

# MEDIA RELEASE



**\*\*\*\*EMBARGOED UNTIL 11PM, TUESDAY 9 February 2021**

9 February 2021

## Marion Hotel named Hotel Of The Year at AHA|SA Hotel Industry Awards for Excellence 2020

The Marion Hotel in Adelaide's southern suburbs has been named the **Best Overall Hotel** in South Australia, at the 2020 Hotel Industry Awards for Excellence, held at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre tonight.

Also taking out the honours for **Best Outdoor or Non-Enclosed Facility**, **Best Gaming Venue – Metropolitan**, and **Best Redeveloped Hotel – Metropolitan**, the Hurley Hotel Group pub has been recognised for its incredible \$20 million transformation.

The 2020 Awards were delayed due to Covid-19. All State winners automatically qualify for the AHA National Awards to be held on 13 September 2021 in Hobart.

Completed in September 2019, the redevelopment of the 60's style Marion Hotel has brought a new lease of life into the venue. With an extensive focus on hotel style accommodation, food and beverage, functions, retail and gaming, all areas of the hotel have been refurbished along with a refreshed brand and personality emphasising interaction with the customer.

Mount Lofty House in the Adelaide Hills cemented its position as the premier luxury destination in Adelaide, receiving two awards: **Best Deluxe Hotel Accommodation** and **Best Restaurant – Accommodation Division** for the iconic **Hardy's Verandah Restaurant**.

Two hotels have placed the Clare Valley region in the spotlight. Sevenhill Hotel has once again received the Award for **Best Bistro Casual Dining – Country** for its innovative, seasonal menu and outstanding customer service. The recently renovated Watervale Hotel has burst into the hospitality scene winning three awards: **Best Restaurant – General Division Country**, **Best Tourism & Regional Promotion**, and **Best Environmental & Energy Efficiency Practice**.

The Sailmaster Tavern won the title of **Best Bar Presentation & Experience – Metropolitan**. Overlooking the picturesque North Haven Marina, the bar at the Sailmaster has been extensively renovated with multiple areas designed to take advantage of the spectacular view.

Tonight also saw the induction of several hotel groups into the **AHA|SA Live Music Hall of Fame**. Fahey Hotel Group, Hurley Hotel Group, RD Jones Group, The Gov and the Tonkin family were all acknowledged for their multi-generational family commitment to the well-being of live music gigs, the employment and engagement of musicians and technicians, and their support for innovation and entertainment in SA hotels.

“Congratulations to all the outstanding winners of the 2020 Hotel Awards for Excellence,” said AHA|SA General Manager Ian Horne.

“Every year the AHA|SA Awards night is an important event for our industry, as we celebrate the exceptionally high standard of hotels in South Australia. But this year our Awards for Excellence is even more meaningful after such a tumultuous 2020 for the industry”.

“Tonight we acknowledged and celebrated an industry that is resilient and innovative, strong and courageous.”

“We thank the community and the people of SA for supporting our great industry throughout 2020, and in turn the 26,000 people it employs”.

The 2020 AHA|SA Hotel Industry Awards for Excellence was held on Tuesday 9 February at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. Over 750 people attended this premier event with entertainment provided by Ricki-Lee and Hans, and hosted by Will Goodings.

#### Media Comment

Ian Horne, General Manager AHA|SA  
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#### 2020 Full List of Winners

CATEGORY	Winner	Judges Commendation
Draught Beer Quality - Country	Vine Inn Barossa	
Draught Beer Quality - Metropolitan	The Barker	
Mid-Range Hotel Accommodation	Atura Adelaide Airport	
Boutique/Superior Hotel Accommodation	Crafers Hotel	<i>Stirling Hotel</i>
Deluxe Hotel Accommodation	Mount Lofty House	
Bistro Casual Dining – Country	Sevenhill Hotel	<i>Dalrymple Hotel</i>
Bistro Casual Dining – Inner Metropolitan	East End Cellars	<i>Strathmore Hotel</i>
Bistro Casual Dining – Outer Metropolitan	Crafers Hotel	<i>Sailmaster Tavern, Stirling Hotel</i>
Restaurant – Accommodation Division	Hardy's Verandah Restaurant - Mount Lofty House	<i>Commodore on the Park</i>
Restaurant – General Division Metropolitan	2KW	
Restaurant – General Division Country	Watervale Hotel	
Bar Presentation & Experience – Country	Macs Hotel, Mount Gambier	
Bar Presentation & Experience – Metropolitan	Sailmaster Tavern	<i>Marion Hotel</i>
Outdoor or Non-Enclosed Facility	Marion Hotel	<i>Republic Norwood, Sailmaster Tavern</i>
Sporting Entertainment Venue	Warradale Hotel	<i>Arkaba Hotel</i>
Community Service & Support	Vine Inn Barossa – Joint Winner	
Community Service & Support	Duke of Brunswick Hotel – Joint Winner	

Marketing & Promotion – General Division	Moseley Bar & Kitchen	
Tourism & Regional Promotion	Watervale Hotel	
Environmental & Energy Efficiency Practice	Watervale Hotel	
Gaming Venue – Country	Big River Golf and Country Club	
Gaming Venue – Metropolitan	Marion Hotel	
TAB Licensed Venue	Marryatville Hotel	
Meeting & Events Venue – Specialist & Accommodation Venues	National Wine Centre	
Meeting & Events Venue – General Division	The Highway	
Retail Outlet - Attached	Stirling Hotel	
Retail Outlet - Stand Alone	East End Cellars	
Small Venue	Paloma Bar & Pantry	
Redeveloped Hotel – Country	Big River Golf and Country Club	
Redeveloped Hotel – Metropolitan	Marion Hotel	<i>Sailmaster Tavern, Strathmore Hotel</i>
Chef of the Year	Kevin Martel - The Playford	
Employee Excellence in Service - Accommodation Division	Jane Heywood - Sage Hotel	
Employee Excellence in Service - General Division	Jessica Bellwood - Marion Hotel	
Hotel Industry Rising Star	Ben Rogers - National Wine Centre	
Best Overall Hotel	Marion Hotel	

## 2020 AHA|SA Hotel Industry Awards for Excellence Winners

### Draught Beer Quality - Country

Vine Inn Barossa

### Draught Beer Quality - Metropolitan

The Barker

Winners of the Draught Beer Quality Award were assessed by personnel from Coopers, CUB and Lion against a set of strict criteria which included storage, delivery and presentation.

### Mid-Range Hotel Accommodation - Atura Adelaide Airport

Opening its doors less than two years ago, the Atura Hotel offers guests the ultimate in comfort and convenience, with stylish design.

Characterised by its modern atmosphere and free-flowing communal spaces, the highly anticipated seven-storey hotel has undoubtedly become a destination in its own right. The hotel features a range of spacious and contemporary guest rooms, some with city views and for those who appreciate aviation, the Runway Rooms give unparalleled views of the airport runway.

With its unrivalled location, designer styling and high-quality facilities, Atura Adelaide Airport is the perfect base from which to explore the city of Adelaide - and beyond.

### **Boutique/Superior Hotel Accommodation - Crafers Hotel**

Completed in 2017, each guest room at The Crafers has been elegantly designed with respect to the 1830s heritage of the building, complemented by modern technology.

The rooms provide unsurpassed comfort away from home for guests and feature ensuite bathrooms with underfloor heating, premium toiletries and added luxuries. The hotel restaurant is available for guests daily, including room service, and rooms have a complimentary mini bar.

### **Deluxe Hotel Accommodation - Mount Lofty House**

Overlooking the picturesque Piccadilly Valley, Mount Lofty House exudes elegance and grandeur. After almost 170 years, the generous refurbishment has breathed new life into the stately hotel. The hotel has 32 rooms and two suites in the main house and boasts four self-contained cottages located within the estate. Guests are treated to luxury throughout, with care given to customer service and comfort. Adding to the experience, guests can dine in the award-winning Hardy's Verandah Restaurant. Entering Mount Lofty House is like entering another world, a world of genuine hospitality, delicious food, grand scenery and a sophisticated interior.

### **Bistro Casual Dining – Country - Sevenhill Hotel**

In 2020, the Sevenhill Hotel has continued to provide excellent quality food and outstanding service to their happy customers. The innovative, seasonal menu includes traditional pub favourites and the "Show Stoppers" that sets them apart. Dishes are created and prepared in house with an emphasis on freshness and locality, whilst keeping in mind the ever-changing dietary requirements of customers. They offer full table service by friendly, vibrant, and welcoming staff and recent refurbishments have lifted the bar further.

The Dalrymple Hotel has received a Judges' Commendation.

### **Bistro Casual Dining – Inner Metropolitan - East End Cellars**

East End Cellars has been established for 21 years in the leafy hub of the East End of Adelaide. EEC - as it is known by the locals - has the feel of a European wine bar; stylish but not pretentious. The in-house chef curates the menu with seasonal offerings that change frequently with what is best on offer from local producers and beyond. Customers are encouraged to choose their own wine to take to the seated area and benches to enjoy with something freshly prepared in the open kitchen. And the excellent customer service creates a warm and friendly atmosphere where people can feel connected.

The Strathmore Hotel has received a Judges' Commendation.

### **Bistro Casual Dining – Outer Metropolitan - Crafers Hotel**

The Crafers Hotel has been carefully transformed over the past six years into a stylish gastropub that oozes warmth and charm with an award-winning Wine Room, a French-inspired bistro, two bars and a courtyard beer garden.

The Crafers Hotel's innovative French-inspired menu has been a game changer for pub food in South Australia. The past year has also seen the implementation of a plant-based menu, which has proven popular at the venue and the menu is updated every six weeks, using fresh local produce.

The Crafers provides polished service and expertise about the dishes and wines to match. This is displayed through customer satisfaction and the popularity of the venue as a destination for diners from near and far.

The Sailmaster Tavern and Stirling Hotel have received Judges' Commendations.

### **Restaurant – Accommodation Division - Hardy's Verandah - Mount Lofty House**

Hardy's Verandah continues to exceed with wonderful cuisine, a stunning wine list, warm ambience and exceptional service. Guests of Hardy's Verandah Restaurant can expect an immersive dining experience true to the House's long tradition of extravagant celebrations.

All staff are incredibly well-versed and trained to have a thorough understanding of all dishes so that guests take away an incredible epicurean story of their own.

The chef's passion for fresh, locally purchased and foraged food is another element to the story which intrigues guests and staff equally. Wine pairing is also an essential part of the overall experience.

The Commodore on the Park has received a Judges' Commendation.

### **Restaurant – General Division Metropolitan - 2KW**

2KW has set a new standard for showcasing the best of South Australia and beyond. The team are passionate about working with South Australian producers and having a menu that showcases their amazing produce. Designed to share, the menu allows patrons to try a multitude of flavours. The exceptional wine list and service in this unique setting sets it apart from the rest.

### **Restaurant – General Division Country - Watervale Hotel**

Located at the licensee's home in Watervale, Penobscot Farm is an organic, bio-dynamic farm managed to permaculture principles. Chefs pick fresh produce for the daily plate and preserve produce to make their way to the plate at a later date.

The Watervale Hotel menu contains small and large plates all designed to be shared and paired with a wonderful selection of local Clare Valley or international wines and polished service.

### **Bar Presentation & Experience – Country - Macs Hotel, Mount Gambier**

Having become a popular meeting place for a broad range of demographics, Macs Hotel has experienced consistent growth since the redevelopment in 2013 with the latest technology, eclectic design and ease of access for all patrons. Macs bar menu offers a good range of pub favourites and the extensive beverage selection is served by their friendly staff. For four consecutive seasons/years the Macs Hotel has built and operated the Secret Garden. The three-month activation and range of events make this a popular destination for Mount Gambians as it appeals to a broad range of demographics including families, bar goers and local suppliers.

### **Bar Presentation & Experience – Metropolitan Sailmaster Tavern**

The Sailmaster Tavern, overlooking the picturesque North Haven Marina, has been extensively renovated with multiple areas designed to take advantage of the spectacular view. The Sailmaster offers three bar areas with a total of forty-four beer taps and eight wine on tap options. There is a strong focus on South Australian wines and support of local spirit producers. The Sailmaster provides excellence in customer service, a relaxed casual atmosphere and a great new purpose-built environment.

The Marion Hotel has received a Judges' Commendation.

### **Outdoor or non-enclosed Facility - Marion Hotel**

The Garden at the Marion is a fantastic space, with plants or shrubs and a modern twist! With natural light streaming through glass panels, a curved wooden deck, majestic Queensland Brush Box Tree in the centre and plenty of funky outdoor seating, it is a comfortable space in any climate.

The Garden is a dynamic space for any occasion, with the option of having a pop-up bar outside to cater for private groups or simply reserving the best seats in the house with a booth.

The Garden menu has a wide range of pub style food classics and new innovative dishes that appeal to all. The area is serviced by a magnificent concrete bar offering 52 different gins and 18 tap beers, as well as extensive wine and cocktail lists.

The Republic Norwood and Sailmaster Tavern have received Judges' Commendations.

### **Live Music Hall of Fame**

The following hotel groups were inducted into the AHA|SA Live Music Hall of Fame. They were acknowledged for their multi-generational family commitment to the well-being of live music gigs, the employment and engagement of musicians and technicians, and their support for innovation and entertainment in SA hotels:

**Fahey Hotel Group**

**Hurley Hotel Group**

**RD Jones Group**

**The Gov/Tonkin Family**

### **Sporting Entertainment Venue - Warradale Hotel**

The Sporting coverage at the Warradale Hotel extends from its impressive dedicated Tavern Bar to its beer garden offering a seamless link with hospitality and sports entertainment. The tavern bar offers everything sporting with LED screens, wagering, lotteries and Foxtel providing coverage from anywhere in the world. Of course, the hotel supports local sports groups including footy, cricket, rugby, lacrosse, basketball, bowls, surf lifesaving, diving and water polo to name but a few. Regular sporting promotions and competitions, along with a successful racing syndicate, keeps patrons entertained.

The Arkaba Hotel has received a Judges' Commendation.

### **Community Service & Support - Vine Inn Barossa - Joint Winner**

A key priority of the Vine Inn Barossa is involvement in a wide range of community interests. Support of sporting institutions, addressing social issues, offering educational support and providing local employment is integral to its philosophy. Their COVID staff help program assisted those in need during a time of great uncertainty.

### **Community Service & Support - Duke of Brunswick Hotel – Joint Winner**

The Duke of Brunswick similarly displayed a wonderful amount of support for the community. Acknowledged as a 100% gluten free kitchen, deaf friendly venue and Adelaide's first official veteran friendly venue. During COVID, Simone and her team made extra efforts to engage with the local community through a time of isolation and fear, offering food deliveries and social support. The hotel continues to engage with its audience through social media.

### **Marketing & Promotion – General Division - Moseley Bar & Kitchen**

The unique beachside location of the Moseley Bar & Kitchen is integral to its marketing driving people to the venue from across Adelaide. The consistent commitment to excellence is evident with the venue promoting various events, themes and options for patrons. Social media and advertising channels support the venue philosophy with exceptional branding and strategy. The Moseley Beach Club is also an example of venues taking a risk to reach a broader audience through offering a more diverse experience.

### **Tourism & Regional Promotion - Watervale Hotel**

The renovation of the Watervale Hotel has incorporated a clear vision to involve the region and community in its position as a destination venue. The traditional family values and passion for the Clare Valley is evident, from the wines of the region to its produce, destinations, and people. From farm to plate, the Watervale sells a story and encourages people to discover the fruits of the region.

### **Environmental & Energy Efficiency Practice - Watervale Hotel**

From the origins of its recent renovation, the Watervale has taken the time to consider the impact its business has on the environment and local community. Their positioning statement is 'Ethical Epicurean Experiences' as they aim to ensure all of the meals are ethical and consider the impact on their community and the environment. This includes the types of goods purchases, waste management, recyclability and water saving initiatives.

### **Gaming Venue – Country - Big River Tavern**

The Big River Golf and Country Club commenced renovations to their gaming lounge in early 2019 with a clear thought process on delivering great service and efficiencies to provide ample space and amenities for their patrons. This major investment includes a strong fleet of up to date gaming machines. They always have a dedicated gaming person in the room monitoring and assisting patrons as required. The staff at this venue have good engagement with Gaming Care and other help services and there has been significant improvement to patron management.

### **Gaming Venue – Metropolitan - Marion Hotel**

Designed by the punter for the punter, the Marion recently set the task of improving its gaming lounge for both personal comfort and entertainment. The spacious gaming room with its own bar, has a great new look with ample lounge areas available for players that want a break and gives everyone a comfortable and positive experience. The professionalism and outstanding customer service of their staff is second to none. The Marion displays excellent engagement with Gaming Care and a clear commitment to harm minimisation and responsible gambling.

### **TAB Licensed Venue - Marryatville Hotel**

The Marryatville Hotel has a friendly bar with great TAB Lotteries and Keno facilities and is the inaugural winner of Best TAB Licenced Venue in SA. Customer service at the Marryatville is a standout. They provide terrific customer engagement and have good access to terminals and info screens, creating a pleasant punting experience. This is shown through a high turnover and return patronage. Venue management and staff are always across compliance and responsible wagering matters and engage well with TAB representatives.

### **Meeting & Events Venue – Specialist & Accommodation Venues - National Wine Centre**

The National Wine Centre of Australia (NWC) is one of Adelaide's premier event and conference facilities, boasting award-winning services in catering, audio-visual technology and event management. The NWC offers six pillar-less event spaces, catering for 10 to 1500 guests, with abundant natural light, easy access and spectacular architecture.

Integrated within each space is state of the art technical and audio-visual equipment which assists in enhancing the client's event experience. A new commitment to customised events requires a flexible approach with each client, and an 'if we can, we will' attitude. Flexibility is something that the National Wine Centre values as a point of difference in the industry.

### **Meeting & Events Venue – General Division - The Highway**

The Highway should be proud of their commitment to functions. They follow a thorough approach to make sure events, whether it be a meeting for 10 people or a wedding for 200 guests, is of the very highest standard. Their Highways' functions, events and conference brochure is a clear, accurate description of what they offer. The Highway Function Room design and decor has remained classically neutral, which enables the rooms to be perfect for a wide range of events and by offering a variety of accommodating packages, they appeal to a wide range of the community.

### **Retail Outlet – Attached - Stirling Hotel**

The Stirling Cellars and Patisserie has a comprehensive offering of wine, beer and spirits from everyday Sip n Save products, to boutique, local wines and internationally renowned brands. High-end wines are also available from the comprehensive cellar located downstairs through consultation with the Cellars' knowledgeable staff. For customers looking to purchase wine or beer and complement their special bottle with gourmet produce, a range of fresh bread, locally produced items and housemade food is available, including a range of products created by the Stirling Hotel chefs.

### **Retail Outlet - Stand Alone - East End Cellars**

EEC has established itself as the preeminent wine cellar in the CBD with one of the largest ranges of local, national and international wine, beer and spirits. It has redefined the retail experience. Its commitment to quality and customer service is paramount - for both on and off trade. It's the interactive experience the customers are looking for and the Tasting Room delivers.

### **Small Venue - Paloma Bar & Pantry**

Paloma Bar & Pantry is described as a "colonial Southern European" bar modelled on French and Spanish drinkeries. A softer venue for Peel Street, it offers a light and refreshing cocktail list and a pantry style charcuterie. Established by the Palmer Hotel Group it complements the other small bars on Peel St well. The wines draw on Paloma's general theme, with Mediterranean varietals from local and international producers. The staff are attentive and polished, providing a very satisfying experience for patrons.

### **Redeveloped Hotel – Country - Big River Golf & Country Club**

The redevelopment of the Big River Golf & Country Club offers guests a fresh, modern, and functional venue for them to enjoy with family and friends. Now a go-to venue in the Riverland region it offers a range of facilities from accommodation to dining, golf and gaming. The focus was on providing better functionality for guests and staff. The additional tavern refurbishment opened more areas for guests to enjoy, seeing the addition of a small function space and utilisation of the previously disused deck area. The Club offers an experience for all, including travellers, corporates, golf groups, local punters and families looking for an outing.

### **Redeveloped Hotel – Metropolitan - Marion Hotel**

Completed in September 2019, the redevelopment of the 60's style Marion Hotel has brought a new lease of life into the venue. With an extensive focus on hotel-style accommodation, food and beverage, functions, retail and gaming, all areas of the hotel have been refurbished along with a refreshed brand and personality emphasising interaction with the customer. A highlight of the redevelopment is the expanded outdoor area featuring a stunning flow of energy through the building. It is clear the team have embraced their new identity and the overall experience for patrons is outstanding.

Both the Sailmaster Tavern and Strathmore Hotel have received Judges' Commendations.

### **Chef of the Year - Kevin Martel - The Playford**

A new award category for 2020, judges were looking for an entrant's commitment to their cookery, venue and teams. Kevin has displayed this convincingly. His passion for food translates to others and he is an inspiration for the new and upcoming generation of chefs, setting them up for great careers in the kitchen.

Kevin is committed to fresh and local produce and translating a food story to the patron, whilst maintaining commercial responsibility and managing teams.

Sustainability is key and beside his herb garden and organic waste programme, he is also a helping hand at Oz Harvest.

### **Employee Excellence in Service - Accommodation Division - Jane Heywood - Sage Hotel**

Another new category for 2020, this category recognises a front of house employee who exemplifies the ideals of service: friendly, professional, and knowledgeable.

Jane Heywood from the Sage Hotel is an asset to the hotel, offering an award-winning standard of service and team. Jane's overall commitment and professionalism is second to none resulting in the highest of quality service and exceptional guest experiences. Jane displays reliability, love for the job, honesty and is a mentor for her colleagues.

Her positive attitude towards work has come from learning to be herself and embracing the hotel's customers as if they were walking into her own home.

Congratulations to Jane and all other nominees.

### **Employee Excellence in Service - General Division - Jessica Bellwood - Marion Hotel**

Jess has been employed with the Hurley Hotel Group since 2014 and is currently the Functions Manager at the Marion Hotel. Jess has displayed her commitment to the hotel, improving both the quality and profitability of the events and functions business at the hotel. Jess is known for her wonderful customer relationships and is a proactive and confident decision maker. She is committed to her team and an asset for any business that she works with. Congratulations to Jess and to all other nominees in this category.

### **Hotel Industry Rising Star - Ben Rogers - National Wine Centre**

Well done to Ben on winning this prestigious award. The judges commended his personal dedication, leadership and commitment. Entrants in this award must be aged 30 or younger and in a management position in a hotel. The judges decided on the winner by considering the entrants' knowledge, expertise, interest, involvement and ambitions in the hotel industry. Ben will now go forward to the AHA National Awards to be held later in 2021.

### **Best Overall Hotel - Marion Hotel**

This incredible renovation of a historical but aged hotel into a southern suburbs gem has positioned the Marion as a shining star in the South Australian hotel industry. Its fresh and innovative approach extends across accommodation, food and beverage, functions and events, and customer service. The Marion Hotel is a wonderful example of true pub-style hospitality. The large investment in the business by the Hurley Hotel Group is an indication of the commitment to ensuring the hotel's success, the ongoing support for staff and satisfaction of patrons.

The Marion Hotel sets the benchmark for hospitality in the state and is a very worthwhile winner of the 'Best Overall Hotel in SA'.