

Tuesday, 23 July 2019

ACT'S BEST HOTELS, BARS AND RESTAURANTS HONOURED

The leading lights of ACT hospitality were on show last night at the 2019 Australian Hotels Association (AHA) ACT Hospitality and Tourism Awards.

The territory's best hotels, pubs, restaurants and bars were honoured in front of a crowd of 470 industry and political leaders at a gala dinner in Hotel Realm. It was the biggest attendance the event has seen in a decade.

The true star of the night was 2019 Member of the Year winner – Pat Lonergan of Doma Hotels, whom AHA ACT general manager Anthony Brierley described as “an institution in Canberra.”

“Pat is respected for his professionalism and integrity, and admired for his contribution to the health and vibrancy of Canberra’s accommodation industry,” said Mr Brierley.

“He leads a motivated and enthusiastic team and when people think of the accommodation industry in Canberra, they think of Pat. There is no one more deserving of this award.”

Two of the biggest winners of the night were Hotel Realm - in the Canberra CBD - and East Hotel, in Kingston.

The East Hotel took out Superior Hotel of the Year, Apartment/Suite Hotel of the Year and Francesco Balestrieri from its restaurant, Agostini's, won Chef of the Year.

Hotel Realm won Best New or Redeveloped Venue in the Accommodation division, Best Conference and Events Venue, Best Wine list for its Buvette Bistro and Wine Bar and Industry Rising Star for staff member James Lightbody.

Deluxe Hotel of the Year went to Jamala Wildlife Lodge in the National Zoo, Mid-Range Hotel of The Year was awarded to Brassey Hotel and Best New or Redeveloped Venue in the general division was won by Fenway Public House.

Best Traditional Pub went to Mooseheads Pub and Nightclub, Best Restaurant to Raku, Best Late Night Entertainment Venue was Kokomo's and the new Best Italian Restaurant award went to Molto Italian in Kingston.

Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) National CEO Michael Johnson said the night was proof of just how far the ACT accommodation and pub sector had come.

“The industry has exploded here over the last decade and ACT venues are up there with some of the best in the country, if not the world,” said Johnson.

“The love and care hoteliers and staff put into these venues is obvious and I congratulate the winners and all the nominees on a job well done.”

Mr Brierley said a record number of nominations were received for awards across 32 categories. This year's awards had new anonymous judges, completely independent of the AHA ACT, selected for their expertise and knowledge.

Some of last night's other big winners included:

- John Press Award: **Lala Hospitality Group**
- Best Steak: **The Duxton**
- Best Burger: **Young & Frisky**
- Best Pub Eatery: **1882 Bar and Grill**
- Best Cocktail/Lounge or Small Bar: **Molly**
- Best Beer Quality - Draught: **The Durham Castle Arms Pub**
- Best Beer Quality – Craft/local: **Bentspoke Brewing Co.**
- Best Casual Dining Venue: **The District**
- Best Sporting Entertainment Venue: **The Dock**
- Best TAB venue: **Ducks Nuts Bar and Grill**
- Bartender of the Year: **Michael Nguyen, Molly**

***For a full list of Award winners please go to www.facebook.com/ahaact**

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