

Slotties Are Born!

Aristocrat, Scientific Games dominate first EKG Slot Awards

By Frank Legato

Aristocrat Technologies, International Game Technology, Scientific Games and other top slot suppliers were honored by gaming research and consulting firm Eilers & Krejcik Gaming in the first EKG Slot Awards, staged in a gala event last month at the Bellagio on the Las Vegas Strip.



The awards—immediately dubbed the “Slotties” by the first winners—covered 21 individual categories of games in the slot sector, with the winners determined by votes from more than 100 slot operations officials from over 300 casinos across the U.S., who collectively operate around 300,000 slot machines. A panel of social gaming experts determined the voting on social casino games.

The big suppliers led the way in the voting, with Aristocrat Technologies capturing seven top awards. Scientific Games took five awards, with IGT the only other supplier scoring multiple awards with three.

Aristocrat took home the EKG equivalent of the Best Picture Oscar, winning the title of Best Overall Supplier of Slot Content.

In addition to the individual game awards, the EKG judges kicked off the EKG Slot Awards Hall of Fame by inducting Joe Kaminkow as the inaugural member. Kaminkow was the longtime slot development VP at IGT, and was responsible for some of the biggest hits in the slot sector before leaving for his current twin roles as a game developer for Aristocrat and for Zynga, the online and social games leader.

Kaminkow’s roots were in the amusement game industry, with Williams Electronics beginning in the early 1980s. He co-founded Data East Pinball in 1986, and produced pinball games including RoboCop, Back to the Future and The Simpsons. He moved to IGT in 1999, where he oversaw the rollout of iconic games including Wheel Of Fortune, The Price Is Right, Sex and the City and many others before returning to the amusement sector with the creation of Spooky Cool Labs.

Kaminkow was inducted into the Pinball Hall of Fame in 2014, and the American Gaming Association Gaming Hall of Fame in 2017.

“When we thought of who should be the first inductee into the EKG Slot Awards Hall of Fame, it was a clear choice, Joe Kaminkow,” said Todd Eilers, principal at Eilers & Krejcik Gaming, LLC. “Joe has consistently been one of the top game developers in the land-based gaming industry and most recently has created some of the industry’s top social casino games. We are very excited to have him be our first inductee into the EKG Slot Awards Hall of Fame.”

“It was a great night celebrating excellence in the slot sector, with approximately 200 executives in attendance from all the major gaming equipment suppliers, as well as several of the industry’s largest casino operators and key media representatives,” said Eilers, according to CDC Gaming Reports.

Following is the complete list of awards:



Above: The Aristocrat team celebrates the award for “Best Overall Supplier of Slot Content”

Joe Kaminkow (l.) is inducted as the first member of the EKG Slot Hall of Fame by EKG principal Todd Eilers

Land-Based Awards

Top Performing Core Video Reel Game: Dancing Drums, Scientific Games

Top Performing Core Mechanical Reel Game: 88 Fortunes, Scientific Games

Top Performing Premium Game: Dragon Link, Aristocrat

Top Performing NEW Video Reel Core Game: Wonder 4 Boost, Aristocrat

Top Performing NEW Mechanical Reel Core Game: Quick Hit Triple Blazing 7s Super Wheel, Scientific Games

Top Performing NEW Premium Game: Dragon Link: Happy and Prosperous, Aristocrat

Top Performing NEW Cabinet – Core: Twinstar J43, Scientific Games

Top Performing NEW Cabinet – Premium: MegaTower, IGT

Top Performing 3rd Party IP Branded Game: Wheel of Fortune Triple Red Hot 7s Gold Spin, IGT

Top Performing Proprietary Branded Game: Dragon Link, Aristocrat

Top Performing Electronic Table Game (ETG): Interblock Roulette

Top Performing Video Poker Game: Ultimate X, IGT

Top Performing Skill Game: Match 3Volution, Gamblit

Most Improved Supplier – Core: AGS

Most Improved Supplier – Premium: Aristocrat

Best Overall Supplier of Slot Content: Aristocrat

Social Casino Awards

Best New Social Slot Game: Lightning Link, Product Madness/Aristocrat

Best Use of Land-Based Content in a Social Slot Game: Jackpot Party Casino featuring SciGames content, Scientific Games – 2018

Most Innovative Social Slot Game: POP! Slots, PlayStudios

Best B2B Social Slot Company: GAN

Top Social Casino Company: Playtika

EKG Hall of Fame: Joe Kaminkow