders, Brands and Trendsetters Making a Positive Impact in Natural Products Industry*

**Boulder, CO (October 30, 2019)** — [Naturally Boulder](#) hosted its widely popular 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Pitch Slam competition and Autumn Awards ceremony this past Oct. 24 and Oct. 25 at the Boulder Jewish Community Center, where hundreds of natural products industry leaders gathered to explore nearly 70 exhibiting companies in the Innovation and Pitch Slam Showcases and cheered on fifteen entrepreneurs in the Pitch Slam competition. Contestants performed a three-minute business pitch to nearly 600 registrants per day and a panel of expert judges who voted on the final top-three winners.

“The Naturally Boulder Pitch Slam is an extraordinary game-changer for the three winning brands. The array of professional resources our sponsors pile upon the entrepreneurs not only lifts the winning companies to greater heights of success, but further demonstrates the depth of the Naturally Boulder community,” said Arron Mansika, Executive Director, Naturally Boulder. “The event is a coming-together of two powerful components in the Naturally Boulder community: fresh, passionate entrepreneurs bursting with innovation and seasoned industry experts with steady expertise who are devoted to Boulder's continued leadership in this industry.”

Out of the fifteen competing brands, Boulder-based [Hoplark HopTea](#) was awarded the grand prize and will receive a free booth at Natural Products Expo East 2020, the world's largest natural products trade show on the East Coast, in addition to a guaranteed spot in the Expo East Pitch Slam and \$5,000 in cash. Hoplark HopTea will also receive the largest cut from the Pitch Slam prize pack, which is sourced from Naturally Boulder's sponsor community. Comprised of 30+ local companies offering free financial/legal advice, packaging design, strategy consulting from leading marketing and public relations agencies and more, the Pitch Slam prize pack is valued at nearly \$100,000.

The 2019 Pitch Slam winners are:

- Pitch Slam 1st Place: [Hoplark HopTea](#)
- Pitch Slam 2nd Place: [Etalia](#)
- Pitch Slam 3rd Place: [Unwrapp'd Energy Bites](#)

“We are thrilled to have won the Naturally Boulder Pitch Slam. [Naturally Boulder] has been incredibly instrumental in our development as a company as well as to so many others,” said Dean Eberhardt, Co-founder, Hoplark HopTea. “To win this prestigious award as such a young company with a unique product is an honor and shows the vision of the Naturally Boulder community.”



*Hoplark HopTea celebrates their win: Andrew Markley, Co-founder; Shannon Wright, Brewery Manager; and Dean Eberhardt, Co-founder. Photo Courtesy: Naturally Boulder*

## About Hoplark HopTea

Hoplark HopTea has created an entirely new beverage category. Expanding from a Farmers' Market launch in May of 2018 to recently becoming a national brand at Whole Foods Market, Hoplark is one of the fastest-growing brands in the industry. Made from three simple ingredients and handmade in a brewery in Boulder, Colorado, Hoplark HopTea is changing the landscape of ready to drink beverages and redefining "Natural" and "Craft."

## Naturally Boulder's Autumn Awards

In addition to the Pitch Slam competition, each year Naturally Boulder honors and recognizes top industry leaders and brands with the prestigious Autumn Awards. This year's Naturally Boulder Autumn Awards include:

- Breakout Brand of 2019: [Weller](#)
- Industry Leader/Community Champ of 2019: Dale Kamibayashi, Partner, Emergent Brands, LLC

## Breakout Brand of 2019: Weller

Weller is a CBD-infused food and beverage company that is out to change the way the world thinks about wellness. Weller is on a mission to upgrade lives and believes the feel-good-feeling that comes with wellness should be available to everyone, anywhere. In 2019, Weller used launched a CBD Sparkling Water line and CBD Drink Mix. <https://www.welleryou.com/>

## Industry Leader/Community Champion 2019: Dale Kamibayashi, Partner, Emergent Brands, LLC

A true trailblazer in the natural products industry, Dale Kamibayashi has held various leadership positions at local and national companies throughout his 40-year career, where he launched several branded retail products. He went on to be the director of operations at Boulder-based Vantage Organics, a brand management consulting company for organics retailers. Currently, he manages sales for the Rocky Mountain & Southwest Regions for award-winning Presence Marketing, the largest independent natural + organic food brokerage with over 500 employees.



*Dale Kamibayashi accepts the 2019 Industry Leader/Community Champion Award. Photo: Naturally Boulder*

## Upcoming Events and More Information

To view more images from the Naturally Boulder Pitch Slam & Autumn Awards celebration or to see upcoming educational and community events, go to <https://www.naturallyboulder.org/>.

## About Naturally Boulder

Naturally Boulder is an economic development organization dedicated to nurturing and promoting organic and natural products businesses to be a powerful force for positive change. Naturally Boulder was created in 2005 and today has nearly 1,400 members comprised of manufacturers, service providers, entrepreneurs, investors and individuals in Boulder, CO and its extended region. Naturally Boulder members receive meaningful connections to mentors and peers, access to cutting-edge business education, and participate in community celebrations. Visit us online at <https://www.naturallyboulder.org/>, and find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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