

Editorial



At the last *Swiss Chemistry Science Night*, the SCS announced a series of awards to outstanding scientists, who were invited to share their research in articles to be published in *CHIMIA*. It was for me a real pleasure to read in more detail the substance of their achievements, and I am sure that my enthusiasm will be shared by you. Interestingly, this year's line-up of contributions mainly originates from industrial laboratories, showing the very intense research activity taking place there. I am also particularly delighted to see the broad spectrum of interests, ranging from medicinal chemistry to mass spectrometry and biotechnology.

The recipients of the **Sandmeyer Prize 2023** are part of a team from *Givaudan*, who developed an impressive synthetic route to (-)-Ambrox, a component of many fragrances, using engineered enzymes to drastically reduce wastes and by-products. Staying in the industrial sector, but this time in discovery chemistry, the laureate of the **Distinguished Senior Industrial Science Award 2023**, *Dr. Alain de Mesmaeker* summarised his research career in the search for biologically active compounds. In this contribution, it becomes very apparent that the scientific method is independent of the ultimate use of the compounds, whether it is pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals or just structurally interesting substances. Likewise, the recipient of the **Senior Industrial Science Award 2023**, *Dr. Robin Fairhurst* gives us a vivid and detailed account of his quest for β_2 -adrenoreceptor agonists for the treatment of respiratory diseases (and later for other therapeutic indications). *Dr. Uwe Grether*, laureate of the **Industrial Science Award 2023**, shows a multidisciplinary effort in order to better understand the function of, and how to interfere with, the endocannabinoid system. This system is of particular importance since it regulates many vital functions in mammals. This project required many collaborations, including with academia. The discovery of new substances would be of little use to society if they cannot be produced in an efficient fashion, and *Dr. Tomas Smejkal*, recipient of the second **Industrial Science Award 2023**, details the systematic evaluation of iridium-catalysed reactions by his team, in a fruitful academic collaboration, to discover that a very simple ligand-less system could constitute a valuable alternative to more expensive complexes. The **Grammaticakis-Neumann Prize 2023**, awarded to a leading young scientist in photochemistry, was given to *Prof. Lea Nienhaus*, for her work in photon upconversion, currently a very hot topic in photochemistry, as it allows the use of harmless and inexpensive low energy photons to reach otherwise inaccessible excited states. Using lead halide perovskites (LHP) as a triplet sensitizer, she was able to convert near-infrared into visible light. Last but not least, *Dr. Michael Stravs*, laureate of the **METAS Award 2023**, guides us through the use of computational mass spectrometry, a fairly large field ranging from identification of compounds from libraries to predicting data using machine learning.

Once again, this collection of outstanding contributions shows the intensity and breadth of the research currently being carried out in Switzerland! I am convinced that you are as impatient as I am to learn about the next series of awards that will be announced this Fall. And don't forget to think about who could be the next laureates, and nominate the top researchers in your fields.

Prof. Christian G. Bochet
President of the Swiss Chemical Society