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The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association Announce Winners of the 2023 Ordinary Awards

The annual hospitality and travel awards dinner celebrates the best and brightest in Virginia

PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Richmond, Va. – The [Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association \(VRLTA\)](https://www.vrlta.org) celebrated the best of the hospitality and tourism industry during the 2023 Ordinary Awards dinner on Tuesday, October 10, at the Richmond Downtown Marriott. An audience of nearly 300 industry peers and leaders from across the state gathered to celebrate the 23 winners across categories that recognize excellence in Virginia’s restaurants, hotels, lodging establishments, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), attractions and more.

Each year, nominations are open to both members of the Association and non-members, and nominees are judged by a group of VRLTA members and industry professionals. The Lifetime Achievement and Legislator Awards are determined by the VRLTA staff and Board. Here are the 2023 award winners:

Attraction of the Year

Virginia International Raceway

Hotelier of the Year

Bruce Thompson, Gold Key PHR

Bartender of the Year

Henry Hill, Hotel Roanoke

Jim Ricketts Award for DMO Employee of the Year

Katherine O’Donnell, Richmond Region Tourism

Campground of the Year

Small County Campground (Louisa)

Jim Wordsworth Award for Restaurateur of the Year

David Saunders, The Texas Inn

Charlie Buser Award for Attraction Employee of the Year

Gayle Jessup White, Monticello

Legislator of the Year Award

Virginia Senator Siobhan Dunnivant

Chef of the Year

Leah Randolph, Dover Hall

Restaurant Employee of the Year

Victor Guzman, Silver Diner Reston

Distillery of the Year

Axe Handle Distilling (Pennington Gap)

Restaurant Manager of the Year

Andrew Vacarella, Catch 31

Golden Pineapple Lifetime Achievement Award

Serafim “Sammy” Canavos

Restaurant of the Year

The Wine Kitchen (Leesburg)

Hospitality Hero - Business

The Boar’s Head Resort (Charlottesville)

Rising Pineapple Award for Hospitality Student of the Year

Zarah King, Virginia Tech

Hospitality Hero - Individual

Brian Wells, Hotel Roanoke

Supplier of the Year

Discover Richmond Tours

Hotel Employee of the Year

Frances Ojeda, Courtyard Marriott North 37th

Supplier Employee of the Year

Daniel Rolander, Keany Produce

Hotel Manager of the Year

Roberto Perez, Residence Inn Ballston

Winery of the Year

Loving Cup Vineyard & Winery (North Garden)

Hotel of the Year

Westfields Marriott Washington Dulles

“This was an exceptional year for the Ordinary Awards, seeing our largest number of nominations yet,” said Eric Terry, President of VRLTA. “On behalf of the Association, staff, and board, we applaud the efforts of our 2023 nominees, finalists, and winners for the incredible work they have done and continue to do. Virginia’s hospitality and tourism industries truly have some extraordinary individuals.”

The event was sponsored by Visit Fairfax, Virginia Business, Cirrus Vodka, Proverb Wines, William Hill Estate Winery, Classic Party Rentals, and Keany Produce. Additional support provided by VRLTA Platinum Partners Ecolab, Heartland, Keynote Event Services, Performance Food Service, Sysco, United Healthcare and US Foods.

For more information on the Ordinary Awards, visit www.ordinaryawards.com.

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The [Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association](http://www.vrta.org) is the unified voice of the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. For more information, visit www.vrta.org or call 800-552-2225.

Why would the awards be called...Ordinary? Chinn’s Ordinary, considered “the oldest original inn in America” (Baltimore Sun), was built around 1728 in Chinn’s Crossroads, now Middleburg, Virginia. The building was uniquely situated to serve as an inn and tavern catering to travelers. Since 1937, it has operated as the Red Fox Inn & Tavern. This history of Chinn’s Ordinary speaks to all facets of VRLTA’s membership—restaurants, lodging, and travel, while the term “ordinary” is just the opposite of the hospitality and travel industry. The true goal of these awards is to honor those in an extraordinary industry, individuals and companies, that are truly Extraordinary.