



Gary Clark

The Chester Grosvenor and Spa

Gary Clark has quickly risen through the ranks at an excellent array of Scottish and North of England hotel restaurants. He became interested in wine while working at Malmaison in Glasgow, when he began co-ordinating training of team members in wine, then moved to Amaryllis, running a team of three sommeliers after just a few months. Then Clark left for Gleneagles, leading a staff of 10. He is now head sommelier at the Chester Grosvenor.

Since arriving in 2004 Clark has taken over the training of staff in wine and leads from the front. He works with executive chef Simon Radley to pair his list with food served in the restaurant, and recently began mentoring a commis sommelier on site, teaching the make-up of the wine list in terms of names and countries, as well as preferences of many guests at the Chester Grosvenor restaurant.

Next year, Clark will be speaking at monthly wine lunches at the hotel, teaching guests about wine, and bringing the Grosvenor's list to the forefront of diners' minds.

Judges liked the fact that Clark was involved in the whole process, both buying and selling. According to Xavier Rousset, sommelier at Texture restaurant in London:

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"Gary is managing a list with some quality wines, some excellent choices – particularly in the New World. He has to limit his choices, which can often be a harder task than building a vast list". Owing to limited storage, Clark maintains the wine list around the 800-bin mark. Jeremy Rata, managing director of Bovey Castle said that "there is a low turnover of staff, training levels are high, and Gary is part of an excellent business".

THE SHORTLIST

Nico Chieze
Sharrow Bay, Penrith
Gary Clark
the Chester Grosvenor
and Spa
Giuseppe Vurchio
(highly commended),
the Macdonald
Randolph, Oxford