



**MEDIA RELEASE
WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

SYDNEY'S CIRRUS WINS AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR

Bentley Restaurant Group takes title for second time in a decade at the 30th anniversary of the industry's night of nights

MEDIA RELEASE: Under strict embargo until 7:00 PM AEST Monday, 25 September 2023

Sydney waterfront restaurant **Cirrus Dining** has been crowned **Australia's Wine List of the Year** at the 30th anniversary of **Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards** ceremony, held tonight at the Ovolo Hotel in Woolloomooloo NSW. The *seafood jewel* in Bentley Restaurant Group's crown of fine dining establishments, Cirrus Dining stood out among a record number of entrants at the milestone anniversary of the pinnacle industry event.

Bentley Restaurant Group is no stranger to presenting exceptional wine lists at Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards, having won Wine List of the Year for Bentley Restaurant + Bar in 2015. In addition to the major award, Cirrus Dining also won **Best Wine List NSW** and **Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - City**, with Cirrus sommeliers **Polly Mackarel** and **Nick Hildebrandt** jointly receiving the **Judy Hirst Award** for the sommeliers responsible for the winning list. Bentley Restaurant Group's Bentley Restaurant & Bar also received the award for **Best Aperitif List**.

Other finalists for this year's major award include Merivale's **Mr Wong** in Sydney and Andrew McConnell's **Gimlet at Cavendish House** in Melbourne.

"Continuing on last year's record number of entries, 2023 saw another record year– with a 19% increase in venues submitting their lists for the Awards across all states and territories, demonstrating the growing number of restaurants, hotels, pubs, clubs and wine bars that realise the importance of a finely crafted wine and beverage list to the overall experience of diners," **Chairman of Judges Peter Forrestal** said.

"While most might consider it a cliché to describe the various contests involved in the judging as 'fiercely fought', the phrase does suggest the close margins involved in many of the decisions made by the judges. As always, more than 30 local and international wine writers and sommeliers ranked the six finalists to decide the winner. Out of the 192 votes cast, while Cirrus ended up the decided winner, only three votes separated second, third and fourth.

"The strength of the Sydney dining establishments was reinforced this year with four of the six finalists plying their trade there: with Mr Wong, Bennelong and Woodcut all finalists alongside Cirrus. Gimlet at Cavendish House and Cutler & Co were close enough to suggest that Victorian diners have much in which to delight."

On Cirrus' extensive wine list, Australia's Wine List of the Year judge and wine writer Jane Faulkner said: "This is a spectacular, innovative and thrilling list showcasing 1200 special bottles with 50 by the glass. Plenty of joy and difference on each page – and who else could offer an extensive mix of French chenin blanc or 17 aligoté with each desirable and perfect for this top seafood restaurant. Bravo."

Kirsten Galliot, Editor-in-Chief of Major Awards Partner **Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider**, said of this year's awards: "It is wonderful to witness the hospitality industry on the road to recovery this year, and I'm thrilled to see a renewed dedication to excellence. The skill, resilience and vision of Australia's sommeliers and restaurateurs is first-rate, and this is a terrific recognition of the wine and beverage lists they create."

"The Drinks Association is proud to be a major partner for the 30th anniversary of the Australian Wine List of the Year Awards. These awards not only celebrate the excellence of sommeliers and establishments but also foster a vibrant wine culture in Australia. I extend my warmest congratulations to the outstanding achievers who continue to elevate the world of fine wine and hospitality," **Georgia Lennon, CEO of the Drinks Association**, said.

Restaurants across the country were celebrated at the Awards with **Italian & Sons** (ACT), **Cirrus** (NSW), **Agnes** (QLD), **Restaurant Botanic** (SA), **Peppina** (TAS), **Gimlet at Cavendish House** (VIC), and **The Shorehouse** (WA) recognised as the 'Best Wine List' in their respective states and territories.

Returning category winners from the 2022 Awards include **CHU by China Doll** (Best Restaurant Wine List - Club), **Settlers Tavern** (Best Restaurant Wine List - Country), **Stillwater** (Best Listing of a Region's Wines), and **The Shorehouse** (Best Wine List WA).

The number of wine lists submitted with under 200 wines was at a record high this year, with this excellent collection taking home five awards in total. This also reflects the judges' shared recognition that it is harder to craft a great small list than a large one. The most popular categories entered this year continued from 2022's popular categories: Best Wines by the Glass, Best Listing of Australian Wines and Best Food & Wine Matching - again all with a record number of entries.

The industry also celebrated its own at the ceremony, with the **Sommelier's Choice Award** being bestowed upon two sommeliers - Foni Pollit from British-style gastropub **Mayfair Lane** (WA) and Alexandra McPherson from **SK Steak & Oyster** restaurant (QLD). The public also voted for Australia's favourite wine list, with **Catalina** in Rose Bay (NSW) taking the title of Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider's **Australia's Choice Award** title.

With the growing diversity of Australia's wine lists, several new Awards were added to this year's event, including **Australia's Best Listing of Italian Wines** which was awarded to **Bistecca** (NSW), **Australia's Best Listing of French Wines** received by **Society** (VIC), **Australia's Best Cocktail List** which went to **Sarino's** (NSW), and **Australia's Best Listing of USA Wines** which was given to **SK Steak & Oyster** (QLD).

The industry continues to excel in compiling and presenting top-quality wine lists, as noted by the outstanding **246 venues** to receive a Three Glass ranking this year - up from 201 in 2022, a figure Rob Hirst, founder of Australia's Wine List of the Year, recognises as a sign of the nation's position as a world-class provider of exceptional wining and dining experiences.

"Since day one, we set the bar high for a wine list to achieve a Three Glass ranking. Our first Awards in 1994 recognised nine lists with this outstanding honour, and it's rewarding to see nearly 250 venues across the country achieve such a high quality standard of wine list and service excellence 30 years after we started the program. These venues should be very proud of all they have put into their lists, and we are very happy to bring the industry together to celebrate these outstanding venues and their talented sommeliers," Hirst said.

Established in 1993 by Rob, his late wife Judy, and Tucker Seabrook, Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards celebrates the depth of talent, dedication and sheer commitment of sommeliers and venue owners across Australia to build and maintain great wine lists and the cellars behind them.

The Awards judging panel comprises of 32 of the world's most respected wine industry talent. The panel is directed by Forrestal, alongside Deputy Chairs Jeni Port and Toni Paterson MW. Founder of the Court of Master Sommeliers Bryan Julyan MS is the International Chair, with 28 judges, including four Master Sommeliers and seven Masters of Wine, from Australia and the balance from New Zealand, Germany, the United States, France, Hong Kong, and Great Britain representing the international jury.

ALL WINNERS OF AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2023

NATIONAL WINNER

**Australia's Wine List of the Year
Judy Hirst Award**

Cirrus Dining
Polly Mackarel & Nick Hildebrandt

STATE/TERRITORY WINNERS

Best Wine List ACT

Italian & Sons

Best Wine List NSW

Cirrus Dining

Best Wine List QLD

Agnes

Best Wine List SA

Restaurant Botanic

Best Wines List TAS

Peppina

Best Wine List VIC

Gimlet at Cavendish House

Best Wine List WA

The Shorehouse

TYPE OF TRADE AWARD WINNERS

Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - City

Cirrus Dining

Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - Club

CHU by China Doll

Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - Country

Settlers Tavern

Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - Hotel

Woodcut

Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - Pub

Mayfair Lane

Australia's Best Wine Bar List -

Where's Nick

The Fiona Macdonald Award

CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS

Australia's Best New Wine List –

Olivine Wine Bar

The Tony Hitchin Award

Australia's Best Wine List (50 Wines)

Jimmy Wah's

Australia's Best Wine List (100 Wines)

Rizla

Australia's Best Wine List (200 Wines)

Restaurant Botanic

Australia's Best List of Wines by the Glass

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Perth

Australia's Best Food & Wine Matching List

Amaru

Australia's Best Champagne List

Quay

Australia's Best Sparkling List

Cru Bar + Cellar

Australia's Best Non-Alcoholic List

Bells at Killcare

Australia's Best Aperitif List

Bentley Restaurant + Bar

Australia's Best Digestif List

Agnes

Australia's Best Sake List

Leonie Upstairs

Australia's Best Beer List

Mojo's Kitchen & Bar

Australia's Best Cocktail List

Sarino's

Australia's Best Listing of French Wines

Society

Australia's Best Listing of Italian Wines
Australia's Best Listing of USA Wines
Australia's Best Listing of a Region's Wines
Australia's Best Listing of Australian Wines

Bistecca
SK Steak & Oyster
Stillwater
Café Sydney

Australia's Best Listing of ACT Wines
Australia's Best Listing of NSW Wines
Australia's Best Listing of QLD Wines
Australia's Best Listing of SA Wines
Australia's Best Listing of TAS Wines
Australia's Best Listing of VIC Wines
Australia's Best Listing of WA Wines

Brunello
Charred Kitchen & Bar
SK Steak & Oyster
Uraidla Hotel
Peppina
Lake House
Mojo's Kitchen & Bar

Best Wine List - Sommelier's Choice
Presented by VINTEC
Best Wine List - Australia's Choice
Presented by Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider

Mayfair Lane (Foni Pollit) & SK Steak & Oyster (Alexandra McPherson)
Catalina

AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS - HALL OF FAME 2023

NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

***New Inductee* - Cru Bar + Cellar (2022)**
Ten Minutes by Tractor (2021)
Attica (2020)
Jonah's (2017)
Bentley Restaurant + Bar (2015)
Lake House (2014)
Rockpool Bar & Grill, Perth (2014)
Wickens at Royal Mail [as Royal Mail] (2012)
Pilu at Freshwater (2011)
Rockpool Bar & Grill, Melbourne (2010)
Rockpool Bar & Grill, Sydney (2009)
Aria (2003) – **20th Anniversary**

INDIVIDUAL WINNERS - HALL OF FAME 2023

David Lawler (2018)
Franck Moreau MS (2014)

REGIONAL AWARD WINNERS – HALL OF FAME – 2023

Attica (Best Victorian Wine List) 2013, 2015, 2020
Blackbird (Best Queensland Wine List) 2017, 2018, 2020
Cru Bar + Cellar (Best Listing of Queensland Wines) 2019, 2020, 2021
Cru Bar + Cellar (Best Queensland Wine List) 2004, 2009, 2015
***New Inductee* - Point Leo (Best Listing of Victorian Wines) 2020, 2021, 2022**
Rockpool Bar & Grill, Perth (Best WA Wine List) 2011, 2012, 2014
Settlers Tavern (Best Listing of Western Australian Wines) 2017, 2018, 2019
Stillwater (Best Tasmanian Wine List) 2016, 2017, 2018
***New Inductee* Stillwater, (Best Listing of Tasmanian Wines) 2016, 2019, 2022**
The Boat House, (Best Listing of ACT Wines) 2019, 2020, 2021

TYPE OF TRADE AWARD WINNERS – HALL OF FAME – 2023

Bert's (Best Hotel Restaurant Wine List) 2018, 2019, 2020

***New Inductee* Cru Bar + Cellar (Best Wine Bar List) 2015, 2021, 2022**

Glass Brasserie (Best International Hotel List) 2008, 2009, 2010

The Botanical Hotel (Best Pub Restaurant Wine List) 2012, 2013, 2014

Jonah's (Best Hotel) 2015, 2016, 2017

Love, Tilly Devine (Best Wine Bar) 2013, 2016, 2017

Members Dining Room (Best Club) 2013, 2014, 2015 [as RACV City Club]

Newcastle Club (Best Club) 2018, 2019, 2021

Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron (Best Club) 2003, 2004, 2008

Settlers Tavern (Best Pub) 2009, 2010, 2011

University House (Best Club) 2015, 2016, 2017

Wickens at Royal Mail (Best Country Restaurant) 2009, 2011, 2012 [as Royal Mail]

OTHER CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS – HALL OF FAME – 2023

Aria (Best Sparkling List) 2017, 2018, 2021

Attica (Best Non-Alcoholic) 2018, 2019, 2020

***New Inductee* Bennelong (Best Listing of Australian Wines) 2020, 2021, 2022**

Chiswick, Woollahra (Best Small List-100) 2015, 2017, 2018

***New Inductee* Cru Bar + Cellar (Best Champagne List) 2018, 2021, 2022**

Cru Bar + Cellar (Best Wine by the Glass List) 2017, 2020, 2021

***New Inductee* Ishizuka (Best Small List-50) 2020, 2021, 2022**

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Sydney (Best Aperitif) 2011, 2012, 2017

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Sydney (Best Digestif) 2012, 2015, 2020

Aria (Reader's Choice Award) 2011, 2012, 2013

****All Award Winners will be published in the October issue of QANTAS Magazine | Travel Insider as well as in Drinks Trade Magazine Summer and Drinks Trade online after 7:00pm AEST on Monday 25 September 2023. All Award Winners and all Glass Award recipients will also be listed on Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards Website at winelistoftheyear.com.au after 7:00 pm AEST on Monday, 25 September.**

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**A special thanks to this year's Awards Partners and Supporters
on behalf of the Industry and the Awards**

