



## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WSWA'S BRAND BATTLE COMPETITION IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS**

*The Unique Tournament Puts Craft and New Brands in Front of Wholesalers, Historically Leading to Brand Expansion and Greater Industry Impact*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., 12/07/2022** – Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA)'s Brand Battle Tournament applications are open, and deadlines to apply are quickly approaching. Brand Battle, the annual stand-out Shark Tank-style event showcases rising brands with unique stories and packaging. The event features new and craft brands that compete in front of a panel of wholesaler and industry professional judges that provide valuable feedback and unrivaled opportunities for development and distribution.

“Winning Brand Battle has opened the doors to retailer and distribution partnerships in key growth markets that have set Campesino Rum up for success beyond my expectations,” said Hatton Smith, founder and president of Birmingham-based Campesino Rum, and the 2021 Brand Battle Champion. “Not to mention, Brand Battle helped tremendously to hone my product pitch skills.”

This year, Brand Battle will begin with eight virtual category tournaments beginning in February 2023. The eight category winners will then take the stage at WSWA's [Access LIVE](#), formerly known as WSWA's Annual Convention & Exposition, on April 3, 2023. The category winners will compete live on the Main Stage in front of an expert panel of judges and an audience consisting of individuals from all three tiers of the wine and spirits industry.

This year's “bracketology-type” event will feature 40-50 brands that will battle in eight specific competition categories. New this year is the inclusion of adult CBD beverages in the Lifestyle category—a growing segment of the industry. This year's announced brand categories are:

- Vodka & Gin
- Tequila, Mezcal & Cachaça
- Whiskey, Bourbon & Scotch
- Modifiers (Liqueurs, Mixers & Cordials)
- Ready-to-Drink & Hard Seltzer

- Wine
- Rum
- Lifestyle (Low-Alcohol, No-Alcohol & CBD)

Past competition winners include: [Campesino Rum](#) (2021), [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.

This year's judges will feature WSWA Access Craft Wholesaler Advisors, WSWA Board Members, as well as other titans from the wine and spirits industry.

Interested brands should [apply online](#). Applications for the first two categories (Vodka & Gin and Tequila, Mezcal & Cachaça) are due by December 23, 2022. The remaining six categories are due January 6, 2023.

More information, important dates and deadlines and the application can be found at [www.accesslive.wswa.org/brand-battle](http://www.accesslive.wswa.org/brand-battle).

Registration for WSWA's 2023 Access LIVE is open. Early-bird discount rates close on Friday, December 16, 2022. Register for your primer suite or exhibit space today at [www.accesslive.wswa.org](http://www.accesslive.wswa.org).

If you have questions about Brand Battle or Access LIVE, please email [registrations@wswa.org](mailto:registrations@wswa.org) or call the hotline at (202) 371-5682.

### **About WSWA's Access LIVE**

WSWA's Access LIVE, formally known as the WSWA Annual Convention & Exposition, is the largest U.S. event uniting all tiers of the beverage alcohol industry. Featuring buy-sell engagements, high-level information panels, wine and spirits competitions, and C-suite-level networking, this event has been a premier destination for beverage alcohol wholesalers, suppliers and now retailers since its inception in 1943. Distributor attendees represent more than 80% of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States, and exhibitors are comprised of some of the most exciting, established and up-and-coming brands in the marketplace. There is no other event in the industry that rallies so much expertise and networking and so many solutions and opportunities under one roof.

To learn more, please visit [accesslive.wswa.org](http://accesslive.wswa.org) or connect with us across our social platforms on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) or follow us at #AccessLIVE.

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