



ELI MARTINEZ BELLO NAMED THE FIRST MEXICAN WINNER OF THE ALTOS BARTENDERS' BARTENDER AWARD, AS PART OF NORTH AMERICA'S 50 BEST BARS 2025

The co-owner and head bartender of Tlecān in Mexico City is best known for championing local producers and native spirits

April 2, 2025 – **Eli Martinez Bello**, head bartender at Tlecān, has been named the recipient of the **Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award 2025**. Martinez Bello is recognized for her remarkable leadership, creativity, and dedication to highlighting lesser known Mexican and female-produced spirits. She is the first bartender from Mexico to receive this prestigious peer-voted honor for her impact and contributions to the drinks community. This is the second special award announced leading up to the highly anticipated awards ceremony for North America's 50 Best Bars 2025.

Martinez Bello's journey in hospitality has been deeply intertwined with culture, activism, and storytelling. She co-founded Tlecān Mezcaleria, a bar that honors Mexico's culinary and drink traditions, after five years as the beverage program leader at world-famous restaurant Pujol (No.33 in The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2024). Tlecān is more than a mezcal bar, it is a cultural venue devoted to showcasing traditional Mexican spirits and rare native distillates. Martinez Bello's approach to hospitality extends beyond crafting cocktails – she curates an experience where every ingredient, from mezcal and sotol to pulque, tells a story of heritage and identity. Through Tlecān, she invites guests to explore Mexico's rich history, and to learn more about its diverse and complex customs.

Emma Sleight, Head of Content for North America's 50 Best Bars, says: "Eli Martinez Bello's influence on the hospitality world goes far beyond the bar. She's a cultural curator, a mentor, and a changemaker in the industry. At Tlecān, she has created a space where every cocktail tells a story, connecting guests to Mexico's rich heritage through taste and tradition. Martinez Bello's dedication to challenging outdated norms continue to shape the future of bartending for both men and women. Receiving the only peer-voted award as part of North America's 50 Best Bars is testament to her lasting impact."

With more than two decades of experience in the industry, Martinez Bello has played a major role in Mexico City's bar scene. Challenging the machismo historically embedded in cantina culture, she has created a space in Tlecān that is not only inclusive but celebrates the voices and craftsmanship of women and Indigenous producers. Her cocktail menu is a testament to this mission, featuring





meticulously crafted drinks that highlight native Mexican ingredients such as pulque, tejuino, and ancestral mezcals, all sourced with transparency and respect for tradition.

Eli Martinez Bello says: “I am so honored to be named this year’s Altos Bartenders’ Bartender. Earning this recognition from peers who share the same passion and dedication to this craft means the world to me. I owe this milestone to the unbelievable team we have at Tlecān, my mentors, and the relationships I’ve built throughout my career. I feel deeply grateful, proud, and excited to be the first Mexican winner of this award!”

Carlos Andrés Ramirez, Global Advocacy & PR Director for House of Tequila — Pernod Ricard, says: “It’s an honor and a true source of pride for Altos Tequila to present this special recognition to Martinez Bello — not only because she’s proudly Mexican and shares the same cultural values that define us, but also for her role in championing the appreciation of artisanal agave spirits, crafted with care, responsibility, and exceptional quality. Going to Tlecān means embracing the complexity and diversity of aromas and flavors that make these spirits so unique.”

The North America’s 50 Best Bars 2025 awards ceremony will take place in Vancouver, on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. This represents the first time the awards ceremony will be staged in Canada and recognizes the country’s presence on the global cocktail scene. North America’s 50 Best Bars aims to provide consumers with an exceptional list of expert-approved drinking destinations across North America.

The countdown of the list of North America’s 50 Best Bars and the awards ceremony will also be broadcast to a global audience who are not able to attend in person, and bar and cocktail lovers will be invited to join through the 50 Best Bars TV [YouTube](#) channel.

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About North America's 50 Best Bars

Following the success of The World's 50 Best Bars, sponsored by Perrier, and the establishment of Asia's 50 Best Bars in 2016, 50 Best launched North America's 50 Best Bars, with the first edition of the awards held in New York, N.Y. on June 7, 2022. It shines a much-deserved spotlight on the region as a world-class drinks' destination and acts as a mouthpiece for the outstanding talent coming through. The inaugural North America's 50 Best Bars awards ceremony and unveiling of the list provided a unique opportunity to unite bartenders, bar owners, cocktail aficionados and drinks media from all over the region at a captivating celebration of drinks, hospitality, passion and talent. North America's 50 Best Bars includes voting for bars from Canada, the U.S., Mexico and the Caribbean. William Reed, which owns the 50 Best brand, is entirely responsible for the organization of the awards, the voting system and the respective lists.

How the Voting Works

The ranking for North America's 50 Best Bars 2025 will reflect the best bar experiences based on the votes of the Academy members, who comprise anonymous North American bar industry experts from the USA, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. The voting split of these bar industry experts is 33% bartenders and bar owners, 33%, drinks writers and educators, and 33% well-traveled cocktail experts. There is a 50/50 gender balance among the voters.

This year's Academy is made up of more than 300 voters. This change was implemented to obtain a wider snapshot and ensure a greater number of diverse voices are heard in the voting process. Moreover, as per all 50 Best lists for restaurants, bars, and hotels, a minimum of 25% of Academy members are refreshed annually to keep the perspectives dynamic and relevant. Members of the 50 Best organization do not vote and do not control the composition of the list; that is the collective role of the voting Academy. This means that bars cannot apply to be on the list and no sponsors have any influence on the list.

The Academy is divided into 7 regions: USA Northeast; USA Midwest; USA West; USA South; Canada East; Canada West; Mexico and the Caribbean. Each region has its own panel of members including a chairperson, called the Academy Chair. The Chairs each select a voting panel, ensuring a balanced selection. Each North America Academy member will vote for 7 bars, with a maximum of 5 in the home country (or state in the U.S.) where they are based. Voters also have the option to vote for a further 2 (or more) bars located outside of their home country (or U.S. state) up to a maximum of 7.

The lists of North America's 50 Best Bars and The World's 50 Best Bars are the results of two separate votes from two different voting Academies, taking place at different times and assessing different geographical regions. Therefore, the results from voting create two separate lists, with different rankings.





Voting is carried out individually and strictly confidentially on a secure site and remains confidential before the list announcement. Academy Chairs are not privy to, and have no knowledge of, the votes cast by the voters in their respective regions. They are not spokespeople for the 50 Best brand.

The list will be the result of a poll of more than 300 experts (all within the North American continent), who each cast votes for the bars where they have had their 'best experience' during the last 18 months before the voting deadline. The list is a simple computation of votes by North American voters for bars in North America. Further information on the Academy Chairs and how the voting works is available on the FAQs page [here](#).

About the Award Sponsor: Altos

Altos is a super-premium Tequila, crafted from 100% blue agave in the heart of Los Altos, more than 2,000 meters above sea level, in the western state of Jalisco, in Mexico. Born from a collaboration between Altos Tequila's Master Distiller, Jesús Hernández, and the internationally renowned UK mixologists, Dré Masso and the late Henry Besant, Altos was made by bartenders for bartenders in 2009. The Altos range celebrates the authenticity of Mexico in a modern way, as such each Tequila is crafted in part using the 500-year-old traditional Tahona method, before being distilled in small copper pot stills.

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