

FEB 22-MAR 2, 2025

THE WINE WORLD WAS HERE

2025 CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

The 46TH Vancouver International Wine Festival proudly honoured the people and places that make such a significant contribution to the B.C. wine and food culture. The following awards were presented at the 21ST Annual Awards Lunch, presented by ContainerWorld, on Friday, February 28.



(l to r): Reverie Beall (AnnaLena), Sarah Doerksen (Dachi), Calen Macdonald (Blue Water Cafe), Stephanie Mathis (Botanist), Tara Pole (Nightingale), Richard Stonehouse (L'Abattoir), Colin Davidson (The Courtney Room), Chris Rielly (Hawksworth), Franco Michienzi (Elisa)



SPIRITED INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

Michaela Morris,
Wine Writer & Educator

The annual Spirited Industry Professional Award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the sales, service or promotion of wine in British Columbia.

Michaela Morris is an international wine writer, educator and speaker based in Vancouver. She contributes regularly to *Decanter*, *Meininger's Wine Business International*, *Quench*, *Vintec Club* and *Taste* magazine. She also judges at global competitions such as Decanter World Wine Awards and Vinity's 5StarWines. Michaela holds the Wine & Spirit Education Trust Diploma and is a Certified Italian Wine Expert through Vinity International Academy. From her start in fine dining restaurants, she went on to source wine and manage communications for Marquis Wine Cellars and then took on the role of Marketing/Logistics Manager for import company Liquid Art Fine Wine. She also founded and co-owned house wine, a consulting company which offered private and public wine tastings and cellar management for collectors.

PRESENTED BY 



TERRY THRELFALL SCHOLARSHIP

Kaede Suzuki, Sales Associate/ Service Specialist, Sutton Place Wine Merchant

The Vancouver International Wine Festival is pleased to partner with the BC Hospitality Foundation, the BC Chapter of the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers, and the Threlfall family on a scholarship in the name of our beloved friend and colleague, Terry Threlfall, who passed away suddenly in October 2020. The scholarship is awarded to a candidate seeking to make a difference in mentorship and leadership in the British Columbia wine trade.

Kaede Suzuki has more than four years of experience in the wine and spirits industry, both in Japan and Canada. In Japan, she managed wine lists at a prestigious Northern Italian restaurant, but it was once she moved to Vancouver that she discovered her passion for leadership and mentorship in the wine community. Kaede's work at Liberty Wine Merchants and Sutton Place Wine Merchants sharpened her customer service skills, and she has been pursuing her WSET Diploma in preparation for joining the sommelier team at Boulevard Kitchen & Oyster Bar.

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2025 WINE RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD

BCLIQUOR 39th and Cambie Store

The Wine Retailer of the Year Award recognizes outstanding retail locations that exemplify excellence in promoting the enjoyment of wine within our community. The festival solicits nominations from across the province to recognize a deserving location that demonstrates exceptional selection, knowledge, service, engagement and social responsibility.

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47TH VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL
MARCH 7-15, 2026
FEATURING FRANCE



SOMMELIER OF THE YEAR

Andrew Forsyth,
Head Sommelier, L'Abattoir

The Sommelier of the Year Award recognizes working sommeliers who consistently demonstrate an outstanding passion for marrying wine with food and a dedication to exceptional service. Andrew Forsyth was selected through a hands-on competition organized by the BC Chapter of the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers.

Andrew Forsyth brings a wealth of experience and a deep passion for wine to the dining experience. His journey began while working as a Dining Room Manager at The Keg Steakhouse & Bar, where he started studying wine through WSET and later through the Court of Master Sommeliers. Andrew's expertise was further honed through his participation as the Canadian representative in the Wines of South Africa Sommelier Cup in 2019, his first competition. His commitment to creating an amazing guest experience and discovering unique wines has made him an influential figure in Vancouver's vibrant wine scene.

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WINE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM WINNERS

These awards pay tribute to restaurateurs who have committed to producing an original and creative wine program. Participating restaurants received careful consideration of their wine program by some of the finest, most professional judges in Western Canada.

Our judges: Kaela Augustine, Ian Casterton, Tom Doughty, DJ Kearney, Jonathan Lai, and Chris Turyk

METRO VANCOUVER

Platinum

L'Abattoir
AnnaLena
Blue Water Cafe +
Raw Bar
Botanist
Dachi
Elisa
Hawksworth
Restaurant
Nightingale
Restaurant
Yuwa Japanese
Cuisine

Gold

Burdock & Co
Chambar
CinCin Ristorante + Bar
Dear Gus Snack Bar
Mott 32
Osteria Elio Volpe
Savio Volpe
Tap Restaurant

Silver

H Tasting Lounge
Wildlight Kitchen + Bar

Bronze

Acquafarina
Bacchus Restaurant &
Lounge
Delara

Honourable Mention

Folke
La Piazza Dario
Ristorante Italiano

INTERIOR

Silver

Waterfront Wines
Restaurant (Kelowna)

WHISTLER

Gold

Alta Bistro
Bar Oso
Il Caminetto
Wild Blue
Restaurant + Bar

Silver

Araxi Restaurant +
Oyster Bar

Bronze

Quattro Restaurant
Whistler

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Platinum

The Courtney Room

Gold

Marilena Cafe &
Wine Bar

Bronze

Boom + Batten
Fathom

ALBERTA

Platinum

RGE RD (Edmonton)

Gold

Major Tom (Calgary –
Best New Entry)
Vin Room YYC Airport
(Calgary)

Bookmark vanwinefest.ca/tradedays/2025-wine-program-excellence-awards for your guide to restaurants with great wine programs.

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