



WINE COMMUNICATORS  
OF AUSTRALIA  
PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN WINE

## Media Release

For immediate release

21 November 2014

# Wine Communicator Award winners announced

Wine Communicators of Australia (WCA) announced the eight winners of its Wine Communicator Awards at a rousing Awards Night at the Four Seasons Hotel, on Wednesday night (November 19), including the coveted Wine Communicator of the Year.

The awards and their winners are:

- Wine Communicator of the Year – Jeni Port
- Digital Communicator of the Year – Cake Wines
- Australian Gourmet Traveller Wine New Wine Writer Award – Charley May
- Best Wine Publication (trade or consumer) – James Halliday's Wine Companion Magazine
- Best Wine Book - The Champagne Guide 2014-15 by Tyson Stelzer
- Best Wine Website or App – Vinomofu
- Best Trade or Technical Wine Writer – Cathy Howard
- Best Single Feature Article or Wine Column – Last of his Generation, Jeni Port

WCA Chair Angie Bradbury said the evening was a fantastic culmination of a highly successful Awards, designed to recognise outstanding contribution to, and excellence in, wine communication in all its forms.

"Through these Awards, WCA seeks to raise the profile of best practice communication and encourage more of it – and this year's winners in all categories are fantastic examples of this," Ms Bradbury said.

"I particularly want to congratulate our Wine Communicator of the Year Jeni Port. Jeni was the first wine writer at The Sun News-Pictorial (now Melbourne's HeraldSun) and has spent the past three decades sharing the stories around Australia's great wines, its colourful and talented characters as well as the industry's many challenges and triumphs. As the longest serving wine writer at The Age, she is also a published author and occasional wine judge – but her continued commitment to telling the real wine story in her honest and compelling way is what WCA is recognising in bestowing this Award."

The judging panel for the awards included a mix of industry professionals, including international digital expert Paul Mabray, Canadian editor Christopher Waters, former Digital Communicator of the Year Jane Thomson, Lowe Wines David Lowe, Fuller director Peter Fuller, Australian Grape and Wine Authority program manager Anne Duncan, and WCA national board members, Roger Sharp, Louise Radman and Angus Barnes. The Gourmet Traveller WINE/WCA New Wine Writer Award was judged by editor Judy Sarris, contributing editor Huon Hooke, and WCA Chair Angie Bradbury.

For more details go to [winecommunicators.com.au](http://winecommunicators.com.au).

For additional media comment please contact WCA Deputy Chair Angus Banes on Mob: 0407 615 132

High resolution images are available of the night and of the winners. Contact Program Manager **Jen Barwick at WCA on Mob: 0413 512 745 or email: [comms@winecommunicators.com.au](mailto:comms@winecommunicators.com.au)**

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS:**

### **Major Award: Wine Communicator of the Year – Jeni Port**

The major award recipient is selected from the winners of all the award categories. Comments in media release.

#### **1. New Wine Writer of the Year Award – Charley May**

For the article, A Taste of the Future. The article was inspired by her love of dystopian fiction. 'A taste of the future' paints a post-apocalyptic picture that focuses on what the wine industry would look like in 50 years through an Orwellian lens. While it contains grains of truth, it is ultimately a complete fantasy designed to entertain. The aim of the feature was to generate thought around current realities and future challenges in an approachable and humorous way. A biologist by training, Charley has spent most of her career leading policy and campaigns in the rural affairs and outdoor education sectors in the UK. A keen outdoors woman with a passion for fly fishing and shooting, it was a chance meeting with Ladies who Shoot their Lunch that introduced Charley into the world of wine. Charley is now the Communications Manager at Fowles Wine and loves introducing more people to their wild food and wine philosophy

#### **2. Best Digital Wine Communicator – Cake Wines**

Founders of Cake Wines, Mike Smith and Glen Cassidy, describe themselves as a 'new kind of winery, created by young winemakers and young wine lovers'. Based out of the Adelaide Hills, this innovative and exciting young company launched in late 2011 and set out to do things a little differently from the very start. Since then, they have collaborated with young winemakers around the country; curating pop-up bars; working with emerging artists on label designs; holding secret rooftop cinema nights; live music events; working with young chefs and even launching its own Art prize – The Archi Bottle – while at the same time created a unique and creative digital presence and content strategy that has been integral in their ability to deliver and engage with a new wine drinking audience.

**Judges' comments:** "Exciting", "original", "creative and clever"... were among the superlatives used by the panel of judges. In particular, it was noted that the content and digital strategy were cleverly tailored to its niche audience, with "clear reach and results."

#### **3. Best Wine Trade or Technical Writer - Cathy Howard**

Cathy Howard is a regular contributor to the *Wine and Viticulture Journal*, and has also written for *Grapegrower & Winemaker*. Her articles draw on her experience as a practical, hands-on winemaker and small wine business owner. Often time-poor and all too aware how difficult it is to keep up with new and exciting trends happening within our research facilities, and in the many vineyards and wineries across the country, she writes her articles with a blend of technical information as well as seeking out comments and input from fellow winemakers, vineyard managers, viticulturists and suppliers.

**Judges' comments:** This writer combines their expert experience with some strong journalism skills - an uncommon achievement. The articles are lively, interesting with good use of comments and outside experience to balance and illustrate.

#### **4. Best Published Feature Article or Wine Column - Jeni Port – Last of his generation (*Winestate Magazine*)**

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The Last of His Generation (*Winestate Magazine*) was written following the death of one of the great pioneers of modern Yarra Valley winemaking, Dr Peter McMahon of Seville Estate. Many Australian drinkers, Jeni included, have grown up enjoying Dr McMahon's wines, particularly his chardonnay and shiraz, so it was fitting to write about him and his life. The article shares a poignant insight into the doctor and the legacy that continues at Seville Estate under his grandson, Dylan.

**Judges' comments:** This is a fitting and poignant homage, with a lovely flow and real personal engagement that also connects the reader to the history and role of an important wine pioneer.

#### 5. Best Wine Publication (trade, technical or consumer) – James Halliday's Wine Companion Magazine

*James Halliday's Wine Companion* magazine is a bi-monthly exploration into the world of wine. From regular articles on varietals, styles, wine personalities and enthusiasts from other fields, to regional features and wine-matched recipes created specifically for each edition, the publication places wines in the lifestyle context – and proudly celebrates it too.

**Judges' comments:** The Best Publication winner was selected for its clever content, excellent flow and tone pitched well at newcomers to wine as well as those already engaged. Its excellent reach was also noted making it an easy-to-read, highly approachable and engaging insight into Australian wine.

#### 6. Best Wine Book (Technical, Trade or Consumer) - The Champagne Guide - Tyson Stelzer

Just as Australian wine benefits from international benchmarks, so, too, the richness and recognition of Australian wine writing is enhanced by tackling international topics and international markets. A complete absence of regularly updated Champagne books in the English language prompted Tyson Stelzer to publish the inaugural edition of *The Champagne Guide* in 2011. Winning International Champagne Writer of the Year in The Louis Roederer International Wine Writers' Awards 2011 prompted successive editions. This up-to-date champagne guide dares to go behind the scenes and reveal the truth about the most guarded and over-hyped wine region on the planet - and it's no easy undertaking, particularly from as far away as Australia. Ten visits to Champagne and ongoing visits with the key people has helped Stelzer gain trust and respect, from this exclusive community, and to be welcomed into their world.

**Judges' comments:** An extraordinary achievement. A great combination that delivers an encyclopaedic depth of detail with an entertaining and engaging tone and style of writing.

#### 7. Best Wine Website or Wine App - Vinomofu

After starting their wine business in a garage in Adelaide, brothers-in-law Andre Eikmeier and Justin Dry teamed up with Barossa boy Leigh Morgan to launch Vinomofu, with hopes to inspire the world to drink awesome wine. In just three years, they have disrupted the traditional wine market, leading the way online. In this short time they've also managed to earn a few gongs along the way... including fastest growing tech company in Australia, Best Startup, Best Website, Best Online Retailer and Most Successful Staff Engagement Strategy. Now, there's 50 staff,



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270,000 members, and a turnover run rate approaching \$30 million, Vinomofu is living up to its promise of being "the most epic wine site on the planet", and it sounds like they're having a lot of fun doing it.

**Judges' comments:** Tonight's winner, according to our judges is hard to fault. Their wide breadth of content goes far beyond sales, design and functionality is a standout but so its sense of humour. Their success is success the whole industry can celebrate and should celebrate.

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(Jen can provide contacts for all Award winners)