

INTERNATIONAL BEER CHALLENGE 2020: NO/LOW ALCOHOL BEER REIGNS SUPREME

An alcohol-free beer has been crowned as the Supreme Champion Beer at the International Beer Challenge (IBC) 2020, beating more than 500 competitors to secure the top award.

Athletic Brewing Co's Free Way IPA impressed the judges at the blind tasting event to such an extent that they awarded it the most coveted title of Supreme Champion.

This title is awarded after the initial round of judging when the gold medal beers are retasted by the senior judging panel to decide upon the Trophy winners and the Supreme Champion beer. For the first time ever in its 24-year history, the IBC awarded a Trophy to a No and Low-Alcohol beer, which went on to be named the overall winner.

The judges, who were tasting the beers together via Zoom, also awarded Trophies to a stout, wheat beer, oak-aged sour beer and a Belgian brown, but they remarked in particular on the progress the No and Low-Alcohol beer category has made, and the brewing skill exhibited by the Athletic Brewing Co. They declared that the winning beer was the best No and Low-Alcohol beer they had ever tasted.

Jeff Evans, IBC Chairman, said: "For many years, the No and Low-Alcohol section of the IBC judging has been a poor relation to the rest of competition. But no more! This year, in recognition of the number of No and Low-Alcohol beers being produced, we added a new trophy for this sector and our judges were hugely impressed with what they tasted."

John Walker, co-founder and head brewer at Athletic Brewing, said: "This achievement is a testament to our entire brewing, packaging and quality teams - it is their dedication to creating the highest quality brew that made this recognition possible.

"We are especially humbled by this award because our beers were rated on par with some of the best non-alcoholic and alcoholic beers around the world at a world-renowned competition, the International Beer Challenge, and received top honours!

"Through innovation, amazing supporters and some incredibly talented teammates, Athletic Brewing set out to disrupt a dormant category and bring it out of the 'penalty box' arena by making great tasting beer using all the amazing ingredients beer lovers across the globe have come to love, just without the alcohol. This award validates everything that we set out to do! Brew Without Compromise!"

Brewers from across the globe won a collective 397 medals at the event, which was launched 24 years ago by Drinks Retailing magazine. This year judges awarded 62 gold medals, 148 silvers and 187 bronzes. The full list of results can be found at www.internationalbeerchallenge.com and in the November/ December print and digital editions of Drinks Retailing magazine (www.drinksretailingnews.co.uk).

More than 500 beers were tasted from 30 countries across the globe, spanning traditional brewing nations like the UK, Germany, Belgium and the USA, plus exciting new markets such as Chile, Belarus, Myanmar and South Korea.

Evans said: "As in a 'normal' year, teams of judges – a mix of brewers, retailers, beer sommeliers and writers – were able to sample the same beers and then exchange their opinions, face to face, the only difference being that this time around it was online.

“As you'd expect from judges with this level of knowledge and experience, the scrutiny is intense. No beer gets an easy pass. Sometimes the decision is straightforward and quickly reached; at other times the debate is more intense as judges highlight technical flaws or sing the praises of a beer's quality and character.

BREWER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

In addition to the product taste medals and trophies, the IBC also rewards the brewers who make the beers, alongside the people who import and sell them. The IBC recognises their achievements in a series of special awards, based on performances in the competition.

The awards are decided by the accumulation of medals, each of which – be it gold, silver or bronze - carry a point score, enabling the IBC to name the most successful brewery, retailer and distributor.

RESULTS

The trophy winning beers and breweries are listed below and the full list of results can be found at www.internationalbeerchallenge.com

The IBC Design & Packaging Awards will take place later this month.

TROPHY	BREWER NAME
Supreme Champion Brewery	Cervejaria Wäls
Brewer of the Year South America	Cervejaria Wäls
Brewer of Year Asia	Buckskin, King Car Group
Brewer of the Year UK	Beavertown Brewery
Brewer of the Year North America	Athletic Brewing Co
Brewer of the Year Europe	Brasserie Du Mont Blanc
Glenn Payne Rising Star Award	Maryensztadt Brewery
UK Retailer	Marks and Spencer

TROPHY	BEER NAME	BREWER NAME
Supreme Champion Beer	Free Way IPA	Athletic Brewing Co
Best No & Low Alcohol Beer	Free Way IPA	Athletic Brewing Co
Best Wheat Beer	LA BLANCHE	Brasserie Du Mont Blanc
Best Lager up to 5%	Myanmar Beer	Myanmar Brewery
Best Ale up to 5%	Silver King	Ossett Brewing Company
Best Lager above 5%	LICORNE 1845	Brasserie Licorne
Best Stout or Porter	Irish Stout	Marks and Spencer
Best Speciality Beer	Legna Dearg	BRÚ Brewery

Best Ale above 5%

De Poes Bruin

Brouwerij De Poes

Best Flavoured Beer

Session IPA

Purity Brewing Company

Notes to editors:

The IBC is organised in association with Drinks Retailing magazine, and the full results are published in the November/December print and digital editions.

For information about judging process and the IBC competition please visit www.internationalbeerchallenge.com

For further detailed information please contact Sarah Burnett at Agile Media on IBC@agilemedia.co.uk