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MEDIA RELEASE

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Winning spirit on show in Royal Queensland Awards first

A Queensland rum flew the flag for the Sunshine State, being named Champion Rum at the first ever Royal Queensland Distilled Spirits Awards.

The Vintage Cane Spirit produced by Burdekin Rum in North Queensland was one of 150 entries presented to the panel of judges at the Brisbane Showgrounds this week, as part of the Royal Queensland Awards first foray into spirits.

More than 30 distillers keen to have their product recognised as the nation's best competed at the nationwide competition where a well-articulated gin from Falls Creek, Victoria stood out from the crowd winning the inaugural Champion Spirit of Show.

Distilled Spirits chief judge Nicholas King, who hails from London's prestigious Wine and Spirit Education Trust, said it was clear the Awards competition held much promise with well over 100 entries in its first year.

"The Awards have made a good solid start and show good promise with a lot of high-quality liquid produced across the board," Mr King said.

"There were spirits there of a very impressive quality, with distillers using various difficult takes on the technique of fermentation. Some products were so good that they could come out onto the world stage."

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

Burdekin Rum producer Kelly Shimota had plenty of reasons to smile after hearing the 2024 Award winner announcement today with their Vintage Cane Spirit also earning accolades for Highest Scoring Queensland Distillery and Highest Scoring Queensland Spirit.

Mr King described the Vintage Cane Spirit as incredibly well-integrated and very elegant.

"When we got to the end of the competition there were four very credible spirits that deserved full recognition," Mr King said.



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Mr King was also full of praise for Fleurieu Distillery's elegant use of peat to produce the Champion Whiskey and Australian Distilling Company whose different approach to production earned them the nod for Champion Vodka.

"There are two key elements in judging which are balance and expression," he said.

"Fair to say this competition did not let me down with these qualities and I think the liquids will only get better."

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the establishment of the Royal Queensland Distilled Spirits Awards was the first competition of its kind in Queensland and provided a benchmarking opportunity for the finest distillers across the nation.

"Almost 100 of the entries came from Queensland, testament to the boom in our state's distilled spirits industry which experts have likened to wine production in South Australia," Mr Christou said.

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.

The Royal Queensland Distilled Spirits Awards' judges comprised of a handpicked panel of industry professionals – including educators, retailers, distributors and distillers – who spent two days this week deciding which producers deserved top honours.

CHAMPION SPIRIT OF SHOW

Falls Creek Distillery - Falls Creek Original Gin

CHAMPION WHISKY

Fleurieu Distillery - Country To Coast #4

CHAMPION GIN

Falls Creek Distillery - Falls Creek Original Gin

CHAMPION VODKA

Australian Distilling Company - Melbourne Vodka

CHAMPION RUM

Burdekin Rum Pty Ltd - Vintage Cane Spirit

HIGHEST SCORING QUEENSLAND DISTILLERY

Burdekin Rum Pty Ltd - Vintage Cane Spirit

HIGHEST SCORING QUEENSLAND SPIRIT



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Burdekin Rum Pty Ltd - Vintage Cane Spirit

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