

Black Star Farms Spirits Win Top Honors at the 2014 Washington Cup

Spirit of Cherry and Spirit of Apple Brandies Each Awarded Washington Cup

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SUTTONS BAY, MICHIGAN - Michigan winery and distillery Black Star Farms had incredible success at the 2014 Washington Cup Competition, taking home two of the six Washington Cups awarded for their Spirit of Cherry and Spirit of Apple fruit brandies. The Cup is the top honor in this competition exclusively for American-made spirits and liqueurs.

Doug Frost is the founder of the Washington Cup and one of only three people in the world to hold the Master Sommelier and Master of Wine certification. He is one of the founders of Beverage Alcohol Resource (BAR) and writes extensively about wine and spirits. He said, "The distilled spirits business demands a steep learning curve, so an experienced hand like Black Star Farms stands out among the many new and aspiring spirits makers. Black Star Farms' success with achieving two Washington Cups is nonetheless remarkable. Only six were given out among the nearly one hundred thirty spirits in the competition."

Lee Lutes directs Black Star Farms winemaking and distilling at Black Star Farms and explained, "Since our inception, we have had an interest in the distillation of fruit from the area, with the expectation that this would complement and contribute to what we do for our regional wines. Northern Michigan has been consistently growing high quality tree fruits for years, and the distillation of this fruit is one of the best ways to showcase its purity. We take great pride in the recognition from such a significant national competition, and this will be fuel for continuing our pursuit of the essence of great Michigan fruit."

Judging for the Washington Cup is unique for the three phases of competition that include a blind tasting by professional spirits judges, tasting by professional bartenders who create signature cocktails for the top scoring spirits and a blind consumer tasting of the created cocktails.

Spirit of Cherry is produced from a blend of black sweet cherries including Hearty Giant, Ulster, Schmidt, Heidel-Fingen, Nelson, Van, and Sam, and from red tart varieties including Montmorency and Balaton. It has a clear appearance and distinctive subtle cherry flavors with robust but balanced alcohol and is neither sweet nor tart.

Spirit of Apple is a small batch, hand crafted apple brandy distilled from a true cider blend of several different apple varieties including Jonagold, Winesap, Rhode Island Greening, Spy,

McIntosh, and Jonathan. It is then barrel-aged for three to five years, using both French and American oak. At the precise time the distiller feels is optimal, the brandy is bottled – often a single barrel at a time. Pale golden amber in color, it is well balanced with opulent, sweet-wood apple and caramel aromas and mellowed, spicy warmth.

Black Star Farms Spirit of Pear Brandy was awarded a Silver Medal. You can get information about Black Star Farms spirits at: <http://www.blackstarfarms.com/winery/spirits/>.

Photo of Spirit of Cherry and Spirit of Apple:

<http://www.blackstarfarms.com/mediafiles/Spirits-of-Apple-and-Cherry.jpg>

More about the Washington Cup: <http://www.washingtoncup.com/>

Black Star Farms is a unique agricultural destination that features two winery production facilities with adjacent tasting rooms, a distillery, an Inn, and an equestrian facility. Our winery and distillery produce some of the most sought after and awarded Michigan wines and spirits. Our luxurious Inn is the perfect place to host private special events including weddings, corporate retreats, and family celebrations. Enjoy culinary offerings including dinners at the Inn or wood-fired pizzas at the Hearth & Vine both located on our Suttons Bay site. Learn more at www.blackstarfarms.com.