



QANTAS



AUSTRALIA'S  
WINE LIST  
OF THE YEAR  
AWARDS



## MEDIA RELEASE

**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 6:00PM AEST**  
**MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2025**  
**WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

## MELBOURNE NEWCOMER WINS 2025 AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR

[Images for editorial use are available here](#)

The results of **Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards** are in, and Melbourne newcomers **Circl** has been crowned **Australia's Wine List of the Year**. Celebrating its 32nd Anniversary, the awards ceremony was presented at NSW Parliament House in Sydney where more than 300 of the industry's finest gathered on Monday, 29 September.

In addition to the major trophy, Circl – which only opened last year – also picked up another staggering seven category awards across the night including Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - City, Australia's Best List of Wines by the Glass, Australia's Best Champagne List, Australia's Best Sparkling Wine List, Best Wine List Victoria, and Australia's Best Listing of Victorian Wines. Circl's list also picked up the Sommeliers Choice Award which is voted upon by fellow Australian sommeliers.

Circl's Xavier Vigier also received the prestigious Judy Hirst Award, which is awarded to the sommelier responsible for curating the winning list, an extraordinary result given Xavier won this Major Award just three years ago with his wine list at Ten Minutes by Tractor. Other front runners at this year's ceremony included Sydney's **Bennelong** who judges applauded for its balanced list which paid homage to staff both past and present to celebrate its 10th anniversary. Brisbane's **Agnes Restaurant** was also acknowledged once again for its impressive wine list with judges noting its dedication to the discovery of new Australian producers amongst respected stalwarts.

This year's state and territory stand-outs included **Bennelong** (Best Wine List NSW), **Gibney** (Best Wine List WA), **The Salopian Inn** (Best Wine List SA), **Fico** (Best Wine List TAS), **Agnes** (Best Wine List QLD), and **Capitol Bar & Grill** (Best Wine List ACT). Gibney, Capitol Bar & Grill, and The Salopian Inn all took out these State titles for the second consecutive year.

Circl's winning wine list was praised by Senior Judge Andrew Graham for its "eye-watering depth" that establishes a new meaning to "accessible" on wine lists.

"So often, the great wines of the world seem almost mythical. They're things that drinkers dream about, but so rarely get to experience. Yet the astonishing list from Circl resets what is accessible," said Graham.

"Led by a truly sublime offering of wines by the glass, which is gleefully heavy with famous 'unicorns', there is eye-watering depth throughout this list. You can start with the wonderfully well contextualised Champagne offering, take a flight of rare rosé and end up with a dive into magnificent rare old Australian Shiraz. What a journey!"

The win marks the second year in a row that a Victorian venue has won the coveted title, with Gimlet at Cavendish House taking out the top accolade at last year's ceremony. This is just Circl's second time entering Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards after opening in Melbourne's Punch Lane in 2024. The venue classifies itself as a 'wine-led restaurant' offering over 150 wines by the glass to pair with its seasonal, Scandinavian-inspired food menu.

Of this year's results, Chairman of Judges Peter Forrestal commented, "The enthusiasm with which those involved in restaurants and, more generally, in serving the public is infectious. The imaginative quality of the food being brought to Australian restaurant tables and the wines that sommeliers have to offer their customers has never been more satisfying or stimulating. The education of sommeliers is at an all-time high. Documenting all this since 1994 is Australia's Wine List of the Year with another record number of entries to affirm the quality of individual restaurants and to record excellence at the table."

This year, a remarkable six venues were added to the Australia's Wine List of the Year Hall of Fame, which is a collection of the country's leading names in hospitality. To be applicable, venues must have won Australia's Wine List of the Year once or a State/Territory or Australian category award three times while also maintaining their glass rating each year. Among the new inductees for 2025 were Melbourne Supper Club (Best Wine Bar List 2008, 2011, 2012); Hobart's Stillwater (Best Wine List Tasmania 2016, 2017, 2018); and Canberra's The Boat House (Best Listing of ACT Wines 2019, 2020, 2021). Brisbane's Cru Bar + Cellar also had an impressive six inclusions most notably for its title of Australia's Wine List of the Year in 2022, along with three-year accolades for Best Wine Bar List, Best Wine List Queensland, Best Wine by the Glass List, Best Champagne List, and Best Listing of Queensland Wines.

Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards was established in 1993 by Rob Hirst OAM and his late wife, Judy, together with Tucker Seabrook. The awards honour the time, skill, and resources that go into developing the highest-quality wine lists and pay tribute to the talented sommeliers, owners, their teams and the cellars behind them. Just last year, Rob was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to oenology and to industry associations.

2025 continued to showcase the breadth and depth of Australia's wine lists with another year of record entry numbers from across the country. Hirst says of this year's results: "We're grateful to receive such significant support from the industry and our Award partners for yet another year of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards and the quality of wine lists across the country has never been better. There is a clear interest and intent by sommeliers, venue owners and beverage managers and directors to build harmony and synergy between the menu and drinks list, and this year's results are proof that the skill and dedication to this task is stronger than ever"

"This year, a record number of venues received the coveted 'Three Glass' rating, an increase of 10% on last year. Many of these venues have received this distinction for the first time with freshly opened venues like Sydney's Table Manners, Brisbane's The Fifty Six, and Adelaide's Station Road all leaping straight to the highest rating in their first year. It's an incredible achievement and one that reflects the importance of a wine and drinks list to the overall dining experience.

"Tonight's awards is not only a celebration but a recognition of the outstanding work of the sommeliers, owners, beverage directors, venue managers and entrepreneurs who make Australia's hospitality industry one of the best in the world and we congratulate all of this year's Award Winners and Glass winning venues for their achievements this year," Hirst said.

The judging panel, led by Chair of Judges Peter Forrestal and Deputy Chairs Toni Paterson MW and Jeni Port, is made up of over 35 esteemed industry professionals from Australia and around the world. These professionals include Master Sommeliers, Masters of Wine and other respected industry experts spanning wine writers and commentators, wine show judges, and past winners.

Each list is judged by a pair of judges who assess it independently and confidentially. The lists are evaluated based on content, balance, suitability to the venue, presentation, and pricing. If the list meets the required standard, it is awarded a glass rating. One Glass indicates the list is recommended, Two Glasses signal that the list is excellent, and Three Glasses are awarded only to lists that are deemed outstanding.

Once all lists have been reviewed and scored, the country's top lists are then re-reviewed and ranked by the full Australian and International Panel to select the Australia's Wine List of the Year Award winner.

"It's always a privilege to witness the innovation and depth of knowledge that go into crafting Australia's top wine and beverage lists. This year's winners have shown incredible passion and attention to detail, drawing on strong relationships and world-class expertise to create truly memorable experiences. These awards are a celebration of that excellence and the individuals who continue to elevate the standard for hospitality across the country." Genevra Leek, Editor-in-Chief of Major Awards Partner Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider said.

## **STATE HIGHLIGHTS**

### **NSW**

New South Wales venues once again held a strong presence in the awards with a total of 15 accolades across a range of categories. **Bennelong** in the Sydney Opera House led the way for the state taking home Best Wine List NSW, and named as finalists for both the Australia's Wine List of the Year and Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - City titles.

**Where's Nick** in Sydney's Inner West was also acknowledged with The Fiona McDonald Award for Best Wine Bar List as well as Australia's Best Aperitif List. **Woodcut** celebrated two wins for Australia's Best Hotel Restaurant Wine List (for the third-year running) and Australia's Best Listing of New Zealand Wines. **The Blue Door** in Surry Hills was celebrated for the Australia's Best Listing of NSW Wines while **Apéritif & Co.** secured Australia's Best Wine List (Max. 50 Wines).

For the second-year running, **The Dry Dock** was named as Australia's Choice (Consumer), which is voted upon by the general public. The back-to-back winners didn't stop there, with **Jonah's** (Australia's Best Listing of Australian Wines); **Junction Moama** (Australia's Best Club Restaurant List); and **O Bar and Dining** (Australia's Best Listing of Organic & Biodynamic Australian Wines) all taking out their awards for the second year in a row.

Other highlights for NSW included newcomer **Olympus** winning Australia's Best Listing of Greek Wines; **Sake at The Rocks** taking out Australia's Best Japanese Sake List; and **Paper Daisy** at Halcyon House scooping up Australia's Best Cocktail List.

### **VIC**

A number of Victorian venues were acknowledged at this year's awards, with the slew of acknowledgements led by **Circl** who was titled as Australia's Wine List of the Year, with its own **Xavier Vigier** winning the acclaimed Judy Hirst Award as the sommelier responsible for the winning list. Circl also received Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - City, Australia's Best List of Wines by the Glass, Australia's Best Champagne List, Australia's Best Sparkling Wine List, Best Wine List Victoria, and Australia's Best Listing of Victorian Wines. LUCAS Restaurant Group's latest addition to its portfolio **Maison Bâtard** received the Tony Hitchin Award for Australia's Best New Wine List, with judges noting its extensive by-the-glass wine list and its nod to the upmarket venues of France. **Society** took out the titles of Australia's Best Digestif List and Australia's Best Listing of Museum and Rare Wines, plus for the second year in a row the award for the Australia's Best Listing of French Wines.

### **WA**

Perth's beachside brasserie and 2024 recipient of the Tony Hitchin Award, **Gibney** was the top performer for the West. For the second year running it secured the Best Wine List Western Australia, and was also acknowledged for its dedication to the local wine industry with Australia's Best Listing of Western Australian

Wines. **Il Lido** in Cottesloe received the award for Australia's Best Listing of Italian Wines, while Australia's Wine List of the Year Hall of Fame members **Settlers Tavern** was titled as Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - Country. **Besk** also took out the award for Australia's Best Pub Restaurant Wine List.

## SA

McLaren Vale's **The Salopian Inn** was the shining star for South Australia, winning both Best Wine List South Australia and Australia's Best Listing of a Single Region's Wines for the second consecutive year. **Restaurant Botanic** continued the back-to-back wins for the state, taking home Australia's Best Food & Wine Matching List and Australia's Best Non-Alcoholic List for the second year running. Fellow McLaren Vale venue **Hardy's Verandah Restaurant** was acknowledged for Australia's Best Listing of South Australian Wines, while Adelaide CBD haunt **A Prayer for the Wild at Heart** received Australia's Best Wine List (Max. 200 Wines)

## TAS

Celebrated Hobart restaurant **Fico** secured the top accolade for the Apple Isle with Best Wine List Tasmania for its European and Tasmanian-focused wine list. **The Agrarian Kitchen** in New Norfolk was celebrated for its Tasmanian-forward ethos across both its food and drink menu securing the award for Australia's Best Listing of Tasmanian Wines.

## QLD

For the third year running, Brisbane fire-led favourite **Agnes** took home the award for Best Wine List Queensland. **Blackbird** in Brisbane was named as Australia's Best Listing of Queensland Wines. . Australia's Best Listing of USA Wines was awarded to **Cru Bar & Cellar**, which also celebrated six inductions into the Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards Hall of Fame as National Award Winner (2022); Australia's Best Wine Bar List (2015, 2021, 2022); Best Wine List Queensland (2004, 2009, 2015); Australia's Best Listing of Queensland Wines (2019, 2020, 2021); Australia's Best List of Wines by the Glass (2017, 2020, 2021); and Australia's Best Champagne List (2018, 2021, 2022).

## ACT

Canberra's Italian dining favourite **Capitol Bar & Grill** was back-to-back winner for two awards: Best Wine List ACT and Australia's Best Listing of ACT Wines. Riesling-led wine bar **Rizla** was also acknowledged for its extensive, and passionate list to scoop up Best Wine List (Max 100 Wines).

## ALL WINNERS OF AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2025

### NATIONAL WINNER

Australia's Wine List of the Year  
Judy Hirst Award

Circl  
Xavier

Vigier

### STATE/TERRITORY WINNERS

Best Wine List ACT  
Best Wine List New South Wales  
Best Wine List Queensland  
Best Wine List South Australia  
Best Wine List Tasmania  
Best Wine List Victoria  
Best Wine List Western Australia

Capitol Bar & Grill  
Bennelong  
Agnes  
The Salopian Inn  
Fico  
Circl  
Gibney

### TYPE OF TRADE AWARD WINNERS

Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - City  
Australia's Best Restaurant Wine List - Country  
Australia's Best Club Restaurant Wine List  
Australia's Best Hotel Restaurant Wine List  
Australia's Best Pub Restaurant Wine List  
Australia's Best Wine Bar List -

Circl  
Settlers Tavern  
Junction Moama  
Woodcut  
Besk  
Where's Nick

## ***The Fiona MacDonald Award***

### **CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS**

**Australia's Best New Wine List –**

***The Tony Hitchin Award***

**Australia's Best Wine List (Max 50 Wines)**

**Australia's Best Wine List (Max 100 Wines)**

**Australia's Best Wine List (Max 200 Wines)**

**Australia's Best List of Wines by the Glass**

**Australia's Best Food & Wine Matching List**

**Australia's Best Champagne List**

**Australia's Best Sparkling Wine List**

**Australia's Best Listing of Australian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of ACT Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of New South Wales Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Queensland Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of South Australian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Tasmanian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Victorian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Western Australian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Organic &**

**Biodynamic Australian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Museum &**

**Rare Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of a Single Region's Wines**

**Australia's Best Non-Alcoholic List**

**Australia's Best Aperitif List**

**Australia's Best Digestif List**

**Australia's Best Japanese Sake List**

**Australia's Best Beer List**

**Australia's Best Cocktail List**

**Australia's Best Listing of French Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Greek Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of Italian Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of New Zealand Wines**

**Australia's Best Listing of USA Wines**

**Best Wine List - Sommeliers Choice**

**Best Wine List - Australia's Choice (Consumer)**

Maison Bâtard

Apéritif & Co.

Rizla

A Prayer for the Wild at Heart

Circl

Restaurant Botanic

Circl

Circl

Jonah's

Capitol Bar & Grill

The Blue Door

Blackbird

Hardy's Verandah Restaurant

The Agrarian Kitchen

Circl

Gibney

O Bar & Dining

Society

The Salopian Inn

Restaurant Botanic

Where's Nick

Society

Sake at the Rocks

Besk

Paper Daisy

Society

Olympus

Il Lido

Woodcut

Cru Bar & Cellar

Circl - Xavier Vigier

The Dry Dock

## **AUSTRALIA'S WINE LIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS - HALL OF FAME 2025**

### **NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS**

**\*New Inductee\* - Gimlet at Cavendish House (2024)**

**\*New Inductee\* - Cru Bar & Cellar (2022)**

Ten Minutes by Tractor (2021)

Jonah's (2017)

Bentley Restaurant + Bar (2015)

Lake House (2014)

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Perth (2014)

Wickens - Royal Mail Hotel (2012)

Pilu at Freshwater (2011)

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Melbourne (2010)

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Sydney (2009)

Aria (2003)

## **INDIVIDUAL WINNERS - HALL OF FAME 2025**

David Lawler (2018)

Franck Moreau MS (2014)

## **STATE AWARD WINNERS – HALL OF FAME – 2025**

Blackbird (Best Wine List Queensland) 2017, 2018, 2020

\*New Inductee\* - **Cru Bar & Cellar (Best Wine List Queensland) 2004, 2009, 2015**

Italian & Sons (Best Wine List ACT) 2018, 2020, 2023

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Perth (Best Wine List WA) 2011, 2012, 2014

\*New Inductee\* - **Stillwater (Best Wine List TAS) 2016, 2017, 2018**

## **WINES OF STATE AWARD WINNERS - HALL OF FAME 2025**

\*New Inductee\* - **The Boat House (Best Listing of ACT Wines) 2019, 2020, 2021**

\*New Inductee\* - **Cru Bar & Cellar (Best Listing of Queensland Wines) 2019, 2020, 2021**

Lake House (Best Listing of Victorian Wines) 2017, 2018, 2023

\*New Inductee\* - **Newcastle Club (Best Listing of New South Wales Wines) 2019, 2020, 2024**

Pt Leo Restaurant (Best Listing of Victorian Wines) 2020, 2021, 2022

Settlers Tavern (Best Listing of Western Australian Wines) 2017, 2018, 2019

\*New Inductee\* - **Stillwater (Best Listing of Tasmanian Wines) 2016, 2018, 2022**

## **TYPE OF TRADE AWARD WINNERS – HALL OF FAME – 2025**

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

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

\*New Inductee\* - **Cru Bar & Cellar (Best Wine Bar List) 2015, 2021, 2022**

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

Jonah's (Best Hotel Restaurant Wine List) 2015, 2016, 2017

Lake House (Best Restaurant Wine List - Country) 2008, 2010, 2013

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

Mayfair Lane Pub (Best Pub Restaurant List) 2019, 2020, 2023

\*New Inductee\* - **Melbourne Supper Club (Best Wine Bar List) 2008, 2011, 2012**

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

Newcastle Club (Best Club Restaurant Wine List) 2018, 2019, 2021

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

Settlers Tavern (Best Pub Restaurant Wine List) 2009, 2010, 2011

University House Club [as University Club] (Best Club Restaurant Wine List) 1995, 1996, 1997

Wickens - Royal Mail Hotel (Best Restaurant Wine List - Country) 2009, 2011, 2012

## **OTHER CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS – HALL OF FAME – 2025**

Aria (Best Sparkling List) 2017, 2018, 2021

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

\*New Inductee\* - **Bentley (Best Digestif List) 2017, 2019, 2024**

Café Sydney (Best Listing of Australian Wines) 2017, 2019, 2023

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

\*New Inductee\* - **Cru Bar & Cellar (Best Wine by the Glass List) 2017, 2020, 2021**

\*New Inductee\* - **Cru Bar & Cellar (Best Champagne List) 2018, 2021, 2022**

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

Rockpool Bar & Grill, Perth (Best Wine by the Glass List) 2013, 2015, 2023

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

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

\*New Inductee\* - **Spice Temple Melbourne (Best Small List-100) 2013, 2015, 2016**

Aria (Readers Choice Award) 2011, 2012, 2013

**Ends.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Media – Amy Northcott, Blend PR

E: [amy@blendpr.com.au](mailto:amy@blendpr.com.au) M: 0400 371 296

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

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