

Tashi Baijiu: brings spirit of Tibet to the World

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Tashi Baijiu, an artisanal white spirit crafted using traditional Tibetan methods, has made waves on the global stage by being named the #1 White Spirit at the prestigious San Diego International Spirits Challenge (SDISC). This recognition is a landmark achievement, not just for the brand but for the entire baijiu category in the United States – outshining popular competitors like vodka, tequila, and white rum.

In an exclusive conversation with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Bill Leigon, President of Tashi Baijiu, shares his thoughts on this incredible honour, the brand's unique origins, and its plans for global expansion. From its high-altitude barley grown on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to its centuries-old fermentation and distillation methods, Tashi Baijiu captures the true spirit and tradition of Tibet. Let's dive into what makes this award-winning spirit stand out and what's next for this rising star in the world of premium spirits.

Winning #1 White Spirit at the San Diego International Spirits Challenge is a major achievement. What does this recognition mean for Tashi Baijiu?

Being recognized as the #1 White Spirit is a huge win for Tashi and the Baijiu category in the United States. This recognition means that Tashi Baijiu won the competition over Vodkas, Tequilas, White Rum, and all other white spirits. Tequila is a particularly hot category in the US right now; therefore, scoring higher than any tequila entered into the competition is a major achievement.

How will this award impact the brand's global presence and market expansion?

This recognition will immediately help Tashi Baijiu expand to a national presence in the USA.

What aspects of Tashi Baijiu do you think stood out most to the competition's expert judges?

We are not privy to the judges' notes. All tastings are conducted "blind", so the judges do not know the brand they are tasting. Typically, a win like this one means the purity, depth, and layers of flavour of Tashi Baijiu stood out to the judges.

Tashi Baijiu is described as "The Spirit of Tibet." Can you share more about its origins and what makes it unique compared to other baijiu's?

Tashi is made from huskless highland barley rather than sorghum or other grains. The name "Tashi" originates from the Tibetan greeting -"Tashi Delek". In English, "Tashi Delek" translates as "auspicious blessings" or "may all good things come to you". The word "Tashi" itself translates as "good fortune". The phrase "The Spirit of Tibet" is appealing for its double meaning in English: 1) "spirit" because Tashi is a distilled spirit and 2) the "spirit" of Tibetan culture, which Americans view as: compassion, mindfulness, the interconnectedness of all human beings, deep respect for nature, and the preservation of the earth's natural resources. The "One World One Sky Tashi Delek!" tagline conveys this message.

Tibet Alajiabao Spirits produces Tashi Baijiu according to time-honoured traditions dating back 600 years. Tashi Baijiu is made from naturally husk-less Qinghai-Tibet barley, grown only above 11,000 feet and quenched by the Himalayan pure glacial water that flows down from the "roof of the world". Fermented in an 11.5 cubic foot granite pit for 90 days, the baijiu base is distilled 4 times and then aged for a minimum of 3 years in 264-gal pottery tuns.

The Qinghai-Tibet plateau plays an instrumental role in the production of Tashi Baijiu. Highland barley is the only viable food crop for human beings in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau with its high altitude and low oxygen. Rich in vitamins, minerals and amino acids, Tibetan barley is used as a food source and for medicinal use. According to Traditional Chinese medicine, it helps digestion and promotes stamina. Ancient Tibetan medical books depict its ability to treat many diseases. It is a precious source of life in Tibet. For this reason, locals refrain from using pesticides and fertilisers, resulting in naturally organic grain. Highland barley provides a rich source of nutrients that are key to the flavour of the new-made spirit.

How has the response been from consumers and the spirits industry since winning this award?

We have had a very positive response.

Are there plans to expand Tashi Baijiu into new international markets?

Ultimately, yes, we would like to bring baijiu not only to the USA but also to other parts of the world as well.

What's next for Tashi Baijiu? Are there any upcoming releases or innovations in the works?

We have a lot of interesting ideas for new and unique distilled products.

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