



OLD EBBITT GRILL
INTERNATIONAL WINES
FOR OYSTERS COMPETITION

PRESS RELEASE

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**2023 Old Ebbitt Grill International Wines for Oysters
Competition Results Announcement**

Washington, DC – We are thrilled to announce the winners of the 2023 Old Ebbitt Grill International Wines for Oysters Competition:

GRAND CHAMPION

Le Garenne Crémant de Loire, Loire Valley, France, NV

FIRST RUNNER-UP

Scharffenberger Brut Excellence, Mendocino County, CA, NV

SECOND RUNNER-UP

Inazio Urruzula Getariako Txakolina, Basque, Spain, 2022

BEST NEW ZEALAND

Forrest Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, NZ, 2022

BEST CHAMPAGNE

Palmer & Co. Champagne Brut Reserve, Reims, France, NV

BEST LOCAL WINE

Windridge Vineyards Albariño, Darnestown, MD, 2022

BEST GRÜNER VELTLINER

Count Karolyi Grüner Veltliner, Dunantul, Hungary, 2021

BEST SOUTH AFRICAN

Simonsig Winery Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch, South Africa, 2022

GOLD MEDAL

Fire Road Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, NZ, 2022

GOLD MEDAL

Sea Pearl Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, NZ, 2022



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About The Winning Wines:

“We are so excited about this year’s winning wines,” says David Moran, Area Director of Operations who has been a part of all 26 years of the competition. “We literally have no idea what the wines will be for the Oyster Riot until we complete the competition after three rounds of blind tastings that determine the winners. This year we get a great mix of bubbles, New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs and other varietals including our first-ever wine from the state of Maryland. I can’t wait for this year’s Oyster Riot.”

John Filkins, Clyde’s Corporate Director of Beverage adds, “This competition gets harder and harder to judge every year as the quality of wines gets better and better. It’s not always about the ‘best’ or most expensive wine. What makes this competition unique is the diversity of wines and the pairing aspect. Each wine that won this year played off of the oysters a little differently. Whether it was the fruit of a California sparkling playing off the fruitiness of the Kussli oyster or the richness of Champagne enhancing the creamy texture of the oyster, or a light, bright Txakoli bringing a punch of acidity that enhanced the salinity and left you wanting for another. We are thrilled to share a few oysters and this year’s winners with everyone.”

Competition Information:

On November 6, 2023, the eve of Election Day, a panel of judges convened in the Cabinet Room at Old Ebbitt Grill for the final round of the Old Ebbitt Grill International Wines for Oysters Competition. Their task was to select gold medal winners from among 20 finalists. The remaining wines earned silver medals, while the bronze medal winners were chosen during the semi-final round a week earlier.

An impressive 292 wines from all over the world were entered in this year’s Competition. Within the United States, 72 wines were submitted from five states (California, Maryland, New York, Oregon, and Washington). Wineries from 16 other countries entered a total of 220 wines – Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, and Spain. Over the course of several weeks in October the Clyde’s team of David Moran – Area Director of Operations, John Filkins – Corporate Beverage Director, David Del Bene – Old Ebbitt Grill Beverage Manager, and Erin Claire – Clyde’s of Chevy Chase General Manager tasted each of these wines with an oyster. The field was reduced to 60 semi-finalists and then tasted again to get to the final 20 wines for this year’s Competition.

In addition to the Oyster Bar at Old Ebbitt Grill, Clyde’s Restaurant Group has Oyster Bars at Clyde’s of Georgetown, Clyde’s of Gallery Place, Mark Center, Tower Oaks Lodge, Willow Creek Farm, and Chevy Chase. The Grand Champion will be served at these five locations during the coming year.

The winning wines will be celebrated at the 26th Annual Oyster Riot featuring unlimited oysters and wine. Held in Old Ebbitt Grill’s expansive atrium on Friday, November 17th and Saturday, November 18th, the cocktail-style party features live music from headlining band Yacht Lobsters at the evening Riots and The Bad Influence Band at the Saturday matinee.



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Our Distinguished Panel of Judges:

Nadine Brown (sommelier & wine consultant), Bill Butcher (Port City Brewing Co.), Bart Farrell (VP Development, Clyde's Restaurant Group), John Filkins (Corporate Beverage Director, Clyde's Restaurant Group), Michael Franz (wine writer & consultant), Mary Beth Gaiarin (Siema Wines), Luca Paschina (Barboursville Vineyards), Tierney Plumb (Eater), Anna Spiegel (Axios), Sally Swift (The Splendid Table), and Tom Yannucci (Kirkland & Ellis)

About The Competition:

Old Ebbitt Grill International Wines for Oysters Competition was inspired by the Pacific Coast Oyster Wine Competition in Seattle, Washington. Seafood consultant, Jon Rowley organized the event over twenty years ago, comparing his Competition to "a dating service for wines and oysters." In 1995, David Moran, Area Director of Operations at Clyde's Restaurant Group (CRG) was sent to judge in Rowley's Competition and immerse himself in Seattle's oyster culture. Upon his return, Moran decided CRG needed to replicate the Competition on the East Coast at the Old Ebbitt Grill. Tom Meyer, President of CRG suggested, "Why don't we just throw a great party with oysters and wine?" A few dozen oysters and a few glasses of Chablis later, the first large-scale International Wines for Oysters Competition and Oyster Riot were born.

Sadly, Jon Rowley passed away on October 4, 2017. An excerpt from his obituary (Leson, Nancy, *The Seattle Times*, 5 October 2017):

He made his own way to Europe and began a lifelong obsession with oysters after reading Ernest Hemingway's "A Moveable Feast." The day before Mr. Rowley died, he was still reading and considering his favorite passage, the one that ends "as I drank their cold liquid from each shell and washed it down with the crisp taste of the wine, I lost the empty feeling and began to be happy and to make plans."

About Clyde's Restaurant Group and the Old Ebbitt Grill

Clyde's Restaurant Group (CRG) is one of the nation's most successful and enduring restaurant companies. In 1963, the original Clyde's opened in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC. The brand has expanded to include 12 properties in Northern Virginia, suburban Maryland, and the District of Columbia: Clyde's of Georgetown, Clyde's of Chevy Chase, Clyde's at Mark Center, Tower Oaks Lodge, Clyde's of Gallery Place, Clyde's Willow Creek Farm, Old Ebbitt Grill, The Tombs, 1789 Restaurant, Fitzgerald's, The Hamilton and The Hamilton Live. Plans for new restaurants include Ebbitt House in Reston, Rye Street Tavern in Baltimore, and Cordelia Fishbar in Union Market. All CRG concepts, while distinctively different from the next, share the same reputation for exemplary customer service, an unforgettable atmosphere and a chef-driven menu featuring high-quality fresh ingredients. CRG closely holds a commitment to its people and the region, proudly fostering an environment of inclusivity, respect, and exceptional hospitality. For more information, please visit www.clydes.com.



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The Old Ebbitt Grill, Washington's oldest saloon, was founded in 1856 when, according to legend, innkeeper William E. Ebbitt bought a boarding house. By 1970, through an auction bid, Stuart Davidson (1922 - 2001) and John Laytham (1944-2019), owners of Clyde's of Georgetown, unexpectedly found themselves owners of a second saloon, the Old Ebbitt Grill. It was the first expansion beyond the original Clyde's in Georgetown, and the "new" Old Ebbitt remains a historic landmark.

About Graham Holdings Company

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