

## FRED MINNICK'S ASCOT AWARDS HONORS THE BEST SPIRITS OF 2021 WITH INAUGURAL COMPETITION

*English Whiskey earns historic win for first time ever in major spirits competition with 'Best in Show' Whiskey Award. Heaven Hill Brands won Best Distiller.*

*A panel of 27 tasters chose the top spirits selects for 2021 from more than 600 entries*

[EMBED VIDEO - <https://youtu.be/WHF2leHcXPg>]

Fred Minnick, a world-renowned bourbon and spirits critic, best-selling author, podcast host and entrepreneur, launched his first international spirits competition called The ASCOT Awards this year. After two months of blind tasting more than 600 spirits samples with a team of 27 spirits industry professionals, he announced the 2021 winners today in honor of National Bourbon Day. See the full list here: [ascotawards.com](http://ascotawards.com).

Cotswolds Founder's Choice became the first English whiskey to win "Best in Show Whiskey" at a major spirits competition, while Heaven Hill Brands earned best large distiller with major wins, including Best Value in Christian Brothers Brandy VS, in multiple categories. Other notable wins: Staggy Jr. earns Bourbon Bourbon; Redbreast Irish Whiskey lands the only Category Sweep; Texas-based Garrison Brothers Distillery wins Craft Distillery of the Year; and Barrell Craft Spirits receives Blender of the Year.

"We executed this competition in the middle of a Pandemic, and while it had its challenges, our judges and staff executed this flawlessly," says Minnick. "I am so proud of what we've done here, and I can't wait for next year."

Minnick and his team set out to honor the best of the best products in the spirits world, recognizing the top 15% as Double Platinum, the next 15% as Platinum and the next 25% as Gold. The top tier of the categories then faced off in a playoff style to determine their Best in Class.

The ASCOT Awards received entries from highly allocated bourbons and all of the major distilleries across the globe. Completed entirely virtually, each judge of the American Spirits Council of Tasters was carefully selected based on expertise in diverse categories of the spirits world – whiskey, gin, tequila and more. Each was given as much time as needed to fully evaluate the sample to prevent palate fatigue. The awards offer distilleries recognition for their hard work and top-notch products from internationally recognized Minnick.

**Watch the final round of the ASCOT Awards, here:**

<https://youtu.be/WHF2leHcXPg>

"This is the first time an English whiskey won a major spirits competition," says Minnick. "Usually, Scotch, Japanese, Irish or bourbon whiskey win, with an occasional Canadian victor. What Cotswolds did is absolutely unprecedented. The best part is that you can buy this for less than \$100 in the United States and 70 pounds in the UK."

**ASCOT Awards results:**

Large Distiller of Year: Heaven Hill Brands

Craft Distiller of Year: Garrison Brothers Distillery

Blender of the Year: Barrell Craft Spirits

Rising Star Spirits Company: Cutwater Spirits

Best In Show: Whiskey - Cotswolds Founder's Choice

Best In Show: White Spirit - Trillium Pink Pinot Gin

Best In Show: Brandy - Chateau Arton Millésime 2010- Haut Armag

Best In Show Liqueur: Rivulet Artisan Pecan Liqueur

Category Sweep: Redbreast Irish Whiskey

Best Value: Christian Brothers VS.

Best Beach Sipper: Cytrynowka

Best Bourbon Whiskey: Staggy Jr.

Best Scotch Whisky: Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban Port Cask 14 Years Old

Best Rye Whiskey: The Senator Rye

Best American Whiskey: Uncle Nearest 1884

Best Tennessee Whiskey: George Dickel Single Barrel Aged at Least 15 Years

Best Irish Whiskey: Redbreast 15 Year Old

Best Japanese Whisky: Nikka Whisky From The Barrel

Best World Whiskey: Cotswolds Founder's Choice

Best Vodka: Drift Vodka

Best Gin: H Clark Distillery Tennessee Dry Gin

Best Aquavit: Long Road Original Aquavit

Best Rum: Ron Colón Salvadoreño Rum High Proof 111pf

Best Tequila: Cutwater Tequila Blanco

Best Mezcal: Mezcal Vago Velote

Best Barrel Finished Bourbon: Four Gate The Kelvin Collaboration III

Best Barrel Finished Rye: Milam & Greene Port Finished Rye

Best American Single Malt: Balcones Mirador

Best Corn Whiskey: Ironroot Hubris

Best Wheat Whiskey: Lone Elm

Best Blend of Straights: BBC Discovery Series 4

Best Barrel Finished Whiskey: Barrell Dovetail

Best Light Whiskey: King's Family Distillery

**See the full list of winners, here:** <https://ascotawards.com/winners-2021>

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ASCOT Awards judges included Minnick, brandy authority Flavien Desoblin, bar owner Martin Cate, special events bartender Tiffanie Barriere, author Dan Dunn, founder of the nationwide organization Bourbon Women Peggy Noe Stevens, mixologist Molly Wellmann, Global Director, Spirits Sourcing at Total Wine & More Michael Lowry, Bourbon legend and Hall of Famer Jim Rutledge, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits National Director of Education Beam Suntory Bridget Albert, Curator to the exclusive Distiller's Club Greg Wilson, Wodka Bar owner Sarah Dworak, cocktail entrepreneur Denaya Jones, world-renowned mixologist Francesco Lafranconi, Whiskey Raiders' T8KE, Head of Whisky Education for Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits of Nevada Max A. Solano, founder of the John Barleycorn Society John McCarthy, New York Times' Clay Risen, tequila national sales manager with The Sazerac Company and Gemini Spirits and Wine David Grapshi, Nationally-recognized spirits educator Robert Gonzales, Director of Brand Strategy & amp Innovation for TKT & amp & Associates Andrea Meriwether, The Daily Beast's Lew Bryson, award-winning boutique wine and spirits agency founder David Moritz, New Jersey Monthly's Tara Nurin, Wine & Spirits Magazine's Rachel DelRocco Terrazas, photographer and blogger Susie "O", and bourbon columnist Susan Reigler.

Minnick will host his first in-person event in more than a year – a blind bourbon tasting in his home state of Oklahoma at Cox Business Convention Center in Tulsa on August 14th. For tickets and more information, visit [fredminnick.com](http://fredminnick.com).

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