

Tourist trail

Drinks International's Wine Tourism Awards winners

Is there a better, more cost effective way of building a wine brand than welcoming visitors to the vineyards and winery, showing them around and telling them how grapes are cultivated and their juice turned into one of the best drinks in the world?

The cultivating of vines, the harvesting of grapes and the making of wine, along with the traditions of the region, have something for everybody.

History, geography/geology, gardening/botany, chemistry and physics – you name it. It's all there in traditional winemaking, along with the economics of running a business.

So wine tourism ticks all the boxes for a variety of potential visitors, from the romantics and hobbyists to the hard-nosed commercial types who want to discover all the aspects of profitably making wine.

In recognition of this burgeoning sector that sits perfectly with the main business of making wine, *Drinks International* launched its Wine Tourism Awards. Every year the entries get stronger and stronger. This year we had entries from all over the world, including Argentina, Chile, Greece, Italy, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, the UK, and the US.

The judges met at the offices of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust in London to decide the category winners.

The Judges

Nicky Forrest, director of PR company Phipps
Ian Harris, chief executive of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust

Emma Roberts, director of PR company Eviva
Hannah Silverman, communications and PR executive with Wine Australia
Christian Davis, editor, *Drinks International*

Best Visitor Centre Winner - Viu Manent

The judges felt Viu Manent's visitor centre was fun and diverse. They particularly liked the horse element and the cooking classes. It was a well presented entry. It boasts significant visitor figures which suggested its wide appeal.

Highly Commended - La Motte (brand owner Hanneli Rupert-Koegelenberg)

Classy and very professional.

Most Innovative Tourism Experience

Winner - Val Du Charron Wines

The South African producer, based in Wellington, transforms its cellar into a theatre with catwalks and actors during the winter to educate and entertain visitors.

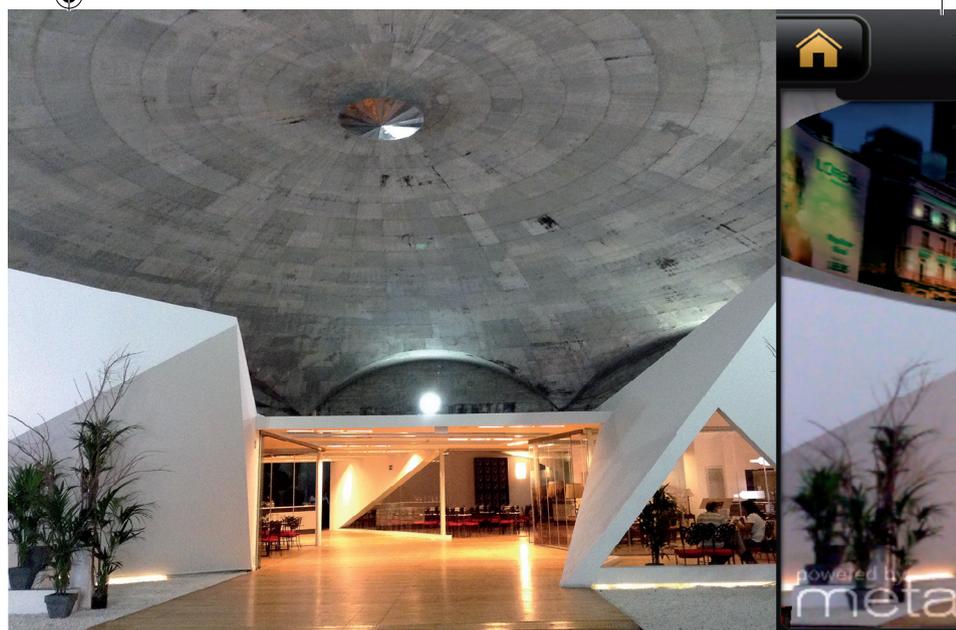
Highly Commended - Casa Vinicola Zonin's Masseria Altemura

For promoting the gastronomy of the Puglia region. It came a close second.

Best Educational Experience

Winner - Monte Da Ravasqueira (Sociedade Agulola D Diniz)

The Portuguese estate runs a series of programmes to educate and inform in a pleasant and unassuming way.



BEST VISITOR CENTRE

Winner: Viu Manent,
Highly commended: La Motte

MOST INNOVATIVE WINE TOURISM EXPERIENCE

Winner: Val du
Charron Wines
Highly commended: Casa
Vinicola Zonin's Masseria
Altemura

BEST EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Winner: Monte Da
Ravasqueira

BEST FOOD AND WINE MATCHING EXPERIENCE

Winner: La Motte
Highly commended: The
Yeatman

Best Food & Wine Matching Experience

Winner - La Motte

Very focused with a lot of thought and detail. There is a cookbook and good use of social media.

Highly Commended - The Yeatman

A Michelin-starred restaurant matching Portugal's finest foods with its best wines. A strong second.

Best Wine Event

Winner Spier Wine Farm

The judges liked the concept of the Spier Secret Festival and the 'secret courtyard' in central Cape Town, open for three months, where visitors could relax, socialise and drink Spier wine.



Wine Tourism Awards



Highly Commended - Bodega González Byass

Lots of things were happening, including a musical wine festival.

Best Accommodation Winner - The Yeatman

Owned by the Fladgate Partnership, which includes in its portfolio of brands ports such as Taylor's and Fonseca, the Yeatman's aim is to "provide its guests with the best and most authentic experience of the city of Porto, port wine and of Portuguese wine", along with a Michelin-starred restaurant and a wine school. An impressive luxury hotel overlooking the Douro river.

Highly Commended - Aldering Vineyards & Wines

For luxury lodges in Stellenbosch to "feel the farm vibe";

Domaine Porto Carras (Styliani Stengou)

For a massive, all-encompassing resort; **Algodon Wine Estates**
All the judges would like to stay here. Praise indeed.

Best Promotional Body Winner - Stellenbosch Wine Routes

Representing 152 wine farms, SWR's aim is to represent the region and its people. The route's objective with its Summer Palace in Johannesburg was to "kindle nostalgia and awareness to

BEST WINE EVENT

Winner: Spier Wine Farm
Highly Commended:
Bodegas González Byass

BEST ACCOMMODATION

Winner: The Yeatman
Highly Commended:
Aldering Vineyards & Wines
Domaine Porto Carras
Algodon Wine Estates

BEST PROMOTIONAL BODY

Winner: Stellenbosch Wine Routes
Highly Commended: Wine Cellar Door

BEST DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE

Winner: Bodegas González Byass
Highly Commended
Stellenbosch Wine Routes

encourage people to visit the region". Its wine festival attracted more than 30,000 people over 10 days. In November it opened a visitor centre in Stellenbosch.
Highly Commended - Wine Cellar Door (Elisabeth Else)
A free guide to visitor-friendly UK vineyards

Best Digital & Social Media Winner - Bodega González Byass

The judges liked the 'augmented reality of the Tío Pepe route app. It claims to be the first to use GPS technology and augmented reality for tourist purposes.
Highly Commended - Stellenbosch Wine Routes
Judges approved of their use of blogging.