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Entry Kit

Entry deadline: Friday 10 April

Judging: Friday 15 May

A competition which brings the formidable judging methodology of the Trophy Wine Show to the Spirits market in South Africa

ENTRIES: Contact Monica Mountjoy Telephone: 011 482 5936 Email: trophy@outsorceress.co.za

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WHAT IS THE TROPHY SPIRITS SHOW?

The **Investec Trophy Spirits Show** is a competition which seeks to identify the best spirits available in and for the South African market, or produced in South Africa for export, applying the tried and tested methodology of The Investec Trophy Wine Show. All judges are experts in their field.

Investec is the headline sponsor of the Trophy Spirits Show, South Africa's premier spirits competition. As a leading international bank and wealth manager, Investec partners with private, institutional, and corporate clients, offering international banking, investments, and wealth management services in two principal markets, South Africa and the UK, as well as certain other countries.

WHICH SPIRITS CAN BE ENTERED INTO THE INVESTEC TROPHY SPIRITS SHOW?

South African and international brands of the following 10 broad categories (refer to the sub-categories under Classes of Entry):

- Brandy including Pot-distilled, Cognac, Vintage, blended
- Gin
- Whisky / Whiskey
- Vodka
- Rum
- Tequila / Mezcal / Agave Spirit
- Fruit Spirits
- Liqueurs
- Anise Liquors
- Apéritifs / Bitters and Digestifs

THE JUDGES

Michael Fridjhn is the convenor of The Trophy Spirits Show and is responsible for selecting the judges and managing the judging process. The panel of judges comprises at least 9 experts.

The judges for 2026 will include the following: Winifred Bowman CWM, Pieter de Bod, Dave Gunns, Sean Gunns, Jason McEvoy, Kresan Naidu, Neil Paterson, Mare-Loe Prinsloo, Andy Watts and Carla Weightman.

As with The Investec Trophy Wine Show, associate judges are drawn from the local spirits industry, some of whom are graduates of the Spirits Judging Academy. Associate judges participate in the tasting and post-judging discussion, although their scores are not included in the final tally.



JUDGING PROCEDURE

The Investec Trophy Spirits Show positions alongside The Investec Trophy Wine Show as South Africa's most authoritative spirits competition. Launched in 2019, it is an annual event and results will be announced in June.

- All entries are judged blind by category in accordance with the class of spirit and age statement/age declaration to which they belong; organisers reserve the right to alter a product's class of entry if deemed incorrect.
- Panels comprise three judges.
- Scoring is based on a 100-point system. Medals will be awarded on the following basis: Gold = 95 points or more (superlative, world-class), Silver = 90 to 94 points (excellent, spirit of distinction); Bronze = 85 to 89 points (good to very good).
- All gold medal winners are re-assessed at the trophy judging. Class winners in each category are awarded trophies.
- The scores of judges with producer interests will not be taken into consideration at the trophy judging.
- The competition results are compiled and verified by a registered chartered accountant who is a member in good standing with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants.
- The judges' decision is final.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR PRODUCERS AND BRAND OWNERS

- Extensive publicity for category winners and show champions.
- Enhanced sales for winning products driven by post-show publicity as well as by medal stickers.
- Presentations of top products to the headline sponsor's high net worth customers and to members of the public at hosted events. (See rule 8)



ENTRY CRITERIA / RULES FOR ENTRY

1. Complete the fillable Entry Form in full (no handwritten submissions) and email to **trophy@outsorceress.co.za by Friday 10 April**; there is no limit to the number of products entered (make duplicate copies of entry form if products exceed 4).
The Entry Form makes provision for:
 - Age Declaration / Age Statement where relevant. An age statement is a generic indication e.g. VS, VSOP, XO for brandy, Reposado, Añejo for Tequila etc. An age declaration requires confirmation of the age as declared on the packaging e.g. 10YO, 15YO etc.
 - Production Volume declaration in respect of Boutique (5 000 litres per annum per product); Craft / Artisanal / Ultra-boutique (1 000 litres per annum per product).
 - Base Materials declaration
 - Flavourants and Botanicals declaration
2. **The following documents must accompany the Entry Form for each product entered:**
 - Proof of product certification: i.e. copy of DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) certificate or Certification of Authenticity or Import Certificate
 - Certificate of Age (where relevant)
 - Labels (front and back)
3. Insufficient entries in a sub-category may result in the product being moved to the nearest appropriate category for judging purposes only.
4. The organisers reserve the right to change the class of entry if required. In particular, for products entered in the Spirit Apéritif class in compliance with current South African regulations, the organisers may change the class to one more appropriate to the spirit style or label from a consumer perspective.
5. All products entered must be market ready and commercially available (no tank samples).
6. Products may only be entered with the express permission of the brand owner or the appointed importer.
7. **Two samples per product entry must be submitted for the judging** (see details below under Timeline), with each entry separately boxed and clearly labelled. All product samples submitted for judging must be in market-ready condition.
8. **All entrants must agree to supply free of charge by Friday 5 June** the following number of promotional bottles after the judging for presentation at sponsor-hosted events (applicable only to medal winners who will be contacted in the weeks after the judging):
Products retailing at less than R1 295 each: 4 promotional bottles
Products retailing at more than R1 295 each: 2 promotional bottles
9. The Trophy Spirits Show or designated agent reserves the right to buy up to 18 bottles of award-winning spirits at the wholesale price.
10. **Entry Fee per product: R2 295 incl. VAT, with the following discounts for multiple entries.**
1 – 4 entries per producer R 2 295 incl. VAT per entry
5 – 9 entries per producer R 1 995 incl. VAT per entry
10 or more entries per producer R 1 895 incl. VAT per entry
11. **CANCELLATIONS:** No refund or credit for entries withdrawn within 10 days of judging.

TIMELINE

- **Deadline for submission of entries** and supporting documentation: **Friday 10 April**
- **Delivery of entry samples (2 bottles for each entry; 4 each for bottle sizes less than 500ml) to Aspiring Couriers, Stellenbosch by Thursday 7 May.**
Saxenburg Park 1, 37 Muscat Street, Rustdal, Cape Town 7580
Attention: Daniel Johannes; tel: 021 905 6221 or 083 497 5965;
email: daniel@aspiring.co.za | www.aspiring.co.za
- **Deadline for payment of entry fee** - upon receipt of invoice: **Friday 17 April**
- Judging date: **Friday 15 May**
- Results announcement: **Date to be confirmed**

CLASSES OF ENTRY

REFER TO THE DEFINITIONS ON PAGES 5 AND 6 TO BE USED AS A GUIDELINE IN SELECTING THE CORRECT CLASS OF ENTRY

All products entered need to adhere to the South African ABV (Alcohol by volume) laws as regulated under the Liquor Product Act, and amended in March 2025.

Brandy

1. Pot-distilled Brandy / Cape Brandy
2. Cognac
3. Blended Brandy / Vintage Brandy
4. Grappa / Marc / Pomace / Husk Spirit
5. Armagnac

Gin

6. London Gin
7. Distilled Gin
8. Other Gin, including Flavoured / Contemporary Gin

Whisky/Whiskey

9. Single Malt Whisky / Whiskey
10. Vatted Malt Whisky / Whiskey
11. Pure / Single Pot Still Whiskey
12. Blended Whisky / Whiskey
13. American Whiskey
14. Grain Whisky / Whiskey
15. Other

Vodka

16. Neutral Vodka
17. Flavoured Vodka

Rum

18. Pot-distilled Rum
19. Column-distilled Rum
20. Blended Rum
21. Spiced or Flavoured Rum

Tequila / Mezcal / Agave Spirit

- 22.1. Blanco (Silver)
- 22.2. Reposado (Aged)
- 22.3. Añejo (Extra Aged)
- 22.4. Extra Añejo (Ultra Aged)
- 22.5. Cristalino

Fruit Spirits

23. Spirits distilled from a single fruit source
24. Spirits distilled from a variety of different fruits
25. Fruit Spirits - Other

Liqueurs

26. Fruit flavoured Liqueur
27. Non-fruit flavoured liqueurs – e.g. coffee, chocolate, Sambuca
28. Crème Liqueur
29. Cream Liqueur
30. Other

Anise Liquors

31. Absinthe / Pastis / Ouzo / Arak

Apéritifs / Bitters / Digestifs

32. Cocktail Bitters
33. Apéritifs, including Spirit Apéritifs
34. Digestifs: Amaro

CLASS OF ENTRY DEFINITIONS

Class of Entry 1: POT-DISTILLED BRANDY

At least 90% from pot stills.

Class of Entry 2: COGNAC

Certified as such, double-stilled potstill brandy from the Cognac region in France.

Class of Entry 3: BLENDED BRANDY / VINTAGE BRANDY

Made by blending different grape-based distillates.

Class of Entry 4: GRAPPA / MARC / POMACE / HUSK SPIRIT

A dry colourless brandy distilled from fermented grape pomace, the residue after crushing the grapes for making wine.

Class of Entry 5: ARMAGNAC

Certified as such, brandy from the Armagnac region of Gascony in France.

Class of Entry 6: LONDON GIN

Obtained exclusively from the spirit of agricultural origin, with flavour introduced exclusively through the redistillation in traditional gin stills using natural plant materials. Nothing other than water and sugar (maximum of 0.1 gram/litre) may be added after the botanical distillation.

Class of Entry 7: DISTILLED GIN

Produced by redistilling spirit of agricultural origin, with an initial strength of 96% ABV using juniper and other natural botanicals, and to which natural flavouring may be added with water prior to bottling.

Class of Entry 8: GIN / FLAVOURED / CONTEMPORARY GIN

Juniper-flavoured spirit produced by adding approved natural flavouring to a neutral spirit of agricultural origin.

Class of Entry 9: SINGLE MALT WHISKY / WHISKEY

Malt whisky made at a single distillery from 100% malted barley, the spirit matured for at least 3 years.

Class of Entry 10: VATTED MALT WHISKY / WHISKEY

A blend of one or more malt whiskies from more than one distillery, made from 100% malted barley, the spirit is matured for at least 3 years.

Class of Entry 11: PURE or SINGLE POT STILL WHISKEY

Distilled from a fermented mash comprising malted and unmalted barley, using pot stills, and then aged in oak barrels.

Class of Entry 12: BLENDED WHISKY / WHISKEY

Made from malt whisky and whisky made from another grain (e.g. from rye, wheat, corn or maize).

Class of Entry 13: AMERICAN WHISKEY

Whiskey made in the USA that is distilled from at least 51% corn/maize and aged in new charred oak barrels.

Class of Entry 14: GRAIN WHISKY / WHISKEY

Whisky that doesn't belong to any of the more familiar or established categories, e.g. Canadian whisky to which different regulations apply.

Class of Entry 15: OTHER

Any whisky/whiskey that does not fall into any of the above classes.

Class of Entry 16: NEUTRAL VODKA

No distinctive smell, taste or colour.

Class of Entry 17: FLAVOURED VODKA

Involving numerous flavour options.

Class of Entry 18: POT-DISTILLED RUM

Traditional rum making method using 'kettle' bottoms.

Class of Entry 19: COLUMN-DISTILLED RUM

Involving multiple or continuous distillation and resulting in more refined, 'lighter' rums used in cocktail drinks.

Class of Entry 20: BLENDED RUM

A combination of pot- and column-still rums.

Class of Entry 21: SPICED OR FLAVOURED RUM

Made with the infusion of flavours and spices, sometimes caramel, often used for cocktails, sometimes lower in strength. Flavoured rums are based on fruit flavours.

Class of Entry 22: TEQUILA / MEZCAL / AGAVE SPIRIT

Age statements Blanco (Silver, Clear White), Joven (Gold), Reposado (Aged), Añejo (Extra Aged) and Extra Añejo (Ultra Aged).

Cristalino is an aged tequila/mezcal/agave spirit which has been charcoal filtered and should therefore present either as a clear spirit or with only slight colour.

ABV strength ranges between 35 and 50%. If made in South Africa, must state "100% agave" indicating product has been made in the traditional method.

Classes of Entry 23 to 25: FRUIT SPIRITS

A fruit spirit, or fruit brandy (schnapps), is distilled from any number of edible fruits, excluding grapes. Typically used are: apples (e.g. Calvados), apricots, cherries (kirsch), pears, plums. 40 to 45% ABV. The broad categories include:

- Spirits distilled from a single fruit source
- Spirits distilled from a variety of different fruits
- Other fruit spirits

Classes of Entry 26 to 30: LIQUEURS

Flavoured, typically heavily sweetened spirits made from fruits, herbs or nuts – distinct from other spirits by way of added sugar. The broad categories include:

- Fruit-flavoured liqueur
- Non-fruit-flavoured liqueurs, e.g. coffee, chocolate, anise/anisette (e.g. Sambuca)
- Crème liqueurs
- Cream liqueurs
- Other liqueurs

Class of Entry 31: ANISE LIQUORS

Absinthe (Switzerland, France) / Pastis (France) / Ouzo (Greece) / Arak (Middle East).

Spirits flavoured with anise/aniseed may have sugar added, but are generally drier than/not as sweet as liqueur. Vary considerably in strength: 40 to 75% ABV.

Classes of Entry 32 to 34: APÉRITIFS / BITTERS / DIGESTIFS

Aromatic plant-based spirits typically used in mixed drinks, cocktails, or as tonics. From seeds, herbs, bark, roots, flowers, leaves and/or fruits. Bitter taste. Broad categories:

- Bitters
- Apéritifs, including Spirit Apéritifs, so named in compliance with South African regulations.

TROPHIES

Investec Trophy for Best Brandy of Show
Investec Trophy for Best London Gin
Investec Trophy for Best Distilled Gin
Investec Trophy for Best Whisky of Show
Investec Trophy for Best Malt Whisky
Investec Trophy for Best Single Pot Still Whiskey
Investec Trophy for Best Blended Whisky
Investec Trophy for Best Liqueur of Show
Riedel Trophy for Best Gin of Show
Vinolok Trophy for Best Premium Spirit
Trophy for Best Pot-distilled Brandy
Trophy for Best Blended Brandy
Trophy for Best Cognac
Trophy for Best Flavoured Gin
Trophy for Best Grain Whisky
Trophy for Best Rum of Show
Trophy for Best Tequila of Show
Trophy for Best Vodka of Show
Trophy for Best Apéritif
Trophy for Best Fruit Spirit
Trophy for Best Anise-based Spirit

