

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Wellington chef wins Inaugural \$30,000 Visa New Zealand Hospitality Scholarship



*Image 1: From left Wellington On a Plate Festival Festival Director Sarah Meikle, Winner Joshua Ross, Visa Country Manager NZ and South Pacific Anthony Watson; Image 2 from left: Sarah Meikle, Zane Neustroski (Finalist), Joshua Ross (Winner), Hayley Scott (Judge), Lena Speed (Finalist) and Anthony Watson - [high res images available here](#)*

Chef Joshua Ross of Wellington has been named the inaugural winner of the 2023 Visa New Zealand Hospitality Scholarship. Josh, aged 27, is currently the Head Chef at Bellamy's by Logan Brown as well as the owner of Lower Hutt café, Twenty Eight.

The Visa New Zealand Hospitality Scholarship, valued at NZD \$30,000, was launched to attract and retain more young people into the industry and support them to take up hospitality as a fully-fledged career. It includes a five-day placement at a top international hospitality venue, professional development, a one-year mentorship, business training and future participation in Visa Wellington On a Plate.

The scholarship attracted 39 applications from all around New Zealand. Lena Speed of Loretta in Wellington, and Zane Neustroski of Mr. Morris in Auckland were also finalists.

Josh says he is honoured and is particularly excited about the opportunity to benefit from a mentor as well as the chance to travel overseas to experience different kitchens and culinary scenes.



“I’d like to thank all the people who supported me along the way, this is such a great initiative for young hospitality professionals. It’s encouraging to have opportunities like this to push outside our comfort zones and learn more.”

Visa’s Head of Marketing for Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific, Natalie Lockwood says, “Visa is proud to support this unique scholarship that provides emerging hospitality talent with learning and career growth opportunities at home and abroad. Congratulations to all the finalists and to Josh. We’re excited to see where this scholarship takes him.”

Industry heavyweights Chef Michael Meredith (Auckland), Master of Wine Stephen Wong (Wellington) and Sherwood General Manager Food & Beverage Hayley Scott (Queenstown) formed the inaugural judging panel.

Visa Wellington On a Plate Festival Director Sarah Meikle managed the judging process, and says it was crucial to have a panel of experienced and successful professionals from across all aspects of the industry involved.

“The judges were blown away by the calibre of applicants, and it was inspiring to see so many talented young people that are passionate about choosing hospitality as a career.”

The scholarship was open to hospitality workers who are NZ residents, aged between 22 and 35 years of age and had a minimum of two years’ experience working in the hospitality industry.

For more information and full details on application criteria visit [www.visawoap.com/visa-wellington-on-a-plate-hospitality-scholarship](http://www.visawoap.com/visa-wellington-on-a-plate-hospitality-scholarship)

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**About Visa Wellington On a Plate**

Visa Wellington On a Plate is the largest culinary festival in the southern hemisphere, and from 2023 will be held in both May and August. Festival goers can explore a curated programme of festival events, pop-ups, chef collaborations, dishes, cocktails



and burgers. Currently in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, Visa Wellington On a Plate is firmly established as a key event in the festival calendar for people across the Wellington region, and New Zealand.

[www.VisaWOAP.com](http://www.VisaWOAP.com)

**About The Wellington Culinary Events Trust**

The Wellington Culinary Events Trust is a not-for-profit trust established in 2014 to run iconic culinary events including Visa Wellington On a Plate and Beervana.

[www.wcet.org.nz](http://www.wcet.org.nz)