



# AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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## MEDIA RELEASE

**\*\*\*EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30PM (EST), 28 AUGUST, 2008**

28 August, 2008

## AUSTRALIA'S BEST HOTELS HONOURED

Australia's best hotels have been recognised at the 2008 AHA National Hotel Awards for Excellence, with the winners announced at a gala dinner in Sydney tonight.

The awards reward high standards in all aspects of hotels, including bars, restaurants and accommodation, and there was at least one winner from each Australian State and Territory.

Major award-winners were:

- Overall General Hotel of the Year: Full Moon Hotel (Sandgate, QLD); and
- Overall Accommodation Hotel of the Year: Lilianfels Blue Mountains Resort & Spa (Katoomba, NSW).

Other award-winners included:

- Best Bar Presentation & Service: Hilton Sydney – Zeta Bar (Sydney, NSW)/Prince Patrick Hotel (Collingwood, VIC) – joint winners;
- Best Restaurant (General Division): First Floor Restaurant (Kingston, ACT);
- Best Restaurant (Accommodation Division): Radisson Plaza Hotel Sydney – Bilson's Restaurant (Sydney, NSW);
- Best Environmental Initiative: Esplanade Hotel Fremantle (Fremantle, WA); and
- Outstanding Community Service and Achievement: Grand Hotel (Mornington, VIC)/Macquarie Hotel (Surry Hills, NSW) – joint winners.

Three hoteliers were inaugural inductees into the Johnnie Walker Hall of Fame:

- Michael Monaghan AM (WA);
- Tom Payne (VIC); and
- David Thomas (NSW).

AHA Chief Executive Officer Bill Healey has praised finalists, award-winners and others who were honoured.

"Australia's hotel industry is constantly 'raising the bar' when it comes to standards," he said. "Hotels that have been honoured at the 2008 AHA National Hotel Awards for Excellence underline this point. Congratulations to all finalists and in particular, all winning hotels."

A complete list of winners follows.

**Please do not attempt to contact any award-winners before 11.30pm (EST) on 28 August, 2008**

**For further information:**

**Bill Healey, Chief Executive Officer  
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*The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) is the pre-eminent tourism and hospitality industry organisation in Australia. It has around 5000 members operating general and accommodation hotels. It has a national office and branches in each State and Territory. It also has a discrete branch to represent the interests of its accommodation members that covers four and five-star properties.*

# 2008 AHA National Hotel Awards for Excellence

## **OVERALL GENERAL HOTEL OF THE YEAR**

**(sponsored by Lion Nathan)**

### **FULL MOON HOTEL (Sandgate, QLD)**

The Full Moon Hotel has been rewarded for its overall presentation in a superb location overlooking the stunning Bramble Bay. It is a landmark destination for good food and entertainment, in a superb indoor and outdoor setting. The design is contemporary and creates a comfortable ambience. The marketing is consistent and well targeted. The hotel boasts excellent, reasonably-priced food and beverages, while another asset is its courteous and professional service. The Full Moon Tavern is a worthy winner of this prestigious award.

## **OVERALL ACCOMMODATION HOTEL OF THE YEAR**

**(sponsored by Tabcorp/Sky Channel)**

### **LILIANFELS BLUE MOUNTAINS RESORT & SPA (Katoomba, NSW)**

This resort, in a magnificent location, is surrounded by beautifully established English gardens and has first-rate recreational facilities. Personalised service and attention to detail offers hospitality at its best! Darley's Restaurant has a beautifully balanced menu, including vegetarian selection and a wine list to be proud of. The food is fresh, using the best of ingredients. The rooms have an elegant feel, are well appointed and superbly maintained. With its fireplaces, the fabulous bar/lounge creates a unique ambience. The staff throughout the hotel are courteous and professional.

## **HALL OF FAME**

**(sponsored by Johnnie Walker)**

### **MICHAEL MONAGHAN AM (WA)**

Michael Monaghan AM has over 36 years experience in the hotel industry, in charge of Perth's iconic Subiaco Hotel. In 1992, he was elected State President of the Australian Hotels Association, WA Branch and held this role until 2004. From 1996-98, Mr Monaghan served as National President of the AHA. He is also a State and National life member of the Association. Mr Monaghan has served on the boards of the Tourism Council of Western Australian and the Western Australian Tourism Commission. Mr Monaghan was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to the hospitality industry and was also a recipient of the Prime Minister's Centenary Medal. Mr Monaghan is a supporter of numerous community and charity organisations.

### **TOM PAYNE (VIC)**

Tom Payne's career in the hotel industry started over 60 years ago, as a teenager with the position of bell-boy at the former Occidental Hotel in Collins Street, Melbourne. He progressed into various supervisory positions and 12 years later, he became a partner in the Target Hotel Group. He later formed the Premier Hotel Group and he continues to successfully operate the Old England and Sir Henry Barkly hotels in Heidelberg. Since 1968, Mr Payne has served as an AHA VIC Councillor and has held the positions of President, Vice President and Executive member with the AHA VIC. He is national and State life member of the AHA. Mr Payne was also instrumental in the process that enabled Victorian hotels to operate gaming machines.

### **DAVID THOMAS (NSW)**

David Thomas has a family history in hotels, having spent his childhood years with his parents at the Good Companions Hotel in Tamworth, and The York and The Surry in Sydney. The first pub Mr Thomas ran in his own right was the Balfour Hotel, also in Sydney. In the early 1970s, he acquired his now-flagship hotel, The Oaks at Neutral Bay. Mr Thomas now owns now four great properties – the Entrance Hotel, the Greystanes Inn, the Winston Hills Hotel and The Oaks. The Thomas family has helped hundreds of publicans improve their businesses. They believe in constant improvement by everyone in the industry. Mr Thomas has a great passion for both his hotels and the industry at large.

## **OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE & ACHIEVEMENT**

**(sponsored by Foster's Group)**

### **GRAND HOTEL (Mornington, VIC)/MACQUARIE HOTEL (Surry Hills, NSW) – joint winners**

The Grand Hotel has a consistent and ongoing commitment to local community groups and charities all year round. It deserves compliments for its new fundraising initiatives, while the hotel is highly regarded in the local community. The Macquarie Hotel has a fierce desire for constant engagement with its local community and in particular, its interest in helping the homeless. Many charities are supported by the hotel all year round and special initiatives like its "walking for MS" campaign are projects to be proud of.

**BEST TRAINING INITIATIVE****(sponsored by Foster's Group)****HOLIDAY INN ADELAIDE (Adelaide, SA)**

Holiday Inn Adelaide provides training and opportunities for all levels of personnel, demonstrating an outstanding commitment to the future of the hospitality industry. Special emphasis is placed on staff incentives for achievers who exceed guest expectations.

**BEST ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE****(sponsored by Staging Connections)****ESPLANADE HOTEL FREMANTLE (Fremantle, WA)**

Excellent, clearly-focused presentation! The Esplanade Hotel Fremantle has implemented initiatives to protect the environment and has established an active environmental task-force to monitor its progress. There are targets to reduce energy consumption, i.e. saving water, gas and electricity. Marketing is focused towards utilising means of communication other than print and guest amenities are bio-degradable, among many other initiatives. The hotel is continually upgrading its facilities to utilise the latest energy-efficient equipment to help to reduce carbon emissions.

**BEST BISTRO BRASSERIE****(sponsored by Crown Commercial)****STANLEY HOTEL (Stanley, TAS)**

Located in north-western Tasmania, the historic Stanley Hotel has a bistro that is popular with locals and tourists alike. The menu is tantalising, using fresh local produce with an emphasis on seafood. Attentive staff and passionate involvement from the hotel's owner add to the experience.

**BEST CASUAL FAMILY DINING****(sponsored by Coca-Cola Amatil)****FULL MOON HOTEL (Sandgate, QLD)**

The Full Moon Hotel is an excellent example of casual family dining in a superb setting overlooking the bay. It offers an interesting menu and friendly, well-groomed staff serve excellent food and beverages.

**BEST RESTAURANT (GENERAL DIVISION)****(sponsored by Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia)****FIRST FLOOR RESTAURANT (Kingston, ACT)**

First Floor Restaurant is a smart, slick and discreet venue. The food is of the highest standards, using only the freshest and best produce, also catering for people with special dietary requirements. The staff are professional and attentive. A wonderful food and beverage experience.

**BEST RESTAURANT (ACCOMMODATION DIVISION)****(sponsored by Diageo)****RADISSON PLAZA HOTEL SYDNEY – BILSON'S RESTAURANT (Sydney, NSW)**

Regarded as the Godfather of Australian cuisine, Tony Bilson has been educating and delighting palates for over three decades in the restaurant that carries his name. Cooking techniques at Bilson's are French-inspired, light and with clean, but complex flavours. The wine list is superb. The staff are friendly and truly professional. A grand dining journey.

**BEST RETAIL OUTLET****(sponsored by Diageo)****EDINBURGH HOTEL & CELLARS (Mitcham, SA)**

This bottle-shop features a vast selection of local, interstate and international wines, beers, spirits and accessories, and it has a customer-friendly layout. The staff have in-depth product knowledge. The displays of special promotions are first class. A browsing treat!

**BEST BAR PRESENTATION & SERVICE****(sponsored by Foster's Group)****HILTON SYDNEY – ZETA BAR (Sydney, NSW)/ PRINCE PATRICK HOTEL (Collingwood, VIC) – joint winners**

Hilton Sydney's Zeta Bar is located atop a breathtaking CBD rooftop terrace and offers inspired interior features and spaces. The cocktail list is cutting edge in the latest global bar trends. The service is friendly and professional. The Prince Patrick Hotel is a quaint, but modern, very popular venue with a comfortable bar/lounge and bistro/brasserie. On offer is an excellent variety of beers, a diverse wine list and fabulous food, supplemented by terrific service.

**BEST SPORTING ENTERTAINMENT VENUE****(sponsored by Fox Sports/Austar)****ARKABA HOTEL MOTEL (Fullarton, SA)**

The Arkaba Hotel Motel presents a versatile, smart and clean entertainment venue. The cuisine, which has a sporting theme, offers value for money. The venue also features original artefacts representing many sports which are tastefully displayed. This is the second straight year the Arkaba has won this award.

**BEST ENTERTAINMENT VENUE****(sponsored by APRA – Australasian Performing Right Association)****COUNTRY CLUB TASMANIA (Prospect, TAS)**

Country Club Tasmania – located in Launceston – offers a huge choice of fun, action and entertainment, including national and international acts. A comfortable environment that enhances Tasmania's tourism product.

**BEST GAMING VENUE****(sponsored by IGT)****MILANO'S (Brighton, VIC)**

Milano's is an outstanding gaming venue. It is clean and attractive, and has friendly and professional staff. In keeping with community expectations, Milano's is committed to promoting responsible gambling.

**BEST REDEVELOPED LICENSED PREMISE (GENERAL DIVISION)****(sponsored by Tabcorp/Sky Channel)****INDIAN OCEAN BREWHAUS & BAR (Mindarie, WA)**

The Indian Ocean Brewhaus & Bar is perfectly located on the water's edge at the Mindarie Marina, overlooking the Indian Ocean. The design is state-of-the-art and incorporates a microbrewery, restaurant and bar. The brewhouse makeover has attracted vast numbers of new customers and has become a hot-spot for locals and day-trippers. A range of good quality food and beverages are available.

**BEST REDEVELOPED ACCOMMODATION HOTEL****(sponsored by J. Boag & Son)****SOFITEL GOLD COAST (Broadbeach, QLD)**

Sofitel Gold Coast's multi-million dollar renovation has proven to be an unqualified success. The superior standard of fit-out has created a truly exceptional, uplifting ambience. Room 81 restaurant is making a superb impression on the Gold Coast dining scene. Every facet of this property has been converted to the highest possible standards.

**BEST MARKETED HOTEL****(sponsored by HOSTPLUS)****FOUNDRY HOTEL COMPLEX (Bendigo, VIC)/ SKYCITY DARWIN (Darwin, NT)**

The Foundry Hotel Complex ticks all the required boxes for this award. Its promotional material and signage are impressive. This hotel has a clear focus on enticing new customers through its innovative promotions. Extensive research was done to develop SKYCITY Darwin's marketing strategy. Great emphasis is placed on innovative marketing supported by promotional literature and advertising.

**BEST HOTEL OR PUB OPERATION****(sponsored by Lion Nathan)****STORY BRIDGE HOTEL (Kangaroo Point, QLD)**

The iconic Story Bridge Hotel is well promoted, well maintained and it continues to be an industry focal point in Brisbane. The hotel boasts excellent cuisine, with its well-aged steaks particularly impressive. A worthy winner of this award.

**BEST HOTEL OR PUB ACCOMMODATION****(sponsored by Lion Nathan)****COOGEE BAY HOTEL (Coogee, NSW)**

This ideally located hotel (opposite Coogee Beach) offers everything under one roof – several bars, including a beer garden, bistro/brasserie, entertainment venue, gaming and retail liquor outlets. It also provides up-market boutique and heritage budget-style accommodation. This is a very impressive, exciting hotel.

**BEST MID-RANGE ACCOMMODATION****(sponsored by Coopers Brewery)****PORT LINCOLN HOTEL (Port Lincoln, SA)**

With sensational views of Boston Bay, the new Port Lincoln Hotel is superbly located. The guest rooms are stylish and contemporary, while similar high standards prevail throughout the rest of the hotel. The restaurant, bars, conference/function rooms, the gaming room and recreational facilities are first class.

**BEST SUITE APARTMENT HOTEL****ACCOMMODATION****(sponsored by Cadbury Schweppes)****QUAY GRAND SUITES SYDNEY (Sydney, NSW)**

This all-suite hotel continually does its best to live up to its enviable location – on Sydney Harbour, within walking distance of the Opera House. A feature is its modern feel and courteous staff. Quadrant Restaurant completes a memorable experience for those visiting this fine property.

**BEST RESORT STYLE ACCOMMODATION****(sponsored by Members Equity)****NOVOTEL NINGALOO RESORT (Exmouth, WA)**

This resort is located on Sunrise Beach in Exmouth Gulf. It provides a base for visitors to the world-renowned Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park. It has been built to a contemporary beach-house design, sympathetic to its surrounding environment using natural material. The rooms are state-of-the-art, have slick décor and a user-friendly layout, while there are good recreational facilities and superb food and beverage.

**BEST BOUTIQUE ACCOMMODATION/HOTEL****(sponsored by Aon)****LILIANFELS BLUE MOUNTAINS RESORT & SPA****(Katoomba, NSW)**

Located in the picturesque Blue Mountains, Lillianfels Blue Mountains Resort & Spa continues to set new standards in accommodation for local and international guests alike. In short, its service and facilities are exquisite. Its signature restaurant, Darley's, is passionate, yet simple, focusing on texture and taste. Recreational facilities – including the garden – are superb. A jewel in the hotel industry's crown.

**BEST SUPERIOR ACCOMMODATION****(sponsored by HOSTPLUS)****CROWNE PLAZA HUNTER VALLEY (Lovedale, NSW)**

The guest rooms at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley are welcoming and well equipped, while the hotel's recreational facilities, which include a golf course, a huge lap-pool and a gym, are simply sensational. With multiple choices, the food-and-beverage experience will satisfy every customer profile. The hotel's staff have a terrific service culture. Wonderful hospitality!

**BEST DELUXE HOTEL ACCOMMODATION****(sponsored by HOSTPLUS)****HYATT HOTEL CANBERRA (Yarralumla, ACT)**

The Hyatt Hotel Canberra is in a premium location in our national capital, within the parliamentary triangle. This traditional hotel offers luxurious accommodation, great dining, as well as a dedication to guest-service perfection. It is an integral part of not only the local community, but also the entire nation at large. The Hyatt Hotel Canberra is a true landmark of the Australian hotel industry.