



THE STAR

Granite Belt wine on the curriculum for The Star Entertainment Group

Granite Belt wines are on the curriculum for The Star Entertainment Group's inaugural wine scholarship program in partnership with the Queensland Wine Industry Association.

The Stars' scholarship winners will go amongst the vines and barrels at vintage time and will be given hands on lessons across all areas of the wine industry from grape growing and harvesting, winemaking processes to bottling, tasting and even wine judging.

Carolina Scudeler restaurant supervisor at The Star Gold Coast's Cucina Vivo and Mark Hadley from premium guest services at Treasury Brisbane are the first to be awarded the scholarships. Both have worked across numerous hospitality roles with The Star for more than five years.

"I love wine, I love drinking it and I love serving it. I was motivated to apply for this scholarship to learn more and provide a better dining experience for my guests," said Carolina.

"I feel I have a solid understanding of wine and wine brands, but I am so enthusiastic to get hands on, learn more about the entire process and then give back as a value add to my customer engagement," said Mark.

The budding sommelier students have already undertaken a two-day immersive program at the Granite Belt's award-winning Hidden Creek Winery, located 20 minutes south of Stanthorpe and 3 hours drive from Brisbane.

Chief Winemaker at Hidden Creek, Andy Williams, who is also a Consultant Winemaker to other vineyards in the region, has applauded the initiative.

"The Granite Belt's reputation for producing quality grapes and award-winning wines is growing in critical acclaim," Mr Williams said.

"As the new kid on the block, it's important to continue exposing our region's wines to the wine consumer. To have a major tourism and hospitality business like The Star immerse the scholarship winners in a hands-on experience in winemaking processes, will only help spread the word."

"Being in the Granite Belt and spending two days with Andy Williams was an unforgettable experience," Carolina said.

"We learned step-by-step the methods required to produce a good wine and how to measure the level of sugar and temperature during the fermentation process. I even got in a wine grape pneumatic press to help take out the leftover skins and seeds.

"I thoroughly enjoyed tasting the beautiful wines made at Hidden Creek, with my favourite the 2021 Verdelho."

Andrew Corrigan, president of the Queensland Wine Industry Association said Carolina and Mark will also get a taste of the industry beyond the vineyards.

"The wine industry is multi-faceted and like the wines themselves, has layers of complexities."

"We are thrilled we can expose the winning pair to the art of wine stewarding at the upcoming Royal Queensland Wine Awards, how to source and match wines for special events as well as become an Associate Judge at the 2023 Queensland Wine Industry Awards later in 2023," Mr Corrigan said.

"I have no doubt both will become passionate ambassadors and advocates for the Queensland wine industry."

Tim Stow, head sommelier at The Star Gold Coast said he was thrilled with the number of outstanding applications for the award.

“We are always looking for ways to support local producers and this is unique.”

“The scholarship is a fantastic opportunity for our team members to gain a deeper understanding of the Queensland wine industry, advance their careers in hospitality as well as bolster our commitment to exceptional guest experiences in our restaurants and bars.”

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