



**WORLD CLASS™**  
C O M P E T I T I O N

**THE WORLD CLASS TOP SIX**

***Australia, Czech Republic, Great Britain, Greece, Israel and Japan bartenders go through to final***

*Cape Town, South Africa, September 3:* The top six WORLD CLASS Bartender of the Year finalists for 2015, selected from among the original 54 contenders, were announced last night after three days of challenges.

Jack Scotti of Australia, Viteslav Cirok of the Czech Republic, Alistair Reynolds of Great Britain, Manolis Lykiardopoulos of Greece, Ariel Leizgold of Israel and Michito Kaneko of Japan were chosen after an exhaustive judging process, presided over by leading authorities in the world of fine drinking and experiential cocktail culture.

“The talent on display this year has surpassed our already high expectations. It was almost impossible to predict who the top six would be because the level of skill was consistent across all competitors – exceptionally high,” said Spike Marchant, judge and WORLD CLASS Global Brand Ambassador. “But what else would you expect when you have the best bartenders in the world under one roof? It was the toughest competition we’ve ever had the honour to judge.”

The bartenders all exhibited varying techniques, styles and philosophies as the challenges unfolded. Michito Kaneko of Kyoto, Japan, was singled out for his technical excellence warmth, personality and creativity while Ariel Leizgold of Israel impressed with his pizzazz and showstopper serves.

“Obviously I am thrilled and a total loss for words to be in the top six. I’ve put everything into this competition. When I have a goal in mind, I just envision what I have to do and I give it my all. I don’t like to do anything half way,” says Ariel who is credited as revolutionizing the Tel Aviv cocktail scene and is acknowledged as one of the top 50 influential people in Israeli hospitality.

For Jack Scotti, from Melbourne, Australia, this was his second WORLD CLASS attempt and although he stumbled in the “Against the Clock” challenge he recovered to deliver a phenomenal performance in the “Street Food Jam”, where his food pairings were a standout along with his showstopper “levitating” cocktail in the “Retro, Disco, Future” challenge.

“When I started my WORLD CLASS journey, I never expected to make it this far. But when I came first in Australia, I realised I had a chance to make it all the way, so I set myself the goal of making it to the final six and here I am. I’m elated,” says Jack.

Great Britain’s Alistair Reynolds, meanwhile, kept his consistency throughout, earning marks on solid performances.



“Alistair didn’t earn his spot through any single, standout performance, but through consistency and quality. He really put us judges through the ringer and I’m really excited to see what he pulls out of his bag of tricks next,” says Spike.

Rounding out the six finalists, Greece’s Manolis Lykiardopoulos presented charm throughout, following in the footsteps of a previous Greek bartender, Aristotellis Papadopoulos who won WORLD CLASS Bartender of the Year in 2009.

“I’m happy to be in the top six, but also a little stressed. When I heard my name it was like time stopped – definitely a moment I will never forget. I’m eager to get started on the final challenge,” says Manolis.

Vitislav Cirok from the Czech Republic was a surprise finalist.

“Vitislav was a bit of a dark horse, but his power, dynamism and skill was more than enough to earn him a spot in the final six. I’m certain his will continue to impress as the competition moves into the next round,” said Spike Marchant.

As part of a recently announced partnership between luxury resort group One&Only and Diageo Reserve, the top six finalists will be afforded the opportunity to spend time at One&Only’s unique resorts worldwide where they will create bespoke menus and signature cocktails for discerning drinkers.

Each of the six global finalists of the WORLD CLASS Bartender of the Year competition will also receive a TANQUERAY® Champion Shaker – the smaller, bar-mounted expression of Jason Crawley’s classic 1.5m Imperial Shaker – to take home to their respective countries as a token of a shared commitment to innovation and craftsmanship.

The top six now go head to head on Thursday in the “Cape Town Shakedown” challenge, where they will each create a pop-up bar representing their personal vision of “the world’s best bar”.

The WORLD CLASS Bartender of the Year winner for 2015 will be announced on Friday at a grand ceremony taking place at Cape Town City Hall.

Country	Bar	Bartender
Australia	Boilermaker House	Jack Sotti
Czech Republic	L’Fleur Bar	Vítězslav Cirok
Great Britain	Hawksmoor	Alistair Reynolds

Greece	Theory Bar and More	Emmanouil Lykiardopoulos
Israel	Bellboy	Ariel Leizgold
Japan	Lamp Bar	Michito Kaneko

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**Notes to Editor:**

Full list of participating countries: Morocco, Ireland, United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, Mexico, Colombia, Lebanon, Kenya, Hong Kong, Italy, Germany, Austria, Brazil, Poland, Greece, Canada, Czech Republic, Japan, Great Britain, Indian Ocean, Russia, Costa Rica, New Zealand, India, Turkey, Philippines, Slovakia, Panama, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Taiwan, Singapore, United States, Australia, Vietnam, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Bulgaria, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Malaysia, Thailand, The Netherlands, Israel, Indonesia, France, Romania, Peru, South Africa, as well as Cruise Ship and Luxury Yacht categories.

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**About Diageo**

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands across spirits, beer and wine categories. These brands include Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B, Buchanan's and Windsor whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness.

Diageo is a global company, and our products are sold in more than 180 countries around the world. The company is listed on both the London Stock Exchange (DGE) and the New York Stock Exchange (DEO). For more information about Diageo, our people, our brands, and performance, visit us at [www.diageo.com](http://www.diageo.com). Visit Diageo's global responsible drinking resource, [www.DRINKiQ.com](http://www.DRINKiQ.com), for information, initiatives, and ways to share best practice.



### **About Diageo Reserve**

Diageo Reserve represents the luxury division of Diageo, a multi-award winning portfolio of fine spirits rich in heritage, craftsmanship and innovation.

The World Class Collection of brands includes: Ciroc vodka, Tanqueray No. TEN and Tanqueray London Dry gins, Johnnie Walker Blue Label, Platinum Label and Gold Label Reserve Scotch Whiskies, Tequila Don Julio, Zacapa rum, Ketel One vodka, Haig Club single grain Scotch Whisky, Bulleit Bourbon, Talisker, Mortlach and Singleton single malt Scotch Whiskies.

Diageo Reserve promotes responsible drinking.

Celebrating life, every day, everywhere.

### **About Diageo Reserve World Class™**

DIAGEO RESERVE WORLD CLASS™ is transforming fine drinking experiences and cocktail culture around the world and in the home. The industry's largest, most credible investment in the luxury on trade, it discovers the next generation of bartending talent who set the latest mixology trends and bring these to the best bars worldwide.

At the core is an outstanding, global training programme and internationally recognised platform that elevates the craft of the bartender and builds careers in the industry culminating in an annual luxury landmark week where the DIAGEO RESERVE WORLD CLASS™ Bartender of the Year is announced. Launched in 2009, over 20,000 bartenders have been inspired and educated in the craft of mixology using the finest spirits in the DIAGEO RESERVE collection.

A partnership and collaboration with gurus, media, partners and owners, DIAGEO RESERVE WORLD CLASS™ is widely recognised as a mark of sophistication and distinction of international fine drinking culture by bartenders and customers alike

