

□3,000/\$5,000 on offer

16 Feb 2012 by Jancis Robinson

In the old, dead-tree days of the annual [Geoffrey Roberts international travel award](#), I used painstakingly to send printed circulars giving details of the £3,000/\$5,000 on offer, along with printed photographs for a select few media. Since our deadline for applications is 31 March, I used to have to do this in early November to ensure that magazine deadlines were met.

In the internet age, when campaigns can be mounted in a minute, a three-month application period seems archaic. So I am hereby alerting you, six weeks before the application deadline of 31 March 2012, to the fact that those of us who set up the charitable trust that runs this award in 1996 in memory of the pioneer importer of top-quality New World wines into the UK are now inviting applications for the 2012 Award.

We're looking for someone who can convince us that their plan to spend the award of £3,000/\$5,000 on food- or drink-related travel is likely to make a positive difference to the worlds of food, drink and/or travel, or would generally make the world a better place.

Past winners have included **Derek Mossman Knapp** of Chile, who spent his award travelling around Maule with the very obvious result of the exciting new [Vigno wines](#), which we hope will improve the lives of farmers in this under-valued region; **Richard Villadoniga**, a Florida teacher who toured his native US to establish a record of disappearing local foods (see www.eat-american.com); and New Zealander **Mary Taylor**, who co-ordinated some very concrete help for a Sri Lankan fishing community devastated by the 2004 tsunami.

Last year's winner, **Sarah Robins** of Sydney (pictured), used her award to travel to the United States last November to research programmes that assist low-income earners to access the farmers' markets that proliferate there. (Our second-ever winner, **Jane Adams**, used her award to introduce the farmers' market concept to Australia, where there are now hundreds of them.) Sarah visited numerous farmers' markets in Washington DC, Charlottesville VA, New York City, New Orleans, San Francisco and nearby Oakland, meeting with market organisers, not-for-profit community organisations, health agencies, government representatives, academics and food producers.

Sarah reports that she gathered a wealth of information and an understanding of the commonalities - and differences - between the programmes in various states. She noted significant differences between America and Australia, most pertinently the frequency of farmers' markets, availability of funding and philanthropy, in addition to the wider emphasis on healthy eating that permeates the farmers' market sector in the United States. She is currently writing a full report about her travels and suggestions for how such initiatives might be approached in Australia and looks forward to applying her knowledge to the local context. We hope that her recommendations might have an ever wider geographical application.

We now welcome applications for the Geoffrey Roberts Award 2012 from anyone of any age anywhere. You don't have to write beautiful English, but you do have to convince us trustees and judges that your travel plans will benefit others and not just yourself. For details of how to apply, see [here](#). Applications by 31 March please.