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## Willy Bauer Chairman, AB Hotels

### THE JUDGES

Senior members of the Caterer Group editorial team

Willy Bauer is held up as a role-model in the hospitality industry, not least because of the success of his hands-on approach to hotel management. Today, of course, he is chairman of AB Hotels, which includes Sopwell House, but this award recognises the service he has given to the hotels sector for more than 30 years.

Among his legendary achievements was his rescue of London's Hyde Park Hotel in the 1970s. He was appointed general manager of the ailing hotel aged just 38 and within five years had turned its fortunes around to become Trust House Forte's flagship hotel. This was followed by a similar achievement at the five-star Grosvenor House.

Indeed, some of the UK's best hotels have benefited from his perfectionism, attention to detail and refusal to compromise. In 1981, he was asked to become general manager and managing director of the iconic Savoy hotel, and during his eight-year tenure was described by the board as "having bought the Savoy back to past glory". As the company grew, he also used his skilled judgement to improve the performance of the Lygon Arms in the Cotswolds and three restaurants in the capital, including Wilton's of Jermyn Street.

In fact, many of the country's most respected institutions have arguably become

what they are today through Bauer's guidance. Take the Wentworth Group, which under his leadership has become the blueprint for many golf and country clubs in the UK. With an eye to the younger generations, he instigated the Golf & Tennis Scholarships, which provide tuition, and he also supported the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme by giving time and encouragement to young candidates.

Certainly, when it comes to supporting charities, Bauer is aware of his position in being able to generate support for worthy causes. One of his most recent projects was to co-found the Ark Foundation to provide help to those in the hospitality industry who become reliant on drink or drugs.

Despite his aim to wind down at this stage in his career, Bauer remains active in hospitality and generously gives advice to those who will take this industry on to the next stage. Willy Bauer's commitment to give something back to the industry that has given him so much is what makes him so deserving of this award.

### What the nominator said ...

● "Quite simply, Willy Bauer is a hospitality phenomenon and a role model for all hoteliers throughout the world."

*Sara Jayne Stanes, director,  
Academy of Culinary Arts*

### FORMER WINNERS

**2007** Grant Hearn,  
Travelodge

**2008** John Williams,  
executive chef, the Ritz