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## Blue Shark Vodka receives critical acclaim, eyes national expansion

### *NFL star Connor Barth named spokesman*

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, NC, Oct. 9, 2020 — Wilmington's first distillery, Blue Shark Vodka, announced Friday it claimed six international medals in its first year of production, including a Platinum SIP Award. Now the family behind Blue Shark Vodka is eyeing a national expansion with the help of retired NFL star Connor Barth.

Since it began distilling last summer, the demand for Blue Shark grew exponentially and in one year, it is currently available across all North Carolina counties, sold exclusively in ABC stores. Now the locally-owned business is gearing up for a national expansion, tapping Wilmington's Connor Barth of NFL fame to be its spokesperson. Barth, a Hoggard High grad, played for the University of North Carolina before a 10-year career in the NFL. He was a member of the Miami Dolphins, Denver Broncos, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, New Orleans Saints and Chicago Bears. He holds a number of records, including the highest field goal percentage in Buccaneers franchise history.

"We are thrilled to take Blue Shark Vodka beyond North Carolina with the hopes of being a national brand by 2021," said co-founder Mark Bloomquist. "We had a wildly successful first year -- a Platinum SIP Award medal, we sold out our special edition Wyland artist bottle in mere days and we have fans across the state. Now it is time for the rest of the country to see North Carolina has The World's Smoothest Vodka."

Blue Shark Vodka is partnering with Connor Barth to take the locally-owned spirit to a wider audience.

Barth, who lives in Wrightsville Beach, tried the vodka during its debut week. He was out at Blue Shark's first restaurant account (King Neptune's) when the bartender suggested trying some.

"I had no idea what to expect trying local vodka for the first time, but I immediately wanted to know more about Blue Shark -- it was an incredible first sip. That was July 2019, and now if a bar doesn't carry it -- I just ask for a beer," Barth said. "I'm happy to be part of the Blue Shark family and use my platform to introduce the rest of the country to Wrightsville Beach and its amazing vodka."

Barth joins two other famous names that have celebrated Wilmington's first spirit. This summer, world-renowned ocean mural artist Wyland designed a limited-edition label for Blue Shark with proceeds benefiting shark research and ocean conservation. The bottle sold out in three days. This month, one of the world's leading cocktail experts, Dale Degroff will release his newest cocktail recipe book, "The New Craft of the Cocktail" naming Blue Shark Vodka in 13 of the recipes.

Blue Shark Vodka was awarded a Platinum Medal for international vodka at the 2020 SIP Awards, recognizing the spirit as one of the leading vodkas in its class.

In addition, the label earned a Double Gold Medal for Package Design and the coveted Innovation Award at the SIP Awards. The SIP Award competition is the sole internationally-recognized consumer judging spirits competition, making it truly unaffected by industry bias.

The label also nabbed a Silver Medal at the New York International Spirits Competition; Silver Medal in the San Francisco World Spirits Competition; and Silver Medal in the Bartender's Spirits Awards.

### **ABOUT BLUE SHARK VODKA**

Blue Shark Vodka uses non-GMO heirloom-variety sweet corn grown in the flavor-imparting soils of North Carolina's Southern Piedmont. Master Distiller Brooke Bloomquist uses a small-batch process that is truly a labor of love. After distilling the corn four times, the mash mellow for 28 days, allowing flavors to fully bloom and awaken. Finally, each batch is triple filtered, giving the vodka a smooth, clean finish and making the "alcohol bite" nearly vanish. This has earned Blue Shark Vodka the clever nickname, "The shark that doesn't bite."

Bottles are hand-blown around a handmade glass shark figurine.

Above creating a top shelf spirit, Blue Shark Vodka is helping conserve blue sharks by partnering with research organizations tagging blues around the Atlantic.

Learn more at [BlueSharkVodka.com](http://BlueSharkVodka.com).

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