

## **THE MHRA 'RECOMMENDED' LABEL SCHEME**

# **EIGHT RESTAURANTS AWARDED THE 'RECOMMENDED' LABEL'**

*"The restaurant sector is considered a vital component of Malta's tourism product and through this scheme, the MHRA is aiming to award those who achieve and seek to maintain very highest operational standards." – MHRA President George Micallef*

Eight established restaurants around Malta were yesterday the first to gain the prestigious 'Recommended' label status by the Malta Hotels & Restaurants Association. The awards ceremony was held in the presence of Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Dr Mario de Marco, (MHRA President George Micallef), MHRA CEO George Schembri and the Chairperson of the 'Recommended' label Adjudication Board Judge Joe Galea Debono.

The eight restaurants that were awarded the 'Recommended' label for their achievement in professional management, quality food and high service standards are: the Black Pearl Restaurant, the Blue Elephant Restaurant, the Grill 3301 Restaurant, La Mentha Restaurant, the Medina Restaurant, Quadro Restaurant, the Rickshaw Restaurant and the Vinotheque Restaurant.

The scheme is intended to recognize and recommend establishments that practice professional management and good standards of customer care and service. The "Recommended" label is endorsed by the Malta Tourism Authority and has been designed to cater for restaurants that fall within the Fine Dining or Casual Dining categories. The MHRA 'Recommended' label is being bestowed on those participants who successfully complete an assessment on 10 areas of good management practices and service, including a mystery guest audit. The results are then further scrutinised by an independent adjudicating panel which is made up of non operational past members of the MHRA and a representative from MTA. The Panel is chaired by Judge Joe Galea Debono who himself had been the Secretary General of the MHRA before being appointed Chairman of National Tourism Organisation in the early nineties and eventually to the bench of Judges.

Successful participants of the Recommended Label scheme are awarded a certificate and plaque to be displayed in a prominent place in their respective restaurant. The MHRA and MTA are meanwhile developing market awareness through inclusion in their literature, mail shots, advertising and through their websites.

When the scheme was launched in March, twelve establishments had originally applied for participation. Eventually one establishment withdrew its application, while three more are in the process of implementing the necessary criteria. The remaining eight

establishments successfully completed the compliance assessment and the mystery guest audit, and therefore qualified to be the first to get the prestigious 'Recommended' label.

MHRA President Mr George Micallef introduced the ceremony highlighting that the 'Recommended' label scheme was launched by the MHRA earlier this year and aims to incentivise restaurant operators to adopt best practice throughout all levels of their operation.

Participants are allowed a six-month 'adjustment period' to implement the necessary standards, policies, procedures and training as indicated in the Operational Guidelines Manual given to them on signing of contract of participation. The restaurant sector is considered a vital component of Malta's tourism product and through this scheme, the MHRA is aiming to award those that achieved and seek to maintain very highest operational standards."

The label will carry a life span of two years during which time the establishment will be re-visited and assessed every 6 months to ensure that the good management promise and standard of customer care and service has been maintained. If it is found that standards have not been retained, the participating restaurant could jeopardize its position and lose the label.

Addressing participants and guests, Dr de Marco highlighted the need of quality in the sector for the benefit of the many local patrons who consider eating out as a main source of entertainment and also for the benefit of the thousands of tourists that chose to visit the Maltese islands for their leisure or business trips. Dr de Marco deemed the scheme launched by MHRA as the launch pad for a Quality label that can make a difference for the sector. Dr de Marco expressed his desire to see more restaurateurs take up the challenge to apply for certification to be awarded the Recommended Label.

The label will be a way of informing both local customers and tourists that a particular restaurant is committed to high professional standards amongst the best on the islands. Those restaurateurs participating in the scheme and which fulfil all necessary criteria will be awarded the *MHRA Recommended* label.

Discussions are underway with MTA in order that the scheme can be the first step towards establishing a Quality Label for restaurants.

**More information on [www.mhra.org.mt](http://www.mhra.org.mt)**

End