

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BAR & RESTAURANT EXPO ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THREE PRESTIGIOUS INDUSTRY AWARD CATEGORIES ON MARCH 20, 2024**

*Recipients of the Industry Excellence Awards, Industry Impact Award, and Supplier Awards were honored on the keynote stage.*

**LAS VEGAS-** Today, Wednesday, March 20, attendees of this year's [Bar & Restaurant Expo](#) gathered to celebrate outstanding leaders, venues and suppliers as event organizers announced winners of three esteemed industry award categories: **Industry Excellence Awards**, **Industry Impact Awards** and the first-ever **Supplier Awards**.

"These individuals and businesses represent the best of the best, and we are proud to recognize their achievements and contributions," said Tim McLucas, Vice President of Bar & Restaurant Group. "Congratulations to all our winners!"

The winners of each award can be found below:

### **2024 Industry Excellence Award Winners**

The Industry Excellence Awards celebrate dedication to the independent bar and restaurant business. These winners exemplify integrity, commitment to equality, sustainability, community, and culture across the industry.

Winners in each category were selected by a panel of experts from Johnson & Wales University who evaluated each submission based on several criteria:

- Panel Chair: Brian Warrener, Associate Professor & Director of the Center for Beverage Education & Innovation
- Jennifer Broderick, Professor
- Sarah Malik, Associate Professor
- Deana Marzocchi, Associate Professor
- Dean Mistretta, Assistant Professor

"The quality of the entries this year was uniformly excellent," said Warrener. "Our panel of judges believe these winners truly represent the best in the industry."

**Bartender of the Year**

Dominique Jackson, Realm of 52 Remedies  
San Diego, California

**Community Leadership Award**

Ebony Austin, Nouveau Bar & Grill  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Chef of the Year**

Iliana de la Vega, El Naranjo  
Austin, Texas

**Best Cocktail Program**

WATERTRADE  
Austin, Texas

**Best Hospitality Training Program**

Your 3<sup>rd</sup> Spot  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Bar of the Year**

Happy Accidents, Albuquerque  
New Mexico

**Restaurant of the Year**

OTOKO  
Austin, Texas

**2024 Industry Impact Award Winner**

This award recognizes an individual who has displayed an immense passion for their craft and has helped make significant advancements in the field. Considerations for the award include enhancing employee culture, raising the visibility of under-represented businesses and owners, implementing fair wage compensation, practicing sustainability, and supporting mental health, sobriety and addiction recovery initiatives.

**Derek Brown, Founder of Positive Damage, Inc.**

*Author and Founder of Positive Damage, Inc., Derek Brown has been recognized as a leading beverage figure affecting positive change in the global bar industry. As one of the nation's top bartenders, Brown owned Spirited Awards 2017 "Best American Cocktail Bar" winner, Columbia Room, in Washington, D.C. He now works as a wellness coach and consultant on low- and no-alcohol drinks.*

**2024 Supplier Award Winners, supported by CM Profit Group**

Bar & Restaurant Expo worked with research company CM Profit Group to present the inaugural 2024 BRE Supplier Awards. These awards aim to honor trailblazers who have redefined the bar and restaurant landscape with their exceptional products and solutions. Suppliers submitted products for consideration across six categories, and then Bar & Restaurant Expo attendees voted on which they considered the best in each category based on their experience with the company and its product.

**Best Alcoholic Beverage**

Diageo's Don Julio Alma Miel Joven Tequila

**Best Entertainment Product**

Team Trivia

**Best Equipment, Tool, or Bar Supply**

True Manufacturing

**Best Food Product/Producer**

Oh Snap! Dilly Bites

**Best Non-Alcoholic Product or Mixer**

Ritual Zero Proof Spirits

**Best Technology Product**

Draft Top PRO

For more information about these awards, visit [www.barandrestaurantexpo.com](http://www.barandrestaurantexpo.com). Stay connected with Bar & Restaurant Expo on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#). Details for next year's event will be announced shortly.

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### **About Bar & Restaurant Expo**

Bar & Restaurant Expo has continued to evolve and mirror the fast-paced, trend-setting nature of the hospitality industry. The event has been providing the specific tools that bar and restaurant owners, operators, and managers need to grow their businesses, compete, and succeed in this hyper-competitive and dynamic industry. The Bar & Restaurant Group is part of the Questex Travel & Hospitality Division and also produces [World Tea News](#), [World Tea Academy](#), as well as [Bar & Restaurant Expo](#), [Bar & Restaurant News](#), and [Vibe Conference](#).

### **About Questex**

**Questex helps people live better and longer.** Questex brings people together in the markets that help people **live better**: travel, hospitality and wellness; the industries that help people **live longer**: life science and healthcare; and the technologies that enable and fuel these **new experiences**. We live in **the experience economy** – connecting our ecosystem through live events, surrounded by data insights and digital communities. We deliver experience and real results. **It happens here.**

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