



Media Release

Issued Wednesday 23 December, 2009

Top marks to Australia

Wine Australia is proud to announce the winners of eight international travel scholarships, whereby the top diploma students of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) – one each from the United States, Canada, Ireland, Europe and the Asia Pacific region – have been awarded a two-week study trip to Australia. In addition, three advanced certificate graduates from the emerging markets of China/Hong Kong/Macau, North East and South East Asia have been recognised and will also be making the trip to Australia.

In 2009 Wine Australia was the first country-specific marketing body to become a Gold Corporate Patron of the WSET, demonstrating Australia's commitment to wine education. Congratulating the winners, Lucy Anderson, Manager – International Marketing and Communications, said: "This is a great way to cap off the year. Well trained and knowledgeable professionals are a cornerstone of a globally successful wine trade, and we are committed to helping achieve this."

2009 Winners:

- Ms Irene Bachkönig (Austria)
- Ms Roisin Curley (Ireland)
- Mr Melvin Goh (Singapore)
- Mr Su Hee Kim (South Korea)
- Ms Jennifer Luk (Hong Kong)
- Ms Sharon McLean (Canada)
- Ms Katy Prescott (New Zealand)
- Mr Jesse Webster (United States)

Ms Bachkönig not only won the Wine Australia travel scholarship for the top performing Diploma student in mainland Europe, but also achieved the highest overall mark worldwide in the academic year 2008/9. Ms Bachkönig commented: "Wine has always been not only my profession but also my passion due to its diversity. With the WSET Diploma I could complete an internationally accredited course at the highest level and I am very proud of being the best candidate and winning the Wine Australia Scholarship."

From the US, Jesse Webster, who has worked in the restaurant business for almost 20 years reflected: "To successfully complete my Diploma after two years of study was a great feeling of satisfaction and no small relief. The Wine Australia scholarship is massively exciting and a great honour. Visiting Australia will provide a fantastic opportunity to put several years of experience tasting, buying and selling Australian wines into a real physical perspective. I really appreciate the huge benefit that walking in the vineyards can bring to appreciation of wine – the sense of place comes into focus a little more clearly if one has seen the place."

Wine Australia has continued its commitment to wine education in 2009, through support of global education providers and ongoing investment in the provision of tutored masterclasses and the delivery of an educational platform "*Australia: world class*", available in seven languages, via the internet and on DVD. In addition, Wine Australia eagerly awaits the launch of the WSET Australian Specialist Course that will provide graduates with a chance to increase their knowledge on Australian wine regions, wine styles and market development initiatives. 2010 looks to be an exciting and rewarding year.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES:

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Notes for Editors:

- **Wine Australia** is the brand under which the **Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation**, a Government organisation established to provide strategic support to the Australian wine sector, delivers its international marketing programs.
- **Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET)** was founded in 1969 to provide high quality education and training in wines and spirits. Since then, WSET has grown into the foremost international body in the field of wines and spirits education, with a suite of qualifications offered in 50 countries worldwide.
- The WSET Diploma is a specialist qualification where detailed knowledge is combined with commercial factors and a thorough system for the professional evaluation of wines and spirits.
- The travel scholarship will take place in April 2010