

Distell Inter Hotel Challenge 2017 winners announced

Described as the 'Oscars of the hotel world', the Distell Inter Hotel Challenge has become a red-letter annual event on the hotel industry calendar. The role of the competition is to provide a vehicle and public platform for creating an environment of mentorship for the country's hospitality industry.

The winners of the fifth annual Distell Inter Hotel Challenge was announced at a gala awards dinner on 5 August 2017 at the Southern Sun Cape Sun. Attended by Richard Rushton (MD Distell) and Volker Heiden (area vice president, Protea Hotels of Marriott International), the cream of South Africa's hoteliers, chefs, sommeliers and vintners as well as top companies that supply the hospitality industry.



Best Wine Steward 2017, Michelle Swart, NH The Lord Charles



Best Chef 2017, Eugene Ramcharan, Beverly Hills

The initiative, championed by Distell, is hotly contested as hotels around South Africa present their protégés. The candidates compete in different categories over a period of months culminating in a glittering gala event where the winners of the 2017 Challenge are announced.

In the chef categories

• **Best Chef 2017:** Eugene Ramcharan from Beverly Hills

For a starter, Chef Ramcharan produced a Woodview Wagyu beef brisket and herb crusted kingklip, served with roasted garlic and Lancewood Cheese cream cheese and parsnip mousse, carrot and citrus mousse, pickled baby radishes and candy stripe beetroots, passion fruit gel and a veloute - Nomonde Dlamini paired the dish very well with Durbanville Hills Wine Chardonnay

For main, the chef presented glazed Woodview Wagyu beef short rib and beef cheek ragout served with jewelled sweet potato mousse, honey glazed rainbow carrots, snap peas, charred sweetcorn segments and jus filled baby onion cups - paired with Durbanville Hills Wine.

Chef Ramcharan finished off with a delectable 'Dark Choc & Orange Delice' which he served with an almond brandy snap, macerated strawberries, cognac cream and a mixed berry gel paired with exquisite Bisquit Cognac.









- **Best Chef first runner up:** Gizelle Els from NH The Lord Charles
- **Best Chef second runner up:** Samkelo Hlophe from One&Only Cape Town
- **Most Promising Chef 2017:** Sive Godena from Cape Town International Convention Centre

- **Best Starter:** Nicholas Freitas from The Palazzo
- **Best Main Course:** Marcos Hendry from Belmond Mount Nelson
- **Lancewood Best Dessert:** Andile Ndlovu from Hartford House
- **Best Presentation:** Litha Salimani from Southern Sun Waterfront
- **Scanpan Excellent Kitchen Practice' Award:** Andile Ndlovu from Hartford House
- **Best Bread Baker:** Togara Mabharani from Belmond Mount Nelson
- **Best Bread Baker first runner up:** Cecelia Adams from Cape Grace
- **Best Bread Baker second runner up:** Brian Baumann from One&Only, Cape Town
- **Showcook 'Man of the Match':** Shaun Munro from Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani
- **Best Team:** NH The Lord Charles and The Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa
- To celebrate the fifth anniversary, British Airways is flying the **winning Executive Chef** Tony Kocke, Beverly Hills to spend a weekend at The Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa.
- **Hotel Awards:** The Best Table Decoration won by Sun International Table Bay Cape Town, was for their sensational representation reflecting the ethos of the rich floral kingdom of South Africa. The Most Glamorous Table was Protea Hotel Edward, Durban and The Table We Would Wish To Dine At, One&Only Cape Town.

“ Our gorgeous table representing our rich Cape Floral kingdom [@TableBayHotelSA #InterHotelChallenge](https://twitter.com/NnaW6Ve33)
[pic.twitter.com/NnaW6Ve33](https://twitter.com/NnaW6Ve33)— Joanne Selby (@GMTheTableBay) [August 5, 2017](#) ”

In the wine steward category:

- **Best Wine Steward 2017:** Michelle Swart from NH The Lord Charles representing Allesverloren & Van Ryn's
- **Best Wine Steward first runner up:** Alvezo Abrahams from Cape Grace representing Fleur du Cap and Bisquit Dubouché et Cie
- **Best Wine Steward second runner up:** Melikhaya Grant Sondezi from One&Only Cape Town representing Durbanville Hills and Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky
- **Most Promising Wine Steward:** Nkululeko Khohloloane from the Cape Town International Convention Centre

representing Pongrácz and Monis.

- **Up and Coming Wine Steward** (The Wonga Prize): Marie Manyoha from The Palace at the Lost City representing Fleur du Cap and Black Bottle

Apart from receiving sought after prizes, the winning candidates use this spotlight to springboard into the industry. Most candidates go on to take on jobs that fast-track them into key positions in hotels, safari lodges, restaurants and other parts of South Africa's hospitality industry. Some go on to successful careers internationally, becoming ambassadors for our hospitality industry. The hotels regard the challenge as a platform for their own skills upliftment programmes. The culminating gala evening is an opportunity to offer tangible recognition and public acknowledgement of their own candidates. Many use the programme to ultimately promote from within.

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