

IRMA

International Regional
Media Association



irmamagazines.com

2024

44th Annual IRMA Awards

DEADLINE: ALL PDF ENTRIES MUST BE UPLOADED BY January 31, 2024



Dear Member:

IRMA is searching for the best in regional magazine journalism, photography, illustration and design that you published between January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. We will present Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Honorable Mention awards in Writing, Design, Digital, and combined (both Writing and Design) at IRMACon2024. **Here are the instructions and entry forms for the 44th Annual IRMA Awards.**

Entries in all categories no longer involve shipping multiple paper copies. Instead, entries will be uploaded via the IRMANet website in PDF format. If you have not been set up on IRMANet (Podio), please contact me ASAP.

Be sure to read carefully and follow the details of all instructions. Pay close attention to the category definitions to be sure you have selected material that fits. When judges decide that an entry doesn't fit the category, they score it as a zero. A zero from just one judge will almost certainly prevent your magazine from winning an award. Entries that receive a zero score will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

Please heed the deadline for entries: January 31, 2024. PDFs must be uploaded to IRMANet (Podio) and a copy of the Remittance Form must be emailed to Joyce (info@irmamagazines.com) by this date (earlier if possible) and payment must be in process by this date.

Active member magazines in good standing are eligible to enter. Enclose payment for entry fees with your entries or contact me directly if you would like to pay via credit card. A service charge may be added for credit card payments to cover fees charged to IRMA.

Good luck!

Joyce Byrne
Executive Director
20 Gladstone Avenue
Unit 702
Toronto, ON M6J 0E9
Canada
416-886-8114
info@irmamagazines.com



44th ANNUAL AWARDS ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

DEADLINE:

January 31st, 2024. PDFs must be uploaded to the IRMAnet (Podio) and a copy of the remittance form must be emailed to Joyce (info@irmamagazines.com) by this date.

PLEASE NOTE:

Entries must be submitted in PDF format. Please read the “How to Submit a PDF Entry” guidelines below as well as the “What to Submit” instructions for each category.

Circulation split for some categories is 34,999-/35,000+ Average Print Run.

Unless specified in the category definition, a single story can be entered no more than three times, once in each of the three category divisions, Writing, Design, and Combined (Writing and Design).

Some categories require content from more than one issue, as described in “What to Submit.” These are considered parts of that one entry. Please submit all of the content for a single category as one PDF.

Magazines are allowed to enter multiple entries per category, but may only win or place in that category with one piece.

MAGAZINE ELIGIBILITY:

All active IRMA member publications are eligible. Content published (cover date) between January 1st, 2023 to December 31, 2023 is eligible. **To be eligible to enter the IRMA Awards, your dues must be paid up.** Provisional members are not eligible to enter the IRMA Awards.

JUDGES' SCORING:

The awards are judged by panels of three judges each. A few combination categories are judged by three Design and three Writing judges, six in all. Judging criteria are stated for each category in the Submission Guidelines below, labeled “Basis of Judging.”

Judges will assign three numerical scores to each entry using the following guidelines on a 30-point system with the following criteria:

Each entry is judged according to three criteria in equal proportions:

- Style and Creativity (1/3 of score) out of 10
- Content: the subject matter or symbolic significance (1/3 of score) out of 10
- Impact: how the subject affects the reader/viewer (1/3 of score) out of 10

Final score is the addition of the three out of 30 points.

Keep in mind:

- | | |
|------|---------------------------|
| 0-4 | Not worthy of award |
| 5-6 | Recognition of some worth |
| 7-8 | Potential to win an award |
| 9-10 | Gold Award potential |

Points scored by the judges in each category will be averaged, with the highest score getting the gold, next highest the silver, and next highest the bronze. Any entry receiving a score totaling 95% or more of the bronze-winning score will receive an Award of Merit. For the Magazine of the Year category, the winners in each circulation level will receive a permanent trophy, and any magazine totaling 95% or more of the winner will receive a Finalist certificate.

Judges will be asked to include written comments about entries. Comments for winning entries will be posted on the IRMA Awards Spotlight after the awards presentation at the Annual Conference.

SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES:



Prepare each entry, including uploaded PDF entries, and other required items. (For details, see the “What to Submit” section in each category and the “How to Submit a PDF Entry” guidelines below.)

Please submit your Remittance Form by email to info@irmamagazines.com. A completed Remittance Form and full payment must be received by the deadline in order for your entries to be considered submitted.

ENTRY FEE:

Writing, Design and Combined categories US \$75 per entry. Digital categories US \$45 per entry.

BRIEF STATEMENT:

Some categories require a **brief statement of no more than one page** in length, along with the other materials that make up your entry. These are described in the “What to Submit” section for each category. **Be sure to upload a copy of this statement your entry.**

PDF ENTRY FILE NAMES:

Name PDF files as follows: “[*magazine name* (may be abbreviated)]-2024-ctgy [number & name (may be abbreviated)].pdf”. For example, *OKT-2024-ctgy9-Essay.pdf*. If you are entering multiple entries in the category, save as above, but add .1.pdf and .2.pdf etc., at the end. For example, *OKT-2024-ctgy9-Essay.2.pdf*. See “How to Submit a PDF Entry” below.

TEAR SHEETS:

We do not require tear sheets to be sent.

PLEASE REMIT PAYMENT IN US FUNDS AND SEND TO:

Joyce Byrne,
702-20 Gladstone Ave Toronto
ON Canada M6J 0E9,
416-886-8114



HOW TO SUBMIT A PDF ENTRY

All entries are now submitted digitally in PDF format using the following guidelines:

ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY IF THEY:

1. are named according to the correct convention
2. are submitted in the correct file format with the correct settings
3. are smaller than 30MB
4. look identical (or as close as possible) to the printed page, i.e. do not blur out the ads. **Two page spreads are best.**

NAMING CONVENTION:

Entry PDF files must be named in the following format: “[*magazine name* (may be abbreviated)]-2024-*ctgy* [*number & name* (may be abbreviated)].pdf”.

For example, *OKT-2024-ctgy9-Essay.pdf* If you are entering two entries in the category, save as above, but add .1.pdf and .2.pdf at the end. For example, *OKT-2024-ctgy9-Essay.2.pdf*.

Two-page spreads should be single PDF “pages.” We want the PDF entries to look as close as possible to your magazine two-page spread.

FILE FORMAT AND SETTINGS:

PDFs generated directly from InDesign or Quark. Entries larger than 30MB will not be accepted. Note that the person in your organization who is familiar with your page layout software will be best qualified to upload entries, and should be registered on our IRMAnet (Podio) system in order to upload PDF entries. Contact Joyce if you are not registered.

PLEASE NOTE:

We do not use the IRMA website for uploads. PDFs will be uploaded in IRMAnet (Podio).

Full page ads may be omitted in order to keep files under 30MB if necessary. Partial page ads that appear within the layouts MAY NOT be removed. Please send the PDF pages as they appeared in the printed magazine.

In digital categories you will submit a document with URLs as well as screen captures of the entry landing page for IRMA use.

For more information on PDF entries, see the general **Awards Entry Instructions** above and “What to Submit” in each category of the **Submission Guidelines** below.

Please ensure all names entered are spelled correctly as these will be listed on your winning plaques and certificates.

FOR QUESTIONS CONCERNING DIGITAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Shawn Dalton, shawn@acgstudio.com, Tel: (902) 464-7258 Ext 1808, for PDF technical questions
Joyce Byrne, info@irmamagazines.com for entry requirements



WRITING CATEGORIES:

Magazines are allowed to enter multiple entries per category, but may only win or place in that category with one piece. A single story can be entered no more than three times, once in each of the three category divisions, Writing, Design, and Combined (Writing and Design) unless specifically noted in the category definition.

Basis of Judging:

NOTE: The following basis of judging applies to all Writing Categories unless otherwise stated in the description.

The judging of the Writing Categories is for text, not the design elements. Judges will consider appropriateness to the category definition, writing style, content, overall impact and how well the article engages the interest of its intended reader. Judges will keep in mind that brevity does not signify insignificance, and bigger does not always mean better. An article may be long because of a lack of focus or lazy editing. Judges will also keep in mind that a small or insignificant subject no more ensures a minor article than a big or important subject guarantees a major one.

What to Submit:

One PDF of the entry uploaded on the IRMAnet from an issue published between January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2023.

1. PUBLIC ISSUES

Writing category

Definition:

A story that is directly concerned with social, ethical, and/or legal issues within the magazine's region.

2. HISTORIC FEATURE

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that focuses on the history of the region or area, of a place and/or individual(s) within the region.

3. HISTORIC FEATURE

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that focuses on the history of the region or area, of a place and/or individual(s) within the region.

4. NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT FEATURE

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that focuses on plants and animals and/or their habitat within the magazine's region.

5. NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT FEATURE

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that focuses on plants and animals and/or their habitat within the magazine's region.

6. TRAVEL FEATURE

Writing category

Definition:

An outstanding travel feature story consisting mainly of a single narrative on a travel-related topic. (Sidebars or graphics will not be considered in the judging of this category.)



7. ART AND CULTURE FEATURE

Writing category

Definition:

A story that focuses on an arts or cultural aspect of the region or area, of a place and/or of individual(s) within the region.

8. RECREATION

Writing category

Definition:

This category honors magazine journalism that focuses on recreational activities within a specific region. Judges will evaluate entries based on the originality, strength and consistency of the reporting, writing, and on the value and usefulness of the content.

9. GENERAL FEATURE

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that does not fit in any of the other categories yet is appropriate for the magazine's regional audience.

10. GENERAL FEATURE

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that does not fit in any of the other categories yet is appropriate for the magazine's regional audience.

11. PROFILE

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that explores the character and personality of one or more individuals or organizations in the region.

12. PROFILE

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Writing category

Definition:

A story that explores the character and personality of one or more individuals or organizations in the region.

13. READER SERVICE ARTICLE

Writing category

Definition:

Any explanatory article on a theme or subject pertaining to the magazine's region that presents information of a practical applicability to the reader.

14. HED & DEK

Writing category

Definition:

Headline is often shortened to head, which is technically spelled h-e-d, leaving out the "a". A dek almost always accompanies the hed: it's the phrase or two that furthers the headline, explaining the story briefly and enticing the reader to keep reading.

Basis of Judging:

Appropriateness of the hed and dek in supporting the text, the quality of the writing and ability to draw the reader into the article.

15. ESSAY

Writing category

Definition:

A story that speculates on or interprets a particular theme or subject that pertains to the region, and that clearly presents the magazine's or writer's viewpoint to the reader. The story may be written in first, second, or third person.



16. COLUMN

Writing category

Definition:

A piece that appears regularly in issues under the same heading and is written by the same writer.

What to Submit:

Columns from three 2023 issues combined in a single PDF. Otherwise, follow the instructions at the beginning of this section.

17. MAGAZINE WRITER OF THE YEAR

Definition:

A collection of a minimum of three and maximum of five stories by one writer, published in the magazine during the contest period. Stories entered in other Writing Categories may be included in the collection.

Basis of Judging:

Judges will consider writing style, content, overall impact, and how well the articles engage the interest of the reader.

What to Submit:

A series of articles of any length by one writer as one PDF. Otherwise, follow the instructions at the beginning of this section.



DESIGN CATEGORIES:

Magazines will be allowed to enter multiple entries per category, but may only win in that category with one piece. A single story can be entered no more than three times, once in each of the three category divisions, Writing, Design, and Combined (Writing and Design) unless specifically noted in the category definition.

What to Submit:

- A PDF of the entry (entire story) from an issue between January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2023.
- On the PDF, place a large “X,” corner to corner, through any other photographs (those that are not the photo you are entering) to clearly indicate the photo to be judged. This can be done in the full version of Acrobat.

18. SINGLE PHOTO

Design category

Definition:

Any single photograph used with any story. This award is for the photograph, not the text.

Basis of Judging:

Appropriateness of the photograph in supporting the text, the overall impression on the reader, the quality of the image.

19. PHOTO SERIES

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Design category

Definition:

Any series of photographs from a single issue used with one story. This award is for the photographs, not the text. Photos entered in other categories may be included in the collection.

Basis of Judging:

Appropriateness of the photographs in supporting the text, the quality of the images and the overall impression on the reader.

20. PHOTO SERIES

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Design category

Definition:

Any series of photographs from a single issue used with one story. This award is for the photographs, not the text. Photos entered in other categories may be included in the collection.

Basis of Judging:

Appropriateness of the photographs in supporting the text, the quality of the images and the overall impression on the reader.

21. PORTRAIT PHOTO

Design category

Definition:

Any single photograph of a person or people, used within any story. This award is for the photograph, not the text. Only portraits of people are eligible for this category.

Basis of Judging:

Displays the character and personality of the individual, appropriateness of the photograph in supporting the text, the quality and consistency of the images, art direction and the overall impression on the reader.

22. PORTRAIT SERIES

Design category

Definition:

Any series of photographs of a person or people from a single issue used with one story. This award is for the photographs, not the text. Photos entered in category 21 may be included in the collection. Only portraits of people are eligible for this category.

Basis of Judging:

Displays the character and personality of the individuals, appropriateness of the photographs in supporting the text, the quality and consistency of the images, art direction and the overall impression on the reader.

23. MAGAZINE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Design category

Definition:

A collection of a minimum of three and maximum of five photographs by one photographer, published in the magazine throughout the contest period. Photos entered in other categories may be included in the collection.

Basis of Judging:

Judges will consider photographic style, content, overall impact, art direction and appropriateness of the photographs in supporting the text.

24. ILLUSTRATION - FEATURE OR SERIES

Design category

Definition:

Any illustration or series of illustrations totalling one page or more used within one story.

Basis of Judging:

Originality of concept, style and appropriateness to the subject.

25. SPOT ILLUSTRATION

Design category

Definition:

Any illustration or series of illustrations totalling less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of one page, used within one story.

Basis of Judging:

Originality of concept, style, and appropriateness to the subject.

26. HOME AND GARDEN

Design category

Definition:

An article that focuses on interiors, decor, gardens and other outdoor spaces, and is related to the magazine's region.

Basis of Judging:

Concept, photography, illustrations, use of typography, overall design, and how well the article gives insight into a region's unique homes, gardens and style.

27. ART DIRECTION OF A SINGLE STORY

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Design category

Definition:

The design (use of any or all of the elements of illustrations, photographs, typography, etc.) of a single story.

Basis of Judging:

Concept, design, and quality of images (photographs, illustrations or other elements); use of typography; originality; appropriateness to subject matter and mood of the feature; coherence; and unity.



28. ART DIRECTION OF A SINGLE STORY

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Design category

Definition:

The design (use of any or all of the elements of illustrations, photographs, typography, etc.) of a single story.

Basis of Judging:

Concept, design, and quality of images (photographs, illustrations or other elements); use of typography; originality; appropriateness to subject matter and mood of the feature; coherence; and unity.

29. OVERALL ART DIRECTION

34,999 or less Average Print Run

Design category

WHOLE ISSUE

Definition:

How well a magazine's overall design and visual presentation fulfills the magazine's stated objectives and design challenges. This category is open only to magazines with 34,999 or less Average Print Run.

Basis of Judging:

Layout, photography, illustrations, typography, visual interaction with editorial and any advertising, pacing and consistency in fulfilling the accompanying statement of objectives and design challenges.

What to Submit:

- Brief Statement: Upload with your entry a brief statement of no more than one page in length that explains how your magazine's design and visual presentation contribute to your magazine's editorial objectives and design objectives.
- Upload 3 issues in PDF format.

30. OVERALL ART DIRECTION

35,000 or more Average Print Run

Design category

WHOLE ISSUE

Definition:

How well a magazine's overall design and visual presentation fulfills the magazine's stated objectives and design challenges. This category is open only to magazines with more than 35,000 Average Print Run.

Basis of Judging:

Same as for Overall Art Direction, 34,999 or less.

What to Submit:

Same as for Overall Art Direction, 34,999, or less.



COMBINED WRITING and DESIGN CATEGORIES:

Magazines will be allowed to enter multiple entries per category, but may only win in that category with one piece. A single story can be entered no more than three times, once in each of the three category divisions, Writing, Design, and Combined (Writing and Design) unless specifically noted in the category definition.

31. DEPARTMENT

Combined writing and design category

Definition:

A section other than a column (as defined in the “Column” category) that appears regularly in issues under the same heading. This award is for both text and design elements.

Basis of Judging:

Concept, quality of writing, style, readability, layout, photography, illustrations, use of typography and overall design.

What to Submit:

- A single department from each of three (3) issues, in the contest period, combined into a single PDF.

32. FOOD FEATURE

Combined writing and design category

Definition:

An article that focuses on the local cuisine, recipes, restaurants, and/or individuals related to the unique food and beverage within the magazine’s region.

Basis of judging:

Concept, quality of writing, style, readability, photography, illustrations, use of typography, overall design and how well the article gives insight into a region’s unique food.

33. SPECIAL FOCUS

Combined writing and design category

WHOLE ISSUE

Definition:

One of your regularly distributed magazine issues in which the majority of editorial pages is dedicated to a single subject or theme. NOTE: Ancillary products will not be considered.

Basis of Judging:

Originality, purpose, thoroughness of coverage, creativity of coverage and presentation of material.

What to Submit:

The full issue in PDF format.

34. EDITORIAL PACKAGE

Combined writing and design category

Definition:

A content collection on a related theme that is published in a single issue, which demonstrates collaboration between writers, editors, art directors and/or other visual creators. Elements may include (but are not limited to) annotations, illustrations, photography, sidebars, infographics and captions. Entries consist of a series of related feature articles and content packaged together.

Basis of Judging:

Concept, quality of writing, style, readability, photography, illustrations, use of typography, overall design and how well the package elements work together to create the overall whole.

35. COVER

34.999 or less Average Print Run

Combined writing and design category

Definition:

Magazine front cover.

NOTE: Inside guide and supplement covers are not eligible.

Basis of Judging:

The unity of the image(s) and text, and the use of typography, art, and design in conveying the message to potential readers.

What to Submit:

- The PDF must be as seen by subscribers, including any barcode or address patch.



36. COVER

35,000 or more Average Print Run
Combined writing and design category

Definition:

Magazine front cover. **NOTE: Inside guide and supplement covers are not eligible.**

Basis of Judging:

The unity of the image(s) and text, and the use of typography, art, and design in conveying the message to potential readers.

What to Submit:

Same as for Cover 34,999.

37. MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

34,999 or less Average Print Run
Combined writing and design category

WHOLE ISSUE

Definition:

An award to recognize continued overall excellence, encompassing the highest standards of written and visual content. This category is open only to magazines with 34,999 or less Average Print Run.

Basis of Judging:

Overall quality and consistency of editorial content and design, illustrations and photography, excellent writing, and quality and consistency of the total product. A brief statement about your magazine's editorial and design objectives and how the three submitted magazines exemplify excellence in achieving those objectives will provide the judges a better understanding of your magazine and a better basis on which to judge your entry in that context.

NOTE: Only issues included with your entry in this category alone will influence the outcome. Judges are instructed to disregard entries or the absence of entries in any and all other categories.

What to Submit:

- Brief Statement: Include with your entry a brief statement of no more than one page in length that explains how your magazine's editing, design and visual presentation exemplify excellence in achieving your magazine's editorial and design objectives.

This statement must include a declaration that your magazine's average print run does not exceed 34,999.

- Three full issues in PDF format.

38. MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

35,000 or more Average Print Run
Combined writing and design category

WHOLE ISSUE

Definition:

An award to recognize continued overall excellence, encompassing the highest standards of written and visual content. This category is open only to magazines with more than 35,000 circulation.

Basis of Judging:

Same as for Magazine of the Year, 34,999.

What to Submit:

Same as for Magazine of the Year, 34,999 except that the Brief Statement must include a declaration that your magazine's average print run is 35,000 or more.

39. BEST PRINT CALENDAR

Combined writing and design category

Definition:

Print calendars—wall or otherwise—published by entrants' publication.

Basis of Judging:

Overall excellence and execution of photography/typography as well as success at extending entrants' brand.

What to Submit:

A PDF of the full calendar for review by judges.



40. WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

Digital category

Definition:

A website that demonstrates high editorial standards and effective use of the digital medium to reach and engage the intended audience. Demonstrates best practices in navigation and architecture; interactivity; excellent content, and outstanding design; and, if applicable, integration with print publication.

Basis of Judging

Each entry should be evaluated in the context of its intended audience and marked according to overall experience, content, structure, navigation, visual design, functionality, interactivity.

What to Submit:

Each entry should be evaluated in the context of its intended audience and marked according to overall experience, content, structure, navigation, visual design, functionality, interactivity. Submit a PDF containing a URL to the main point of entry, along with a PDF of the screen shot.

41. NEWSLETTER

Digital category

Description:

An online newsletter that extends the reach of the brand using creativity and high editorial standards to engage the intended audience. Winning entries will demonstrate effective use of the digital medium in regards to alignment with other brand channels, ease of navigation, readability, excellent content, and outstanding design. Entries with or without advertising are permitted.

Basis of Judging:

Each entry should be evaluated in the context of its intended audience. Entries in the digital newsletter category should be marked according to the following criteria: Overall experience, Content, Structure, Navigation, Visual Design, Functionality, Interactivity.

What to Submit:

A PDF containing the URL for the main point of entry for the newsletter (eg. signup page) and three newsletters is to be submitted as part of this entry as well as a PDF containing an image of the first screen of each entry to be considered (for IRMA use). Judges are directed to review these and only these issues of the newsletter for the purposes of judging.

42. PODCAST

Digital category

Description:

A podcast that demonstrates creativity, high editorial standards, and effective use of audio to extend the reach of the brand.

- Demonstrates effective use of the digital audio medium to reach and engage the intended audience.
- Demonstrates effective use of the digital medium such as alignment with other brand channels; ease of navigation; excellent content and design. Entries with or without advertising are permitted.

Basis of Judging:

Each entry should be evaluated in the context of its intended audience. Entries in the podcast category should be marked according to the following criteria: Overall experience, Content, Structure, Alignment with brand

What to Submit:

Submit a URL to the main point of entry for the podcast series; and submit URLs to three (3) specific episodes to be judged. Please also submit a PDF of the podcast title page for IRMA use.



43. BEST SOCIAL MEDIA PRESCENCE

Digital category

Description:

Given to the magazine brand that best demonstrates creativity, innovation, and subject-matter expertise on one or more social media platforms.

Basis of Judging:

Entrants submit a PDF portfolio of chosen social media channel posts that convey the spirit of their brand. Entrants will be judged based on how memorable and/or inspiring the body of work is as well as how clearly the work conveys the mission of the publication to its intended audience. Entrants should also include a brief statement that shows positive interaction with the target audience including comments, engagement metrics, or direct reader feedback. Judges are directed to review these and only these posts for the purposes of judging.