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Penton's North American Tea Championship Awards the Best Iced Teas for 2016

Honorees Will Be Featured at the North American Tea Championship 'Winners Tasting Circle' at World Tea Expo, June 15 - 17 at the Las Vegas Convention Center

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NEW YORK, May 25, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- [Penton's North American Tea Championship](#) (NATC), the only independent and professionally-judged tea competition in North America, presented 11 first-place wins to the best, premium iced teas in various categories, as well as Best Packaging and Best Value awards – just in time for National Iced Tea Month in June. The evaluation was held May 12 – 13 in Montebello, Calif. at the [Wilbur Curtis](#) headquarters, and all of the high-quality winning teas are commercially available in the marketplace. Visit [TeaChampionship.com](#).

Kevin Sardino, [Starbucks'](#) product development manager, beverage R&D, tea, in Seattle, Wash., and an NATC evaluator for the Iced Tea Class, said, "As a long-time tea enthusiast, I'm delighted and honored to be able to contribute to a competition like the [North American Tea Championship](#). The sheer number of entries in the Iced Tea category is a testament to the popularity of the segment. The panel of judges came to a unanimous consensus on nearly every winner, leaving little room for the question of subjectivity in those products' quality."

Honorees will be featured at the North American Tea Championship Winners Tasting Circle at World Tea Expo ([WorldTeaExpo.com](#)), June 15 – 17, 2016 at the Las Vegas Convention Center (#WTE16).

A complete list of the winners, including second and third-place teas, is available at the North American Tea Championship website: [TeaChampionship.com](#).

North American Tea Championship first-place winners include:

(Company/Website, Name of the Winning Tea, Category)

- **Farmer Brothers** ([farmerbros.com](#)), Farmer Brothers Select Unsweetened Black, *Foodservice – Bag-in-Box (BIB) Black - Unflavored/Unsweetened*
- **Royal Cup Coffee & Tea** ([royalcupcoffee.com](#)), IBIS MOON Mango Brz, *Foodservice – Black – Flavored*

- **Royal Cup Coffee & Tea** (royalcupcoffee.com), IBIS MOON, *Foodservice – Black – Unflavored/Unsweetened Tea*
- **S&D Coffee & Tea** (sdcoffeetea.com), Passion Fruit Green, *Foodservice – Green – Flavored*
- **Farmer Brothers** (farmerbros.com), Farmer Brothers Select Green, *Foodservice – Green – Unflavored/Unsweetened*
- **Eastsign Inc.** (eastsignbio.com), Matcha - MCJ05, *Instant – Green – Unflavored/Unsweetened*
- **Turkey Hill** (turkeyhill.com), Haymakers Sweet Tea, *Ready to Drink – Black – Flavored*
- **Milo's Tea Company** (drinkmilos.com), Milo's Famous Sweet Tea, *Ready to Drink – Black – Sweetened*
- **Crystal Geysler Water Co.** (crystalgeyser.com), Tejava Unsweetened Tea, *Ready to Drink – Black - Unflavored/Unsweetened*
- **ITO EN (North America) INC.** (itoen.com), Matcha LOVE Unsweetened, *Ready to Drink – Green – Flavored*
- **Argo Tea** (argotea.com), Hibiscus Tea Sangria, *Ready to Drink – Herbal*
- **ITO EN (North America) INC.** (itoen.com), Matcha LOVE Green, *Best Packaging*
- **S&D Coffee & Tea** (sdcoffeetea.com), Quality Blend, *Best Value*

Evaluators Share Insights

Scott Svihula, an NATC Iced Tea Class evaluator and principal of [Hula Consulting](http://hulaconsulting.com) in Juno Beach, Fla., noted, "This year's NATC submissions offered an array of profiles and flavors, some of which were pleasantly surprising. Categories like Bag-in-Box [BIB] and Instant, that are not normally associated with a quality iced tea beverage, were delightfully good. However, one of my favorite categories, fresh brewed herbal iced teas, was very underwhelming; a category that offers such promise and with such an array of ingredients should provide an enticing flavor profile. Several categories were very competitive, like Foodservice Unflavored Black and Foodservice Flavored Black; oftentimes subtle differences separated the winners."

NATC Evaluator Sardino said, "Many of the submissions exceeded expectations, especially in light of some of the format's potential limitations. But, there were also those that fell short. To them, I would say, understanding your components — whether teas or botanicals — and how they work together, is the key to separating your product from the pack. Become the master of your toolbox! And, always taste the competition. As one improves, the bar is raised for the rest. The NATC is an ideal platform for gauging how hard you'll need to work to get to the top, or to stay there."

Steve Schwartz, CEO of [Art of Tea](http://artoftea.com) in Los Angeles, Calif., an NATC evaluator, shared, "It's wonderful to see a collaboration of likeminded companies come together and put out their best work for open feedback. This is how we all rise as an industry and get better. There is no more room for good, only great. Iced tea continues to be a meaningful space to play in, and now is the time to excel with quality sourcing and key ingredients."

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Svihula added, "I congratulate all the winners in this year's NA ITC, and I urge all World Tea Expo attendees to take part in this year's NATC Winner's Tasting Circle at the event in June, to see for themselves."

[Wilbur Curtis](#), a leading manufacturer of tea brewers and accessories, was the official equipment supplier and brewing host for the North American Tea Championship Iced Tea Class evaluation. [GC Water](#) was the official water sponsor.

All NATC tea submissions were evaluated blind and through organoleptic analysis of the following characteristics: Flavor, body, color and clarity. An overall numerical value on a 100-point scale was then calculated based on the ratings of each characteristic. Winners were determined by rank. Judges evaluating the teas were not allowed to enter teas from their own company.

Next Up: NATC 'Spring Tea Class' Evaluation

The next North American Tea Championship will be held July 21-22 for an evaluation of spring teas. Entries will be accepted through July 8, and further entry and competition details are available at TeaChampionship.com. To inquire about entering the competition, e-mail info@teachampionship.com.

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