innovation challenge 2026
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Press release

WINE, NEW TECHNOLOGIES ON THE SIMEI PODIUM. THE WINNERS OF THE 2026 "LUCIO MASTROBERARDINO" INNOVATION CHALLENGE ANNOUNCED

(Milan, 3 November 2026). The race for innovation in the winemaking and bottling machinery sector continues rapidly, driven by digitisation and automation, a trend highlighted at **SIMEI** (at Fiera Milano Rho from 17 to 20 November) by the now traditional **"Lucio Mastroberardino" Innovation Challenge**. The Innovation Challenge is designed to honour the most interesting innovations for the wine and beverage supply chain. This year, it highlights an increasingly decisive use of artificial intelligence to make production processes more precise and automated, to achieve an overall efficiency that also translates into sustainability, while packaging evolves prioritising safety, recyclability and the protection of wine.
The 2026 edition gives 4 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARDs to the most promising proposals in the field of technological innovation, 4 *GREEN INNOVATION AWARDs to solutions that stand out for their environmental commitment and 12 NEW TECHNOLOGY mentions for works with distinctive characteristics in the areas of evaluation: technical innovation, efficiency and functionality, economic, environmental, ethical and social sustainability; practicality in use, environmental impact, quality of work and quality of wine products.* The awards are to be given on Tuesday, 17 November (11, a.m., Hall 4 – Conference Room) during the inaugural ceremony of the 31st edition of the leading international exhibition for winemaking and bottling machinery. The winners were determined by a Technical-Scientific Committee composed of university professors, technicians and representatives of user companies.

Technology Innovation Award 2026

The "concrete balance between quality, efficiency, flexibility and sustainability" earns the **Elyra** project by Bertolaso of Omnia Technologies the most coveted prize. Elyra is a bottling system with a compact tank and redesigned valves capable of reducing water consumption during washing, simplifying maintenance and managing different types of products without impacting quality. Gai Macchine's **Disgorging Valve**, on the other hand, stands out for its "design ingenuity". This multi-function valve for treating sparkling wines after disgorgement integrates excess wine removal, dosing and levelling operations in a single device, while controlling the bottle pressure to reduce foaming and wine loss. Intelligent fermentation control is what earns Luigi Scavone's HTS Enologia an award for **IntraSense™.** This is a sensorised probe with real-time measurement, dosing and localised physical intervention functions, and **MetaFerm™**, an adaptive management system that uses data from previous fermentations to optimise subsequent ones. Finally, **Omnia Technologies' Virtual5** is a digital system for industrial automation. The system integrates cloud, 5G connectivity and the use of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, IoT and Digital Twin to manage and monitor production plants, which may also be through virtual simulations, with a predictive perspective. The Technical-Scientific Committee valued its contribution in terms of "vision, research and the ability to transform technology into value for the industry".

Green Innovation Award 2026

Among the winners for the commitment to sustainability is the **Flavy FGCM** filtration system by Bucher Vaslin. This system makes it possible to filter musts and raw wines with high concentrations of suspended solids,

simplifying processing and reducing water and energy consumption. The Logichem **GoLo™** wine de-alcoholation system also aims to save energy. Thanks to the use of evaporation, vacuum evaporation with an integrated heat pump, this system allows for a 70% reduction in power consumption. Two award-winning innovations on the packaging side, and in particular capsules. **Altair,** presented by Astro, is a tamper-proof capsule that facilitates the removal of aluminium from the glass of the bottle before delivery, thereby promoting its disposal and recycling. The Crealis Group focuses instead on material innovation. **Virtuo** is a capsule in 100% recycled tin, with the same performance as a traditional capsule, while reducing CO_2 emissions in the production cycle by 61%.

New Technology 2026

Finally, the winners of the New Technology section are: the optical grape sorter with artificial Intelligence Enovision by 3U Vision; the label finishing system **Stiratura Universale** by Acmi Labelling, Omnia Technologies; the technical cap for still wines **LiOX VT** by Diam Bouchage; the digital system by Equipamientos Industrales Ekinsa for the control of the washing and sterilisation of barriques, **Ekinsa App**; the **CR Racing Press** for whole or crushed grapes by L.A.S.I.; the modular system for capsulating machines, the **AMHS System** by Nortan, Omnia Technologies; the **Smart Valve System** by Parsec for winemaking temperature control; the Pop Guard **Safety Ring**, a cork retention system for sparkling wines; the *Clear Flow* musts flotation system and the technology for pneumatic wine presses **Pressatura Pulse** by Puleo; the **Nomasense CO2 C2000**, the tool for analysing the CO2 dissolved in wine by Vinventions; the **Winegrid DataDriven** digital monitoring platform with artificial intelligence by Watgrid.

Photos AND IMAGES OF THE WINNERS OF THE 2026 "LUCIO MASTROBERARDINO" INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Organised by the Unione Italiana Vini, SIMEI is a biennial international exhibition and the leading reference event for technology applied to the wine supply chain and the beverage industry in all its phases, focussing on wine, liquid food, oil, beer and spirits. The 2026 edition marks the debut of Bevertech, the new project dedicated to the world of Liquid Food & Beverage created in collaboration with Ipack Ima. Strategic partnerships further expand the event's scope: the collaboration with the ***Consorzio Birra Italiana*** *brings the debut of the Italian Beer Competition along with a space dedicated to all-Italian hops; the partnership with the* ***Olio Officina's Oleoteca*** *for oil; the return of* ***Distillo****, dedicated to equipment for micro-distilleries, and* ***Enovitis Business****, the international exhibition of viticulture techniques.*