

PRESS RELEASE
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Leading global spirits brands Absolut Vodka, Ballantine's Scotch whisky and Jameson Irish Whiskey join the ranks with BLAST for 10th anniversary of Counter-Strike Major

Absolut Vodka, Ballantine's Scotch whisky and Jameson Irish Whiskey will make their collective esports debut at France's first ever Counter-Strike Major in May 2023, as partners of the BLAST-organised tournament, which will see the world's best CS:GO players descend on Paris to compete for \$1.25 million in prizes.



- The partnership with the BLAST.tv Paris Major 2023 is the first group-wide esports move from leading Pernod Ricard-owned spirits brands, the worldwide no.2 producer of wines and spirits
- World's best CS:GO teams and players will compete for \$1.25 million prize pool at the Accor Arena in Paris, broadcast in more than 100 territories and 23 languages

The partnership reflects the shared mission across the brands of connecting and bringing people together from all corners of the world. Ballantine's, the No.1 Scotch whisky in Europe, who proudly champions those who stay true themselves, first entered the gaming arena last year through its collaboration with Gearbox's franchise, *Borderlands The Game*, recruiting the game's character, Mad Moxxi, to open up the category to new audiences.

This is the first gaming and esports partnership for Absolut Vodka. The iconic brand has pioneered forward thinking and inclusive experiences since 1979, in the name of positive change being made through connection and diversity. Jameson Irish Whiskey, the world's most loved and shared Irish whiskey, also makes its debut into the captivating world of esports through this partnership.

The brands will be going behind closed doors with key players to share untold stories of past legends, current champs and the broader Counter Strike community through behind the scenes content. In addition to sponsoring the popular Overtime Show, which sees members of the Paris Major broadcast talent team discussing all things Counter-Strike, the partnership will encompass immersive one-off experiences at the tournament, fan-led watch party activations in multiple markets, digital branding, broadcast content integration to BLAST.tv's 100+ global territory reach and social giveaways.

Oliver Clarke, Commercial Director at BLAST, said: *"We are delighted to have Absolut, Ballantine's and Jameson onboard for the BLAST.tv Paris Major, their first large-scale, collective esports partnership. We look forward to working together to deliver unique content, digital integrations and activations to the global gaming community at one of the world's most revered and popular esports events."*

Tom Elton, Ballantine's Global Head of Culture & Partnerships, on behalf of Absolut, Ballantine's and Jameson added: *"Our brands are all about the shared moments in life and with esports at the centre of new communities across the globe, we are delighted to announce Absolut, Ballantine's, and Jameson's partnership with the BLAST.tv Paris Major 2023. This year marks the 10-year celebration and final ever CS:GO Majors. With online gaming continuing to grow in popularity, we're also thrilled that this championship will take place in Pernod Ricard's home country of France."*

The BLAST.tv Paris Major is one of the most renowned and highly-regarded esports events in the calendar year, giving thousands of teams from all around the world an opportunity to compete for a £1.25 million prize pool, a chance to etch their names in Counter-Strike folklore and a shot at being named the best team in the world.

The BLAST.tv Paris Major joins a list of high-profile international events taking place in France over the next few years, alongside: 2023 Rugby World Cup, 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris and the 2025 Rugby League World Cup.

2023 will mark 10-years of Counter-Strike Majors and the BLAST.tv Major will celebrate this momentous occasion by looking back at some of the most iconic moments from the pinnacle of esports and Counter-Strike.

For more information please contact Joe Lovelace on email: joe@blast.tv or blast.tv/press or via phone: 07779602441

BLAST imagery and media bank: <https://news.cision.com/blast>

About BLAST

We're on a mission to take esports to the next level of global entertainment. We excite and invite billions of fans to join the esports revolution. We create live and digital experiences - from tournaments that pack out major arenas around the world to great content that's guaranteed to blow your socks off.

We work with some of the world's best game publishers and brands to elevate their properties into amazing esports experiences - having delivered tournaments, content and shows in a variety of games, including: CS:GO, Rainbow Six Siege, DOTA 2, VALORANT, Apex Legends, FIFA 2022, Rainbow Six Siege and Fortnite.

Over the last year, we've been working with Fortnite to develop industry leading, year-round, calendar of exciting and competitive esports events. Following last year's FNCS All-Star Showdown and FNCS Grand Royale tournaments, we're now operating the entire FNCS Chapter 3 broadcast schedule during each Fortnite Season for 2022.

BLAST Premier is a worldwide Counter-Strike tournament series where the best teams and biggest superstars fight it out for glory and a multi-million dollar prize pool. Famous for its unparalleled production quality and game-changing fan-first moments. Attracting tens-of-thousands of fans to our crazy-big-adrenaline-pumped live events in big arenas from London and Copenhagen to Miami and Sao Paulo, with millions more watching at home on our broadcast tuning in from more than 150 territories and in 25 different languages.

About Absolut Vodka

Absolut Vodka is one of the world's top ten international spirits brands. Every bottle of Absolut Vodka is produced and distilled from one source, one community, in and around Åhus, Sweden. The iconic brand has a long history of being in the forefront of progressive culture and an ally of diverse communities. From collaborations with Andy Warhol, Gilbert Baker to partnerships with Tomorrowland and various inclusive events across the world, Absolut is always reinventing itself as a catalyst of diverse expression and creativity.

www.absolut.com

About Ballantine's

Ballantine's is the No.1 Scotch whisky in Europe and the No.2 Scotch whisky in the world with the range selling over 70 million bottles a year worldwide. Ballantine's was created as a Whisky for Everyone; and a commitment to inclusivity is part of the brand's DNA as the motto 'a friend to all humankind' has been on the crest of every bottle for over 100 years. Ballantine's entered the world of gaming through its partnership with Gearbox franchise, Borderlands The Game, as part of the brand's ambition to open up the category to new audiences. People come to the virtual world of gaming to free themselves from societal expectations, epitomising Ballantine's ethos of encouraging people to live life the way they want; because when they do, there's no wrong way.

www.ballantines.com

About Jameson Irish Whiskey

Jameson is the world's most awarded and bestselling Irish whiskey, ranked in the top 4 global whiskey brands and number 9 in spirits worldwide. Leading the Irish whiskey category with a 67% market share and having experienced 30 years of consecutive growth up until 2019, Jameson reached unprecedented sales of 10.4 million cases in FY22. Triple distilled, every bottle of Jameson is distilled and matured at the world renowned Midleton Distillery in County Cork, Ireland.

www.jamesonwhiskey.com

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