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NEW ZEALAND'S BEST RESTAURANTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2015

Small Canterbury restaurant wins big at 2015 *Cuisine* NZ Good Food Awards

Canterbury restaurant Roots has been named *Cuisine* magazine's NZ Restaurant of the Year 2015, thanks to an innovative approach and creative dishes that focus on local ingredients.

The degustation-only Lyttelton restaurant is owned by chef Giulio Sturla and his partner Christy Martin – the pair set up the restaurant in 2012, following the 2011 Canterbury quake. "It showed me life is today, not tomorrow, so why not?" Chilean-born Sturla said.

Winners of the prestigious *Cuisine* NZ Good Food Awards – presented by Vittoria Coffee – were announced last night at a cocktail evening at St Matthew-in-the-City in Auckland, attended by the restaurant industry's best. The awards are the only nationwide restaurant accolades.

Roots also took out the Ōra King Salmon Innovation Award for its pioneering approach to produce and sustainability. "When finding the Restaurant of the Year, we look for somewhere that has a story – Roots is that place," said *Cuisine* Editor, Sarah Nicholson. "The restaurant's philosophy has a strong focus on sustainability, much of the produce is grown or foraged, and they serve delicious modern food that has a connection to them, the land and the region."

Cuisine NZ Good Food Awards' head judge Kerry Tyack said it was great to see winners of the awards drawn from throughout the country, along with the number of hatted restaurants increase. "We're very happy to have superb winners from Canterbury, Hawke's Bay, Wellington and Auckland. And the quality of restaurants increases every year in these awards – seven more restaurants gained coveted chef's hats this year."

Benjamin Bayly, the mastermind behind the menus at Auckland fine-diner The Grove and its Italian sibling Baduzzi, was named Vittoria Coffee Chef of the Year for the second year running. Bayly remains the only New Zealand chef to hold an impressive five chef's hats – three at The Grove and two at Baduzzi. "Ben moves his food on to greater heights every year," said Nicholson.

Auckland's Sidart, which took out the 2014 Restaurant of the Year title, was crowned Sanpellegrino Best Metropolitan Restaurant in this year's awards.

Also in Auckland, The French Café was recognised for its impeccable wine service with the Negociants New Zealand Best Wine Experience award. The restaurant was additionally named joint runner-up Best Metropolitan Restaurant, together with The Grove.

Wellington's smart and chic new seafood-focused restaurant Whitebait won Electrolux Best New Restaurant, while the capital's Jano Bistro was runner-up.

Napier's quirky, creative restaurant Pacifica was named KitchenAid Best Regional Restaurant, with Nelson favourite Hopgood's runner-up.

Cazador, a game-focused Auckland eatery, was awarded the title of American Express Best Specialist Restaurant.

North Canterbury's idyllic Pegasus Bay took out the Best Winery Restaurant award, with Hawke's Bay's stylish Elephant Hill runner-up.

And Wellington's Ortega Fish Shack maître d' Davey McDonald was named Ghiotti by European Foods Restaurant Personality of the Year, with judges commenting on the warmth, knowledge and commitment that McDonald brings to the restaurant.

For full profiles of the winners and other top restaurants listed in the *Cuisine* NZ Good Food Awards 2015, go to cuisinegoodfoodguide.co.nz or get the *Cuisine Good Food Guide 2015* free with the July issue of *Cuisine*, on sale 15 June 2015.

Cuisine NZ Good Food Awards 2015 winners

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR 2015: Roots, Lyttelton

Ōra King Salmon Innovation Award: Roots, Lyttelton

Vittoria Coffee Chef of the Year: Benjamin Bayly, Baduzzi and The Grove, Auckland

Sanpellegrino Best Metropolitan Restaurant: Sidart, Auckland

Joint runners-up: The Grove & The French Café, both Auckland

KitchenAid Best Regional Restaurant: Pacifica, Napier



Runner-up: Hopgood's, Nelson

Electrolux Best New Restaurant: Whitebait, Wellington

Runner-up: Jano Bistro, Wellington

American Express Best Specialist Restaurant: Cazador, Auckland

Best Winery Restaurant: Pegasus Bay, North Canterbury

Runner-up: Elephant Hill, Hawke's Bay

Ghiotti by European Foods Restaurant Personality of the Year: Davey McDonald,
Ortega Fish Shack, Wellington

Negociants New Zealand Best Wine Experience: The French Café, Auckland

* **2015 Hat recipients**

Scores out of 20 determine a restaurant's hat rating. One hat is (15/20) is considered very good, two hats (16-17) is great to excellent and three hats (18-20) mean a restaurant is consistently amazing and among the very best.

3 HATS 

Sidart, Auckland

The French Café, Auckland

The Grove, Auckland

Kazuya, Auckland

2 HATS 

Baduzzi, Auckland

Cazador, Auckland

Clooney, Auckland

Cocoro, Auckland

Logan Brown, Wellington

Masu, Auckland

Merediths, Auckland

Roots, Lyttelton

1 HAT 

Bracken, Dunedin

Bracu, Auckland

Charley Noble, Wellington

Depot, Auckland

Elephant Hill, Hawke's Bay

Harlequin Public House, Christchurch

Hopgood's, Nelson

Jano Bistro, Wellington

Orphans Kitchen, Auckland

Ortega Fish Shack & Bar, Wellington

Pacifica, Napier

Palate, Hamilton

Pegasus Bay, North Canterbury

Pescatore, Christchurch

Ponsonby Road Bistro, Auckland

Rata, Queenstown

Riverstone Kitchen, North Otago

Saggio di Vino, Christchurch

Soul Bar & Bistro, Auckland

The Engine Room, Auckland

The Grill by Sean Connolly, Auckland

The Larder, Wellington

Victoria Street Bistro, Hamilton

WBC, Wellington

Whitebait, Wellington

- Ends -

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