



EVENT RECAP

Media Contact: Carol Brejot, carol@elmorepr.com, 713-503-3885

The Periwinkle Foundation bestows Matthew McLaughlin from Guard & Grace with the title of 2024 *Iron Sommelier* at The Post Oak Hotel on Nov. 7

Iron Sommelier, Houston's premier sommelier competition and wine tasting event, presented by AUTOSOL®, raised over \$410,000

WHAT: The Periwinkle Foundation's *Iron Sommelier 2024*, presented by AUTOSOL®

WHEN: Thursday, November 7, 2024

WHERE: The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown Park Houston

WHO: The event was chaired by **Sean Beck**, Wine Chair and **Lara Lack**, Sommelier Chair.

DETAILS: **Matthew McLaughlin** from Guard & Grace was named as the 2024 Iron Sommelier Champion. presented by AUTOSOL®, the prestigious Iron Sommelier event brought together 14 of Houston's top sommeliers vying for the title of Iron Sommelier for Houston's wine-tasting experience, all benefiting The Periwinkle Foundation. His theme was "Rhône If You Want To: Rhône Around the World."

Over [600] wine enthusiasts gathered to raise more than \$410,000] for Periwinkle's Camps, Arts, and Survivor programs, which support children, teens, and families facing cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

Each sommelier handpicked three wines centered around a specific region, grape, or style, with judges evaluating the wines on selection, presentation, originality, and expertise.

Beyond the competition, four Master Sommeliers offered a selection of rare, high-end wines to underwriters in the exclusive Masters Tasting Room. Master Sommelier **Steven McDonald** fired up the crowd with a rap presentation about the wines he curated, accompanied by members of the University of Houston Marching Band.

Following the sommelier presentations, The Periwinkle Foundation's Executive Director **Doug Suggitt** introduced sisters **Natalie Fraker** and **Ashley Fraker**. Ashley talked about how Camp Periwinkle and Periwinkle Arts in Medicine have been enriching and meaningful to her and her sister, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor at age three.

Another highlight was the presence of world-renowned winemaker **Paul Hobbs** who joined guests in the Underwriter Room sharing one of his wines as well as serving as an Iron Sommelier guest judge.

Few people have made a bigger imprint on wine than Hobbs. For the past 40 years he has produced legendary wines in America and abroad. Referred to as the “The Steve Jobs of Wine” by Forbes Magazine, Hobbs has been twice named “Wine Personality of the Year” by Robert Parker of The Wine Advocate.

The competing sommeliers were judged by: **Colin Eddy** of Hyland Estates and NW Wine Company; **Paul Hobbs** of Paul Hobbs Wineries; **Lauren Holbrook** of Della Terra Wines and **Gabe Howe** of CDV 713.

Other awards included:

1st Runner Up: **Kelly Rau**, AOC Selections & The Texas Wine School

2nd Runner Up: **Alvin Pham**, Andiron

People’s Choice: **Brennan Harmeier**, The Library Wine Bar

Best Wine: **Alvin Pham**, Andiron (For: 2019 Cliff Lede Beckstoffer To Kalon Cabernet Sauvignon Vineyard)

Best Theme: **John Mason**, The Coronado Club (Theme: “Break it Down Now: The Wines of Australia”)

Other competing sommeliers included:

Harold Haupt, 13 Celsius Wine Bar; **John Mason**, The Coronado Club; **Kate Severson**, Houston Oaks Country Club & Retreat; **Lucas Bowes**, MARCH; **Davis Allen Wood**, Mastro’s Steakhouse; **Travis Walker**, Padre’s Wine; **Jason Barnett**, Pappas Bros. Steakhouse; **Dennis Vawter**, River Oaks Country Club; **Sarah Brenner**, Vinology Bottle Shop + Tasting Bar

Unique auction items included:

- A once-in-a-lifetime, four-night getaway to the wine country of Gigondas, France, featuring VIP tastings in the heart of Southern France.
- Personalized wine and dining experiences at iconic Houston restaurants, such as Brennan's and Blutorn.
- A curated 40-50 bottle personalized wine cellar, plus a 10-bottle collection of artisan agave, gin, rum, and whiskey, selected by sommelier Sean Beck.
- Exclusive food and wine experiences with master sommeliers, including former Iron Sommelier champion Julie Dalton.

Guests were also able to bid on artwork by pediatric cancer patients at Texas Children’s and Hematology Center through the Periwinkle Arts in Medicine program. All Periwinkle camps and other programs are offered free to charge to patients and families.

GUESTS:

Staff:

Doug Suggitt, Executive Director

Alice Rohrman, Development Director
Ann Massey, Development Director
Erin Locke, Community Programs Director
Larry Geiger, Program Director
John Wayne Gasper, Operations & Development Manager

Board Members

Justin Goodman and Natalie Goodman
Drs. Jayne Finkowski-Rivera and Carlos Rivera
Jenifer Jarriel and Dr. Scott Jarriel
Lara Lack
David Steinhart
Karen Smith and Dave Smith
Greg Smith
Dr. Tim Porea
Dr. ZoAnn Dryer
Debbie Bauer and Ozzie Bauer
Joe Birkhofer and Carol Birkhofer
Gabriela and Quitman Smith
Dr. Hubert Ho and Monica Ho
Lorrie Lee
Andrew Koenig and Dawn Koenig
Marilyn Mogas
Mike Slabic and Cristina Slabic
Mick and Mary Jo Cantu
Chienling Lee and Dr. Chien Wei

Other Guests

Melinda and Matt Mogas
Sherry and Connard Barker
Sherri and Chris Boatwright
Laureen and Mark Boyer
Dr. Jett Brady
Allison Lin and Steven Spears
Lindsey Brown and Chris Shepherd
Erin Hicks and Bryan Caswell
Meredith and Carter Crow
Laura and Jeff Kaplan
Cathy Easter
Lori Swan,
Drs. Erin Fox and Gray Hancock
Michael Garfield
Dr. Frank Lin
Gary Moss
Monique Pappas
Cia Pappas
Joy and Mike Rayburn
Drs. Melanie and Bucky Ribbeck
Jill and Phil Ribbeck
Judy and Chris Simon
Jennifer Vallone and Doug Klesel

Photos by Dave Rossman

###