

Harvey's Brewery Old Ale Low Alcohol named International Beer Challenge Supreme Champion

A low alcohol beer has been crowned the Supreme Champion Beer at the International Beer Challenge (IBC) 2021, beating 641 competitors to secure the top award.

Old Ale Low Alcohol (0.5% abv), from Lewes-based Harvey's Brewery impressed the judges at the blind tasting event to take the title.

This is the second year running that a beer in the no and low alcohol category has taken the top award, after alcohol-free Athletic Brewing Co's Free Way IPA took the accolade in 2020.

The Supreme Champion title is awarded after the initial round of judging when the gold medal beers are retasted by the senior judging panel to decide Trophy winners and the Supreme Champion beer.

Judges praised Old Ale Low Alcohol for the skill it takes in the brewery to produce excellent low or no abv beer.

Jeff Evans, IBC Chairman, said: "The judges were astonished by the winning beer. It's incredibly difficult for a beer with less than 0.5% alcohol to hold its own against much stronger beers. The roundness and fullness that alcohol brings to a beer cannot be underestimated and so many low alcohol beers suffer in comparison because of that. However, Harvey's Old Ale Low Alcohol really stood up to the challenge and the judges for the final round asked me to stress just how impressive that was when the competition came from excellent beers as strong as 11.4% abv. But, that apart, the beer is just a delight, with rich malt flavours and a pleasant balance of bitterness and sweetness, with none of the thinness or astringency that often mars beers of this strength.

"It's been a fantastic year in the competition for Harvey's. No fewer than three of its beers won trophies and justly so. The brewery has long been held in high regard among many beer lovers and the results of this year's International Beer Challenge reveal why. Many congratulations to Miles Jenner and the team."

The judges, who were tasting the beers together via Zoom, also awarded Trophies to a dark mild, a New England IPA, a stout, a fruit beer, a pale lager, a dunkel, a wheat beer and a beer aged in port wood.

Brewers from across the globe won a collective 487 medals at the event, which was launched 25 years ago by Drinks Retailing magazine. This year judges awarded 74 gold medals, 189 silvers and 224 bronzes. The full list of results can be found at www.internationalbeerchallenge.com, with highlights in the November/ December print and digital editions of Drinks Retailing magazine (www.drinksretailingnews.co.uk).

Beers were tasted from across the world, spanning traditional brewing nations like the UK, Germany, Belgium and the USA, plus exciting emerging markets in South America and Asia.

Evans said: "This year's International Beer Challenge was a particularly enlightening experience for the judges. I'm quite used to hearing that the standard of entries gets better every year, which reflects the development of the beer industry over the last decade, but this year it was remarkable how many judges actually made that comment. The fact that the judges awarded more gold medals than ever before backed this up, too. Something really positive is going on in the brewing industry, despite the trials of the last year or so.

"Once again, it was fascinating to see what's happening internationally and not just here in the UK. We had entries from all around the globe and awarded gold medals to beers from 15 different

countries, from established brewing nations such as German, Belgium and the USA to emerging countries in South America and Asia. Nine gold medals went to beers from Taiwan, for instance. It's a really exciting time for beer lovers."

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

Buckskin, Supreme Champion Brewer

Buckskin, Brewer of the Year Asia

Braufactum, Brewer of the Year Europe

Harvey & Son, Brewer of the Year UK

Athletic Brewing, Brewer of the Year North America

Cervejaria Wäls, Brewer of the Year South America

Jack Black Brewing Company, Highly-Commended Brewer of the Year Africa

Marks & Spencer, UK Retailer of the Year

Triple Point, Glenn Payne Rising Star

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

Old Ale Low Alcohol, Harvey's Brewery, SUPREME CHAMPION

Old Ale, Harvey's Brewery, Best Ale up to 5%

Northern Monk Order of the Faith DDH IPA, Waitrose & Partners, Best Ale above 5%

Peach n' Love, Birra del Borgo, Best Flavoured Beer

ABK Hell, ABK Betriebsgesellschaft der Aktienbrauerei Kaufbeuren, Best Lager up to 5%

Afterdark, Spring Valley Brewery, Best Lager above 5%

Hertog Jan Vatgerijpt - Port Tawny, Hertog Jan, Best Speciality Beer

Imperial Extra Double Stout, Harvey's Brewery, Best Stout or Porter

Bear Beer Wheat 5,0%, Darguner Brauerei, Best Wheat Beer