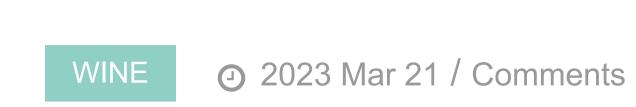


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The Winners of the Meininger Awards 2023 Revealed

The seats were packed, the stage was lit, and the lights were dimmed. The 17th Meininger Awards Excellence in Wine & Spirit began, in front of 500 of the most significant people in the wine and spirits sectors.

Reading time: 2m 45s



Winners of the 2023 Meininger Awards

Created by Meininger Verlag, Germany's leading publishing house for alcoholic beverages, the Meininger Awards have become the most coveted awards in Europe. Presented the night before ProWein begins, the exclusive ceremony was held at the Kö59 luxury hotel in Düsseldorf.

Without further ado, here are the winners:

International Wine Entrepreneur of the Year Dr Andreas Brokemper

Dr Andreas Brokemper is CEO of the sparkling giant Henkell Freixenet, and has been responsible for driving the international outlook and dynamic development of the Henkell company. The merger between Henkell & Co. Group and Spain's Grupo Freixenet in 2018 represents a unique entrepreneurial achievement.

Brokemper has worked for the Oetker family business, which owns Henkell Freixenet, since 1998. He provided crucial strategic input when it came to transforming the then Binding brewery into the Radeberger group. In 2002 he was appointed Director of Controlling & Finance at Henkell & Söhnlein Sektkellereien, subsequently integrating several famous sparkling wine and spirit businesses and masterminding the incorporation of Mionetto, the successful Prosecco brand, in 2008.

National Wine Entrepreneur of the Year Luca Lobenberg

Luca Lobenberg joined Lobenbergs Gute Weine, Germany's largest owner-operated distributor, in 2018. His entrepreneurial spirit allowed him to revolutionise his father's online wine retail arm and triple profits by investing in marketing and digital sales channels.

Founded in 1991 by Luca's father Heiner Lobenberg, Lobenberg's Gute Weine ("good wines") began as a wine retail and mail order company. Today its unique portfolio includes a large number of winemakers with a cult following and internationally recognised names, along with young talents and special discoveries.

Wine Family of the Year The Lo Franco family, Fattoria La Vialla, Tuscany

Fattoria La Vialla was born out of Piero and Giuliana Lo Franco's ambitions in 1978 to start an organic farm. For years now, the La Vialla brand has stood for family values, high-quality organic products, pioneering spirit, respect for nature, sustainability and prudent entrepreneurship.

Today, La Vialla is a complex agricultural operation managed by brothers Gianni, Antonio and Bandino Lo Franc. Visitors to the region are invited to stay in the company's lovingly restored country houses and enjoy locally crafted organic products.

Fattoria La Vialla is the largest biodynamic farming operation in Europe. The brothers' latest ground-breaking discovery is fermentation yeasts grown from bee pollen.

Outstanding Achievement Award Dr Laura Catena, Catena Zapata

Dr Laura Catena is the fourth generation to manage the Catena Zapata vineyard in Argentina and is recognised as the face of Argentine wine. In 1995, she founded the Catena Institute of Wine in pursuit of her vision to produce top quality wines in the country's highest altitudes.

Laura Catena has a background in the natural sciences — she studied biology and medicine at Harvard and Stanford — and so, when she took over the helm of the vineyard in 2009, there was no question that she would focus on sustainability both in growing and producing wine.

Spirits Company of the Year Lantenhammer Destillerie, Bavaria

Its inspiring and forward-looking entrepreneurship has earned Lantenhammer Destillerie on the shores of Schliersee lake in Bavaria the Award. The company's philosophy centres around using regional Bavarian ingredients to create popular spirits. Their Bavarian vodkas, rums, dry gins and whiskies sport names such as Bavarka, Rumult, or Josef and recently they began selling single malts created on the North Sea island of Sylt.

Today, Lantenhammer's products are a fixture on the menus of Germany's top bars and restaurants. Founded in 1928 by Amalie and Josef Lantenhammer as a gentian schnapps distillery, Lantenhammer is now one of the most modern distilleries in Europe and features a fully immersive visitor centre. '

Lifetime Achievement Award Bruno Paillard, Champagne

Bruno Paillard hails from an old winemaking family and like his father trained as a wine broker. Early on, discovered his love of Champagne: in 1981, aged just 27, he founded the eponymous Champagne house that today is considered one of the best producers in the region.

Thanks to his close-knit network and extensive expertise, he has succeeded in securing access to top-class vineyards, demonstrating courage and an uncompromising attitude since the early days of his career as a winemaker. Rather than leasing an old, tradition-rich wine cellar, in 1990 he opted for a production site with stateof-the-art equipment and steel tanks, side by side with wooden barrels, and aimed his sales strategy squarely at top restaurants and bars, an approach that has proven successful.

Producing his Champagne is by no means Bruno Paillard's only venture; in 1991 he joined forces with others to establish what is today known as Lanson BCC Holding, which over the years has incorporated brands such as Philipponnat, De Venoge, Boizel and Maison Burtin to become one of the major players in the Champagne business.

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