

## Big global wins for SA whisky brand Bain's

South African single grain whisky brand, Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky, has been awarded the title of World's Best Grain Whisky and founder distiller, Andy Watts, awarded the title as the global Icon of Whisky Master Distiller/Master Blender for 2018.



Andy Watts

These awards, held annually by the UK's *Whisky Magazine* attract fierce competition from well-known Scottish, Irish, American, Japanese, Taiwanese and other expressions from around the world in an attempt to be named the World's Best, and be recognised as an industry leader in the Icons of Whiskies.

The results were announced at a gala dinner held at the Waldorf Hilton Hotel in London last week. Watts was at the dinner to receive the awards and said the win was overwhelming news for the brand and South Africa.

"We have overcome the odds against the perceived perception that only traditional whisky-producing countries can be taken seriously. Our industry in SA is only 40 years old and although we've had many hurdles along the way, we have become innovative in our approach to manage our unique warmer climate, found creative ways to use home-grown raw material to our best advantage and constantly strive for crafting exceptional whiskies.

"By receiving these two World titles in one night it is the most humbling experience of my 34-year career in the whisky industry."

Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky, the only whisky to be made from 100% South African maize (mielies), is smooth due to its rather unique double maturation over a five year period in casks previously used for Bourbon. The warmer climate is also a contributing factor which accelerates the interaction between wood, spirit and air during maturation, resulting in a much smoother whisky at a younger age usually associated with more mature whiskies.



## Bain's takes gold at 2017 World Whisky Masters

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## The making of a master distiller

It took Watts 10 years to develop Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky before it was released in 2009 and since then, the whisky has created a tidal wave of interest for its unique taste. The whisky was first named World's Best Grain Whisky in 2013 and has received gold and double gold at all the major international whisky competitions.

Watts, a former professional cricketer, happened upon becoming a master distiller by being in the right place at the right time. Born in the UK, he visited South Africa in the 1980s to coach cricket during the summer seasons and it was during such a visit that he was approached by the then Stellenbosch Farmer's Winery (now Distell) to train in Scotland on whisky production.

In 1991 he headed up the company's move of the whisky production from a small distillery in Stellenbosch to the James Sedgwick Distillery in Wellington, today the home of Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky and Three Ships Whisky, the only commercial whisky distillery in Africa.

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