

River Pilot Vodka Honored With National Awards As Distillery Reaches Visitor Milestone

Written by Ryan Burchett

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Le Claire, Iowa, November 8, 2011 – Mississippi River Distilling Company has recently been recognized with two exceptional industry awards for their spirits. MRDC's River Pilot Vodka received the Beverage Tasting Institute's (BTI) Gold Medal in the International Review of Spirits as well as a Bronze Medal at this year's 2011 New York International Spirits Competition (NYISC).

River Pilot was recognized in BTI's Unflavored Vodka category. The tasting was completed in BTI's Chicago Tasting Room on November 1. River Pilot received a score of 90, which put it in the "Exceptional" category and garnered the gold medal award.

BTI described River Pilot as, "Aromas of rye cracker and salt water taffy with a satiny dryish medium-to-full body and a grainy, creamy vanilla, dusty stone, and Brazil nut accented finish. A nice balance of raw and refined characteristics."

The Beverage Tasting Institute relies heavily on highly experienced, professional guest tasters who are either retailers, restaurateurs, or prominent writers that are especially knowledgeable about the beverage category being reviewed. All panelists are rigorously screened and audited and then trained in BTI's proprietary blind tasting methodology.

The second award came from the prestigious New York International Spirits Competition. NYISC uses trade-only judges from top to bottom that consist of people who are buyers from the top retail stores, restaurant and bar owners, distributors and importers. Each submission is placed in its product category and along with other spirits in its same price range. While the full list of 2011 winners has not yet been publicized, in 2010 only 2 medals were awarded in this highly competitive category.

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“These are fantastic awards and such a compliment to what we are doing,” Ryan Burchett, owner/distiller says. “To have a product handmade from local ingredients be recognized with by two prominent nationally recognized organizations in the industry is just outstanding. It lends a lot of credibility to what little guys like us are doing.”

These awards are on the heels of another national recognition for MRDC’s River Baron Vodka. In August, River Baron was recognized as the 8th best vodka made in the United States by TheFiftyBest.com.

It’s been an exciting time at the distillery as MRDC crossed another big milestone over the weekend. The distillery welcomed its 20,000th visitor in less than 11 months of being open.

“It has been so encouraging to visit with all the people who have stopped in to see what we’re all about,” said owner/distiller Garrett Burchett. “People have taken such a tremendous interest in our locally grown products. We love having the opportunity to share our story with everyone who walks in the door and for them to see the grain-to-glass process in person.”

Mississippi River Distilling Company is open from 10 AM to 5 PM Monday through Saturday and from 12 to 5 PM Sundays. Free tours are offered to the public daily on the hour from 12 to 4 PM or by appointment. The tour takes visitors through the entire distilling process. Tours end in the Grand Tasting Room with free samples of products for those patrons over 21 years of age. Mississippi River Distilling Company’s next product release will be their much anticipated Cody Road Bourbon Whiskey will hit store shelves on December 2, 2011