

For Immediate Release

28 November 2025

## HEINEKEN MALAYSIA RAISES THE BAR AS STAR ACADEMY CROWNS FIRST FEMALE NATIONAL CHAMPION

*Cora Jean Cantwell triumphs in the 2025 National Finals, celebrating skill, service, and HEINEKEN Malaysia's commitment to elevating the services sector.*



*Wayne Wong, Commercial Quality Lead, HEINEKEN Malaysia; Jimmy Ding, Sales Director, HEINEKEN Malaysia; Cora Jean Cantwell, Bartender & Star Academy 2025 National Champion, Langkah Syabas Beach Resort, Sabah; Martijn van Keulen, Managing Director, HEINEKEN Malaysia; Wilson Lim, Head of Trade Marketing, HEINEKEN Malaysia; Cian Hulm, Commercial Quality Manager, HEINEKEN Malaysia; Jen Lyn Sin, Senior Brand Manager, HEINEKEN Malaysia*

**PETALING JAYA, 28 November 2025** – At the highly anticipated 2025 Star Academy National Finals today, Heineken Malaysia Berhad (HEINEKEN Malaysia) has crowned Cora Jean Cantwell from Langkah Syabas Beach Resort, Sabah, the first female National Champion in Star Academy history.



The remarkable victory has secured her an exclusive trip to the Home of Heineken®—Amsterdam, where Cora Jean Cantwell will experience the brand's heritage and innovation firsthand, brewing the Joy of True Togetherness.



Now in its seventh year, HEINEKEN Malaysia's Star Academy programme continues its vital mission to elevate the services sector across the nation. It achieves this by consistently training and enhancing the skills of Malaysia's talented local bartenders, thereby setting new benchmarks and raising the bar of excellence in the hospitality and tourism sectors.



Star Academy 2025 also unveiled **"Tap Into The Future,"** a groundbreaking immersive Virtual Reality (VR) experience. This innovative module redefines skill mastery, offering a fully multisensory learning environment where bartenders engage sight, touch, and sound. The gamified, scenario-based approach significantly enhances memory retention, deepens product knowledge, and perfects pouring techniques, making complex concepts both accessible and enjoyable, a one-of-a-kind experience by HEINEKEN Malaysia.



Martijn van Keulen, Managing Director of HEINEKEN Malaysia, said, "With over 11,000 bartenders trained to date, Star Academy reflects our commitment to elevating the services industry, strengthening the capabilities of our local F&B sector, and supporting a vibrant hospitality ecosystem. As one of HEINEKEN Malaysia's flagship programmes, we are incredibly proud to see Star Academy raise the bar for service excellence nationwide."



The 2025 Star Academy National Finals brought together fierce competition, with finalists hailing from KL/Selangor, Sarawak, Sabah, Penang, Perak, and Johor respectively.



Jimmy Ding, Sales Director of HEINEKEN Malaysia, said, "We are grateful to our trade partners for their unwavering support and to the dedicated bartenders who continue to challenge themselves and uphold the highest standards. Their passion and dedication are what drives the industry forward. This year, we are especially excited to introduce our pioneering VR training, which enhances the programme with hands-on, immersive learning."



The competition also featured a distinguished panel of judges, including Cian Hulm, Commercial Quality Manager and Wayne Wong, Commercial Quality Lead of HEINEKEN Malaysia, with special guest judge Jason Dennis D'Cruz, 2024 HEINEKEN Global Draught Champion.





PHOTO RELEASE

National Champion Cora Jean Cantwell expressed, "I feel amazing winning this competition, and I am so proud to represent Sabah at this year's Star Academy National Finals! Thank you, HEINEKEN Malaysia for this incredible opportunity. I am excited to go to Amsterdam!"

For more information on HEINEKEN Malaysia and the Group's initiatives, please visit [www.heinekenmalaysia.com](http://www.heinekenmalaysia.com).

<ENDS>

## About Heineken Malaysia Berhad

HEINEKEN Malaysia is one of the leading brewers in the country with its portfolio of iconic international brands. The company's business strategy, EverGreen, is designed to achieve balanced growth through five key priorities:

- **Drive Superior Growth** – With consumer centricity, we shape and lead the premium category and continue investing behind our brands.
- **Fund the Growth** – Cost and value to drive efficiency to enable reinvestments into our brands and business.
- **Raise the Bar on Sustainability and Responsibility** – Deliver on our ambition to become net zero carbon in Scope 1 & 2 by 2030 and the full value chain by 2040.
- **Become the Best Connected Brewer** – Accelerate digital and technology to create a Unified Customer Ecosystem with a customer and consumer-first approach.
- **Unlock the Full Potential of Our People** – Promote a high-performance culture that boosts our strategic capabilities, nurture the best talents, and foster an organisation where people thrive.

The Company brews, markets and distributes:

- The World's No. 1 international premium beer **Heineken®**
- The World-acclaimed iconic Asian beer **Tiger Beer**
- The World's No. 1 stout **Guinness**
- The premium wheat beer born in the Alps **Edelweiss**
- And many more. Visit [www.heinekenmalaysia.com](http://www.heinekenmalaysia.com) for a full overview of our portfolio

HEINEKEN Malaysia advocates responsible consumption through its Enjoy Responsibly and When Your Drive, Never Drink campaigns. HEINEKEN Malaysia's corporate responsibility initiatives are carried out by its corporate responsibility arm, **SPARK Foundation**, focusing on environment and community partnerships.

Listed on the Bursa Malaysia Main Market, the principal shareholder of HEINEKEN Malaysia is GAMPL Pte Ltd headquartered in Singapore. GAMPL Pte Ltd is 100% owned by Heineken N.V. For more information, please visit: [www.heinekenmalaysia.com](http://www.heinekenmalaysia.com).

**For media enquiries, please contact:**

**Heineken Malaysia Berhad**

Prithi Sharma

Head of Communications & Sustainability

Corporate Affairs & Legal Department

Email: [Prithi.Sharma@Heineken.com](mailto:Prithi.Sharma@Heineken.com)

**Burson (Formerly known as Hill & Knowlton)**

Bell Yew

[BellTW.Yew@bursonglobal.com](mailto:BellTW.Yew@bursonglobal.com)

Bryan Tan

[Bryan.Tan@bursonglobal.com](mailto:Bryan.Tan@bursonglobal.com)

Cell: 012-613 8129

Cell: 012-440 8208