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Virginia Spirits Announces Inaugural Virginia Cocktail Games
*Olympic-Themed Competition Celebrates the Best of the Commonwealth's
Mixologists and Distillers*

RICHMOND, Va. (June 3, 2024) – Virginia Spirits is excited to invite bartenders from around the state to participate in the first ever [Virginia Cocktail Games](#) to battle it out for the title of “Virginia’s Best Cocktail in 2024.” Inspired by the Summer Olympics, the Virginia Cocktail Games is a state-wide, two-round cocktail competition featuring mixologists and Virginia-made spirits from across the commonwealth.

Now through June 20, bartenders can enter the competition by submitting a cocktail creation that pays tribute to the Summer Olympics and features at least one locally distilled product from their region. A panel of representatives from the Virginia Spirits Board, the Virginia bartending community, and Virginia distillers will select 25 submissions, five from each region of the state, to square off in the digital round of the Virginia Cocktail Games.

Once chosen, the 25 semi-finalists will have two weeks to develop content for VirginiaSpirits.org and [@vaspirits](#) showcasing their cocktail creations. From July 26 - August 11, Virginians will be encouraged to view the content online and visit establishments in their region to try out the Olympic-themed cocktails. They will then cast their votes to determine five finalists, one from each region, to advance to the next round. The finalists will compete in a live, in-person cocktail showdown September 14 during Virginia Spirits Month at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond as part of its annual “Virginia Distilled” event.

“Just as the Summer Olympics highlights the best athletes from around the globe, the Virginia Cocktail Games will feature the finest mixologists and most talented distillers in the state,” said Jack Gorman, executive director of the Virginia Spirits Board Marketing Office. “We’re excited to foster collaboration and innovation between bartenders, distillers, and licensees and to educate Virginians about the incredible diversity of spirits and mixology in the state.”

The winning mixologist will be credited with the 2024 “Virginia Cocktail of the Year,” which will be promoted on VirginiaSpirits.org, [@virginiaspirits](#) social media channels, and in Virginia ABC stores throughout Virginia. The winner will also receive registration, accommodation, and a travel stipend to attend [Bar Summit 2025](#).

The 25 semi-finalists will receive:

- A Virginia Spirits swag bag with a custom embroidered jersey and other fun swag
- A copy of “Cocktail Theory” by Dr. Kevin Peterson
- Complimentary registration to the [Virginia Spirits professional development conference](#) in Richmond October 7 - 9, 2024

The five finalists who advance to the live competition will receive:

- \$250 cash prize
- \$150 travel stipend and complimentary hotel accommodations for the “Virginia Distilled” event on September 14, where the final round will take place
- Feature in regional media
- Professional headshots, action shots, and videography during “Virginia Distilled”

For rules, eligibility and to submit an application, bartenders should visit virginiaspirits.org/virginia-cocktail-games. Applications close June 20.

About Virginia Spirits Board

The Virginia legislature established the Virginia Spirits Board in 2020. The purpose of the Spirits Board is to allocate funds to projects that expand spirits distilling research, education, and promotion of the growing of grains and the production of spirits in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Spirits Board is one of 16 commodity boards within the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

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