



SAN FRANCISCO WORLD
SPIRITS COMPETITION

San Francisco World Spirits Competition Marks 15th Anniversary with Largest Number of Entrants Ever

More than fourteen hundred different bottles of high-end spirits under one roof for one weekend in the heart of San Francisco – sounds like the best ever Pop-up bar or swank soiree in the world.

And it just might be for the [42 spirits professionals](#) among the best palates and personalities in the world of spirits, who will be judging the largest international spirits competition in America.

The 15th Annual [San Francisco World Spirits Competition](#), from March 20-22, 2015 will pit the world's best whisk(e)ys, gins, tequilas, mezcals, sojus, baijius, rums – you name it – against each other at the elegant [Hotel Nikko](#) in downtown San Francisco.

The competition has mirrored, and spurred, the spirits industry's explosive growth over the last 15 years. The inaugural 2000 World Spirits Competition welcomed 12 judges and 292 entries in 59 categories. The 2014 competition saw over 400 spirits from the United States alone, and this year, for the second consecutive year, more than 1,400 spirits will participate in 90 categories. "We have always been a bellwether for trends in spirits consumption and growth. Our caliber of judges, our international reputation and professional organization of the competition helps the marketplace be assured of tremendous quality control and opportunities," says competition director and spirits guru Anthony Dias Blue.

Entries continue to pour in for the 2015 competition with an extended deadline of [March 11th](#).

The list of judges is as impressive as the bottle list. Blue, the Executive Director and competition founder, is a James Beard award-winning radio host, the Editor-in-Chief of both The Tasting Panel Magazine and The SOMM Journal, as well as the author of 9 spirits, wine, and food-focused books.



SFWSC Director of Judging Tony Abou-Ganim

Over the last 15 years, he and his director of judging, Tony Abou-Ganim, the [Modern Mixologist](#), have recruited the industry's top writers, bartenders, and personalities to judge, including Master Sommelier and Master of Wine Doug Frost, who judged the inaugural 2000 competition, and Esquire Magazine and Saveur spirits writer David Wondrich among many others.

In addition to ace palates, glassware is as paramount to the high performance outcome of competition as the liquid it holds. For the first time in its 15-year run, the competition will exclusively use the [NEAT glass](#). The new industry standard for spirits tasting, with a patented design, NEAT glasses are scientifically engineered with a compressed lip and flared rim to enhance the judging experience. "We have rigorously tested the NEAT Glass in comparative tastings with other spirits glasses," says Blue. "It is the only glass that

eliminates alcohol burn while enhancing aroma. It showcases all the nuance and complexity that the spirit's producer intended."

The breadth and detail of entrant categories exemplifies America's cocktail revolution, and evolution, and the competition has become the rite of passage for the highest quality bottles that line the shelves of leading restaurants and bars. Cachaça and nut liqueurs get their own Best in Show categories, for instance, while the competition organizes whisk(e)y entrants into 13 different sub-categories – from best Single Malt to best Irish Whiskey to the best over-11-year-old single barrel Bourbon.

"Every year with this event we see the emerging trends in the spirits category. Often, our event is a launchpad for a burgeoning trend to be taken seriously. Prior to our event, smaller categories such as Pisco, Calvados, Cachaça and Mezcal were little known in this country. Now, bartenders and journalists worldwide turn their attention to our results to gauge the marketplace," says Director Blue. "Over the last 15 years as we've witnessed this explosive growth in spirits, we also note that the further sub-categorization of aging and types of spirits is proliferating. We are in an exciting time in the beverage business."

About the Competition

Founded in the new millennium year of 2000 by noted wine & spirits critic and competition director Anthony Dias Blue, the San Francisco World Spirits Competition has gained a reputation as the leading gauge for spirits trends and top quality products in the country and worldwide. Noted journalists, distillers, beverage directors, mixologists, restaurateurs, Master Sommeliers, hoteliers, consultants, educators comprise the august body of judges. The continued double-digit growth of entries annually points to an undeniable love affair with distillate products in the United States.

For interviews, images and media information, please contact Kimberly Charles at Charles Communications Associates at press@charlescomm.com or 415|701-9463. Please also Like our page at San Francisco World Spirits Competition on Facebook, and follow the competition on Twitter at #SFWSC.



NEAT Glass Experience