

**Contact:**

Ryan Trapp, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Virginia Restaurant Lodging & Travel Association  
ryan@vrlta.org | 804.292.5002

**For Immediate Release**  
**Tuesday, October 11, 2023**

## 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](http://www.ordinaryawards.com).

# # #

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](http://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.