

Are you ready?

From classic ready-to-drinks such as WKD to Funkin pouches and bottles shaped like cocktail shakers, the pre-mixed drinks category is booming. Lucy Britner chaired the 2011 Pre-Mixed Drinks Challenge



Gold

Margarita	Funkin
Piña Colada	Funkin
Capel Ice Citrus	Capel
Rum/Cola	Manchester Drinks Company
Vodka/Diet Cola	Manchester Drinks Company

Following its successful launch in 2009, DI's Pre-mixed Drinks Challenge attracted entries from around the world.

The competition was launched to celebrate the burgeoning readymade alcoholic drinks sector and assess the quality of the drinks that are part of it.

Judges were chosen for their variety of expertise, whether it be as a technical expert, an on-trade professional or a master of the off-trade.

The quintet was briefed to assess the quality of the drinks from a consumer perspective as well as give their professional opinion.

Judges spent the day slurping and swilling their way through 50 drinks and the general feeling was that this is a relatively young sector with more room for innovation.

The competition was split in to categories: classic alcoholic drink/mixer combination; original/unique product combinations; original/unique product combination; shooters; readymade cocktails; classic cocktails (user adds alcoholic drink); contemporary alcoholic drink/mixer combination.

General observations from the judges included comments on the quality of the base spirit used in some of the drinks, as well as the quality of cola, particularly in the spirit and mixer combinations.

Judges also remarked on the intense sweetness of some of the products and they said they felt a natural fruit flavour was lacking in some cases.

Products on the medals table were praised for their balance of sweetness, alcohol and flavour.

Pre-Mixed Challenge

Silver	
Gin/Tonic	Manchester Drinks Company
Gin/Diet Tonic	Manchester Drinks Company
Strawberry Daiquiri	Funkin
Cosmopolitan Bar2DR	Asda

Quality Award	
WKD Original Blue	Beverage Brands
Woody's Sasparilla	Beverage Brands
Pomtini	Beverage Brands
Oscar's Cosmopolitan	Aldi c/o Weber Shandwick
Mai Tai Coppa	Toorank
Mai Tai Bar2dr	Asda
Pacific Mai Tai	VnC Cocktails
Capel Ice Mandarin	Capel
Sea Breeze Coppa	Toorank
Long Island Iced Tea Coppa	Toorank
Long Island Iced Tea Bar2DR	Asda
Mojito Coppa	Toorank
Capel Toffee Cream Colada	Capel
Passionfruit Capriosca	VnC Cocktails
Capel Pisco Sour	Capel



The judges



(Top) Vanessa Pearson, category buyer, Sainsbury's; Alex Turner, head of product training and mixology, Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands (Bottom) Nicola Collenette, features editor, Off Licence News; Andrew Gale, category technical manager beer, wines and spirits, Tesco; Neil Garner, Barwizard, bartender

