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Travel Berkeley Springs - Berkeley Springs, WV

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BIG WINS AT OLYMPICS OF WATER IN BERKELEY SPRINGS

BERKELEY SPRINGS, WV -----

The Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting, the world's most prestigious, gave out awards tonight to waters from three continents. All five continents had waters among the nearly 100 entered.

The municipal water category was a battle of champions with the water judged best in the world for 2018 -- Clearbrook, British Columbia, Canada -- also the biggest medal winner in the event's history. The best water in the USA is Santa Ana, CA, another former gold medalist along with three of the next four winners, all American waters. The silver was won by the City of Hamilton, OH. Mission Springs Water District, Desert Hot Springs, CA won bronze. Fourth place was El Dorado Springs, CO and Independence, MO placed fifth.

"The consistency in winners from year to year with different panels of judges validates the choices," remarked perennial watermaster, Arthur von Wiesenberger. "It also speaks to the impressively high caliber of the waters entered."

The Best Bottled Water title paid tribute to both love and hope. The gold medal winner was Frequency H2O, Major Creek, Queensland, Australia which is infused with the frequency of love. The silver went to famous Mountain Valley Springs Water, Hot Springs, AR. A tie for bronze included Hope Natural Spring Water, Halifax County, VA and Jackson Springs Natural Premium Spring Water, Marchand, MB, Canada. Finishing the line-up were Svalbaroi Polar Iceberg Water, Longyearbyen, Norway in 4th place and Dioni, Epirus, Greece in 5th.

The audience was filled with water enthusiasts coming from as far as Australia and Oklahoma. Twelve media judges spent hours tasting and selecting from waters sourced in 15 states, four Canadian provinces and nine foreign countries. "There were waters from four new countries this year: Turkey, Cyprus, Jamaica and Trinidad-Tabago. They joined waters from Korea, Bosnia, Greece and Australia" said Jeanne Mozier, an event founder.

Mozier was particularly impressed by a new state entry from Oklahoma. "Now there are only three states left that have never entered," she said. "And the Oklahoma folks from Catt Springs actually drove here to be at the event. They are debuting their bottled water."

Sparkling waters are sourced from four continents. Gold medal winner was Antipodes Sparkling Water, Whakatane, NZ and silver was Touch Sparkling Mineral Water, Marchand, MB, Canada. Bronze was KOPU, another New Zealand water that came in a glamorous turquoise metal container. Fourth was a perennial winner, Tesanjski Kiseljak, Tesanj, Bosnia and fifth was Castle Rock Sparkling Water, Dunsmuir, CA.

Purified waters are a relatively new addition to the water world, often municipal systems bottling their water. This year's winner is a newcomer to the event. Ken Gulin was in the audience when his Ophora Water from Santa Barbara, CA was announced as the gold. Last year's winner, GP8 Oxygen Alkaline Water, Toronto, Ontario, Canada won the silver. Finishing out the top five were: 3rd - Rain Fresh Oxygen-Rich Purified Water, Garland, TX, 4th - Lesage Water, Lesage, WV and in a tie for 5th - Berkeley Springs Purified Water, Berkeley Springs, WV and Hamilton On Tap, Hamilton, OH.

"It was another wonderful year for the longest running and largest water tasting in the world," said von Wiesenberger. "Berkeley Springs is the Olympics of water."

The crowd was interested in two peoples' choice categories where it was their votes that chose the winners. The packaging category had ten entrants competing for most alluring. Last year's winner, Svalbaroi Polar Iceberg Water from Longyearbyen, Norway won the gold again. The newcomers from Oklahoma, Catt Springs, won the silver. Antipodes from New Zealand was third. Flavored Essence Sparkling Water was a new category for a new

product and had three entrants. They scored only two points apart with the winner being Icy Blue Lemon from Marchand, Manitoba, Canada.

Jane Lazgin, former Communications Director of Nestlé Waters North America was the recipient of the 2018 International Water Tasting Lifetime Achievement Award. WaterExpo Guangzhou 2018 and Guangzhou Informa Yi Fan Exhibitions Co., Ltd of China is the presenting sponsor of the Lifetime Achievement Award. “We are always thrilled when our global reach is reinforced by major international sponsors,” said Mozier, “and we welcome China to our line-up.”

Conclusion of the daylong water tasting is the famed "water rush" where the audience is invited to take home hundreds of bottles of water sent as part of the judging. "My team and I spent about six hours arranging all the waters in a display," said Mozier. "The crowd spent less than ten minutes making it all disappear. It's like a Tibetan sand mandala," she laughed. “I was pleased to see our favorite couple from Brooklyn in the rush. Peter and Cynthia Lloyd come every year especially for the water tasting – and the rush.”

The twelve media judges selected by Klein Rone included representatives from various regional and national media including television and online magazines. They were instructed by von Wiesenberger to look, sniff and taste each water under guidelines similar to those in a wine tasting. The waters were rated for each attribute including appearance (it should be clear - or slightly opaque for glacial waters), aroma (there should be none), taste (it should taste clean), mouth feel (it should feel light), aftertaste (it should leave you thirsty for more). Waters were tasted in four separate flights over two days.

“The judges job is crucial and so is their training,” said Mozier. “We present all our judges with a diploma designating them as a Certified Water Taster.”

The 29th annual Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting is scheduled for Saturday, February 23, 2019. The event seminar on Friday and Saturday’s award ceremony were live streamed on the Berkeley Springs, WV Facebook page operated by the Morgan Arts Council’s Digital Media Center. For more information on Berkeley Springs or its water tasting, call 1-800-447-8797 or check the website.

Best Municipal Water 2018

Best in the World – Clearbrook, BC Canada

Best in the US - Santa Ana, CA

2nd – City of Hamilton, OH

3rd – Mission Springs Water District, Desert Hot Springs, CA

4th – Eldorado Springs, CO

5th – Independence, MO

Best Bottled Water 2018

1st – Frequency H2O, Major Creek, Queensland, Australia

2nd -- Mountain Valley Springs Water, Hot Springs, AR

Tie 3rd – Jackson Springs Natural Premium Spring Water, Marchand, MB, Canada

3rd – Hope Natural Spring Water, Halifax County, VA

4th – Svalbaroi Polar Iceberg Water, Longyearbyen, Norway

5th -- Dioni, Epirus, Greece

Best Sparkling – 2018

1st – Antipodes Sparkling Water, Whakatane, NZ

2nd. – Touch Sparkling Mineral Water, Marchand, MB, Canada

3rd – KOPU Sparkling Water, Otakiri, NZ

4th – Tesanjski Kiseljak, Tesanj, Bosnia

5th -- Castle Rock Sparkling Water, Dunsmuir, CA

Best Purified Drinking Water – 2018

1st – Ophora Water, Santa Barbara, CA

2nd - GP8 Oxygen Alkaline Water, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

3rd – Rain Fresh Oxygen-Rich Purified Water, Garland, TX

4th – Lesage Water, Lesage, WV

Tie -- 5th – Berkeley Springs Purified Water, Berkeley Springs, WV
Hamilton On Tap, Hamilton, OH

People's Choice-- 2018

Best Packaging

1st – Svalbaroi Polar Iceberg Water, Longyearbyen, Norway

2nd – Catt Springs Natural Springs Mineral Water, Apache, OK

3rd – Antipodes Water, Whakatane, NZ

Best Flavored Essence Sparkling

1st – Icy Blue Lemon, Marchand, Manitoba, Canada