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FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, EMBER RESTAURANT AT WE-KO-PA CASINO RESORT RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS *WINE SPECTATOR* “BEST OF AWARD OF EXCELLENCE”

A recipient since the first year the restaurant opened, Ember’s carefully curated – and ever-changing – wine collection boasts more than 900 selections from 29 countries

FORT McDOWELL, Ariz. – July 6, 2023 – For the third consecutive year in a row, Ember – the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort’s innovative fine dining restaurant – has been bestowed *Wine Spectator*’s highly coveted “Best of Award of Excellence.” This “2 Glass” award was granted to 1,411 preeminent restaurants around the world, and Ember is one of 22 establishments in the state to receive this designation.

Wine Spectator began its program to honor the world’s best wine lists in 1981 and recognizes achievement across three categories – the Award of Excellence, the Best of Award of Excellence, and the Grand Award – with recipients from all 50 states and more than 75 countries and territories.

The Best of Award of Excellence, which Ember has received, was granted to restaurants that went above and beyond in offering “around 350 or more well-chosen selections that represent a breadth of wine regions and styles, as well as vintage depth through vertical collections of notable wines. These restaurants also provide training and educational opportunities for staff so that they can help customers make well-informed wine choices.”

“When granting the ‘Best of Award of Excellence,’ *Wine Spectator* honors restaurants that show a deep commitment for wine and are destinations for serious wine lovers,” said Zac Gallo, Executive Director of Food and Beverage for the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort. “Dennis Payne, our Advanced Certified Sommelier, is committed to sourcing intriguing wines and assembling a dynamic wine program that offers something for every palate and budget. His passion – and that of general manager Brent Rumph – flow throughout our entire restaurant team, so that each bottle introduced to a guest is done so with knowledge, dedication and heart.”

Ember’s extensive wine program covers 29 countries, focusing on each country’s top wine-producing regions and most highly acclaimed vineyards. It includes more than 900 wines by the bottle and 26 wines by the glass – ranging from a strong California presence to France, Spain, Italy, New Zealand, Argentina and Germany – along with a vast array of unicorn, dessert and Ports-Madeira wines.

In addition, Ember has a special page in their 38-page wine list titled “The Century Club,” dedicated to the world’s top 100-point wines. Curated for fine wine collectors, this list contains 36 critically

acclaimed wines spanning more than two decades that have scored a perfect 100 points. No other wine list in Arizona offers so many 100-point wines.

“We take pride in finding ‘unique gems’ by networking with 50+ wineries around the world, and leveraging those carefully nurtured, decades-old relationships to locate ‘unicorn’ and winery-only items that set us apart from other restaurants,” added Payne. “For example, we’re the only restaurant in the state to offer a few, select Italian wines. We do that intentionally to give our guests something truly unique to pair with Ember’s delicious, inventive cuisine.”

On that note, Ember hosts several curated wine dinners each year, with each showcasing the vintages of a particular wine-growing region. The next by-reservation-only event will be a five-course dining menu and wine pairings on August 23 featuring selections from Napa Valley’s FRIAS Family Vineyard. President/COO Fernando Frias will be the guest speaker.

For more information on Ember, visit www.wekopacasinoresort.com/dining/ember.

About Ember

A destination dining experience at the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort run by Property Executive Chef Richard Pelz, Ember features the highest quality USDA Prime and Angus Wagyu beef, game and seafood from around the world, carefully prepared over a custom wood burning grill. Signature items include their Ujih Hot Stone appetizer, Seafood Tower, Snake River Farms Wagyu “Pave,” Braised Buffalo Short Rib, and new Mûres Flambé dessert that the service team finishes tableside.

The energetic dining space overlooks the all-scratch kitchen with views of the culinary team, and seasonal outdoor dining by the fireplace is also available. A separate piano lounge with live entertainment five nights a week adds to the dynamic vibe.

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