

Winner of Patrón Perfectionists Josh Hendricks says he wants to bring home the global prize

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Josh Hendricks has been named South Africa's Patrón cocktail master after clinching top honours at this year's Patrón Perfectionists, a global bartending competition which gives mixologists a platform to showcase their skills as they strive for perfection in their craft. The South African leg of the competition took place over two rounds and saw the finalists whip up two Patrón-inspired cocktails. As the winner, the 26-year-old head bartender at Fable in Cape Town will join 14 other global finalists in March 2024 for an experience-filled week as part of the final leg of the global bartending competition at Hacienda Patrón, the distillery where Patrón is distilled in Atotonilco El Alto, Jalisco, Mexico.



Q: You've just been crowned as South Africa's ultimate cocktail Patrón perfectionist. What does winning this mean to you?

A: I always go into something with a goal and my goal was to try and get as far as possible. I've put a lot of effort into it and it means a lot to me. People don't really look at other bartenders and take note of what they do unless it's on a scale like an international guest shift or a competition. It makes what you are saying more credible and people take you more seriously. I am still young and I want to take this further. Winning this helps me do that.

Q: To enter the completion you had to create a Patrón Margarita De Mexico cocktail which integrates a Mexican ingredient and a Paloma Shared DNA cocktail using a serve ritual for two people that celebrates the essence of the Paloma. What did you create, what inspired it and what has gone into it?

A: For the margarita challenge I used Patrón Silver – the perfect base for a margarita – with fresh mint which was my Mexican ingredient. I used that as my main feature with cucumber cordial, fresh lime, beetroot pickle and jalapeño tincture garnished with a rice cracker chicharrón which is like a pork

crackling but I made it vegan so it's approachable for anyone. I wanted that contrast between savoury and really fresh from the cucumber, mint, and agave.

The second challenge was based off of the first challenge in which we had to make a cordial and base it on a city and story behind it. Mine was themed around the beauty of Cape Town. The sunset image is always the one you see on Instagram and I replicated it into the actual drink in the glass in the form of a silhouette on the glass and a light underneath which shows table mountain and the city. The cordial included the flavours from all the cultures that came together from other countries way back when – Madagascar, Java, Malaysia, South East Asia. Things like galangal, lime leaf, teamwood pepper. It was a very aromatic cordial that I elevated with Patrón Reposado, grapefruit-infused bergamot liqueur, a hibiscus syrup and a rose petal salt rim. So it was super floral, super fresh, and had a nice dry end.

Q: As South Africa's winning finalist you will fly to Mexico next year to participate in the final, global leg of the competition. What are you hoping to gain by this experience?

A: I want to get to the highest point of bartending in South Arica. That is my goal. Even if I don't make it at least I'm trying. I want to bring it home and I want to try as hard as I can to because with that opportunity my career goes international.

Q: What impact do you believe Patrón Perfectionist has on the enhancement of the bar industry in South Africa?

A: I think competitions like Patrón Perfectionists play a big role because they allow winners to showcase what they're passionate about instead of just what they make at work. Some people maybe make a lot more simple, classic drinks but in the background they're more experimental and they're so much more out there if they have that stage to showcase that and it also allows other bartenders to be inspired by that. The bar industry is small and there's not a lot of mentorship at the moment so I feel like when it comes to inspiration that's what other people are looking at. People don't really see South Africa as a cocktail destination. I feel like we've been flying under the radar but South Africa is going to make its break soon.

Q: As a mixologist, what is it that you enjoy about using tequila?

A: It's versatility. Obviously good tequila can be served neat on the rocks. But with mixing you can go from super fresh to super spirit-forward or dryer or more like an old fashioned or a martini or a margarita or daiquiri. It falls into all categories and that's why I think it's why it's the number one trending spirit in the world.

Q: What's your preferred way of drinking Patrón Tequila?

A: I enjoy a classic, good margarita. Just fresh lime and Cointreau.

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