RESTAURANT
Award Category Definitions

Restaurant categories are for establishments that offer extensive menus designed for multiple courses to be ordered. Restaurant must have sit-down facilities. Categories vary by state/region and will be split into sub-categories dependent on entries. Restaurant category winners qualify for the major award of Restaurant of the Year.

ASIAN RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in cuisine from the Asia region (not covered by an existing category i.e., Indian).

CHINESE RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in Chinese cuisine. Must be 100% Chinese cuisine; otherwise, the Asian category will apply.

JAPANESE RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in Japanese cuisine. Must be 100% Japanese cuisine; otherwise, the Asian category will apply.

THAI RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in Thai cuisine. A high proportion of the menu must be Thai cuisine; otherwise, the Asian category will apply.

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN RESTAURANT
Establishments that predominantly offer a menu characterised by fresh seasonal produce and innovative dishes that reflect contemporary trends in Australian cooking.

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN - FORMAL
A dining experience aimed at the premium end of the market within this cuisine.

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN - INFORMAL
A dining experience provided in an informal and relaxed setting within this cuisine.

EUROPEAN RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in a cuisine from either a country or region in Europe (not covered by an existing category i.e., Italian).

FRENCH RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in traditional or contemporary French cuisine. Must be 100% French cuisine; otherwise, the European category will apply.

MEDITERRANEAN RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in Mediterranean inspired cuisine. Greek restaurants qualify for this category if category is offered in state.

INDIAN RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in traditional or contemporary Indian or Sub-continent cuisine, e.g., Sri-Lankan.

ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in traditional or contemporary Italian cuisine. May be merged with European in some states/regions.

ITALIAN RESTAURANT - FORMAL
A dining experience aimed at the premium end of the market within this cuisine.

ITALIAN RESTAURANT - INFORMAL
A dining experience provided in an informal and relaxed setting within this cuisine.

RESTAURANT
Award Category Definitions

NEW RESTAURANT
This is the only category that a new restaurant is eligible to enter, all cuisine styles qualify. Establishments which have been in operation no greater than 12 months from the opening of the 2026 nominations. Entry qualifying period - openings from 11 February 2025 to 10 February 2026.

PREMIUM DINING
Establishments which provide a high-end dining experience aimed at the premium end of the market, including premium quality dining with exquisite service, wine list and food with specialised staff in both FOH and BOH.

RESTAURANT IN A HOTEL/RESORT
In-house restaurants operating daily in a Hotel, Motel, Resort or Guesthouse.

RESTAURANT IN A PUB/CLUB
In-house restaurants operating within/on the premises of a pub, club or tavern.

RESTAURANT IN A WINERY
Restaurants operating on the premises/site of a winery, cellar door or vineyard.

SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
Establishments that specialise in seafood. A high proportion of the menu must be seafood.

SPECIALITY RESTAURANT
Establishments which clearly specialise in a particular style of cuisine not specifically accommodated by any other listed category, i.e., Middle Eastern, Moroccan, Turkish, Vegan/Vegetarian. Mexican establishments qualify for this category if Mexican is not a category offered.

STEAK RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in premium quality steak and pro-actively market this as a speciality. A high proportion of the menu must be red meat.

STEAK RESTAURANT - FORMAL
A dining experience aimed at the premium end of the market within this cuisine.

STEAK RESTAURANT - INFORMAL
A dining experience provided in an informal and relaxed setting within this cuisine.

TOURISM RESTAURANT
Restaurants offering a tourism experience or service to the tourism industry must be seen in the public eye to be a draw card to the restaurant. It is not just a food award but does recognise a significant contribution to tourism through the provision of food and beverage.

CASUAL DINING
Award Category Definitions

Casual Dining establishments offer affordable light meal menus and are not suitable for menu's designed to order multiple courses. Categories vary by state/region and will be split into sub-categories dependent on entries. Casual Dining category winners qualify for the major award of Casual Dining of the Year.

BREAKFAST RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in the provision of breakfast for at least 5 days per week.

CAFÉ DINING
Establishments providing a relaxed menu of affordable snacks, light meals, and refreshments (non-alcoholic or alcoholic). Must have dine-in facilities and offer continuous service in a casual dining environment. Establishments that provide high tea can enter this category and patisserie/bakeries with sit-down facilities. Must operate for at least 5 days a week and have some table service.

FAMILY DINING
Establishments that caterer specifically for family dining and offer menu options suitable for all children's ages.

MEXICAN CASUAL DINING (SEQ ONLY)
Establishments serving Mexican cuisine with a relaxed, fun and inviting atmosphere with sit-down dining facilities and table service.

PIZZA RESTAURANT
Establishments which specialise in pizza. A high proportion of the menu must be pizza. Must have sit-down dining facilities and table service.

MAJOR AWARDS

Major Awards are not eligible for direct entry.

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR
The major award category winner is determined by the highest scoring points from the winners of the restaurant categories.

CASUAL DINING OF THE YEAR
The major award category winner is determined by the highest scoring points from the winners of the casual dining categories.