

THE WORLD'S FIRST GLOBAL ENERGY DRINK RANKING ACCIDENTALLY REVEALED SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER

A beverage expert ranked energy drinks from all six continents — and discovered they are not really the same product around the world.

GERMANY, May 19, 2026

/EINPresswire.com/ -- WORLDWIDE COLLECTION & ASSESSMENT

Pat Eckert, an internationally

recognised German beverage professional and certified water sommelier, realised that nobody had ever created an objective global ranking of energy drinks. This was despite energy drinks being one of the world's largest and most discussed beverage categories, while cars, phones, wines, films, and many other consumer sectors already have serious worldwide rankings.

So over roughly half a year, he and his team collected energy drinks from all six inhabited continents and assessed each one using the same professional 36-criteria framework, focused on measurable product quality, ingredients, transparency, and formulation standards. Top-performing products were submitted for laboratory testing and analytical verification. This became the Six Continents Index - built to be professional, rigorous, and objective.

The original goal was simple: to identify which brands objectively perform best worldwide.

However, during the assessment, another finding emerged almost accidentally: energy drinks are not really the same category across continents. Different regions follow very different product philosophies - from Europe's strong focus on pasteurisation, to Asia's preference for real sugar, to North America's heavy reliance on artificial formulations, sweeteners and preservatives.

So the project ultimately became both the world's first objective global energy drink ranking and a snapshot of how differently the category is formulated around the world.

THE SHOCK FINDINGS

- Europe goes natural. South America goes artificial.

85.7% of European energy drinks were pasteurised, compared with 12% in North America and



Energy drinks from around the world - ready to be ranked

under 1% in South America.

- Asia still uses real sugar. North America barely does.

In Asia, 78.9% of energy drinks used real sugar. In North America: just 8%. They are effectively drinking a different product.

- North America runs on sweeteners. The rest of the world mostly does not.

84% of North American energy drinks relied entirely on artificial sweeteners. In Europe: just 4.2%. In Asia, Australia, South America, and Africa: almost none.

- Australia vitaminizes. North America simplifies.

Australian drinks averaged 4.2 vitamins per product, compared with just 2.9 in North America.

- Aspartame is still used worldwide, especially in Africa

Aspartame (classified by WHO/IARC as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2B)), was used in 10.5% of products worldwide, with 43% of those aspartame-containing products found in Africa.

- BPA-free labelling was almost invisible worldwide.

Only 1.4% of the global sample clearly carried BPA-free labelling.

- North America - the world’s largest energy drink market by revenue - ranked last overall among the six continents.

Europe pasteurises. North America sweetens artificially. Asia uses real sugar. Australia vitaminizes. Same category, completely different product philosophies.

GLOBAL BRAND NOTES

Among the many brands assessed across six continents, two stood out for reasons beyond the ranking. Red Bull was the only energy drink brand found in virtually every market assessed worldwide, while Japan’s Lipovitan-D was the oldest brand in the study, having been on the market since 1962.

HIGHEST-SCORING PRODUCTS

At the continental level, Europe achieved the highest overall score in the index. Australia & Oceania ranked second, followed by Asia in third place.

At brand level, HELL Energy from Hungary achieved the highest overall score for objective product quality in the index. Second place went to 28 BLACK from Germany, followed by TAKE OFF, also from Germany.

FULL FINDINGS

Further findings, methodology, and background information are available on request.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Six Continents Index was led by Pat Eckert and his team. Eckert is a German certified water sommelier and independent beverage expert whose previous work has been featured by The Guardian, ABC News, The Telegraph, L'Express, Der Spiegel, and the BBC.

Assessed brands were not notified in advance, did not apply, and had no involvement in the evaluation. No paid participation, sponsorship, or commercial influence played any role.

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