2027 American Craft Spirits Competition Submission Guidelines

The American Craft Spirits Association (ACSA), the nation's only 501(c)(6) trade group dedicated to representing U.S. craft spirits producers, invites entries for the 13th annual American Craft Spirits Competition.

COMPETITION JUDGES

The competition will be judged during a private event in Chicago just before ACSA's 2027 Convention & Expo in February.

- **Judging Chairs**: Colton Weinstein of Liba Spirits and OJ Lima of Bainbridge Organic Distillers
- **Judges**: Each judging panel will include distinguished professionals representing a wide range of expertise across the spirits industry. To ensure impartiality, judges will not evaluate entries in any category in which they have a vested interest.

MEDALISTS ANNOUNCEMENT

Category medalists will be announced during the awards ceremony at the 2027 ACSA Convention & Expo, taking place February 17-18, 2027 in Chicago, Illinois. Because medalists are revealed live at our Spirits Awards event, we warmly encourage you to join us at the convention and be part of the celebration. Learn more and register at: americancraftspirits.org/convention.

CATEGORIES

Entries will be judged in the following categories: Brandy, Gin, Rum, Specialty Spirits, Ready to Drink Cocktails (RTDs), Vodka, and Whiskey (including Bourbon) will be judged.

Innovation Award: Alongside the Best of Class honors, ACSA presents the Innovation Award to recognize exceptional creativity, craftsmanship, and originality. We know some remarkable spirits push boundaries and defy traditional flavor profiles of their categories. If you have created a spirit that stands out as an 'outlier,' rest assured—it still deserves recognition.

American CRAFT SPIRITS ASSOCIATION

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- While membership in ACSA *is not* a prerequisite for entering the competition, to enter your spirits you must be *eligible* for voting membership as defined by ACSA.[1] ACSA membership does provide a significant discount on entry fees.
- ALL products must have a valid COLA from TTB. We reserve the right to request a copy of your COLA should there be a question as to an individual submission. Each spirit must have received formal approval for the "fanciful name" with a corresponding COLA by the date of judging or that spirit will be ineligible for evaluation.
- The Judging Chairs reserve the right to reclassify a submitted spirit based on its professional judgment.

ENTRY FEES AND DEADLINES

Entry Type	Deadline	Fee
ACSA Member	January 29, 2027	$300 per entry
ACSA Non-Member	January 29, 2027	$400 per entry

PAYMENT AND ENTRY

Payment must be made by credit or debit card when registering your spirits on ACSA's website: americancraftspirits.org/programs/judging/.

DEADLINES

- **September 21, 2026:** Entry shipments may begin
- **January 29, 2027:** Last day for registration
- **February 5, 2027**: Entry receiving deadline

*****ANY ENTRIES RECEIVED ON-SITE AFTER THE RECEIVING DEADLINE ARE NOT GUARANTEED ENTRY INTO THE COMPETITION*****

[1] To be eligible for ACSA membership as a voting member you MUST be either a craft distiller holding a valid DSP, produce fewer than 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond, subscribe to ACSA's Code of Ethics, and no more than 50% of the DSP is owned (directly or indirectly) by a producer of distilled spirits whose combined annual production of distilled spirits from all sources exceeds 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond; or a craft brand that creates, produces, processes (through contract manufacturing) fewer than 750,001 proof gallons removed from bond, owns and/or operates a distilled spirits brand produced in the United States, subscribe to ACSA's Code of Ethics, and no more than 25% owned (directly or indirectly) by a producer or brand of distilled spirits whose combined annual sales and/or annual production of distilled spirits exceeds 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond.

American
CRAFT SPIRITS
ASSOCIATION

SHIPPING AND PACKAGING INSTRUCTIONS
Failure to follow these instructions may result in the disqualification of your entry.

- Send two 750 ml bottles, or the equivalent volume, of each spirit entered.
- For each RTD product entered, send eight 12 oz cans or bottles, or the equivalent volume).
- Label the outside of the box: “For Sample and Lab Use Only.”
- Use a rubber band to attach a copy of the **SPIRIT ENTRY PACKING SLIP** to each bottle. This will help ensure that your entry is inventoried accurately.
- **DO NOT TAPE PACKING SLIPS TO BOTTLES**. Tape may damage the bottle labels.
- **DO NOT USE STYROFOAM PEANUTS.** They are difficult to contain and dispose of.

DELIVERY ADDRESS
Thornton Distilling
400 E. Margaret Street
Thornton, IL 60476

DISCLAIMER
All products submitted will be considered property of the American Craft Spirits Association. The Judging Board retains the right not to award a medal, if, in its professional consensus, no medal is deserved in a specific category.

Neither ACSA nor Thornton Distilling is responsible for entries that are damaged, delayed, or lost in transit. All registrations are final, and refunds will not be issued for shipping-related issues.

CONTACT US
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ACSA Competition Chairs
Colton Weinstein, colton@libaspirits.com
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