



Success for South East Wine Merchants International at the IWC Merchant Awards UK

At this year's International Wine Challenge (IWC) Merchant Awards UK the South East brought home a range of medals with local businesses impressing the judges and claiming the titles for:

- IWC Specialist Merchant Australia 2019 – [The Vinorium](#)
- IWC Specialist Merchant Fortified 2019 – [Vintage Wine and Port](#)
- IWC Specialist Merchant Germany 2019 – [The WineBarn](#)
- IWC Small Independent Merchant of the Year 2019 – [Dunell's](#)

Dunell's was also named the IWC Regional Merchant South and South East 2019.

The **Vinorium** based in Lenham near Maidstone scooped the prize for IWC Specialist Merchant Australia 2019. Their impressive range of Aussie wines and their desire to exclusively represent the very best of Australia's greatest wine producers, wowed the judges and won them the title for the second year running.

IWC Specialist Merchant Germany 2019 went to **The WineBarn**, Winchester, again retaining the title from 2018. With a list containing over 140 German Rieslings alone, the judges were impressed by the amazing choice of German wines that the WineBarn had to offer.

Hampshire-based **Vintage Wine and Port** took home the prize for IWC Specialist Merchant Fortified 2019. Housed in a beautiful 1830 building in Fordingbridge, it is now the UK's largest retailer of vintage wine and port gifts online, housing nearly 25,000 bottles in its cellars.

Despite stiff competition, Jersey business **Dunell's** was chosen as IWC Regional Merchant for the South and South East 2019. Not only that but the retailer also scooped the award for IWC Small Independent Merchant of the Year 2019. The judges were impressed by the extensive shop makeover that the business had recently undergone and the brilliant way in which it markets its impressive range. 'They offer a truly exciting place for consumers to buy wine', concluded the judges.

Much-loved sommelier-turned-hotelier **Gerard Basset**, who passed away in January, was also honoured at the awards ceremony with the IWC Lifetime Achievement Award. The award comes a month after a Service of Thanksgiving at Winchester Cathedral for the remarkable life of Gerard Basset. His career included being the first to simultaneously hold the Master of Wine, Master Sommelier, MBA Wine Business and MSc from the International Organisation of Vine and Wine, and being a founding partner in the ground-breaking Hotel du Vin group.

In its 36th year, the International Wine Challenge is accepted as the world's most rigorous, impartial and influential wine competition. The International Wine Challenge Merchant Awards UK celebrate the most successful small and large businesses, who deliver an outstanding service to wine consumers. The awards are based on top quality wines, but, most importantly, in this sector of the awards, of a commercially successful, viable, and proven business model. This year's winners were announced on 9th July and the full list of those awarded can be seen [here](#), and the [Merchant Awards results here](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The International Wine Challenge

In its 36th year, the International Wine Challenge is accepted as the world's most rigorous, impartial and influential wine competition. The IWC assesses every wine 'blind' and judges each for its faithfulness to style, region and vintage. Each medal-winning wine is tasted on at least three separate occasions by a minimum of 12 different judges including Masters of Wine. Awards include medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze) and Commended awards.

The IWC Merchant Awards UK

The Merchant Awards were introduced to the IWC in 1990. A distinguished panel of judges examines each entry and, over the course of two days, decides on the winners for each category. The judges focus on the business side of retailing; it's not just about having great wines. This year the judging panel comprised Laura Jewell MW, Helen McGinn, Peter McCombie MW, Tim Atkin MW and Charles Metcalfe. Laure Patry joined the team to assist with the judging of the Restaurant Wine List award.

The IWC is committed to helping consumers discover great wine, and the medals displayed on winning bottles and in winning shops offer a trusted guarantee of quality.

For more information on the IWC, please contact the IWC team at Phipps
iwc@thisisphipps.com : +44 (0)20 7759 7400 : 17 Exeter Street, London, WC2E 7DU, UK