

## **Excellent crafts: the winners of Berlin's Craft Spirits Berlin Awards 2023**

*The international spirits competition finished with a lively award ceremony*

Berlin, March 6, 2023 – "Those who do not take pleasure in drinking are fools", said the Greek poet Euripides almost 2,500 years ago. At that time, it was taken for granted that liquid delights were handcrafted. In recent years, more and more distilleries have been rediscovering the virtues of artisanal production. This has resulted in the establishment of premium spirits with an extravagant flavor profile. The best in the industry were chosen on March 4, 2023 at the Säälchen at Holzmarkt 25 in Berlin. It was a lavish celebration and a vibrant get-together of the international craft spirits scene.

This year's entries include classics and exotics: pear brandy from Baden, liquid pitch and agave brandy from Mexico, vodka from Estonia and apple-honeycomb brandy from the Czech Republic, pastry-infused liqueur from Münsterland as well as Japanese rice distillates, a fruit spirit from Patagonia and a mountain pine liqueur from Switzerland. The variety shows: handmade spirits are on the rise. "All of us are winners", says Theo Lighthart, co-organizer of the largest and most important international competition for handcrafted spirits, "the excellent spirits, liqueur wines, soft drinks, fillers and syrups gift us moments of pleasure. Through the Craft Spirits Berlin Awards, they will now receive the attention they deserve and find their place in bars, restaurants and retail." Co-organizer Dr. Thomas Kochan agrees: "Especially for small distilleries, the Craft Spirits Berlin Awards are a great chance to become known - across the globe!"

The global significance of the awards is already becoming evident when looking at the participants: this year, distilleries from 27 countries faced the international jury of experts and sensory experts. In blind tastings, the submitted products were evaluated on the basis of a 100-point scheme - with at least three jurors testing the smell, taste, balance and peculiarity of each product. Gold, silver and bronze medals are then awarded according to the number of points achieved. The winners of this year's Craft Spirits Awards are:

### **Craft Spirit of the Year 2023**

(Spirit with the highest score)

Kirschwasser L-6308 43 % vol, Hausbrennerei Fridolin Baumgartner

### **Craft Distillery of the Year 2023**

(Distillery with the highest score)

**Gold:** Birkenhof Brennerei, Nistertal, Westerwald, Deutschland

**Silber:** Destillerie Zott, Ustersbach, Bayern, Deutschland

**Bronze:** Spezialitätenbrennerei Humbel, Stetten, Aargau, Schweiz

**World's Best Craft Distilleries** – award for those manufacturers who won three gold medals within three years, being:

- Birkenhof Brennerei, Nistertal, Deutschland
- Destillerie Zott, Ustersbach, Deutschland
- Hausbrennerei Fridolin Baumgartner, Vogtsburg, Deutschland
- Heiner's Destillate, Zug, Schweiz
- Humbel Spezialitätenbrennerei, Stetten, Schweiz
- Maidli Gin, Heuweiler, Deutschland
- Mozers Spirit, Pfedelbach, Deutschland
- Spezialitätenbrennerei Norbert Winkelmann, Hallerndorf, Deutschland

The following **special prizes** were awarded for outstanding accomplishments in the field of manually produced spirits:

- **Female Craft Distiller of the Year:** Ina Kirschner-Backert, Gebranntes Glück (Marktrodach, Deutschland)
- **Outstanding Innovation:** Katrin Schray, Schray's Distillery (Baiersbronn, Deutschland)
- **Best in Tradition:** Sasse Feinbrennerei (Schöppingen, Deutschland)
- **Craft Spirits Newcomer of the Year:** Jo Dunkel, Edition Dunkel (Riehen, Schweiz)
- **Young Craft Distiller of the Year:** Tomáš Grič, Grič Distillery (Brezovička, Slowakei)

Winners of single product categories receive the **Best-in-Class** award:

**Free Spirits:** SI-OFF Apéritif Suisse Waldrauschen Alkoholfrei, Destillerie Studer

**Liqueur wine:** Vinn White Weinaperitif 18 % vol, Birkenhof Brennerei

**Absinthe:** Steinhorn Fee Absinth 60 % vol, Steiner Bros.

**Agave:** Erstwhile Espadin 2021 Artisanal Limited Edition 48 % vol, Erstwhile Mezcal

**Baijiu, Shochu & Soju:** Koji 1607 Premium Vintage Limited 35 % vol, Fundodai

**Aquavit & Kümmel:** Aquavit 40 % vol, Elephant Gin

**Liqueur:** Grüne Walnuss Likör 28 % vol, mühle4 | Manufaktur edler Brände

**Cordial:** Dr. Billings Vaccinium Heidelbeer-Kräuterlikör 35 % vol, Alkemists

**Geist:** Mandarinensalbei-Geist 38 % vol, Schray's Distillery; Salbei Geist 40 % vol, Engel Naturbrennerei (zwei Sieger mit gleicher Punktzahl)

**Vegetable:** Rote Bete Brand 40 % vol, Birkenhof Brennerei

**Berries:** Himbeerbrand durch Mazeration und Destillation gewonnen 40 % vol, Birkenhof Brennerei

**Citrus fruits:** Pomeranze Bitterorangegeist 53,5 % vol, Destillerie Zott

**Stone fruits:** Kirschwasser L-6308 43 % vol, Hausbrennerei Fridolin Baumgartner

**Pomaceous fruits:** Williams Christ Birnenbrand 42 % vol, Destillerie Zott

**Wild fruits:** Vogelbeerbrand durch Mazeration und Destillation gewonnen, 40 % vol, Birkenhof Brennerei

**Grape, pomace & wine:** Grappa Rubinia 42 % vol, Distilleria Gualco

**Gin Barrel Aged:** Private Time Barrel Aged Gin 45 % vol, Esslingen Spirits Company

**Gin Navy Strength:** Tinctura Anatomica Dark Gin 60 % vol, Destillerie Möbus

**Gin New Western Style:** Poodle Head Gin 44 % vol, Den Klodsede Bjørn

**Gin:** Hausgin 43,8 % vol, DrinkSyndikat

**Grains & more:** LUK Handcrafted Vintage Korn 43 % vol, Birkenhof Brennerei

**Vodka:** Kaiho Single Estate Organic Vodka 40,2 % vol, Turku Distillery

**Whisky & Whiskey:** Tully Cross 123,8 Proof 61,6 % vol, Spezialitätenbrennerei Norbert Winkelmann

**Sugar cane:** Ron de Marinero Blanco 40 % vol, Humbel Spezialitätenbrennerei

**Spirits Unlimited:** Salbei mit Honig 38 % vol, Birkenhof Brennerei

The full list of awards can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.craftspiritsberlin.de/en/awards/results-2023/>

Press photographs Craft Spirits Berlin Awards 2023

<https://www.craftspiritsberlin.de/en/awards/press/>

**Captions:**

**Photo 382:** Organizer Thomas Kochan with Jo Dunkel / „Craft Spirits Newcomer of the Year 2023“

**Photo 428:** Organizer Thomas Kochan with Sarah Grawe / Feinbrennerei Sasse / „Best in Tradition 2023“

**Photo 642:** Gold medal winners: presenter Leslie Nachmann, organizer Theo Ligthart, Fridolin Baumgartner (Hausbrennerei Baumgartner), Markus Wuchner (Maidli Gin), Lorenz Humbel (Humbel Spezialitätenbrennerei), Martin Eschenbrenner (Eschenbrenner), Jonas Klöckner (Birkenhof Brennerei), organizer Thomas Kochan

**Photo 702:** Alessandro Soldatini (Distilleria Gualco) (M.) with organizers Theo Ligthart and Thomas Kochan

**Photo 842:** winners „World’s Best Craft Distilleries“; organizer Thomas Kochan, presenter Leslie Nachmann, Fridolin and Anneliese Baumgartner (Hausbrennerei Baumgartner), Philipp and Markus Wuchner (Maidli Gin), Jonas Klöckner (Birkenhof Brennerei), Thomas Heiner (Heiner’s Destillate), Lorenz Humbel (Humbel Spezialitätenbrennerei), Constantin Mozer (Mozers Spirit)

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