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2009 SIP Awards Put Consumers in the Judges' Seat

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Dec. 22, 2009 — The inaugural Spirits International Prestige (SIP) Awards world spirit competition (<http://www.sipawards.com>) took place in Los Angeles on November 14, awarding Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum medals to the top spirits from around the globe. Unlike other spirits competitions, however, the SIP Awards didn't rely on industry experts or experienced judges to suss out the best of the best.

Instead, the winners of the 2009 SIP Awards were chosen by a panel of 100 people who happen to enjoy spirits and know what to look for in distinguishing quality in distilled beverages. As a result, the SIP Awards, says event coordinator Ali Samsami, offered competitors a level playing field — and a chance for greater exposure.

“Other competitions use experienced judges and food and beverage industry experts,” Samsami explained. “The SIP Awards moves away from that by allowing knowledgeable consumers to judge the competition. They decide what they favor without marketing pressure or brand bias. By using industry outsiders, we are able to showcase the best distilled beverages based purely on quality.”

The 2009 SIP Awards was a truly international competition. Platinum awards, announced this week, went to spirits spanning from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Central America. Judges firmly graded brands on aroma, taste and finish in a blind tasting. Tequila won big, with 3 Amigos Blanco, 901 Silver, Azcona Azul Silver, Don Pilar Anejo, El Jimador Anejo, Sauza Tres Generaciones Anejo, Herradura Seleccion Suprema Extra-Aged Anejo, Muchote Reposado, Hornitos Reposado, Real de Mexico Reposado, and Republic Reposado tequilas taking home Platinum SIP Awards.

Platinum SIP Awards also went to Finlandia Grapefruit and Tangerine Fusion Vodka; RND Vodka, IS Vodka, Krome Vodka, Orange V Vodka, Vodka 14 and Vonost 88 Vodka; Commander's Call Coconut Rum and Horne Spiced Rum; TY KU Soju, La Valote Absinthe and Pere Francois Absinthe; Galliano L'autentico, Lillet Blanc, Nature's Own Marula Cream Cocktail, Ventura Limoncello Originale, (ri)1 Whiskey and Woodford Reserve Bourbon.

In addition to the bragging rights earned by taking top honors at the SIP Awards, winners will enjoy increased exposure: Industry publications are already interested in featuring the winners in future issues. The competition is also committed to getting the word out about the companies, large and small, that walked away with SIP Awards.

“The SIP Awards is the only spirits competition not judged by experts,” Samsami stated. “So the winners rose to the top based purely on quality. They couldn't fall back on slick marketing campaigns or industry buzz. The people have spoken, and their preferences are finally shining the spotlight on some companies that really deserve the recognition.”

Next year's world spirits competition will be held May 2010. Distilleries interested in competing in the 2010 SIP Awards, which promise to be bigger and come with even more publicity for the winners, can find entry information at <http://www.sipawards.com>.

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