

Information for Gold Plate entrants

How does the judging process work?

Judging will take place during June, July and August. You can expect a visit any time during this period – maybe even twice if it is considered necessary. The judges' assessments will be moderated to maximise consistency and fairness.

Who are the judges?

All the judges have knowledge of, and interest in, food, customer service and dining out. Some have a professional background in hospitality and business; others are enthusiastic amateur food critics — just like your customers. Judges are all independent, strictly anonymous, and have received training to ensure the assessment process is as consistent and fair as possible.

What do they assess?

Judges look at almost 50 detailed criteria, starting from the seamlessness of the booking process and ending with the farewell at the conclusion of the meal. The highest weighting is on the quality of the food. Judges will be looking for things like:

- high quality produce, especially local produce, and thoughtfully and respectfully prepared in a way that matches the menu description and is appealing to the customer;
- knowledgeable, helpful and friendly staff who are appropriately dressed and groomed — and there when customers need them and the care and consideration given to the customer for the duration of their visit;
- a menu and drinks list with a range of appealing, well-priced and appropriate choices;
- a clean, well maintained venue, furniture, crockery, cutlery, napery, glassware and menus;
- a pleasant atmosphere including aspects like décor, noises levels, appropriate music and lighting — and clean toilets!

Judges of the Best Wine List category look for:

- Presentation of the wine list, including correct spelling
- Extent of regional information
- Volumes for wines by the glass
- **Vintages are essential.**

How can I give my venue the best chance of winning a Gold Plate award?

Check the judges' feedback from last year if you haven't already done so. Ensure that all staff, especially new staff, are familiar with the menu and drinks list and are mindful of providing great customer service. Remember that the judges may arrive at any time during the judging period, so consistency and paying attention to details are crucial.