

Peter Avis praised as 'fantastic ambassador' in Academy's 2009 Awards for Excellence

The Academy of Food & Wine has announced that Peter Avis, restaurant manager of Babylon Restaurant at the Roof Gardens, London, is the 2009 winner of its prestigious Dalmore Award for Excellence, given to an outstanding personality in the hospitality industry. Peter, who earlier this year was named as the Academy's Restaurant Manager of the Year 2009, received his second accolade as part of the Academy's Annual Awards for Excellence, held yesterday [24 September] at Butchers' Hall, London.

Liverpool-born Peter, 34, was praised for his complete dedication to the role of restaurant manager, his enthusiasm for service and his ability to inspire and lead his team. 'He has been a great supporter of the Academy and his dedication to the role of restaurant manager and the industry as a whole is an example we hope others follow in the future. He's a fantastic ambassador for this industry,' said David Morgan-Hewitt, managing director of The Goring Hotel, London, announcing the award.

Peter, who has worked at the Roof Gardens, owned by Virgin Limited Edition, since 2001, was presented with a bottle of the rare, award-winning highland malt whisky, The Dalmore 40, by John Robertson, regional business manager of sponsor Whyte & Mackay, and Academy of Food & Wine president, Roy Ackerman. The 40-year-old whisky was filled to cask in 1965 and matured in hand-selected American white oak casks then finished in Oloroso sherry butts from Gonzalez Byass. With only 1,000 made, bottles now retail at over £1,200.

'It has been an amazing year so far,' commented Peter after the presentation. 'Since winning Restaurant Manager of the Year I've spent time at Kasbah Tamadot, Virgin Limited Edition's retreat in Morocco, been to Necker Island, our collection's award-winning island, become an ambassador for the National Skills Academy, hosted a masterclass for the Academy of Food & Wine, been invited to speak at the Restaurant Show in October and been the guest of honour at Liverpool College. I've also just returned from doing a 'stage' at Danny Meyer's restaurant group in New York for winning Restaurant Manager of the Year. This accolade, and my time in New York, has really inspired me to keep moving forward with my team and the restaurant and made me realise how much I enjoy working in this amazing industry.'

The list of award winners in full is as follows:

The Dalmore Award for Excellence

Sponsored by Whyte & Mackay

Awarded to an outstanding personality. Presented with a bottle of the award-winning highland malt whisky The Dalmore 40, worth over £1,200.

Winner: Peter Avis, restaurant manager, Babylon Restaurant at the Roof Gardens, London

Company of the Year Award 2009

Awarded to a company that has worked to raise the profile and standards of front-of-house service.

Winner: Rex Restaurant Group

College of the Year Award 2009

Awarded to a college that stands out in providing young people in our industry with outstanding support and encouragement.

Winner: South Trafford College, received by Kay Johnson, head of hospitality, tourism & aviation

The Virgin Rising Star Award

Sponsored by Virgin Limited Edition

Awarded to an up and coming star of the industry. The winner receives a 'stage' at the Roof Gardens, London.

Winner: Alessandro Valvo, Royal Automobile Club, London

The Savoy Educational Trust Sommelier Scholarship 2009

Sponsored by The Savoy Educational Trust

This travel scholarship goes to someone who has demonstrated dedication and commitment to the art of sommellerie. Winner receives work experience at the vineyards and wineries of Feudi di San Gregorio in Campania.
Winner: Laura Rhys, head sommelier, Hotel TerraVina, Hampshire (winner of the Academy of Food & Wine's UK Sommelier of the Year 2009)

The Philip Thornton Award,
Sponsored by The Savoy Educational Trust
This award was launched in 2005 in memory of Philip Thornton LVO, past trustee of The Savoy Educational Trust. It is given to someone who, like Philip, understands and promotes the role of food service in the hospitality business. The winner will be given work experience at the Andaz hotel, London.
Winner: Andrew Sargent, University College, Birmingham

The Wines of Germany Travel Award
Sponsored by Wines of Germany
Awarded to the candidate who submitted the best answers to a series of questions on the wines of Germany. The winner joins a trip in 2010 to a wine fair in Germany and visit to a number of top producers.
Winner: Patrick Salles, head sommelier, Fifth Floor Restaurant, Harvey Nichols, London

The New Zealand Winegrowers Award
Sponsored by the New Zealand Winegrowers
Given to the entrant who submitted the most comprehensive and imaginative answers to a series of questions on New Zealand wines and an essay question on how to drive sales. The winner of this award receives a mixed case of New Zealand wine and a copy of the Michael Cooper Wine Atlas.
Winner: Agustin Trapero, sommelier, Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Ramos Pinto Travel Award
Sponsored by Ramos Pinto
The winner submitting the best answers to a series of wine questions will travel to the Douro Valley, Portugal, to explore the quintas of Ramos Pinto.
Winner: Bastian Fischer, sommelier, Hotel du Vin & Bistro, Winchester

Honorary Fellowships for 2009
These are awarded to senior members of the industry who have an outstanding commitment to craft skills training and the encouragement of young people in the industry.
Recipients: Govert Deketh, general manager, London Marriott Hotel Marble Arch; Frederic Billet, food & beverage director, Marylebone Hotel, London; Christian Horvath, general manager, RAC Pall Mall Clubhouse, London.

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Editor's notes

? About the Academy. Founded in 1988, the Academy of Food and Wine is the industry's professional training body, dedicated to skills, wine service and food service. The Academy's purpose is to identify, promote and maintain the highest professional standards for the education and training of food and wine waiting staff and bar assistants in the UK hotel, restaurant, catering and bar industry.
? Its objectives are: for every practicing waiter/waitress, wine waiter and bar assistant in the industry to be a member of the Academy ? their professional body; to gain greater recognition for these operatives throughout the industry by accreditation, badging and recognition; to help members develop, maintain and advance their knowledge, skills and ability; to provide an interface between educators, service

staff and
their employers; and to enhance member's career prospects.
? Currently the Academy has over 1,000 members.

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