



The new spirits trends set to 'tipple' the status quo

World-renowned International Wine and Spirit Competition reveals its spirits winners of 2017

- **No-age whiskies challenge Scotch traditions**
- **Asia's spirits explode on to world stage**
- **Mezcal takes its rightful place next to Tequila**
- **Gin sees an entry increase of nearly 600% in just two years**

London, 27th July 2017: The IWSC's Annual Spirits Tasting has lifted the lid on the key trends shaping what we'll be drinking in the year ahead. The annual event, held last night at London's Vintners' Hall, saw more than 200 of the competition's top-awarded spirits showcased to guests and judges, amid a record number of entries, in the history of the competition, from all over the globe.

The final results have revealed exciting shifts in the spirits occupying our bars and drinks cabinets. Not only has this year's competition confirmed a number of key consumer trends, it has also heralded the arrival of a multitude of lesser-known, but bold newcomers to the spirits premier league.

Now in its 48th year, the IWSC continues to be as relevant today as when Anton Massel founded the organisation in 1969, playing an integral role in identifying upcoming spirits trends, and spotting key newcomers even before they hit the public eye. Having distilled the statistics from this year's competition, the IWSC has identified four of the most 'in-vogue' categories that consumers can raise a glass to.

Age is Nothing but a Number

The world of whisky has expanded and diversified far beyond the traditional Scotches and blends associated with the category. This year's IWSC results have debunked the long-standing myth of 'the older the better', with **a range of no-age statement whiskies taking the sector by storm**. Turning the focus to the art of the blend, rather than the prestige tied up in age, the trophy this year was awarded to Richard Paterson's The Dalmore Valour Single Highland Malt – a rich, chocolatey elixir with warm orange and cinnamon aromas.

The Proof is in the Provenance

From India's 'Feni', to China's 'Baiju' (pronounced Bye-joe), **Asia's spirits market is thriving as never before**, and the continent has plenty to offer our western palates. Testament to consumers' enthusiasm to explore new offerings – both in flavour and in provenance – recent years have seen Baiju, made from the fermented grain sorghum, arrive in style on the world stage. With an increasing number of Baijus being entered each year, IWSC officials have even introduced the Baiju trophy, this year won by the Yushan Taiwan Kaoliang Liquor – thought by the judges to have soft lavender and pine needles on the nose, followed by a delicate palate that has a touch of baked bamboo and Chinese pickle.



Slow and Artisan wins the race

Possibly the greatest success story to have come out of this year's awards is **the rise of Tequila's partner-in-crime, Mezcal**. With certain craft Mezcal producers using agave plants matured for up to 35 years, some of the resulting liquids are now ready to compete with the best tequilas. For the first time ever, this year even saw the 'Tequila Trophy' being renamed the 'Mezcal Trophy' – reflecting changing appreciation of the drink. The top prize was awarded to the Corte Vetusto Mezcal Espadin, hand-crafted by fourth-generation master mezcalero, Juan Carlos Gonzalez Diaz. Seeking to capture the essence of artisanal Mezcal, the leading producers within this category are set to challenge consumers' perceptions of agave spirits, positioning them as a genuine sipping alternative to single malt whisky. David Shepherd, co-founder and director at Black Sheep Spirits, says *"Mezcal is niche. It's about 2% of tequila sales – but it's coming out of the darkness. It's made that transition from bartender's secret to being requested by consumers"*.

The Gin Bubble

This year, the IWSC received nearly 400 gin entries from 35 different countries – an enormous **571% increase since 2013**. With consumer loyalty yet to wane, gin has continued to dominate the aperitif scene – as producers experiment with new craft creations and evermore obscure botanical concoctions. Professor Ampleforth's Bathtub Navy Strength Gin (winner of the Contemporary Gin Trophy, 2017) packs a botanical punch thanks to the "bashing up" of the ingredients, including orange peel and cinnamon, to release even more flavour. Eco-friendly Brighton Gin, who bike bottles straight to customers' doors in the city, also walked away with an award, with its quirky packaging catching the eyes of the judges.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editor

About the International Wine & Spirit Competition

- Established in 1969, The International Wine & Spirit Competition (IWSC) was the first competition of its kind, set up to seek out, reward and promote the world's best wines, spirits and liqueurs. Now in its 48th year, The IWSC's relentless pursuit of excellence underpins every aspect of the competition today
- The IWSC is set apart by the formidable reputation of its judging process. Panels are made up of carefully selected industry experts including Master Distillers, Masters of Wine, wine and spirit buyers and sommeliers; WSET qualified educators and respected wine and spirit journalists. Every single wine and spirit is blind tasted and assessed on its own merit within the context of its class
- Currently receiving entries from 81 countries, the IWSC is truly international in its reach and recognition



- The IWSC's partners around the world work throughout the year to drive awareness and promote winners to both trade and consumer audiences
- With 48 years' heritage, an IWSC Award is recognised internationally as a badge of quality

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IWSC 2017 Spirit Trophy Winners

Product Awards

- Vodka Trophy – Purity Vodka 51 Limited Reserve, Purity Vodka AB
- London Dry Gin Trophy – Swedish Rose Gin – Hernö that boutique-y Gin Company, Atom Brands
- Contemporary Gin Trophy – Ableforth's Bathtub Gin Navy Strength, Atom Brands
- Fruit Spirits Trophy – Lörch Hocharomatischer Waldhimbeergeist, Bimmerle KG
- Pomace Brandy Trophy – Grappa Le Giare Gewürztraminer, Distilleria Marzadro
- Baiju Trophy – Chinese Spirits Baiju Yushan Tawiwian Kaoliang Liquor Aged 5 years, AOW
- Shochu Trophy – Shasharakuraku Aka, Nishi Sake Brewing Co.
- Mezcal Trophy – Corte Vetusto Mezcal Espadin, Corte Vetusto
- Cognac Trophy – Cognac Rouillet VSOP Grande Champagne, SAS Maison de Negoce Charentaise
- Rum Trophy – Rhum Agricole Vieux Neisson 12 ans d'âge, Distillerie Neisson
- Bourbon Trophy – Big House Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Sazerac Company
- Liqueur Trophy – Mozart Chocolate Cream, Schlumberger Wein-und Sektkellerei GMBH
- Worldwide Brandy Trophy – KVV 15 Potstill Brandy, KVV
- Blended Scotch Whisky Trophy – Syndicate 58/6 12 YO Blended Scotch Whisky, Syndicate 58/6 Ltd
- Single Malt Scotch Whisky no age statement Trophy – Dalmore Valour Single Highland Malt, Whyte & Mackay Ltd
- Single Malt Scotch Whisky 15 years and under Trophy – The Balvenie 14YO Caribbean Cask Single Malt Scotch Whisky, William Grant & Sons Distillers Ltd
- Single Malt Scotch Whisky over 15 years Trophy – Glenglassaugh Highland Scotch Whisky 40YO, The BenRiach Distillery Company Ltd
- Single Malt Scotch Whisky Cask Strength Trophy – Bunnahabhain 18YO Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Distell
- Worldwide Whiskey Trophy – Kavalan Solist ex-Bourbon Single Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky, Kavalan Distillery
- Aquavit Trophy – Gylde Akvavit, Pabst & Richarz Vertriebs GmbH

Mixer Awards

- Gin & Tonic Trophy – Spritfabrikens "G" Gin, Skånska Spritfabriken
- Rum & Ginger Beer Trophy – Worlds End Rum Dark Spiced, 2240 Social Club
- Vodka & Tonic Trophy – Gustav Dill Vodka, Lignell & Piispanen
- Rum & Cola Trophy – Rom Rincon, Cadushy Distillery



Packaging Awards

- White Spirits Trophy – Brighton Gin, Brighton Gin Spirits Company Ltd
- Brown Spirits Trophy – (Joint winners) Glenfiddich Project XX Single Malt Scotch Whisky / Glenfiddich IPA Experiment Single Malt Scotch Whisky, William Grant & Sons
- Contemporary Trophy – Italicus Rosolio di Bergamotto, Italicus Ltd
- Traditional Trophy – (Joint winners) Cap Mattei Grande Réserve Quinquina Rouge 2015 / Cap Mattei Blanc 2015, La Distillerie
- WoW Trophy – Padró & Co. Rojo Amargo Light Box, Unión Vegas SL
- Storytelling Trophy - Ableforth's Bathtub Cut Gin, Atom Brands