



FEBRUARY 1st



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SIXTH ANNUAL AWARDS & GALA



Congratulations!!

You made it to the awards show!

A voice of the Trenches.

When the HVAC Tactical awards were created, the vision was the same as the movement itself: to bring a voice of the trenches to the forefront - without dilution, without polish for polish's sake.

These awards were built from within the trade, not around it.

Not to celebrate popularity, but to recognize mastery. Not to manufacture credibility, but to honor where it already exists.

Our goal is simple.

- Recognize individuals whose work reflects real skill, accountability, and leadership earned in the field
- Elevate the standards of the HVACR industry by honoring those who raise the bar for their peers
- Create a platform where tradesmen and tradeswomen are recognized by people who understand the work

Tonight is about respect—peer to peer.

From the trenches. For the trenches.

Participation

These awards are shaped by the industry itself.

Nominations, peer recognition, and continued involvement are what keep this platform grounded and credible.

If you know someone whose work deserves recognition—or if you want to be part of strengthening this movement—we're always open to the conversation.

Email us at info@hvactactical.com

@hvactactical   

2026 AWARDS & GALA

Table of Contents

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- 20 honoring John Pastorello
- 34 2025 winners
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Awards & Gala Schedule

- 5:30 Red Carpet / Cocktail Hour
- 7:15 Dinner
- 7:30 Awards



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MORE THAN AN AWARD

how



is

Raising the standard from the Trenches Up

The skilled trades are the foundation of modern civilization, yet much of the execution happens quietly—behind

walls, above ceilings, and out of sight. When the job is done right, no one notices.

No homeowner invites guests to admire their HVAC system or the hours of troubleshooting that keep their home comfortable and safe. Without skilled tradespeople, modern life simply doesn't function.

HVAC Tactical is changing how that body of work is understood—without cheapening it.

These awards are not about popularity or polish. They are about mastery, accountability, and leadership earned in the trenches.

When recognition comes from people who actually know the craft, something powerful happens. Confidence grows. Standards rise. Responsibility deepens.

Seen by the Right People

For Jessica Bannister (right), Lady of the Trade Award Winner (2021), that show of respect through HVAC Tactical mattered because it came from people in the field who understand what it takes to do



Rachelle Martins

Lady of the Trade 2025

this job well.

“Winning an HVAC Tactical Award feels incredibly validating—to have my work and content recognized by people within the industry that I respect and admire so much.”

In a trade built on experience and trust, being noticed by respected voices matters. That validation reinforces the fact that sustained effort still counts—and that what happens behind the scenes is not invisible.

For Jessica, distinction created forward movement. It reinforced the credibility of her platform, opened doors to new collaborations, expanded her reach, and strengthened her confidence. Most of all, it affirmed that contributing honestly and consistently has weight—and that her voice belongs in the trade.

Recognition Raises the Bar

Visibility like that raises expectations. It shines a spotlight that demands higher discipline.

Mentor of the Year Award Winner (2025), Tim De Stasio, describes the impact of being nominated—and ultimately winning—as a moment of clarity.



“Winning Mentor of the Year made me realize my actions matter. The accuracy of my content is important, because I would not want to mentor someone to do things the wrong way.”

That sense of responsibility is central to the HVAC Tactical ethos. Honor like this is not a reward for past contributions—it’s a commitment to future benchmarks. When colleagues elevate someone’s contribution, it sharpens their focus. Precision and integrity matter more. Mentorship becomes a responsibility, not a role.

For Tim, the peer acknowledgment expanded his reach across the industry and beyond it. But more importantly, it reinforced that leadership in the trades means protecting the next

generation by setting the bar high—and holding it there.

Momentum and the Ripple Effect
Dylan D’Amato, a 2025 HVAC Tactical Awards nominee, views recognition as a catalyst, not a finish line.

“The nomination alone meant a lot. It reminded me the work we’re doing is being seen and respected by our peers.”

Nothing changed overnight—but it reaffirmed his mindset around discipline and quality.

“It made me lace the boots a little tighter. It pushed me to lean further into quality over quantity.”

That was validation that what he produced belonged among the best in the trade. It carried back into his local network, where it opened doors, built trust, and influenced decisions to partner with his team. His name comes up as a recommendation—clear evidence that being seen within the



trade carries real, practical impact.

This is how standards spread. When validation comes from others in the trade who understand the job itself, accountability rises. And for many, that responsibility doesn't stop with their own role—it extends to the people watching, learning, and following their lead.

That sense of responsibility is echoed by Alex Ivey, whose nomination reshaped how he views both his platform and his role in the trade. Being nominated affirmed that the daily effort of operating in the field and documenting it mattered—and that people were paying attention.

“It changed my perception of how much impact these videos can have on the industry and on people coming into the trades,” Alex shared. “There are a lot of people who trust me for advice, and I want to make sure I’m a good role model for the next generation.”

Finding a Lane, Finding a Voice

For Francisco Pastor, Best Social Content Award Winner (2025), the HVAC Tactical Awards marked a turning point he didn't anticipate.

He walked into his first award show shy, uncomfortable on camera, and unsure of his place in the wider industry. What he found was community—real

blue-collar talent, encouragement, and a culture that valued growth.

That experience helped him find a lane: creating educational content, collaborating with



manufacturers, and building relationships rooted in mutual respect. It gave him confidence to contribute more fully—and to serve an audience often underserved in technical education.

The award didn't change who he was. It showed him where he belonged.

The Bigger Picture

Together, these stories reveal what HVAC Tactical is building.

What began six years ago as an awards show centered on acknowledgment and visibility has become something more lasting: pride in craftsmanship and responsibility to a culture of stewardship, mastery, and peer-earned respect.

By honoring real-world impact and integrity, HVAC Tactical reinforces that blue-collar work is not background labor—it is skilled, essential, and worthy of respect. When excellence is affirmed by those who live this craft, accountability rises, standards hold, and trust follows.

That recognition creates the pull the trades need—inviting the next generation to see the trades not as a fallback, but as something worth mastering.

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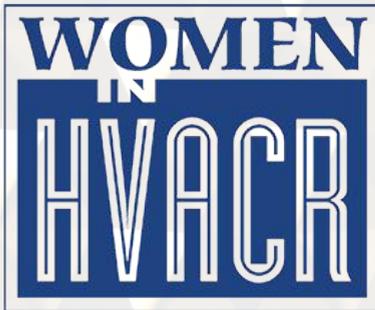
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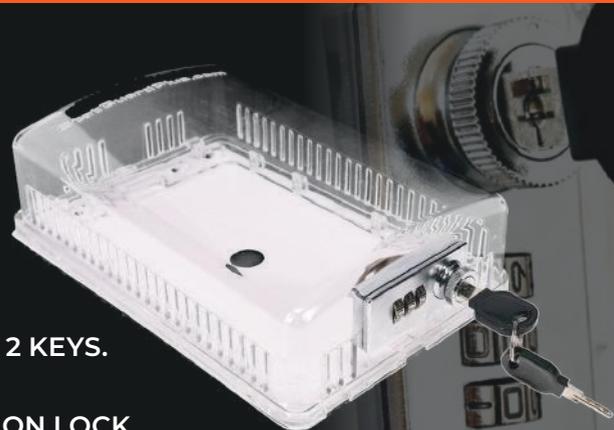
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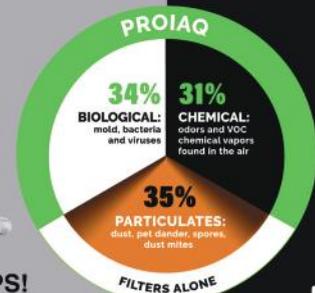
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2026 Lifetime Achievement Award

Congratulations

John Pastorello *Founder* **Refrigeration Technologies**



John Pastorello's impact on the HVAC/R field is rooted in a rare combination: formal training in chemistry, hands-on experience in the field, and a refusal to accept products that "mostly worked" as good enough.

Early in his career, he recognized a persistent disconnect between scientific theory and

how HVAC/R systems actually behaved under real-world conditions. Those working in the field were often asked to rely on products that were poorly understood, inconsistently formulated, or promoted without regard for long-term system performance. As both a chemist and a technician, he understood the risks—and the opportunity to do better.

That realization led him to found Refrigeration Technologies in 1987 with a clear objective: to develop HVAC/R formulated products that were technically sound, field-tested, and safe. His early work focused on solving persistent problems rather than chasing trends.

It began with leak detection and expanded into coil cleaners, sealants, maintenance solutions, and specialty formulations professionals could trust.

Over time, that approach resulted in some of the most widely recognized products in the trade, including the Viper® line and the original Big Blu® leak detector. These were created to simplify the work and ensure it was done correctly, without compromising system performance or long-term reliability. Each product reflected a belief that chemistry should work with the system—not against it. He understood shortcuts often carry hidden costs.

tions!





For him, this philosophy was not merely technical; it reflected a deeper sense of accountability to the systems themselves, the people servicing them, and the manufacturers introducing products into real operating environments.

As the company grew, he remained closely involved in product development and technical education. Throughout his career, he was a tireless educator who believed professionals deserved more than instructions—they deserved understanding. Through articles, training programs, interviews, and industry discussions, he explained not just how products work, but why.

Topics many avoided, ranging from coil-cleaning chemistry to oil additives and system interactions, were approached with clarity and grounded in testing, observation, and measured judgment.

What truly set him apart was not only innovation, but a deep commitment to responsibility and transparency. He spoke openly about product limitations, proper application, and the role manufacturers play when introducing chemicals into complex mechanical systems. In a field where shortcuts can be tempting, integrity consistently guided his decisions, earning long-standing respect

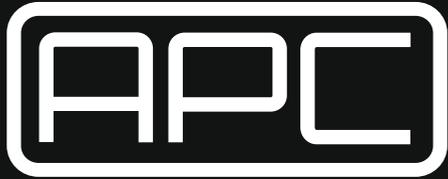
across the HVAC/R community.

Nearly four decades after founding Refrigeration Technologies, his influence continues wherever professionals demand products that do what they claim and companies are willing to stand behind the science.

His work helped raise expectations across the HVAC/R product landscape, reinforcing the idea that reliability, education and integrity are inseparable. Understanding that principles endure only if they are carried forward, John intentionally entrusted his company to the next generation, confident that the foundation he established would continue to guide the work. Technical rigor, safety, and respect for the craft were never meant to be temporary; he intended them to last.

John's legacy is not defined by a single product or moment, but by consistency: a commitment to doing the work correctly, explaining it honestly, and respecting the people who rely on it every day.





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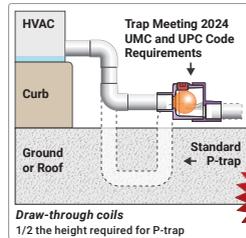
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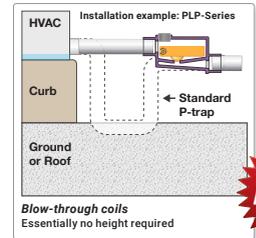


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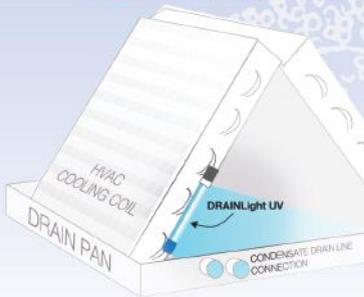
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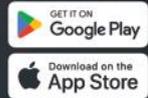
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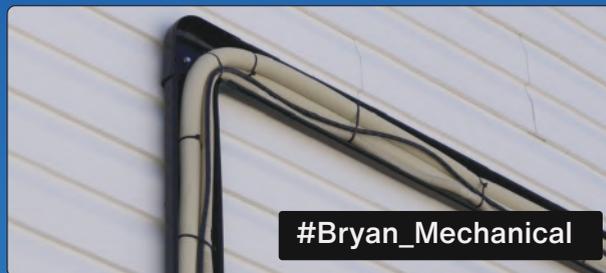


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Fieldpiece

CONGRATULATIONS

To the winners and nominees of the HVAC Tactical Awards, your commitment to innovation, excellence, and mastering your craft continues to inspire us. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with the HVAC community and for pushing the industry forward.

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2025 WINNERS

LADY OF THE TRADE

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BEST SOCIAL CONTENT

Francisco Pastor

[@climasterlatino](#)

HIDDEN GEM

Jon Esquivel

[@austinstarservices](#)

HYDRONIC HOTSHOT

Dylan D'Amato

[@nextgen_plumbing_heating_nj](#)

INFLUENCER OF THE YEAR

Tony Mormino

[@tony_mormino](#)

LIFELINE

Ilija Martinovich

[@the_hvac_foodie](#)

MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Tim De Stasio

[@timdestasiohvac](#)

PICTURE PERFECT

Joey Yepez

[@hvackombat](#)

PODCAST OF THE YEAR

Brett Wetzel & Kevin Compass

[Advanced Refrigeration Podcast](#)

SERVICE TECH

David Waldon

[@hvac_slim](#)

YOUTUBE

Curtis Harrison

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Dan Hołohan

2025
Lifetime Achievement
Award Winner



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water²



¹VS. standard electric. Source: AHRI directory of 10/23/24

²VS. comparable water heaters without mixing valve at 120°F set and 58°F water temperature

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Energy Efficiency	✓ 4.7X* (vs standard electric)	3.9X* (vs standard electric)
Flexible Hot Water Production	✓ 60% more** (50 gallon model acts like an 80 gallon)	Up to 40% more** (50 gallon model acts like a 65 gallon)
Wireless Leak Detection	✓ YES	NO
Cold Climate Capable	✓ YES	Limited
Quiet Operation	✓ 41dBA	≥45dBA

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* Source: AHRI Directory 10/23/24

** Models with integrated mixing valve

† Based on the combination of all GEOSPRING™ features available vs. leading industry competitors

†† Requires 20V dedicated breaker

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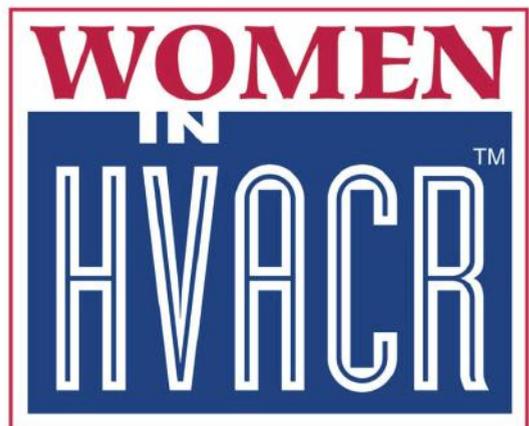
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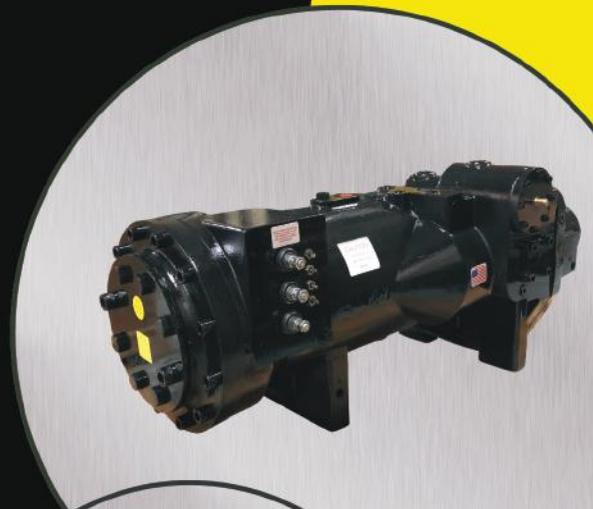
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John Pastorello

2026





2027

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blue collar goes black tie

magazine mindset

As the HVAC Tactical Magazine marches into its fourth year, the editorial team has big things planned for the future.

Meet the magazine team:

Ben Poole

Unstoppable Founder

Matthew Pryce

Editor, Jazz Pianist

Rebekah Poole

the glue keeping it together





HVAC TACTICAL MAGAZINE

Be a part of the movement.

The first year of HVAC Tactical magazine was a success, a learning experience, and an amazing launchpad for things to come.

Over the last four 'episodes' - HVAC Tactical Magazine has featured some of the top folks from the trades, showcasing installation work,

charitable deeds, fun stuff, and everything in between.

And we're always on the look out for more amazing stories from the industry.

HVAC Tactical Magazine is always interested in featuring newwriters, technical overviews, editorial content, installation photography, and more.



Send ideas and content to magazine@hvactactical.com and our editorial team will review it.

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Lisa Lyon

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"I've always believed the real heroes of this industry are the technicians in the field, the ones who show up, get the job done, and take pride in their craft.

From day one **I was fired up about the HVAC Tactical Awards** because it finally gave us a way to spotlight and celebrate the techs."

Lance Robinson

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