

2018
New Zealand
HOTEL
INDUSTRY
AWARDS

5 July 2018

Media Release

Hotel Awards highlight regional hotel excellence

Operating far from the main centres has been no barrier for several winners in the 2018 New Zealand Hotel Industry Awards, announced on Thursday evening (5 July) at a gala dinner in Auckland.

High-performing staff members from the previously un-nominated Franz Josef region won three of the 12 awards. The Hotel Industry Awards celebrate and recognise the individuals and hotels delivering outstanding visitor experiences, and set a benchmark of excellence for others to aspire to.

The awards were part of the New Zealand Hotel Industry Conference, co-hosted by Tourism Industry Aotearoa and Horwath HTL Ltd.

A new award, Regional Hotel Employee of the Year, was presented for the first time to recognise the best operational employee working in a hotel not located in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch or Queenstown.

Sally Attfield, Hotel Sector Manager at TIA, says the new award is “an opportunity for regional staff to shine.”

It was awarded to Rohan Thakur, Front Office Manager of Te Waonui Forest Retreat in Franz Josef.

“It’s often difficult to work in a remote region, but Rohan is surviving and thriving in that environment. He is knowledgeable about the product, customer-focused, flexible, and calm under pressure. He’s a great leader and is always looking for ways to develop and motivate his team,” Ms Attfield says.

Te Waonui Forest Retreat’s Richard Bungeroth picked up the award for Hotel Industry General Manager of the Year, while Mick Yuan from Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier was named Hotel Industry Food and Beverage Employee of the Year.

“It’s extremely pleasing to see that hotels in remote regions are meeting the challenges of providing excellent customer service and can foot it with main centre properties that benefit from much easier access to staff and resources,” Horwath HTL Ltd Director Stephen Hamilton says.

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The hotel sector's most prestigious prize, the Hotel Industry Achievement Award, also went to a hotelier who built her career in the regions. The Hotel Industry Achievement Award was presented for the fifth time this year to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution of an individual to the New Zealand hotel and tourism industry.

It was won by Kathy Guy, Group General Manager of the Chateau Tongariro Hotel and the Wairakei Resort Taupō, and a Director of scenic flight operator Mountain Air.

"Starting out as a waitress, a job that fitted around her young family, Kathy worked her way up to management level. In addition to overseeing the restoration of the iconic Chateau Tongariro Hotel, she has been active in both the regional and national tourism industry, representing her region on a number of boards and setting up the Ruapehu Marketing Group," Ms Atfield says.

Mr Hamilton says the New Zealand Hotel Industry Awards attracted a record number of entries this year, giving the judges a difficult task.

"The calibre of the finalists and winners shows our hotel sector is in good heart and is providing people with excellent career opportunities across a range of disciplines," he says.

The hotel industry is a vital part of New Zealand's \$36 billion tourism industry, supporting employment for thousands of people and injecting millions of dollars into our country. They also give back to their local communities in many ways.

The judging process selected candidates who demonstrated a number of common factors, such as receiving recognition from hotel guests beyond the norm, demonstrating a remarkable commitment to their employer, having undergone training to further their career, and personal attributes such as personality, problem solving, and anticipating guests' needs.

The winners of the New Zealand Hotel Industry Awards are as follows:

Hotel Industry Achievement Award

- Kathy Guy, Group General Manager of the Chateau Tongariro Hotel and the Wairakei Resort Taupō

Hotel Industry General Manager of the Year, sponsored by AHS Hospitality

- Richard Bungeroth, General Manager, Te Waonui Forest Retreat, Franz Josef Glacier

Hotel Industry Senior Hotel Executive of the Year, sponsored by NZ Sotheby's International Realty

- Les Morgan, Director of Hotels, Sudima Hotels & Resorts

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Hotel Industry Outstanding Young Hotel Executive of the Year

- Danielle Davies, Business Development Manager – International, SKYCITY Hotel and SKYCITY Grand Hotel, Auckland

Hotel Industry Administration Employee of the Year

- Eugenia Marquez, Marketing Executive, Cordis Hotel, Auckland

Hotel Industry Concierge of the Year

- Ingmar Becker, Chief Concierge, Bolton Hotel, Wellington

Hotel Industry Environmental Initiative of the Year, sponsored by SKAL

- Sudima Auckland Airport

Hotel Industry Food and Beverage Employee of the Year, sponsored by ServiceIQ

- Mick Yuan, Restaurant and Bar Manager, Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier

Hotel Industry Front Office Services Employee of the Year, sponsored by the New Zealand School of Tourism

- Neil Hemraj, Front Office Manager, CityLife Hotel Auckland

Hotel Industry Housekeeper Employee of the Year, sponsored by Vendella

- Annalise Stewart, Executive Housekeeper, InterContinental Hotel Wellington

Hotel Industry Regional Hotel Employee of the Year

- Rohan Thakur, Front Office Manager, Te Waonui Forest Retreat, Franz Josef Glacier

Hotel Industry Revenue Manager of the Year, sponsored by ARMA

- Roma Patel, National Reservations & and Yield Manager, Sudima Hotels & Resorts

Hotel Industry Sales, Marketing & Distribution Employee of the Year, sponsored by Fastrack Group

- Leigh Higgins, Director of Sales – Corporate and MICE, Sudima Hotels & Resorts

About the co-hosts

Tourism Industry Aotearoa Hotel Sector

TIA's hotel sector represents the interests of over 170 members throughout New Zealand, including international chains, large independent and privately owned hotels. TIA hotel sector members employ over 11,000 staff nationally, with annual revenues of more than \$1.4 billion. TIA's hotel members contribute to a monthly performance survey conducted by the Fresh Information Company.

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Horwath HTL Ltd

Horwath HTL Ltd is a consulting firm specialising in the hotel, tourism, and leisure industries, providing specialist consulting services to a wide range of private sector clients and public sector stakeholders, including developers, investors, funders, owners, and operators. Horwath HTL is affiliated with Crowe Global, a network of more than 140 independent accounting and advisory services firms with 560 offices in more than 100 countries.

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