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5TH ANNUAL GREATER KANSAS CITY BARTENDING COMPETITION EXPANDS AND ENHANCES EVENT, ANNOUNCES TOP 13 FINALISTS

KANSAS CITY, MO (August 10, 2011) - This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Annual Greater Kansas City Bartending Competition, providing new experiences for attendees as well as drawing new faces from outside of the Kansas City area. For the first time in the history of the event that is being held on Sunday, August 21st at the Uptown Theater in Kansas City, Missouri, there will be 13 finalists that include competitors from Kansas City, St. Louis and Nashville. In the week leading up to the main event, local restaurants and bars including Tannin Wine Bar, Extra Virgin, Blanc Burgers + Bottles, M&S Grill, Manifesto and The Rieger Hotel Grill and Exchange will host cocktail parties promoting the GKCBC.

The event is part competition and part festival showcasing the best bartending talent in the region as well as offering the opportunity to learn from some of the industry's top professionals, taste great cocktails using quality ingredients, and learn about some of the newest products on the market. The main event pits the 13 finalists against each other on stage where they make their own original cocktail and one classic cocktail for the judges. They are timed and critiqued on presentation, creativity, flavor, and balance. Every step of the competition is displayed on an 8 foot by 12 foot projection screen, complete with commentary from the judges. The top 3 finishers win cash prizes and national press.

"This event has grown beyond just a competition and has become a festival celebrating cocktails, spirits, local food, vendors, and most importantly bartenders." - Ryan Maybee

2011 Finalists:

Tony Beyer, Benton's Prime Chop House, Kansas City

Jennifer Tosatto, Manifesto/The Rieger, Kansas City

Valdez Campos, Manifesto/The Rieger, Kansas City

Shannon Ponche, Taste, St. Louis

Jon Yeager, Watanabe Asian Cuisine, Nashville

Paige Unger, M&S Grill, Kansas City

Matt Seiter, Sanctuaria, St. Louis

Berto Santoro, Extra Virgin, Kansas City

Chad George, Demun Oyster Bar, St. Louis

Matthew Herman, Trezo Vino, Leawood, KS

Travis Stewart, Chaz on The Plaza, Kansas City

Justin Richardson, The American, Kansas City

Jason Kimbrell, Nica's 320/Tannin Wine Bar, Kansas City

Drink: PeachCo Sour

Drink: Everybody's Girl

Drink: Rick's Fizz

Drink: PDA

Drink: The Smoking Jacket

Drink: The Armistice

Drink: Der Achet Vund

Drink: The Bazegnole

Drink: The Standoff

Drink: Republic of Fizz

Drink: Passport 86

Drink: Hoodoo Tonic

Drink: Strange Holiday

Organizers Doug Frost and Ryan Maybee are aided by a committee made up of local bartenders from the Kansas City Bartenders' Alliance, representatives from local businesses and restaurants, and volunteers. The presenting sponsor is William Grant & Sons, with brands including Hendrick's Gin, Milagro Tequila, Solerno Liqueur and Stolichnaya Vodka, among others. There are a number of enhancements to the event this year, including live music in the Nowhere Lounge, a live Burlesque performance, and a tasting room where all of the finalists' drinks will be available to audience members. In addition, sample tables featuring locally owned businesses such as SodaVie, The Roasterie and Boulevard Brewing Company. Food will be catered from some of the area's best restaurants.

The event and all of the pre-event parties are open to the public. Tickets to the main event are \$15 and include one drink token for the tasting room, access to the main theater for viewing the competition, food samples, and entertainment in the Nowhere Lounge. Visit gkcbc.com for more information or to purchase tickets.

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