



MEDIA RELEASE

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2026 Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards – Entries Opening Tuesday, 7th April

Curators of the nation's top beverage lists are invited to enter the 33rd edition of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards

Entries will officially open for the **33rd edition of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards** — the nation's most prestigious program celebrating Australia's finest wine and beverage lists — on **Tuesday 7th April**.

Entries will open with an early bird entry period that runs until Monday, May 4th before entries officially close on **Monday, 18th May at 11:59pm AEST**. Entries submitted online at winelistoftheyear.com.au.

Venue owners, sommeliers and beverage managers are invited to enter and have their lists recognised by an esteemed panel of **36 Australian and international judges**. The panel includes 14 Master Sommeliers, Masters of Wine, and some of the world's leading wine critics and journalists.

Recognising Excellence and Passion

"We're excited to be opening entries for our 33rd edition of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards and we can't wait to see what I know will be another year of outstanding lists from our nation's top curators and venues," Australia's Wine List of the Year Founder Rob Hirst OAM said.

"Last year saw our winners receive wonderful recognition amongst both their peers and the public and gain invaluable exposure to drive consumer awareness. It was also our biggest year to date with a record-number of entries and also a previously unseen number of venues gaining the coveted Three Glass Rating attesting to the talent of our nation's curators."

Why Enter?

Taking part in the Awards offers **unparalleled recognition and benefit** for venues, teams, and individuals across Australia's hospitality industry.

All entrants receive:

- **Publicity and promotion** through Qantas Magazine | *Travel Insider* (readership 541,000) and an extensive national media campaign highlighting the country's top places to wine and dine.
- **A Glass Rating** from the judges, accompanied by a **Glass Award Certificate and Seal** for marketing and display.
- **Expert Review** for all Glass winning Lists, published on the Awards website and celebrated for many years to come.
- **Confidential feedback** from judges to support list improvement for future entries.
- For those entering the **Wine List Service Award**, eligible winners receive a **Wine List Service Award Seal** together with their Glass Award Seal.

Judging, Categories and Leadership

This year, 2026, represents an extraordinary milestone for Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards with esteemed judge of 35 years — the last 23 years as Chair — **Peter Forrestal**, stepping down as Chair of Judges and assuming the role as **Emeritus Chair**. Forrestal (Forrie) will continue to contribute to the ongoing growth of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards in his new capacity.

Toni Paterson MW, herself a fourteen-year judge of the Awards and immediate past Deputy Chair, will take on the **Awards Chair of Judges** position for the 2026 Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards. **Jeni Port** continues as the **Awards Deputy Chair** and **Brian Julyan, MS** President and Founder of the Court of Master Sommeliers Europe also continues as **International Chair** of the Awards.

"Our sommeliers are incredibly knowledgeable, our local wines are fabulous, and we have access to diverse international wines through the network of astute distributors. Restaurants recognise the value of a well-honed wine list, and sommeliers are continually looking to improve and refine their selections. It is a privilege for the whole team of judges to recognise and reward this," **Toni Paterson MW, Chair of Judges** said.

This year's Awards judging panel, working closely with Toni and Jeni will continue to assess each list independently and confidentially based on its **content, balance, suitability to the venue, presentation and pricing**. All lists - big or small - have a chance to win significant recognition along with the major Award for Australia's Wine List of the Year

All lists, large or small, are eligible for recognition and can vie for **Best in State/Territory, Type of Trade, Category Awards**, and of course, **Australia's Wine List of the Year**. Categories include **Australia's Best Listing of Wines by the Glass, Best Food and Wine Matching, Best New Wine List, Best Wine List – Max 50 Wines** and **Max 100 Wines**, as well as awards dedicated to regional or varietal specialities. To see the full listing of categories, visit www.winelistoftheyear.com.au/enter-awards.

Recognition and Reward

Returning as this year's presenting consumer media partner for the Awards is **Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider**. This presents an extraordinary opportunity for Australia's top wine and beverage list creators - and the outstanding cellars behind them - to reach their 541,000 readers nationwide and receive the ultimate recognition for their continued pursuit of excellence.

"Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider is proud to return in 2026 to champion Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards, shining a spotlight on the sommeliers, beverage directors and visionary venues setting the benchmark. These awards recognise the craft behind the glass - from deeply considered cellars and smart pairings to sustainability and innovation - and give us the privilege of sharing these stories with readers nationwide across our print, digital and social channels," said **Genevra Leek, Editor-in-Chief, Qantas Magazine | Travel Insider**.

"We're especially delighted to bring back Australia's Choice Award, inviting our audience to nominate the wine or beverage list that elevates their favourite restaurant, bar or hotel experience. It's a celebration of the dedication and creativity that defines Australian hospitality."

Continuing its past invaluable support as trade media partner is the pre-eminent supplier of information and services to the Australian liquor trade, **The Drinks Association**.

Last year's edition of Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards - its 32nd annual event - saw more than 300 of the industry's top talent gather at NSW Parliament House in Sydney. During the day, guests attended in-depth sommelier-led masterclasses, an extensive Tasting Trail featuring leading producers and service providers, and 'speed dating' Wine List Guidance sessions between Sommelier & Judges. The highlight of the evening - the announcement of Australia's Wine List of the Year - saw Melbourne's Circl, and its sommelier, Xavier Vigier awarded the top honour.

A Legacy of Excellence

Established in 1993 by Rob and Judy Hirst and Tucker Seabrook, Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards continue to honour the skill, creativity, and dedication of those building remarkable wine lists and the cellars behind them across the country.

Venue owners, sommeliers and beverage managers are encouraged to enter now to give their venue, team and cellar the recognition they deserve.

Registrations to enter the 33rd Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards are now open!
Details and submission link available at www.winelistoftheyear.com.au.

KEY DATES TO MARK IN YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2026:

ENTRIES OPEN: Tuesday, 7 April 2026
EARLY BIRD ENTRIES CLOSE: Monday, 4 May 2026
ENTRIES CLOSE: Monday, 18 May 2026
AWARDS PRESENTATION EVENT (SYDNEY): Monday, 28 September 2026

Ends.

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Chairman Tucker Seabrook (Awards Owner) - Rob Hirst OAM

Founder Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards - 1993

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**A special thanks on behalf of the Industry
and the Awards to all our 2026 Awards Partners
and Supporters joining us this year – see below.**

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