

The lengthy line-up for this year's Drinks International Cocktail Challenge finals was testament to the quality of recipes submitted by the drinks brands in the qualifying rounds. David Longfield reports from the judges' bench

Shake, battle & roll

Now in its 17th year, the Drinks International Cocktail Challenge has built a reputation in the industry as being the world's only truly independent cocktail competition, attracting the highest calibre of entries from global brand owners, brand ambassadors and bar professionals.

It's the best possible way for spirits producers to showcase how their brand can perform at the cutting edge of the business – mixed in original recipes by some of the world's top bartending names.

This year for the first time, the Cocktail Challenge was opened out beyond its traditional focus on a single cocktail category, to include new recipes in each of the Aperitif, Long Drink and After Dinner categories.

With the prospect of tasting and assessing 28 cocktails, the judges (pictured right) at the finals – held at May's Distil show in London's Docklands – were faced with a daunting task. Well, someone's got to do it.

As it turned out though, the standard of the entries was so high (quite possibly the best ever) that the panel's palates were kept tantalised and refreshed right through to the 5pm finish.

At this point, discussions ensued to select the three category winners from among the various Gold medalists. While this was not a clear-cut exercise, with so many high-scoring efforts, there was, unusually, a unanimous choice for the overall winner – each judge giving it their top individual score.

The Drinks International Cocktail Challenge Champion will be revealed in the presence of some of the spirits industry's most influential names at the International Spirits Challenge awards dinner at the Marriott Grosvenor Square hotel, London, in November.

Contact jo.morley@drinksint.com for enquiries.

The Drinks International Cocktail Challenge in association with



Julian Shaw
Director, Gorgeous Group



Andrea Horsfield
Director, The Training School



David Longfield
Drinks International deputy editor



Lucy Britner
Drinks International news & web editor



Neil Lowrey
Co-founder, Bar Wizards International



Thanks to Nick Wykes and IPBartenders for providing the equipment

Cocktail Challenge

Trophy winners



Aperitifs

Beefeater 24: Lapsang Martinez Mixed by Timothy Stones

Ingredients

Lapsang Martinez
35ml Beefeater 24
25ml Dubonnet
5ml Maraschino
5ml Lapsang Souchong syrup

Method

Stir and strain into a cocktail glass.
Garnish with an orange twist.



GOLD

Aperitifs - White Spirits

Bols
Genever:
Genever Diva (Alex Kratena)



Long Drinks

Volare: Gyaos Mixed by Jamie Stephenson

Ingredients

25ml Volare Green Melon
25ml Volare Peach
25ml Lemon juice
2 Dash Regans' Bitters
75ml Monster Ripper

Method

Shake all ingredients except Monster Ripper.
Strain into a tall glass over cubed ice.
Top with Monster Ripper.
Garnish with a slice of melon and lemon twist.



GOLD

After Dinner - Liqueurs & Specialities

Gabriel
Boudier: **The Maximilian Affair** (Danny Smith for Oskar Kinberg)



After Dinner

Bénédictine: Monk's Sour Mixed by Ludovic Miazga

Ingredients

50ml Benedictine
25ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 bar spoons of organic honey syrup (homemade)
1 dash of orange bitters
15ml egg white

Method

Add all ingredients in a shaker then ice (egg white last).
Shake hard.
Strain into a Monk's wooden cup.
Garnish with grated nutmeg.



SILVER

Aperitifs - White Spirits

Beefeater 24: **English Breakfast** (Timothy Stones)



SILVER

Long Drinks - Brown Spirits

Mekhong:
Lady Boy (Matt Ronald)



BRONZE

Aperitifs - Brown Spirits

Buffalo
Trace: **King Kong** (Jamie Stephenson)





GOLD
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Siwucha:
The Bimber Cocktail
 (Charles Vexenat)



GOLD
Aperitifs - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Gabriel
 Boudier:
Sage In Private Peach
 (Danny Smith for Oskar Kinberg)



GOLD
After Dinner - Brown Spirits
 Wild Geese:
Five Points
 (Nick Wykes)



GOLD
After Dinner - Brown Spirits
 Admiral
 Rodney:
The Lucian Solution
 (Jack Rackham)



SILVER
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Zubrowka:
French Bison-Tini
 (Che Gibson)



SILVER
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Siwucha:
1946
 (Charles Vexenat)



SILVER
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Bacardi:
Vicentico
 (David Cordoba)



SILVER
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Herradura
 Blanco:
Puerto Bello
 (Thomas Bartram)



SILVER
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Bacardi:
Bajofondo
 (David Cordoba)



SILVER
Aperitifs - White Spirits
 Caorunn:
Good for the Gander
 (Ervin Trykowski)



SILVER
Aperitifs - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Averna:
The Liberal
 (Karin Engele)



SILVER
Long Drinks - White Spirits
 Finlandia:
 Finlandia
Ginger Snap
 (Pekka Pellinen)



SILVER
Long Drinks - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Gabriel
 Boudier:
Boudier's Spring Thyme
 (Danny Smith for Oskar Kinberg)



SILVER
After Dinner - Brown Spirits
 Herradura
 Reposado:
Mayanhattan
 (Thomas Bartram)



SILVER
After Dinner - Brown Spirits
 Santa Teresa
 Selecto:
Muchas Caracas
 (Thomas Bartram)



SILVER
After Dinner - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Frangelico:
Frangelico Choc-Chip Martini
 (Stefanie Holt)



BRONZE
Aperitifs - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Midori:
Shogun Assassin
 (Michelle Smith)



BRONZE
Long Drinks - Brown Spirits
 Chivas
 Regal:
Summer Wind (Phil Huckle)



BRONZE
Long Drinks - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Wodka
 Zoladkowa
 Gorzka
 Traditional:
Green Line
 (Michelle Smith)



BRONZE
Long Drinks - Liqueurs & Specialities
 Wodka
 Zoladkowa
 Gorzka
 Mint:
Red Mint
 (Michelle Smith)