



MEDIA CONTACT

Michael Bilello
Senior Vice President, Communications & Marketing
michael@wswa.org | (202) 243-7506

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WSWA ISSUES RESOURCES FOR BRANDS AS 2021 BRAND BATTLE APPLICANT DEADLINE QUICKLY APPROACHES

"It all started on stage at Brand Battle." – CEO of JJ Corry Irish Whiskey Louise McGuane

WASHINGTON, D.C., 03/31/2021 – With less than thirty days to go until the application period for the 2021 WSWA Brand Battle Tournament closes, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) is sharing resources with applicants who want to better position their brand to be selected for the industry's marquee pitch competition that has been the springboard for many startup, small production and craft brands. Applicants can now access and utilize [Best Practices for Creating a Brand Battle Tournament Entry Video](#) and [Questions Brand Battle Contenders Should be Prepared to Answer](#) to maximize their product pitch to the industry's leading wholesalers.

"Because of the Brand Battle in 2019, Seaside Grown gained instant recognition in the beverage industry ultimately leading to partnerships with some of the leading distribution companies in the business," said Paige Glazer of Marketing & Brand Development at 2019 Brand Battle Winner Seaside Grown. "Together, we have positioned the brand on the shelves of retail chains like Total Wine, Harris Teeter, The Fresh Market, etc. From these partnerships, we grew our brand from a single retail category to multiple categories in the CPG industry."

"It all started on the stage at Brand Battle in Orlando, and I am eternally grateful for the exposure [WSWA] gave me," said 2019 Brand Battle Competitor and CEO of JJ Corry Irish Whiskey Louise McGuane. "We'd spent two years organically growing the brand, focusing on qualitative distribution, building our reputation and telling our unique story. We recently announced a new USA strategic partnership with Trinity Beverage Group which signals significant growth for us moving forward. We are now looking at a national rollout in the coming 18 months or so."

Typically held during the WSWA Convention, the annual stand out Shark Tank-style event showcases rising brands with unique stories, packaging and flavor profiles. WSWA Brand Battle usually features 5-7 brands that compete in front of a panel of wholesaler and industry professional judges that provide valuable feedback and unrivaled opportunities for product development and distribution.

This year's expanded, "bracketology -type" event will feature 40-50 brands that will battle in eight specific competition categories – each with a chosen Best in Category winner that will continue onto the final round of competition to determine the overall 2021 Brand Battle Champion. This year's announced brand categories and competition dates are:

- June 8, 2021 - Vodka/Gin
- June 15, 2021 - Tequila/Mezcal/Cachaça

- June 22, 2021 - Ready-to-Drink/Hard Seltzer
- June 29, 2021 - Rum
- July 13, 2021 - Wine
- July 27, 2021 - Low-Alcohol/No-Alcohol/Mixer
- August 3, 2021 - Whiskey/Whisky/Bourbon/Scotch
- August 10, 2021 - Cordial/Liqueur/After Dinner Drink

WSWA Access, WSWA's initiative for craft, startup and small production wines and spirits has released programming specifically tailored to better prepare applicants "On the Road to Brand Battle." Featured programming includes [Wine-ding Up On The Menu: Getting Your Wine Label In Restaurants](#) and [Labeled For Success: What Goes Into A Label](#). The next webinar, *Building Your Distribution Playbook: From Pitch To Deal* takes place on **Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 1 PM EST**. Host **Charlie Merinoff**, Co-Chairman of Breakthru Beverage Group, industry veteran and past WSWA Brand Battle judge will be joined by panelists CEO of Old Elk Distillery **Luis Gonzalez**, CEO of Sweet Amber Distilling **John Bilello** and Executive Vice President, Supplier Management and Business Development at Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits **Ray Lombard** to discuss what strategies and considerations craft, startup, or small production wine and spirits brands should examine when pitching distributors. Open to the media and general public, interested parties can register [here](#).

Pasts Brand Battle winners include: [Seaside Grown Bloody Mary Mix](#) (2019), [Boukman Rhum](#) (2019), [Gray Whale Gin](#) (2018) and [Bedlam Vodka](#) (2017). In the inaugural year, 2016, there were no declared winners.

About 2021 WSWA Brand Battle Tournament

This year, in lieu of the 78th Annual WSWA Convention & Exposition, WSWA will be holding the 2021 Brand Battle Tournament - a can't miss for craft, start-up and small production wine and spirits brands. This event will publicly showcase rising brands with unique stories, packaging and flavor profiles in an engaging digital environment while panels of wholesaler judges provide valuable, thought-provoking insight and feedback to competitors across eight different product categories. Whether you are interested in competing or viewing the competition, you are sure to walk away with greater knowledge of the industry and see hot emerging trends and products.

About Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America

WSWA is the national trade association representing the distribution tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and its members distribute more than 80 percent of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

To learn more, please visit www.wswa.org or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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