

PRESS RELEASE  
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# Dohyung 'Demie' Kim wins Altos bartenders' Bartender award in Asia's 50 best bars 2024

The advocate for Korea's cocktail culture on the world stage and co-founder of the sustainability-focused Zest wins Asia's top peer-voted award

Seoul's Dohyung 'Demie' Kim, co-founder of Zest (No.5 on Asia's 50 Best Bars 2023 and No.18 on The World's 50 Best Bars 2023) has been named the winner of the Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award 2024. At the forefront of Seoul's bartending scene, sustainability champion Kim is being recognised by his peers for his significant contribution to Asia's bar landscape. The Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award is the only peer-judged award in Asia's 50 Best Bars programme, collectively voted for by the bartenders of those establishments which have placed on the 2024 list of Asia's 50 Best Bars.

This is the second of two special awards to be announced ahead of the awards ceremony at Asia's 50 Best Bars 2024, sponsored by Perrier, which will take place in Hong Kong on 16 July 2024 in collaboration with destination partner Hong Kong Tourism Board. This marks the second consecutive year the awards and its surrounding event programme will be held in the city.

Born and raised in Busan before moving to Seoul, Kim began his career mixing drinks at Woo Bar in the W Hotel before becoming Head Bartender at the speakeasy-esque Alice (ranked No.28 on Asia's 50 Best Bars 2023) in Seoul's buzzy Cheongdam neighbourhood. During the pandemic, Kim and his veteran bartender partners launched the minimalist watering hole, Zest and, despite pandemic-related shutdowns and challenges, the bar emerged as a pioneering space offering a sustainable 'fine drinking' experience.

At Zest, the team promotes a drinking culture that is deeply rooted in Korean heritage, emphasising sustainability where the environment and community coexist. The laboratory-like cocktail bar is steadfast in supporting local producers and sources its herbs and vegetables directly from farms across South Korea, eliminating the need for packaging. In addition, the team upcycles any leftovers into new components for its drinks, such as the house-made soda, tonic and colas. These practices have made Zest now proudly circular and free of plastic and aluminium waste. They also reinvest a share of profits into local ecological projects, positioning themselves at the forefront of the

modern sustainable bar movement. Since their debut, Zest has experienced a meteoric rise in global recognition, including the Nikka Highest Climber Award as part of Asia's 50 Best Bars 2023 and Disaronno Highest New Entry Award at The World's 50 Best Bars 2023. Kim's tireless enthusiasm has been instrumental to this success, as he proudly flies the flag for Korea's rich drinks heritage on the world stage and continues to inspire many in the region and beyond.

Emma Sleight, Head of Content for Asia's 50 Best Bars, says: "Demie is a formidable force in Seoul's bar scene, relentlessly championing Korean ingredients and cocktail culture to create a distinctive bar experience while keeping sustainability at the forefront of every endeavour. His pioneering efforts towards low-waste drinking and circular cocktail craft are not only an inspiration to his peers, but also a guiding light for the future of bars in Seoul and beyond. In recognition of his creativity and generosity within the industry, it is wonderful to see his peers have awarded him the well-deserved Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award."

On winning the Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award, Kim says: "I've been working as a bartender for over 10 years and this honour exceeds my expectations. I will take this award as the beginning of a new journey, strive to remain humble, and aim to convey this energy and positivity to those around me. This achievement couldn't have been accomplished alone. I would like to attribute it to my teammates, family, and everyone who supports what we are doing at Zest. Thank you so much."

Carlos Andrés Ramirez, Global Advocacy & PR Manager of Altos Tequila, said: "For the Altos Tequila and Altos Tahona Society family, it has been a priority to support bartenders on scaling up their careers. We want to congratulate our friend Demie Kim from Zest on winning the Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award as part of Asia's 50 Best Bars 2024. We are so happy to see this recognition go to the leader of a sustainability-forward bar, which is one of the best in Korea." 50 Best works with professional services consultancy Deloitte as its official independent adjudication partner to help protect the integrity and authenticity of the voting process and the resulting list of Asia's 50 Best Bars 2024. See more details on the Asia's 50 Best Bars voting process [here](#).

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## About Asia's 50 Best Bars

Asia's 50 Best Bars is the first regional event of The World's 50 Best Bars brand, created in 2016 with the purpose of showcasing the best and most innovative talent in the drinks industry in this region. The annual ranking is based on the votes of the Asia's 50 Best Bars Academy, comprising the most knowledgeable and travelled members of the bar industry, drinks media and mixology experts from across Asia. The Academy spans dozens of cities across the continent, reflecting the relative development and importance of bar scenes in different locations and the diversity of the drinking scene in Asia. Asia's 50 Best Bars, The World's 50 Best Bars and North America's 50 Best Bars are owned and organised by William Reed, the group behind The World's 50 Best Restaurants and The World's 50 Best Hotels.

## About the host destination partner: Hong Kong Tourism Board

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) is a Government-subsidised body. Operating 15 offices around the world and representative offices in seven different markets, its primary mission is to maximise the social and economic contribution that tourism makes to the community of Hong Kong, and consolidate the city's position as a world-class destination. The HKTB works closely with the Government, travel industry and other partners to promote Hong Kong worldwide, widen the range of tourism products and elevate service standards, as well as enhance the experiences of visitors during their stay.

## About the award sponsor: Altos Tequila

Altos is a super-premium Tequila, crafted from 100% blue agave in the heart of Los Altos, more than 2,000 meters above sea level, in the western state of Jalisco, in Mexico. Born from a collaboration between Altos Tequila's Master Distiller, Jesús Hernández, and the internationally renowned UK mixologists, Dré Masso and the late Henry Besant, Altos was made by bartenders for bartenders in 2009. The Altos range celebrates the authenticity of Mexico in a modern way, as such each Tequila is crafted in part using the 500-year-old traditional Tahona method, before being distilled in small copper pot stills.

For more details on Asia's 50 Best Bars and selection process, please visit:  
<https://www.worlds50bestbars.com/asia/>

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