

PRESS RELEASE  
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# Iain McPherson of Panda & Sons in Edinburgh named Altos bartenders' bartenderas part of The world's 50 Best Bars Awards 2024

The founder of the renowned Panda & Sons receives the bar industry's most coveted peer-voted award for his unparalleled innovation, sincere transparency and passion for Scottish hospitality

Iain McPherson of Panda & Sons in Edinburgh, Scotland has been announced as winner of the Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award as part of The World's 50 Best Bars 2024, sponsored by Perrier. This prestigious award is voted for by the bartenders on this year's list of The World's 50 Best Bars, who are asked to name one peer who pushes the limits of what it means to be a great bartender.

The award goes to an individual who made a significant impact in the global bar sector over the voting period and recognises their commitment to the international community in that time. This is the second of two special awards to be announced ahead of the live awards ceremony in Madrid, Spain, on Tuesday 22 October 2024.

Iain's love of hospitality was born in The Voodoo Rooms in Edinburgh, joining as a bar back in 2007 and working alongside some of the era's most esteemed bartending talent, where he quickly made a name for himself on the international stage. Just six short years later, he opened his first bar, Panda & Sons, in the Scottish capital, hidden behind a vintage barbershop frontage on Queen Street. On descending to the basement, the interiors are part cocktail pub, part Prohibition speakeasy, the russet wood panelling adorned with knick-knacks and curiosities galore, alongside numerous Panda-inspired touches. In 2015, Iain also opened Hoot the Redeemer in the city, a New Orleans-inspired dive bar renowned for its outstanding cocktails and boozy ice cream.

Over the years, he has taken on the role of unofficial ambassador for Scottish hospitality and, in 2018, launched Nauticus in Edinburgh's port town of Leith to champion Scottish produce and Scottish producers. Earlier this year, Iain was also integral in founding the first Edinburgh Bar Show to inspire, educate, entertain and unite the Scottish bar community and showcase the city's hospitality offering to some of the greatest international bartending talent.

Renowned as an unparalleled innovator, his mission to expand the flavour spectrum through sub- zero experimentation has revolutionised the bar world's approach to freezing and its impact on flavour. While the latest Panda & Sons menu, Transcend, has garnered much international acclaim for its outstanding presentation of his groundbreaking techniques, Iain's scientific creativity is rivalled only by his commitment to knowledge-sharing within his industry. He offers full transparency on his proprietary techniques and travels the world hosting seminars and masterclasses to fuel cocktail innovation for everyone.

Panda & Sons joined The World's 50 Best Bars list in 2018 at No.61, the first bar from Scotland ever to do so other than the iconic Bramble, and has subsequently risen through the ranks, placing at No.39 in 2023. In 2021, Nauticus joined the 50 Best Discovery list, the digital database of hospitality venues created by votes from the 50 Best Academies, which acts as an extension of the annual 50 Best rankings.

Emma Sleight, Head of Content for The World's 50 Best Bars, says: "We are delighted to unveil Iain McPherson as the winner of this year's Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award. He is renowned for his contribution to cocktail excellence and innovation, and his commitment to education within the industry (as well as his signature panda accessories). His sincere advocacy for Edinburgh's hospitality industry demonstrates the most important attributes of a true Bartenders' Bartender."

On winning the award, McPherson says: "I am overwhelmingly full of gratitude to be named this year's Altos Bartenders' Bartender. How meaningful it is to be nominated by the people that I look up to and admire daily – a true honour. Awards, especially one like this, are never truly an 'individual' effort but a reflective accolade of the creative, collaborative, driven and passionate team at Panda & Sons. They continuously inspire me and together we have pushed boundaries, creating magic for all. It's always a huge honour to be representing bonnie wee Scotland on the international bartending stage and I believe this award also shines a light on what an amazing bar scene we have in Edinburgh."

Carlos Andrés Ramirez, Global Advocacy & PR Manager for Altos Tequila, says: "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 Iain McPherson from Panda and Sons in Edinburgh on winning the Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award as part of The Worlds 50 Best Bars 2024. We are so happy to see this recognition to one of our favourite bartenders in Scotland!"

The Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award was introduced to The World's 50 Best Bars in 2017 and the inaugural winner was Iain Griffiths of London's Dandelyan. Subsequent winners include Joe Schofield, then of Tippling Club in Singapore, in 2018; Monica Berg of Tayēr + Elementary, London, in 2019; Renato 'Tato' Giovannoni, of Florería Atlántico, Buenos Aires, in 2020; Lynnette Marrero of Llama Inn, New York, in 2021; Jean Trinh of Alquímico, Cartagena, Colombia in 2022; and GN Chan of Double Chicken Please, New York, in 2023.

The countdown of the list of The World's 50 Best Bars 2024, sponsored by Perrier, will also be broadcast live to a global audience who are not able to attend in person. Bars and cocktail lovers are invited to join through The World's 50 Best Bars [Facebook](#) page and 50

Best Bars TV channel on [YouTube](#).

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**About The World's 50 Best Bars**

The World's 50 Best Bars, sponsored by Perrier, provides a definitive list of the world's best drinking venues, voted for by an Academy of more than 700 experts worldwide. The World's 50 Best Bars list has been published annually since 2009 and has become the most anticipated ranking for drinks professionals and cocktail aficionados across the world, with the awards the highlight of the bar industry calendar. The list of Asia's 50 Best Bars has been published since 2016, while the list of North America's 50 Best Bars was launched in 2022. William Reed, which owns the 50 Best brand, is entirely responsible for the organisation of the awards, the voting system and the respective lists.

**How the voting works**

The list is compiled by votes from The World's 50 Best Bars Academy, which comprises more than 700 drinks experts with gender balance, including renowned bartenders and consultants, drinks writers and

cocktail specialists from around the world. The Academy of voters is spread across 28 global geographic regions, each headed by an Academy Chair who selects their region's voters, with the distribution of voters designed to reflect the relative development and sophistication of the drinks sector, and the concentration of quality bars, in each region. Each voter casts seven votes based on their best bar experiences of the previous 18 months. Voters are required to remain anonymous and voting is confidential, secure and independently adjudicated by Deloitte.

## About Altos

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, 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.

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