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Headline: Seven leading entrepreneurs named winners of the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2021 Singapore awards

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EY has named seven entrepreneurs from five organizations as recipients of the 20th EY Entrepreneur Of The Year (EOY) 2021 Singapore awards, in recognition of their proven ability and track record befitting this year's theme "The Unstoppables".

They are Aaron Tan, Founder and CEO, Carro, named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year – Digital Automotive Solutions; Alex Chua, CEO, Goldbell Financial Services, named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year – Financial Services; Jackson Aw, Founder and CEO, Mighty Jaxx, named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year – Collectibles and Lifestyle Products; Dr Zhou Lihan, Co-founder and CEO; Dr Zou Ruiyang, Co-founder and CTO; and Isaac Ho, CIO; MiRXES. They are collectively named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year – Biotechnology; Walter de Oude, Founder and Deputy Chairman, Singlife, named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year – Digital Insurance Solutions.

One of the winners will be named the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2021 Singapore, and represent Singapore at the annual EY World Entrepreneur Of The Year™ (WEOY) award in 2022 to compete with contenders from over 60 jurisdictions.

The overall winner will be announced on Nov 22 at an event graced by Indranee Rajah, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and Second Minister for National Development.

"The ambition, foresight and grit of this year's winners are undeniable, particularly in how they nimbly navigated the challenges of their entrepreneurial journeys and the current pandemic," says chairperson of the judging panel, Wong Ngit Liong.

"Whether it is through leveraging digital technologies or combining different disciplines, they innovated, pivoted and disrupted existing ways of business. Not only have they excelled against the six global judging criteria, they have achieved business excellence for their respective organizations, and also re-energized and uplifted the industries they operate in and the communities they serve," says Wong, chairman and CEO of Venture Corp.

Max Loh, Singapore and Brunei Managing Partner, Ernst & Young LLP, notes that the EOY program, now in its 20th year, has honored close to 100 entrepreneurs in Singapore for their exceptional achievements in their respective fields.

"These entrepreneurs come from very diverse backgrounds and industries, and increasingly, we are seeing younger winners and businesses that are technologically driven or digital natives," he says.

"Yet, whether twenty years ago or now, they embody qualities that continue to distinguish themselves from others: an unwavering conviction and spirit of innovation and risk-taking that enables them to forge through uncertainty and seize opportunities in adversity," he adds. In addition, two other honorary awards conferred for entrepreneurial excellence in Asean and family business excellence.

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Indonesia's Djoko Susanto, founder of PT Sumber Alfaria Trijaya Tbk is named the winner of this year's EY Asean Entrepreneurial Excellence award.

The award is an honorary award that is presented on board the EOY platform (the award recipient does not compete for the EOY Singapore 2021 title) and recognizes successful Southeast Asian businesses that contribute to the economy and community in the region.

"From humble beginnings in running a modest grocery stall to leading a large retail business chain, Mr Susanto's entrepreneurial journey and commercial success is remarkable and inspiring," says EY's Loh.

"With his astute business acumen and determination, Mr Susanto has grown the company to more than 16,000 stores, which hires over 130,000 people across Indonesia and the Philippines. Beyond the socio-economic impact made in terms of job creation, the company also gives back to the community, for example, through providing support and relief during the COVID-19 pandemic," he adds.

In another honorary award, Goldbell Group is named recipient of the EY Family Business Award of Excellence. The award recipient is jointly selected by knowledge partners, Business Families Institute @ Singapore Management University and the Wendel International Centre for Family Enterprise, INSEAD. This marks a second win for Goldbell as Alex Chua, CEO, Goldbell Financial Services, has been named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year – Financial Services this year.

"The Goldbell Group builds upon its legacy of shared values and culture established by its founding generation to anchor its core business, and at the same time, innovate and grow into new areas of business led by the second and third generations," says Loh.

"Clearly, the entrepreneurial spirit continues to thrive in the family, as they seek to chart a sustainable and long-term strategy for the business," he adds.

The Singapore Exchange continues as a partner of the EOY awards for the second year.

"Singapore is home to many exciting high-growth enterprises, which can benefit from strong and conducive support to access capital from private to public markets," Pol de Win, Senior Managing Director, Head of Global Sales and Origination at SGX.

"We look forward to seeing the award winners continue their growth trajectory, but more importantly to keep up the spirit and qualities of successful entrepreneurship," he adds.