

Excellence Awards

Finalists – January, February, March 2026

Above & Beyond

Mitchell Lindsay (IT) - Mitch has been an incredible support to all departments, especially during the time of having a skeleton crew and a new team. He has truly stepped up to the challenge and is doing an outstanding job managing the many tasks that come his way. We also really appreciate his willingness to come in on days off and public holidays to help resolve issues. Thank you, Mitch, for your dedication and hard work.

/Mitch: Mitch has stepped up hugely since Paul has been away, and no matter how busy he always has a smile on his face and time for a chat. He has taken Jasper under his wing and provided comprehensive training, and Jasper seems to be thriving - well done Mitch! He is also so willing to resolve issues as quickly as possible and truly keeps this resort running!

/Mitch: Mitch has been a constant source of support for our operational teams over the past few months, especially while we work through the system issues with Agilysys. His positive attitude and willingness to assist every team – whether the questions are complex or simply “silly IT ones” – has made a tremendous difference. We could not have navigated the Christmas and New Year period without his dedication. Mitch, thank you for always being here for us. We appreciate you!

Bob Cullen (Housekeeping) - Above and beyond: Positive attitude and always willing to help in any way that will benefit the resort. Stepping up to help drive during the NZ Open.

/Bob: Bob truly is the definition of 'a nice place for nice people'. Bob is caring, friendly, and whenever I see him around the resort he always stops and says hello. A few weeks ago, I saw Bob drying dishes in the kitchen helping the team! He has such a calm presence, great communication skills and genuinely cares about his job and his team.

Chiho Yasuda (F&B) – Chiho brings a wonderful can-do attitude to everything she does, always greeting others with a smile. She consistently puts people first and is committed to creating a true 5-star experience for everyone she interacts with. As she loves to say, “everyone is VIP,” and she truly lives that value each day. We are also incredibly grateful for her support in translating and coordinating itineraries whenever we have guests from the Ishii family visiting. Thank you, Chiho, for your kindness, professionalism, and dedication.

/Chiho: I wanted to commend Chiho for her assistance in the last 3 nights with the Japanese guests sent by the Ishii's. On Friday night she spent almost 2 hours assisting the guests, and me, with their billing issues. I could have never settled their bill without her. On Saturday night she was a translator over the phone until 11 pm when they flooded the house and made the fire alarm go off. I am writing this email because she would never say a word about this and I don't want her efforts to go unnoticed. She deserves this above and beyond more than anyone.

/Chiho: I would like to nominate her for this for her work with all the Japanese Ishii VIPs. We have had several over the past while and she is always more than happy to be their first point of contact. She ensures she is available for their arrival, checks up on them daily, and comes in whenever is needed to assist the group. She makes front offices life very easy helping organize them and ensure they are having a great stay. Most recently she was even in at 1130pm to help with a water leak in the house and was back the next day to keep up the communication between the resort and guest. Similarly, she helped us accommodate guests when they were due to check out but thought they had another night of stay but we were fully booked. We made it work but only with the support of her.

Investing in the Future

Lucy Nicol (Reservations) – Lucy has planted her hospitality roots at Millbrook. With no hospitality background, she has built a very strong foundation. She has truly proved her ability in her role. She carries confidence, organisational skills, and strong collaboration skills. She is great at making sure things are handled without any discrepancies. Lucy is very kind-hearted, respectful, and supportive. Despite the consistent turnaround of staff in her department, she continues to be energetic and empathetic in providing her training. Lucy truly is one of the best future leaders. A smile is an expression, and if it were to speak, it would say, “I am a person who carries myself well.” That’s Lucy Nicol. She truly deserves this award for her consistent performance. Her support is fabulous, and she gives it with a big heart.

/Lucy: Lucy has taken on her new role with such care and professionalism. She is a quietly capable leader who cares about her team, and the wider resort. She is always positive, has a smile on her face and is an asset to Millbrook.

/Lucy: Lucy has settled into her new role with confidence and curiosity, bringing fresh ideas and refining processes to create smoother operations in the Reservations team. She remains approachable, open to feedback, and unafraid to try, adjust, and improve. She has also managed challenging guest issues with care and excellent communication. Keep learning and keep sharing your knowledge with the team!

Stella Shaw (Front Office) – Stella has played an essential role in training our summer reception team. She has grown her own skills while ensuring each team member received training tailored to their learning style. She stays close, supportive, and ready to help whenever needed. Well, done, Stella – keep it up!

Ricky Larsen (Front Office) - Ricky consistently goes above and beyond, training all our new starters with in-depth, engaging guidance on what driving for Millbrook truly means. His fun local stories and attentiveness to guests set the tone for excellence. The team looks up to you, Ricky – thank you for being a fantastic leader.

Collaboration & Support

Shubham Gupta (Kitchen) – A professional kitchen is one of the most fast-paced and demanding environments to work in, where pressure is high and every second matters. During one particularly busy service, I found myself struggling while learning a new task. Orders were coming in quickly and the entire kitchen was moving at full speed. In that moment, it would have been easy for anyone to simply focus on keeping the service moving. But Chef Shubham did something that truly reflects the kind of leader he is.

Despite the pressure of running the kitchen, he stepped beside me and patiently guided me through the task. With calmness, he explained each step and encouraged me to keep trying until I felt confident. There was no frustration, no rush — just encouragement and belief that I could do it. In the middle of a hectic service, he created a moment of learning and support that I will never forget. What makes this even more remarkable is that this is not unusual for him — it is simply who he is. Even on the most demanding days, Chef Shubham makes us all feel valued, supported, and proud to be part of the team. Great leaders do more than manage operations — they build people. Our Head Chef does exactly that by supporting & uplifting us every day. Chef Shubham Gupta leads not only with skill, but with heart — creating exactly what Mr. Ishii envisioned: "a nice place for nice people". When someone consistently lifts others up, invests time in their growth, and creates a culture of respect and positivity, it deserves to be recognised. For the difference Chef Shubham Gupta makes every day — often in quiet but powerful ways — I wholeheartedly believe he embodies the true spirit of Collaboration & Support and is truly deserving of this award.

/Shubham: I would like to nominate Head Chef Shubham Gupta for the Collaboration & Support category. I work in F&B service in Functions, but I was asked to help at Millhouse twice during very busy services. Walking into a different outlet during peak hours can be challenging because we're unfamiliar with the team, the menu & the way the service runs. During my first shift, Chef Shubham noticed I was new and took a moment, even in the middle of the rush, to quickly explain the menu, each dish, its components along with the sauces for each dish. He explained the flow of the service and how the orders would be picked up & served to the guest. Throughout the service he clearly called dishes and communicated with me directly so I could stay organised and keep up with the pace. He kept checking up on me and asking if I was doing okay and if I needed any help. Because of his calm guidance and supportive attitude, I quickly felt comfortable and able to help the team effectively during those busy services. It wasn't his responsibility to do all the above but his support made my challenging day a success. His leadership made me feel included rather than just someone filling in, which is why I believe Chef Shubham truly deserves recognition for Collaboration & Support.

/Shubham: During the NZ Open it was an extremely busy and hectic time for everyone, especially at Millhouse, which had a lot of bookings that night. After completing a very busy service and a long shift, Chef Shubham asked me how my day had been and what work I still had left. I work as a kitchen hand & told him that I still needed to clean & close 2 kitchens that night. Despite being tired after such a demanding service, he immediately offered to help and stayed back to clean and close the Millhouse kitchen with me. He was even doing the dishes himself and asked me to just support him so we could finish faster. Because of his support, I was able to finish my work on time. His willingness to step in and help his staff, even after a long and busy service, truly reflects the spirit of Collaboration & Support, and that is why I believe Chef Shubham deserves this recognition.

/Shubham: I would like to nominate Chef Shubham Gupta for the Collaboration & Support category. I work as a landscaper and spend most of my time working across different areas of the huge Millbrook property. One summer afternoon, I was working on the flowerbed outside the Millhouse restaurant on a very hot day and was feeling quite exhausted. Chef Shubham noticed me working in the heat and came over to check if I was okay. He kindly brought me a glass of water, some refreshments, and something to eat so I could get some relief from the heat. It might seem like a small gesture, but after working at Millbrook for about a year, it was the first time someone went out of their way to show that kind of care and consideration. What stood out to me was that he treated someone from a completely different department with the same kindness and respect he shows his own team. Moments like this build a sense of community and support across the whole property, not just within one department. That genuine compassion and willingness to support others is why I believe Chef Shubham truly represents the spirit of Collaboration & Support and deserves this award.

Ellie Dady (Landscape) – Ellie is always willing to help anyone who needs a hand. In our work chat group, she consistently offers support, whether it's answering questions, stepping in to assist on a task, or helping solve problems. She genuinely looks out for the team and makes sure no one feels stuck or unsupported. She brings a positive attitude to work every day, even during busy or challenging periods. Her energy lifts the team and creates a great working environment. On top of that, she is an incredibly hard worker who leads by example through her dedication and reliability. Ellie truly represents collaboration and support in action, and I believe she would be a very deserving winner of this category.

Mel Greenfield (Housekeeping) - Mel is a fantastic team player with deep knowledge of the resort and housekeeping operations. She uses her experience to refine processes, streamline workflows, and support the team in achieving stronger results. She provides thorough training and offers both positive and constructive feedback that helps others grow. Thank you, Mel, for your dedication and teamwork.

/Mel: Her initiative to assist which area needs it the most according to the daily operations and for giving both positive and constructive feedback to her teams, helping to ensure our rooms are looking their best.