

Women in Business: Kaitlyn Tsai at Kavalan Distillery



Looking to promote Kavalan's mission to create a new category in the global spirits industry - Taiwanese whisky, Tsai took on the role of Brand Ambassador & Global PR Officer

Following a career in the film industry in association with Above Taiwan Cinema, Kaitlyn Tsai, Brand Ambassador & Global PR Officer, Kavalan Distillery, returned to her hometown of Yilan, Taiwan, to contemplate her next move. Inspired to continue educating people worldwide about the small, beautiful country of Taiwan, Tsai aimed to find a way to share its cultural identity, rich history and natural beauty.

In 2016, Tsai seized the opportunity to become a Kavalan Distillery brand ambassador. She wanted to generate awareness of the budding brand and promote Kavalan's mission to create a new category in the global spirits industry - Taiwanese whisky. In her role as Brand Ambassador & Global PR Officer, Tsai builds brand awareness and drives customer advocacy of Kavalan by working with media partners and assisting to create content, plan and execute client and employee workshops, promotional sessions and tasting events across the globe.

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, Tsai traveled to more than 15 countries representing the distillery, conducting masterclasses and sharing Kavalan's brand story and whisky portfolio. She comments this experience hosting in-person events has allowed her to successfully navigate the transition from offline to online presenting. According to Tsai, since virtual meetings provide the ability to host groups of people in different countries on the same day, the benefits of working online far outweigh the challenges. This way, she shares it's much easier to keep whisky lovers' palates sharp amid social

distancing restrictions.

“At the beginning of each event, I always start by introducing Kavalan as a single malt whisky from Taiwan, promoting not only Kavalan, but also the land it’s from. I explain how the natural beauty of Yilan County shapes a whisky known for its complexity, depth and smoothness. I still cherish the opportunity to let as many people as possible learn about Taiwan through drinking Kavalan Whisky,” explains Tsai.

A diverse, inclusive and supportive working environment

From interacting with the blending team and learning about its whisky production process to guiding consumers through the overall Kavalan experience, Tsai consistently helps to re-define the stereotype that spirits is a male dominated industry. The ambassador’s heard it been said that women have more sensitive noses and are therefore better at distinguishing the aromas released by whiskies. Whether or not this is the case, Tsai does not believe whisky should be claimed by a single gender and apparently, Kavalan agrees with this notion, as the male to female ratio at the Spirits Research Institute of Kavalan Distillery sits 5:4.

“As the pioneer of the Taiwanese whisky industry, I am so glad Kavalan is also taking steps to create a more diverse, inclusive and supportive working environment. I will keep up the good work in my role as spokesperson – nothing more, nothing less,” adds Tsai.

Icons of Whisky Awards 2021

Earlier this year, in addition to Kavalan Distillery earning “Visitor Attraction” at Icons of Whisky Awards 2021, Tsai was named “World Whisky Brand Ambassador of the Year.” When asked what sets her work apart from others in the industry, she says although she’s honored and humbled by the recognition, it’s not the outcome of her individual performance.

“I am lucky to have the support of the entire hard-working team behind the first Taiwanese whisky distillery. Each member of the team has made the effort to establish and sustain the quality of Kavalan Whisky,” she notes.

Kavalan Artist Series

Over the next several years, Kavalan will be conducting a brand upgrade to further embrace and promote the culture of Taiwan. Tsai mentions the launch of *Kavalan Artist Series*, made in collaboration with Paul Chiang, Taiwanese Master Artist, is part of representative work to re-position the brand. This new range of expressions aims to showcases the fine art of whisky.

Made up of four single-cask, cask-strength whiskies – Puncheon, Virgin Oak, French Wine Cask and Peated Malt – each limited-edition set includes a uniquely numbered and signed edition of one of two silkscreen prints by Chiang, *Pisilian* or *Mountain Range of Taiwan*.

More to come

As a company in its second decade, Kavalan is based on innovation and reputation. During the first half of 2020, the brand launched its first ready-to-drink products, Kavalan Highball Whisky Soda and Gin & Tonic, as well as Kavalan Distillery Select No. 2 Single Malt Whisky, to capture a broader market.

Moving forward, Tsai reveals that the brand will continue to expand its global presence and create surprises to excite whisky drinkers. In the coming years, consumers can expect many more additions

to its ranges and in terms of different casks used. Additionally, she says new peated malt whiskies are undergoing maturation, which should satisfy fans in the future.