



# SPIRITS ENTRY GUIDE

COMPETITION. CONNECTION. COMMUNITY



## WHO WE ARE

*The IWSC (International Wine and Spirit Competition) is one of the world's oldest and most respected competitions, often referred to as the "Olympics of the drinks industry".*

Since 1969, we have been setting the global benchmark for quality across an extensive range of wine, spirits, and other drink categories. Evaluating over **12,000 entries annually from more than 90 countries**, we connect producers to both trade experts and consumers.



## WHY CHOOSE US?



### JUDGED BY GLOBAL TRADE EXPERTS

We **connect** producers with **key industry decision-makers** – our judges, offering access to Head Buyers, Master Distillers, Beverage Directors, Communicators and other experts whose **opinions shape markets**.



### ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

Our **rigorous judging** process, where daily assessments are **limited to 65 samples**, ensures **fair evaluation** and **detailed feedback** for **all entries**. Our transparent approach fosters valuable industry connections.



### UNPARALLELED EXPOSURE

Leveraging **over 50 years** of industry connections, we **showcase your brand** to media, trade, and consumers, while connecting you with top suppliers, retailers, and hospitality professionals across the **entire industry ecosystem**.



# WHAT WE JUDGE

**Our main categories include:**



## WINE

- White
- Red
- Rosé
- Orange
- Sparkling
- Fortified
- Dessert



## SPIRITS

- Gin
- Scotch Whisky
- Worldwide Whiskey
- Rum
- Agave
- Vodka
- Cognac & Armagnac
- Absinthe
- Aquavit
- Distilled Flavoured Spirits/ Fruit/ Seed/ Nut Spirits
- Grain Spirits
- Asian Spirits (including Shochu & Baijiu)
- Grape Brandy
- Bitters & Liqueurs
- Calvados
- Pisco



## ALTERNATIVE DRINKS

- Low Alcohol
- No Alcohol
- Lighter Alcohol
- RTD
- Pre-Mixed Drinks
- Wine-Based Flavoured Drinks
- Vermouth
- Cider



**Can't find a category for your innovative drink?  
Contact [info@iwsc.net](mailto:info@iwsc.net) and we will be happy to help.**

# WHO ARE OUR JUDGES?

Our **Spirits Judging Committee**, comprised of world-class industry professionals including Master Distillers, Master Blenders, Senior Buyers, and top Communicators, leads a **team** of key decision-makers who shape the UK and global spirits scene.



*“For brands, achieving a medal at the IWSC is a true benchmark of quality at the international level. You get compared to the best spirits from a global set of entries, by an elite set of judges focused on objective scoring and feedback-driven discussion.”*

**Olivier Ward**  
IWSC Spirits Judging  
Committee



*“The IWSC judging process is really strict and it needs to be because you’ve got real experts within the industry here. From distillers to retailers to bartenders, everyone looks at the product from a slightly different angle. It’s about collaboration and it’s about having the best of the business judging the drinks.”*

**Dawn Davies MW**  
IWSC Spirits Judging  
Committee



*“To get that independent accolade is great! Thinking about how people shop in supermarkets, there are 30 or so gins on the shelves, if you see one with a gold medal you are more likely to try it as it has been endorsed by the experts.”*

**Desmond Payne MBE**  
IWSC Judge, Master  
Distiller  
at Beefeater



*“Every year I see the IWSC judges – renowned distillers, buyers, communicators, taking notes: what to look out for when the results come out. Very often we say: I’ve tasted this, it’s fantastic, where can I buy a bottle? The level of exposure producers get is phenomenal, and this is one of the greatest endorsements to those who enter the competition.”*

**David T Smith**  
IWSC Spirits Judging  
Committee



*“We’re working in a highly competitive area, and it’s up to international competitions like IWSC to reveal where the changes are happening. The big production is always there, but now it’s the individual craftsmanship that’s entering the field. It’s an exciting time, an innovative time, and thanks to the IWSC, we can show the world what gold medal winners are all about.”*

**Richard Paterson OBE**  
IWSC Spirits Judging  
Committee

# HOW WE JUDGE



## PRE-TASTING

- Our **expert panel** of judges is **restricted** to the **world's most eminent buyers** and **key decision-makers**.
- Expert panels assembled from **over 30 countries**.
- **Balanced representation** across industry sectors.



## DURING THE TASTING

- **Double-blind tastings:** samples poured behind screens to ensure complete anonymity.
- **Daily limit of 65 samples** to avoid judges' palate fatigue.
- **Panel evaluation** and **group discussions** for each entry.
- **Re-tasting all gold-medal winners** by Spirits Judging Committee



## AFTER THE TASTING

- Our **winners** receive **comprehensive tasting notes** and **scores** from our judges.
- We are the **only industry award body** to share **free constructive feedback** with **non-winners**.
- We are **one of the only competitions** to **reveal the names of the judges** who assessed your drinks, **connecting you** to **trade experts**.

 WHERE WE JUDGE





## WHERE WE JUDGE

### ANNUAL UK JUDGING: SHIP YOUR SPIRITS TO THE IWSC

The IWSC annually evaluates over **12,000 entries from more than 90 countries**. Each year, our expert judges convene over one month in London, UK, to assess each drink. Using a rigorous panel process, we ensure fair evaluation, guaranteeing that the first drink receives the same attention as the last.



*“An IWSC accolade is one of the key pieces of getting your name out there, to actually tell people not only that you exist but also that you have quality, that you are a great product.”*

Billy Abbott, IWSC Judge, Whisky & Fine Spirits Expert at The Whisky Exchange

*“With the experts that the IWSC has, producers get excellent feedback. It means that, even if you don’t get a medal you get great feedback from people who really know what they’re doing”*

Colin Hamden-White, IWSC Judge, Writer & Broadcaster

# WHERE WE JUDGE

## GLOBAL JUDGING: BRINGING THE IWSC TO YOU

In addition to our annual Judging in the UK, we take our experts to wine and spirit regions around the world to judge on-site.

- Our judges delve deeply into each region's unique offerings through the distillery visits and workshops, gaining comprehensive knowledge that enables them to represent these regions effectively in the global market.
- Producers gain invaluable opportunities to connect with influential decision-makers in the industry. These interactions pave the way for lasting partnerships and offer insights into the UK market.
- Judges have access to a broader range of spirits directly at the source, allowing for a thorough understanding of the country.

We hold Global Judging events worldwide, including USA, Georgia, South Africa and China. To find out the Global Judging programme for 2025, click [here](#).

*"My overall impression of the IWSC Judging in Kentucky has been one of awe. We've all been working together - distillers, judges - and visited many of the wonderful distilleries here."*

Richard Paterson, IWSC Spirits Judging Committee



# COMMUNITY & ADD-ON AWARDS

Celebrating excellence across the drinks industry, championing sustainability and giving back to the community.



## PRODUCER TROPHIES

Following the announcement of the IWSC's results, the brands that performed best are put forward for our prestigious Producer Trophies.

[Discover More](#)



## TALENT AWARDS

Recognising the contribution of individuals across the industry:

- Emerging Talent
- Communicator Awards
- UK Sommelier Of The Year.

[Discover More](#)



## SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Championing producers who follow environmentally friendly practices through our Green Spirit Initiative.

[Discover More](#)



## DESIGN AWARDS

Rewarding innovation, creativity and brand personality in bottle design and packaging.

[Discover More](#)



## MIXER ADD-ON AWARDS

Awarding the best spirit & mixer pairings across several categories

[Discover More](#)



## IWSC WEBSITE

Weekly IWSC features and recommendations on IWSC website.

**Global page views: 2+ million.**



## IWSC NEWSLETTER

Fortnightly IWSC e-newsletters highlight winners and awards.

**21,000+ global subscribers.**



## IWSC SOCIAL MEDIA

Year-round social media campaigns on our trade (IWSC) and consumer (Club Oenologique) platforms.

**Global reach - 70,000+ users.**



## IWSC EVENTS

Showcasing winning wines and spirits at international trade fairs, trade & press tastings and our annual Awards Celebration.

# HOW WE CAN HELP

Are you an award winner? Be it bronze, silver or gold, here's how our expert in-house team with global industry connections and decades of cross-sector experience can help



## CONNECT WITH KEY DECISION-MAKERS

We are the only competition to reveal judges' names for your entries and to share your details with judges post-results, facilitating industry connections.



## THE DRINKING HOUR PODCAST

Showcasing IWSC winners on global consumer radio station Food FM's "The Drinking Hour" podcast.

**25,500+ total downloads.**



## CLUB OENOLOGIQUE

Our winners are regularly featured in our consumer magazine, Club Oenologique, published online and in print.

**Global page views 1.4+mln.**

# MEDIA EXPOSURE

Our winners are spotlighted by leading media across the world, including:

**Forbes**

THE  
BUYER

TimeOut

The  
Drinking  
Hour  
CLUB  
ENOLOGIQUE

Food&Drink  
BUSINESS

FOOD&BEVERAGE  
MAGAZINE

MEN'S JOURNAL

drinks  
trade

THE SHOUT

## WHAT OUR WINNERS SAY



*“One of the draws to the competition is the feedback from the judges on the profile of the gin. This was very important to me, as it allowed me to make minor adjustments to improve the spirit for the marketplace, as well as provide customers tasting notes from the experts.”*

*As a result of our IWSC win, we were featured on Channel 4’s Sunday Brunch. Our sales increased by over 830% following the show, this has now steadied back down, but the Great Bustard Gin continues to be a popular choice.”*

**Hugh Anderson**  
Founder & Distiller at  
Downton Distillery (UK)



*“We get approached by many spirit competitions all over the world and when we evaluated the benefits of each one, we decided that entering our brands in IWSC is no-brainer! When you consider the longevity of the IWSC, the knowledgeable, experienced and talented judges and of course the quality of the entries this is a competition where winning a medal means a lot.”*

**Alexander Kong**  
Commercial Manager at  
Worthy Park Estate (Jamaica)



*“The IWSC is an important competition and has been since we launched Four Pillars in 2013. Whilst it is the ideal opportunity to benchmark our gins against the best in the world, we also value the feedback on some of our smaller batches and innovations. The judging panels are exceptional.”*

**Cameron Mackenzie**  
Co-Founder at  
Four Pillars Gin (Australia)

**Read more  
winners success  
stories [here](#)**



HOW TO ENTER

# HOW TO ENTER



## STEP 1 SELECT

Select your finest spirits and complete the entry form.



## STEP 2 SHIP

While you can choose any shipper, our partnership with Hellmann Worldwide Logistics offers the most cost-effective and secure option. Send bottles to a local Hellmann depot for all-inclusive shipping, covering duties, taxes, and customs.



## STEP 3 SHOWCASE

Showcase your results and connect with our industry experts.





# HOW TO SHIP



## STEP 1

Find your nearest Hellmann depot on [IWSC website](#).



## STEP 2

Send your samples to your nearest Hellmann depot.



## STEP 3

Hellmann handles customs clearance and sample delivery with an all-inclusive fee.



## NO HIDDEN COSTS

Your spirits will be delivered safely to us in proud partnership with



To find out how to ship your spirits to us directly, please visit our [website](#).

# KEY DATES

**ENTER & PAY ONLINE**

**£170 per entry + VAT**

**Reduced to £160 per entry for a minimum of 4 entries**

**14 November 2024**



**ENTRIES  
OPEN**

**7 March 2025**



**CONSOLIDATED  
SHIPPING DEADLINE**

**21 March 2025**



**ENTRY  
DEADLINE**

**28 March 2025**



**DIRECT SHIPPING  
DEADLINE**

**May 2025**



**SPIRITS  
JUDGING**

**2 June 2025**



**RESULTS  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

**[ENTER HERE](#)**



## Ready to enter? Contact us.

### Sales

Peter Everall - [peter.everall@iwsc.net](mailto:peter.everall@iwsc.net)

Thomas Goble - [thomas.goble@iwsc.net](mailto:thomas.goble@iwsc.net)

Diego Carrejo - [diego.carrejo@iwsc.net](mailto:diego.carrejo@iwsc.net)

Massimo Serpelloni (Italy only)- [massimo.serpelloni@iwsc.net](mailto:massimo.serpelloni@iwsc.net)

Janine van Zyl (South Africa only) - [janine.vanzyl@iwsc.net](mailto:janine.vanzyl@iwsc.net)

### Marketing

Mila Gorchakova – [marketing@iwsc.net](mailto:marketing@iwsc.net)

### General enquiries

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[www.iwsc.net](http://www.iwsc.net) | [@theiwsc](https://www.instagram.com/theiwsc)

