



## 2018 AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS MARKS 25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

**- Entries now open -**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018:** Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with the 2018 awards.

Recognised as one of the leaders in Australia's hospitality and tourism award programs, the Awards have seen dramatic changes since they were first launched in 1994.

Just 10 top ranking Three Glasses were awarded at the 1994 **Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards**, compared to an impressive 110 Three Glasses in 2017.

Awards founder, Rob Hirst is expecting more entries than ever in 2018 as more venues large and small recognise the importance of a quality beverage list as a key customer expectation with quality cuisine, service and atmosphere.

"There has been a dramatic change over the past 25 years from the days when many restaurants had just a few wines on lists, to the rich and diverse offering available across Australian venues today. We established **Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards** over two decades ago for two reasons. The first, to recognise and reward the enormous investment in time, skill and resources by committed and talented owners and sommeliers in developing wonderful wine lists. The second was to promote Australian restaurants, hotels, clubs, wine bars, pubs, cafes and brasseries to local and international consumers looking for a discerning beverage experience with their food," says Rob Hirst.

In addition to recognising well curated wine offerings, the awards today also recognise lists with winning selections of other drinks including beers, aperitifs, digestifs and non-alcoholic offerings.

The hospitality and tourism industry's investment in education and training as well as recognition and promotion of key awards including **Australia's Wine List of the Year** has contributed to this extraordinary elevation in standards of service, cuisine and beverages offered in Australia venues, large and small.

In 2018 the Awards are again supported by presenting Consumer Media partner – Australia's leading wine and drinks magazine **Gourmet Traveller WINE**, and Trade Media partner – the Australian Liquor Industry's **the Drinks Association**, the pre-eminent supplier of information and services to the Australian Liquor Trade.

According to **2017 Winner, Niels Sluiman** from **Jonah's**, winning one of the most highly regarded awards in the wine industry is a real honour. *"It is an incredible feeling to know we have made it this far, it makes the future even more exciting. It has definitely increased our guest interest and we have had a lot of amazing feedback which carries our wine passion at Jonah's even further. Guests are enjoying reading the list as well as the wines and that is a great achievement!"*

**2015 Winner, Nick Hildebrant**, from **Bentley in Sydney** concurs; *"It's been really good for business. We've always been known as a destination for wine lovers and the Award has now cemented that position for us. We've had customers come in to see the wine list and drink the wines because they've heard about the Award and that definitely adds something special to the place".*

**Gourmet Traveller WINE** editor **Judy Sarris**, says readers eagerly await the results of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards and follow the one, two and three glass recommendations throughout the year. "We are looking forward to receiving the results from across Australia from venues big and small. It is the quality of the list that matters, not the size. We, therefore, encourage any restaurant or bar with a worthwhile wine list to enter the Awards." In the last year **Gourmet Traveller WINE** has enjoyed continued success with both print and digital and has, once again, been awarded Best Wine Publication by Wine Communicators of Australia.

The **Drinks Association** is thrilled to be the official Trade Communications Partner of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards as it celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. "Our mission is to inform, strengthen and connect the Australian drinks industry and this event is a wonderful opportunity to publicise the achievements of sommeliers and venues throughout Australia. We look forward to celebrating the winners of the Awards across the Drinks Association publications and digital media platforms with Australia's restaurants, hotels, pubs, clubs and bottle shops." – says **Georgia Lennon**, CEO, **The Drinks Association**.

Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards has again assembled an exceptional selection of outstanding local and international judges to maintain the integrity and independence of the Awards – plus retain a global perspective. Headed by Chairman of Judges, leading wine commentator **Peter Forrestal** – supported by Deputy Chairs – **Toni Paterson MW** and **Jeni Port**, the long-term panel of 30 includes respected global industry figures such as the founder and CEO of The Court of Master Sommeliers Europe – **Brian Julyan MS**, former global wine Man of the Year and World Champion Sommelier - **Gerard Basset MBE, MS, MW, MBA**, from the USA – **Evan Goldstein MS**, from France – **James Lawther MW** and **Andrew Jefford**, from Germany – **Felicity Carter**, from New Zealand – **Bob Campbell MW** and **Cameron Douglas MS**, plus also from Australia – **Mike Bennie**, **Peter Bourne** and **Andrew Caillard MW**, to name but a few, together with former **Wine List of the Year Award Winners** and representatives of **Sommeliers Australia**.

The panel will assess each list based on the quality of the wines, the balance of choice, the design and presentation of the list, and the suitability of the wines to the style of cuisine. – see Judging Criteria at [www.winelistoftheyear.com.au](http://www.winelistoftheyear.com.au).

As usual there are a wide range of categories to cater for the different styles of venues from **Best Small Wine List – 50 or 100 wines**, **Best Restaurant List – City and Country**, **Best Hotel List**, **Best Pub List**, **Best Club List**, **Best Wine Bar List**, **Best Food and Wine Matching List**, **Best Wine by the Glass List** and more. A full list of categories is available at [www.winelistoftheyear.com.au](http://www.winelistoftheyear.com.au)

This year, **Wine Australia** continues to promote the exceptional quality of Australian wine with their sponsorship of the '**Best Listing of Australian Wines**' Award. This Award recognises the venues that celebrate our local winemakers and highlight the diversity of Australian wine. In 2016, Wine Australia extended the award to also include the **Best Listing of ACT, New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian, Western Australian, Tasmanian and Queensland Wines** and these additional Awards continue in 2018.

Results will be published in the Aug/Sept 2018 issues of both **Gourmet Traveller WINE** magazine and **Drinks Trade** magazine and all venues that receive one, two or three-glass ratings will be awarded certificates and will be featured on the Awards Website – [winelistoftheyear.com.au](http://winelistoftheyear.com.au) as well as [gourmettravellerwine.com](http://gourmettravellerwine.com) and on **GT WINE's** tablet and iPhone apps.

#### **AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS – 2018 KEY DATES:**

ENTRIES – Open: Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2018,

– Close: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2018,

AWARDS PRESENTATION: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- [www.winelistoftheyear.com.au](http://www.winelistoftheyear.com.au)
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