



WINE TOURISM AWARDS

DRINKS INTERNATIONAL'S ANNUAL WINE TOURISM AWARDS SEEKS TO HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF WINERIES AND VINEYARDS CATERING FOR VISITORS, TOURISTS AND CUSTOMERS. **CHRISTIAN DAVIS** REPORTS

THE AWARDS judging took place on Wednesday January 13 at the Wine & Spirits Education Trust's headquarters in the International Wine and Spirits Centre in south London.

Wine tourism should be about pleasure, information and education. A visitor centre affords the opportunity to explain about growing vines, harvesting grapes, making wine and how to taste it.

It's viticulture (gardening), geography and geology, vinification (science, fermentation), history and gastronomy (food and wine matching) all rolled into one. All in one building or complex. Surely that offers something for everyone?

Visitors can be existing customers or future consumers. So, a visitor centre is the shop window for such an operation. Provide a positive experience and you may have a customer for life.

THE JUDGES WERE: Anita Jackson, head of Wines of Chile UK, Hannah Silverman of Wine Australia, Jane Parkinson, broadcaster/writer and Drinks International editor Christian Davis.



BEST VISITOR CENTRE

SEPPELTSFIELD ESTATE BAROSSA VALLEY, AUSTRALIA

There were some strong entries and the judges agonised over which to award it to. The Seppeltsfield entry was superbly presented and allowed judges to tick all the boxes for what they would expect from a fantastic visitor centre. There were impressive visitor numbers and major investments. The judges particularly liked the 'pods' for tastings and providing wines in visitors' birth years.



BEST FOOD & WINE MATCHING EXPERIENCE

LA MOTTE FRANSCHHOEK, SOUTH AFRICA

When it comes to food and pairing with wine, the sumptuous Hanneli Rupert-Koegelenberg operation takes some beating. La Motte was a strong contender in several categories but there was no denying it winning this one with its themed tastings, the Pierneef à La Motte, restaurant, Sunday Family Lunch, Chef's Table, Winelands Tea and Food on Tour as part of its Historic Walk. There is also baking and cake making.



MOST INNOVATIVE TOURISM EXPERIENCE

MIGUEL TORRES PACS DEL PENEDÈS, SPAIN

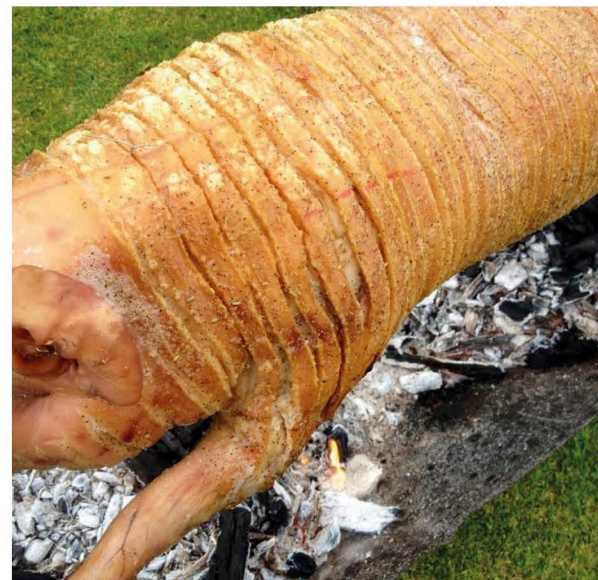
Looking for true innovation, something unusual, the judges went for some of the Torres special events. We loved the professional photographer improving people's camera skills, making your own brandy, the vineyard race and a 'blind tapas experience'. A previous winner, the Starry Night stargazing continued to impress.



BEST ACCOMMODATION

THE YEATMAN VILA NOVA DA GAIA, PORTUGAL

This luxurious showpiece hotel was developed by The Fladgate Partnership, owner of Taylor's, Fonseca and Croft ports. With a Michelin-starred restaurant and stunning views over Porto and the Douro river, the Yeatman showcases not just the company's products but all Portuguese food and wines. It is a stunning place to stay.



BEST WINE EVENT

PIG ON SPIT @KELLEMEISTER, BAROSSA VALLEY, AUSTRALIA

Provide lots of hog roasts and lay on great wines and you have a party. Kellermeister takes this simple idea and does it every month at its cellar door. It started with a maximum of 150 but, due to the popularity, it has risen to 240 guests per event. Simple.

HIGHLY COMMENDED The Yeatman, Vila Nova da Gaia, Portugal



BEST DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE

ADEGA MAYOR ALENTEJO, PORTUGAL

This huge development, part of a 350ha, farm has pulled out all the electronic stops to get people to come and marvel at the building and all its amenities. Youtube, Facebook, Tripadvisor etc have helped attract 42,000 visitors from the likes of Spain, the Netherlands, the UK, and not forgetting Portugal itself, to a region which is not the easiest to get to.