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10th Annual SIP Awards Maintains Decade-Long Record-Breaking Trend

The 2018 SIP Awards celebrates its tenth annual competition with new award categories, medal designs, and record-high participation

NEWPORT BEACH, CA, May 19, 2018 - From its humble beginnings, the Spirit International Prestige (SIP) Awards has grown into a movement that is gaining traction across the spirits industry at lightning speed. As the only international spirits competition with only consumers as judges, the SIP Awards provides small and big brands a rare opportunity to receive unbiased consumer feedback. Following the growth trend across the last decade, the 2018 competition saw a new record of 783 spirit brand entries and 122 consumer judges.

In addition to the large number of new spirit brand entries, the 2018 SIP Awards also brought about a spike in returning brands vying for the coveted Consumer Choice Award (CCA). The CCA is an exclusive medal reserved for spirit brands that manage to secure a SIP Award for two or more consecutive years.

“In 2018, we saw a 14% increase in the number of eligible entries for the Consumer Choice Award. This surge of interest in the Consumer Choice Award reflects the brands’ desires to demonstrate quality, consistency, and ongoing dedication to high standards with evidence from a third party,” says Paul Hashemi, founder of the SIP Awards.

However, the 2018 SIP Awards was not only marked by a dramatic increase in engagement with the spirit industry and consumers. In commemoration of the 10th annual competition, the SIP Awards also refreshed medal designs and created a new category, the Double Gold medal, to accommodate a greater spectrum of the top winners. The Double Gold medal corresponds to an outstanding rank of spirits and mixers which consumers judged to qualify for the top percentile of their given categories and justify strong recommendations.

“In line with our commitment to honest and unbiased feedback from consumers, we listen to our participants’ feedback to improve the value of our competition every year,” Hashemi says. “For our 10th anniversary, we updated the design of our medals to bolster the spirit brands’ marketing efforts and introduced an additional award category to further nuance the different levels of quality distinction.”

The SIP Awards takes a number of measures to ensure the objectivity of the consumer evaluation. First, all judges are screened to make sure they are not affiliated with spirit brands or the spirit industry. Additionally, the SIP Awards accounts for demographic diversity when selecting judges, as shown in our online [infographic](#). Moreover, all spirits are served chilled and undiluted for blind tasting in a scientifically designed [Neat Glass](#) to enhance the tasting experience. Lastly, the SIP Awards uses a proprietary algorithm to gauge the judges' palate consistency. Scores from judges with less palate variability are weighed heavier than those who have shown more palate fluctuations.

Each spirit across the various categories were graded on aroma, taste, and finish. The 2018 Platinum Best of Class honorees include:

Tequila Terraneo Organico
100% Agave Tequila Silver/Blanco

Hotel California Tequila Reposado **CCA**
100% Agave Tequila Reposado

Suerte Tequila Anejo **CCA**
100% Agave Tequila Anejo

El Fogonero Tequila
100% Agave Tequila Extra Anejo

Rosso Vermouth
Vermouth

D'Usse XO
Armagnac XO or Equivalent

36 Short Original Gin
Gin

Western Son Texas Gin
Gin

Sacred Spring Barrel Aged Gin
Gin Aged

Seesucker Southern Style Lemonade
Flavored/Infused Gin

Appalachian Sippin' Cream Dark Chocolate Coffee
Cream/Dairy/Egg Liqueur

Five Saints Blood Orange Liqueur

Fruit/Berry Liqueur

Bols Ginger
Herbal/Botanicals Liqueur

Maggie's Farm Falernum
Other Liqueur

Cutwater Fugu Vodka Soda Lime
Pre-Mixed Cocktail (RTD) - Max of 25% AbV

1934 Bloody Mary Mix
Bloody Mary Mixer

Sunder Mixer
Carbonated Mixer

Stirrings Authentic Grenadine
Syrup/Cordial

The Naked Turtle White Rum
White Rum

Ron de Jeremy Reserva
Gold/Dark Rum

Santa Teresa 1796 Solera Rum
Extra-Aged Rum

Twenty Boat Spiced Rum **CCA**
Spiced Rum

Club Caribe Mango Rum **CCA**
Flavored/Infused Rum

Guillotine Vodka Originale
Vodka

Cathead Vodka
Vodka

Western Son Hill Country Peach Vodka
Flavored/Infused Vodka

Evan Williams Bottled-In-Bond
Straight Bourbon Whiskey

Bernheim Original Small Batch Kentucky Straight
Small Batch Bourbon

Bower Hill, Single Barrel Bourbon
Single Barrel American Whiskey

Oregon Rye Malt Whiskey
American Straight Rye Whiskey

Golden State Corn Whiskey
Other American Whiskey

Kamiki Intense
International Whisky (non-Ireland/non-Scotland)

Dewars 12 Yr The Ancestor **CCA**
Blended Scotch

The Singleton of Glendullan 12 Year Old
Distillers' Single Malt Scotch

Ole Smoky Blue Flame Moonshine **CCA**
Unaged Whiskey/Moonshine

William Wolf Coffee
Flavored/Infused Whiskey/Moonshine

Five Farms
Individual Bottle Design

Revel Avila Series
Series Bottle Design

For a complete list of the categories, winners, and photos from the event, visit: <https://sipawards.com>

About the SIP Awards

The SIP Awards provides a unique judging competition for spirit brands to gain exposure, feedback, and recognition from unbiased consumers. As the only blind tasting competition of its kind, the SIP Awards offers a fair platform for top brands to showcase their products to their most discerning audience. To learn more about the SIP Awards beverage competition, venue partnerships, or for a complete list of this year's winners, visit <https://sipawards.com>.