

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Shortlist announced for the 2022 Silmo IOA International Optician of the Year Award

The shortlist has been announced for the Silmo IOA International Optician of the Year Award. The finalists are:

Wendy Buchanan (Canada)

Grant Hannaford (Australia)

April Petrusma (Australia)

Jean Francois Porte (France)

The innovative **Silmo IOA International Optician of the Year Award**, first given in 2018, recognises the importance of the optician in the optical business and their role in the choice of optimum products for their clientele. The award is presented by the International Opticians Association (IOA), an international body dedicated to the enhancement and development of the profession worldwide, in partnership with Silmo.

More about the finalists

Wendy Buchanan exudes professionalism and innovation. She has created one of the most unique and profitable mobile optician businesses in the industry and is known as an advanced image consultant having designed a propriety face shape and colour coding system unique in the industry.

Grant Hannaford has made Hannaford Eyewear the destination for leading edge innovation and excellence in clinical care for the Southern Highlands in Australia as well as delivering optical dispensing training for optometrists at UNSW.

April Petrusma is an on-call optical dispenser, a teacher with Australia's largest provider of dispensing training ACOD, and serves the wider optical industry as the inaugural CEO of the recently formed Optical Dispensers Australia.

Jean Francois Porte founded Edgard Opticians with his partner Julien Quesnel, growing the company from 1 to 16 independent optical stores plus 8 franchise stores in major cities in France. The business has been built on word of mouth, customer satisfaction, specialisation (two of his stores are dedicated to children) and designer products.

IOA President Fiona Anderson says, “We are impressed by the calibre of entries and delighted to announce this short list. The finalists will now have the chance to supply a dossier of evidence to back up their achievements in the eight areas of expertise we are looking for. I hope that showcasing these outstanding opticians will inspire the whole profession.”

The winner of this award, all qualified opticians in the country they practice in, will display the following attributes:

- Professionalism – the client is at the heart of their business and receives excellent care.
- Excellent communication skills – both personally and via social media.
- Entrepreneurial spirit – with solid business acumen highlighted through the success of their enterprise.
- Innovation – within their business model / product offer / shop design.
- Specialisation – with a reputation in a specific branch of optics.
- Creativity – both in the products they offer and the way they practice.
- Engagement – with the profession, the community, charitable endeavours and industry.
- Advocacy - championing the profession of dispensing.

What happens next

The finalists will be contacted and asked to fill in a dossier. The dossiers will be scrutinised by an international panel made up of industry experts. The winner will be announced during Silmo in Paris, France.

As well as the award, the winner will also win a trip to Silmo 2023 (economy air fare and hotel).

The 2021 winner, chosen from a competitive field, was Helen Whitaker, the first woman to win the award. Helen runs Secure Vision Optical in British Columbia, Canada and is the founder of the Secure Vision Mobile Optical Academy.

To find out more visit www.ioassn.org/award

##ENDS##

Notes to Editors

1. Media enquiries to Antonia Chitty, +44 7538 525476, achitty@abdo.org.uk
2. A high res IOA logo and images of the finalists, Fiona Anderson and Helen Whitaker are available.
3. The IOA is an international body dedicated to the enhancement and development of the profession worldwide. www.ioassn.org