



**ROYAL  
QUEENSLAND  
AWARDS**  
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**MEDIA RELEASE**

23 February 2024

## **Distilled Spirits are high thanks to new awards event**

The RNA's prestigious Royal Queensland Awards (RQA) is seizing the opportunity to put the flourishing Australian spirits industry in the spotlight with the launch of its inaugural Distilled Spirits Awards.

Entries for the Royal Queensland Distilled Spirits Awards open today with categories for whisky, gin, vodka, rum and brandy.

The Distilled Spirits Awards form part of the RQA which showcases and rewards the nation's best Beef, Lamb, Wine, Beer, Dairy, Cheese, Ice Cream and now Aquaculture.

Distilled Spirits chief judge Nicholas King, who hails from London's prestigious Wine and Spirit Education Trust, said the competition was timely as Australia is currently enjoying a craft distilling boom.

"Knowing that Australians are good at producing quality wines makes it beyond exciting for me to be part of this competition and get a thorough overview of Australian spirits," Mr King said.

"Based on past experiences with the Australian wine industry, I've learnt that Australians are skilled producers in general and innovative at heart. What makes them stand out is the quality of execution – Australians do not do things by half.

"I am sure it will be a similar story for distilled spirits producers and that I will soon be singing their praises too."

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the establishment of the Royal Queensland Distilled Spirits Awards is testament to the outstanding craftsmanship of Australian-manufactured spirits, liqueurs, aromatics and vermouths.

"Come July, the Brisbane Showgrounds will host a handpicked panel of industry professionals – including educators, retailers, distributors and distillers – who will spend two days deciding which producers will take out top honours," Mr Christou said.

"The Distilled Spirits Awards is the first competition of its kind in Queensland and will provide a benchmarking opportunity for the finest distillers across the nation."



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There will be 27 classes in the RQDSA with awards for Champion whisky, gin, vodka, rum and brandy, as well as Major Awards for the Champion Spirit of the Show, Champion Queensland Distillery and Champion Queensland Spirit.

Mr King said the distilled spirits entries would be assessed on their overall quality with consideration given to the product's appearance, aroma, palate, balance and finish.

"This is a truly unique opportunity for distillers to gain insight into where their spirits sit among their peers," he said.

"The outcome of this competition will provide producers with a better understanding of where they stand and, ideally, feedback on how they can potentially improve."

David Ridden, President of the Queensland Distillers' Association Inc said Queensland distillers are at the cusp of being to Queensland what wine is to South Australia, an export and job creation powerhouse producing and exporting Queensland spirits, liqueurs, aromatics, and vermouths that are equal to the very best in the world.

"We welcome our interstate colleagues, their excellent spirits and the opportunity for Queensland Spirits to be judged by world-class judges in world-class competition," Mr Ridden said.

Entries for the RQDSA must be in by Friday 7 June, with judging taking place from Monday 8 to Tuesday 9 July and the winners to be announced on Friday 12 July before Grape Grazing by Night.

To enter go to [www.rqa.com.au](http://www.rqa.com.au)

**ENTRIES OPEN – FRIDAY 23 FEBRUARY**

**ENTRIES CLOSE – FRIDAY 7 JUNE**

**JUDGING – MONDAY 8 TO TUESDAY 9 JULY**

**WINNERS ANNOUNCED – FRIDAY 12 JULY**

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