

WASHINGTON STATE WINE AWARDS
TOAST PEOPLE, PLACES THAT MAKE WINE SHINE
Wine retailers, tourism professionals and distributors
now share the spotlight with restaurants

Washington State Wine Commission
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SEATTLE – After a decade of honoring restaurants, the Washington State Wine Commission expanded its prestigious award program to celebrate additional industries and individuals whose work raises the profile of Washington State wine throughout the state and beyond.

Monday's well-attended Washington State Wine Awards [Twitter: #wawineawards] at McCaw Hall showcased exemplary retailers, tourism professionals and distributors for the first time, along with restaurants. Winners were selected from more than 100 nominations and were chosen for their impressive menus, innovative educational programs and marketing efforts, and commitment to excellent service.

"The nominees and winners of the Washington State Wine Awards perform a vital role in shaping Washington State as both a favored home and destination for those who enjoy outstanding wines," said Commission President Steve Warner.

"These exemplary businesses and individuals help us spread the word that Washington State has a reputation for premium wines with superior quality across a range of varietals and distinctive character exhibiting a unique balance of the Old World and New World," Warner added.

From an Italian restaurant nestled near the eastern foothills of the Cascade Mountains to a boutique hotel in downtown Seattle, an employee-owned chain of neighborhood groceries to a 23,000-square-foot wine shop just off I-5, the esteemed sommelier of a classic steakhouse to the concierge of a bustling visitors bureau – all award-winners are making a difference in promoting Washington State wine.

Fifteen businesses and individuals were singled out as champions within their industries. They will be featured in a full-page ad in 10 key publications: Food & Wine, Wine Spectator, Town and Country, Elle Décor, Real Simple, Seattle Magazine, Seattle Met, Sunset, SIP Northwest and Wine Press Northwest, as well as the 2013 Washington State Wine Tour Guide.

Prizes ranged from certificates and wine carriers to etched magnums. Three winners received custom goblets designed by Seattle Glassblowing Studio. Master Sommelier Shayn Bjornholm emceed the event, during which attendees were able to taste wines from 60 Washington State vintners.

WINNER

BEST RESTAURANT GROUP:

Mackay Restaurant Group, operator of El Gaucho restaurants (Western Washington)