

The Art Institute of Vancouver's Sommelier Challenge Winner Announced

Kevin Nicholson of Le Crocodile restaurant, Vancouver, was crowned winner of The Art Institute of Vancouver's Sommelier Challenge 2009, as part of the Playhouse International Wine Festival, on March 27, 2009.

The event, currently in its fourth year, gives Sommeliers & wine professionals the chance to compete for the Puddifoot Award, through demonstrating their knowledge on a range of wine related topics to a team of industry professionals. This year's competition, held at The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Vancouver on March 16, 2009, tested the skills of nine competitors from some of Vancouver's top venues, including Blue Water Café and Cioppino's Mediterranean Grill. The judging team consisted of Stephen Bonner, ABV; Neil Ingram (Boneta Restaurant and former Sommelier of The Year); Michaela Morris, AIWS (House Wine); Barbara Philip, MW; and Mark Shipway, AIWS (The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Vancouver).

Kevin was presented with the coveted Puddifoot Award by John Puddifoot, at the Riedel at the Restaurant seminar on March 27, 2009. He was also awarded with a Riedel carafe, a bottle of Vintage Port and a Trade Super Pass to the Playhouse International Wine Festival for 2010. Kevin, who was also nominated for Sommelier of the Year, said that he was shocked but honoured to have won, and that the challenge itself was "a blast - so much fun." He praised the competition format, saying "It's talking about what you know about wine, which is exactly what we do as a Sommelier every day. "

Former winners of The Art Institute of Vancouver's Sommelier Challenge include Chris Giroux, 2008 (Bacchus at the Wedgewood Hotel); Kimberley Hall, 2006 (The Fairmont Waterfront); and Pamela Cohen, 2005 (International Sommelier Guild).

The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Vancouver is proud to be the sole provider of the WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust) Diploma in Western Canada. For more details visit: <http://www.winecollege.ca/>