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WSWA's ACCESS CRAFT BRANDS ANNOUNCE SIGNIFICANT BRAND MILESTONES

Distribution Partnerships and Bold Brand Activation Leads to the Growth of Craft Spirits in the U.S. Marketplace

WASHINGTON, D.C., 10/15/2021 – Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) today announced that several WSWA Access Craft Wine & Spirits Program brand representatives have achieved significant growth benchmarks through three-tier compliant distribution deals, brand partnerships and engaging the unprecedented demand by consumers for bold, artisan products.

WSWA Access brand representative, [21 Seeds Tequila](#), a women-owned and all-natural, fruit-infused Tequila, has been nominated as [Spirit Brand of the Year](#) for the 2021 Wine Enthusiast Wine Star Awards. Each year, the comprehensive media staff at Wine Enthusiast magazine nominates the most influential members of the alcohol beverage industry for these annual awards. Since its founding in 2019, 21 Seeds has seen year-over-year business growth of 260%, with latest Nielsen data showing it is as a top 10 blanco Tequila in nationwide chains and a leader in the flavored Tequila category.

"I couldn't be more honored that 21 Seeds has received this nomination," stated Kat Hantas, Co-Founder and CEO of 21 Seeds Tequila. "I set out to create a spirit that I could enjoy with girlfriends: something smooth, not too sweet, and frankly a bit different than what was on the market. I am so grateful that we are being recognized by Wine Enthusiast and am incredibly proud of the product and our team," she added.

[Treaty Oak Distilling](#), an Access brand representative based in Texas, has [announced](#) its partnership with the highly acclaimed country rock band, [Whiskey Myers](#), to release a new 95-proof (47.5% ABV) bourbon. Treaty Oak Distilling and Whiskey Myers' Red Handed Bourbon will be available on November 1. The bourbon, the first collaboration to come from this partnership, is a new take on Treaty Oak Distilling's already-popular Red Handed offering.

"[W]e couldn't have dreamt of a better partner," said Tony Gonzales, Chief Marketing Officer of Treaty Oak Distilling. "Whiskey Myers embodies the rebel spirit that our Treaty Oak team has –



the desire to break from convention and strive for the best, most authentic results. We're excited to work with them well into the future."

With live, in-person events taking place once again, WSWA Access brand representative, [BLACKENED American Whiskey](#), born from a heavy metal collaboration between Metallica and legendary Master Distiller Dave Pickerell, is connecting music and whiskey fans at music festivals and concerts across the country. In September, at the Louder Than Life festival in Kentucky, Metallica headlined two nights to sold-out audiences, where over 10,000 BLACKENED drinks were sold at 60-foot, highly branded, stand-alone bar. In July, BLACKENED joined the country music scene with a bar at the Country Thunder Music Festival in Wisconsin. Due to great success, the festival owners have asked BLACKENED to have a bar at the Arizona festival this month.

"The exciting milestones met by WSWA Access brand representatives are well deserved and a direct reflection of the hard work, dedication and significant growth of these craft teams," said Michael Bilello, WSWA's Senior Vice President, Communications and Marketing, and current Director of WSWA Access Craft Wine & Spirits Program. "WSWA Access is honored to work with such inspiring brands like 21 Seeds Tequila, Treaty Oak Distilling and BLACKENED American Whiskey. WSWA Access and its wholesaler Advisory Council will continue to support and echo the achievements of craft, start-up and small production brands as their success undoubtedly continues."

WSWA's Access initiative launched December 9, 2020 and currently includes a 17-seat Advisory Council structure comprised of eight craft, start-up or small production wine and spirits brand representatives, and seven WSWA wholesaler member advisors who provide counsel and perspective for other industry partners. The council is tasked with developing relevant content, reviewing strategy and identifying opportunities for industry inclusion and growth. Identified members of the 2021 WSWA Access Advisory Council include:

- Rick Lopus, Great Lakes Wine & Spirits
- Cheryl Durzy, LibDib
- Ray Lombard, Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits
- Michael Klauer, Colorado Beverage Team
- Sara Harmelin, Allied Beverage Group
- Ken Rosenberg, Republic National Distributing Company
- Drew Levinson, Breakthru Beverage Group



Craft, start-up or small production wine and spirits brand representatives who wish to be a part of the 2022 WSWA Access Advisory Council should email access@swa.org for more information.

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.

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