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CASTLE & KEY DISTILLERY WINS WHISKEY AND BOURBON CATEGORY OF WSWA'S BRAND BATTLE

Washington, D.C., 08/04/2021 – WSWA is pleased to announce [Castle & Key Distillery](#) was crowned the Whiskey & Bourbon category winner of the 2021 virtual Brand Battle tournament. Castle & Key is a Kentucky based distillery with a long history. Today, they are crafting products to help reimagine how Kentucky spirits are presented to the world.

During the live event, audience members had the opportunity to vote for their favorite brand. Claiming the People's Choice award this week was [Horse Soldier Bourbon](#), an all-American, award winning spirit, featuring all-natural ingredients.

The 2021 Brand Battle is an expanded virtual industry event that spotlights craft and emerging brands in front of expert distributor judges, industry experts, and enthusiast. The Whiskey & Bourbon competition was the second to last category before the Brand Battle Championship on September 14.

During today's competition, Dale Stratton, a [SipSource](#) analyst, presented on the current trends in brown spirits. According to SipSource data, all whiskey classes are back to seeing growth across all segments. For example, when looking at the past 12 month rolling data, rye is growing at 7.2 and ultra-premium is growing at 13.2 percent in both share and trend.

The six brands represented in today's battle were diverse and covered many segments of the category. The judges found Castle & Key Distillery to be well-rounded, with an interesting, historical story and great product.

"Our distillery was founded in 1887 and was one of the first examples of a destination distillery – a showplace distillery – in the US," said Jon Newton, the director of sales for Castle & Key, after the competition. "As the site fell into disrepair, the modern-day iteration of Castle & Key started in 2013... [and we] started to discover a lot of the original equipment that was left behind was in really good shape. We were given this gift from the "Bourbon gods" that helped us scale and provide the opportunity to scale more in the future. We realized scalability is a challenge that many young brands have. So, we are very fortunate that we made the decision early on to do things ourselves from scratch, from the start."



The final Brand Battle category, Cordial, Liqueur & After-Dinner Drink, will take place next Tuesday, August 10. On September 14, all category winners from every category will compete to be named the Brand Battle Champion. Register for all remaining competitions [here](#).

About 2021 WSWA Brand Battle Tournament

WSWA will be holding the 2021 Brand Battle Tournament virtually and has extended the event series for craft, start-up and small production wine and spirits into a bracketology-style tournament. Brand Battle will 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.

To learn more, please visit www.wswa.org/brandbattle.

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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