

Hospitality trailblazer Justin Hemmes is 2018 Property Person of the Year

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The Urban Taskforce has announced hospitality trailblazer **Justin Hemmes** as its 2018 Property Person of the Year.

“Justin Hemmes has revolutionised Australia's hospitality industry by bringing a new level of sophistication, creativity and ingenuity to Sydney's dining and entertainment landscape”, says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. “His innovative properties, like Establishment, ivy, Coogee Pavilion, The Collaroy and The Newport offer unique, memorable and internationally renowned experiences, and have transformed Merivale into a peerless hospitality powerhouse”.

The Urban Taskforce represents the development industry's risk-takers and Justin Hemmes has been an outstanding entrepreneur in the way he has acquired old hotel sites and venues across Sydney and turned them into must-visit destinations.

Since taking the reins of his family's fashion business in 1997, Justin has made a major mark on commercial property development in Sydney, dominating the hospitality sector and expanding the Merivale portfolio to include a host of the country's most ambitious and successful hospitality transformations. His Merivale portfolio now includes over 70 venues that have galvanised their local cultural economies and magnetised tourists from around the world.

The redevelopment of Hotel CBD in 1995 was one of the first projects fronted by Justin. Taking a true hands on approach by working on site as a brickies labourer for a year and a half, Justin drove the design and refurbishment to turn what was a bookstore and commercial space into a multi-story hotel. Hotel CBD pushed societal boundaries by reimagining the concept of pubs as a predominantly male domain to places where both men and women could happily socialise for any occasion. From this, the first multi venue pub was born; presenting a variety of different spaces for people to make their own.

In the mid-nineties he purchased the Slip Inn and redesigned the original pub and its four adjoining terraces to accommodate beautiful bars and the Chinese Laundry nightclub, completely reinvigorating a desolate pocket of Sydney's CBD. In 2000 he opened Establishment in the burnt-out ruins of the former George Patterson House on George Street; creating a nine-story entertainment complex now home to fine dining, a boutique hotel, private event places and the award-winning 240-seat Cantonese restaurant Mr Wong.

In 2007, Merivale launched the ambitious \$160 million ivy project to create an urban oasis in the heart of the city. This 20,000 square metre mixed-use development is home to 12 boutique shops, 18 bars, nine restaurants, a rooftop pool, a garden atrium and a large ballroom. He also had the foresight to create and activate two surrounding laneways, providing Sydney with the way of life enjoyed in European cities. A sanctuary in the middle of the CBD, ivy quickly became the destination, helping shape Sydney into a truly great global city. ivy has won a host of awards including:

- National Hotel of the Year at 2014 AHA National Awards for Excellence
- IDEA09 Interior Design Excellence Awards - IDEA09 Overall Winner and Hospitality Winner and Multi-Residential, Highly Commended
- Australian Institute of Architects National Awards 2009 - Harry Seidler Award for Commercial Architecture and National Award (Urban Design)
- Australian Institute of Architects (NSW) 2009 - Lloyd Rees Award for Outstanding Urban Design and Commercial Architecture Award.

Justin's enthusiasm for designing, building and operating exciting venues does not stop. After his developments in the city, he has reinvigorated the top end of Oxford Street with the Paddington, Fred's, Charlie Parker's and The Chicken Shop. He transformed the derelict beachfront Coogee Pavilion from a pub into a dynamic lifestyle destination and re-envisioned the landmark Newport Arms Hotel as The Newport. New ventures have increased Merivale's footprint across Sydney even further, from Queens Hotel and Vic on The Park in Sydney's thriving Inner West to The Royal in Bondi, Tennyson Hotel in Sydney's South-East and The Collaroy on the idyllic Northern Beaches. And he's also forecasting an even bigger redevelopment of the ivy site.

Urban Taskforce Chair Peter Daly says "We are amazed at what Justin has achieved across Sydney in a manner that has set new standards for every project. His innovations always cause ripple effects that have added energy to surrounding buildings and areas that were previously degraded. He is a very worthy winner of Property Person of the Year award for 2018 and he joins distinguished former winners that include Harry Triguboff (twice), Lang Walker, Bill Moss, Greg Goodman, Wal King, Bob Rose, Garry Rothwell, Ross McDiven, Tony Perich, Steve McCann, Iwan Sunito, Joe Khatter and Sarkis Nassif."

The 2018 Property Person of the Year Award dinner appropriately will be held at Justin's landmark venue, ivy, on 28 November. A crucial motivation for these annual events is to raise funds for the two charities supported by the Urban Taskforce: Warrah Homes and St Vincent's Prostrate Cancer Research. The Urban Taskforce has raised more than \$4million for these charities over the past 17 years. Justin and Merivale also support various charities—including Ronald McDonald House, the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation and the Royal Hospital for Women.



ivy



Coogee Pavilion



The Collaroy



The Newport

The **Urban Taskforce** is a property development industry group, representing Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers.

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