



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Japan's best wine lists are in Nagano, Niseko, Osaka and Tokyo

On 15th April 2026, Krister Bengtsson hosted the awards ceremony for the second Star Wine List of the Year Japan competition, at ProWine Tokyo. Nine venues, spread across four cities, were presented with Gold Stars in 13 categories. Whilst the capital, Tokyo, took the lion's share of the titles, there were also accolades for Osaka, Niseko and Nagano. These are the best wine lists across the country.

Star Wine List of the Year is a global competition celebrating the best wine lists and the sommelier teams that create them. The 2025/26 tour will have stopped in a total of 13 territories, and incorporated one digital event, before the much-anticipated Global Final this summer. This week saw the second edition of its Japanese edition, held during ProWine Tokyo.

Judges Toru Takamatsu (Master Sommelier), Richard Hemming (Master of Wine), Paz Levinson (ASI Best Sommelier of Americas 2015) and Mikk Parre (ASI Best Sommelier of Europe, Africa and the Middle East 2024) awarded Gold Stars in 10 'international' and three 'local' categories; their winners are spread from Osaka up to Niseko, with capital Tokyo taking a total of seven prizes.

While Takamatsu joined Bengtsson on stage to hand out certificates, it fell on Parre to provide a comment on behalf of the jury, once it had agreed its winners. "The wine and beverage scene in Japan is impressively diverse," said the Estonian sommelier, "with wine lists that demonstrate true global reach and scale. We were particularly struck by a world-class selection of French wines, including an impressive array of mature vintages, alongside a strong and growing focus on local Japanese producers. This excellence is the result of a vibrant culture of sommeliers and wine professionals, whose dedication and knowledge are evident throughout the carefully curated lists."

Gold Star recipients in the 10 'international' categories have now been entered into the Star Wine List of the Year Global Final, which will be hosted by **Terra Skåne** in southern Sweden, in June 2026.

Gold Star winners:



INTERNATIONAL CATEGORIES:

Best Long List

For wine lists with more than 600 references

- NéMo, Tokyo

Best Medium-Sized List, presented by Dreissigacker

Recognises the best wine list with 200-600 references

- CYCLE, Tokyo

Best Short List

Recognises the best wine list with fewer than 200 listings

- Bianca Omakase, Niseko

Best By-the-Glass List

Recognises the best 'by-the-glass' list

- NéMo, Tokyo

Best Sparkling Wine List

Recognises the best list for sparkling wines

- NéMo, Tokyo

Best Newcomer List, presented by Chateau d'Esclans

Recognises a venue that has recently opened

- Raindrop, Osaka

Sustainability Prize

Assesses the sustainable commitment of both the wine list and broader venue via a supplementary questionnaire submitted during the application process

- La Vigne Dining Fûdo, Nagano

Best Austrian Wine List, presented by Austrian Wine

Recognises the best list for the wines of Austria

- Shimanouchi Fujimaru Winery, Osaka

Best Italian Wine List

Recognises the best list for the wines of Italy

- Raindrop, Osaka

Special Jury Prize

Rewards a wine lovers' place that does something out of the ordinary



- Maz, Tokyo

LOCAL CATEGORIES:

Best Bordeaux Wine List, presented by Château Tour des Termes

- Esprit C. Kei Ginza, Tokyo

Best California Wine List, presented by Robert Mondavi Winery

- Île de Colline, Tokyo

Best Japanese Wine List, presented by Craft Wine Shop

- La Vigne Dining Fûdo, Nagano

Useful links:

- [Gold and Silver Star winners](#)
- [Photos and media](#)

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About Star Wine List

Star Wine List is the international wine lovers' guide to great wine bars and restaurants. Available as an app and at starwinelist.com, it was launched in Stockholm, Sweden in 2017, and is now live in more than 45 countries. All venues are selected by top wine professionals for the quality of their wine programmes.

The Star Wine List of the Year competition celebrates the wonderful wine lists of the world and the dedicated sommelier teams who create them. Since its inception in 2018, this global tour has evolved to cover numerous territories. Its highly anticipated awards events recognise excellence in the wine and hospitality industries, and culminate in a Global Final each summer.