

Dunedin man top apprentice

By Gail Goodger

A Dunedin sign-writer is the country's top apprentice.

Glen Wallace (21), right, of the Sign Shop, won not only the top sign-writing apprentice award at the Wellington Polytechnic, a \$200 cash prize, but also received the overall Sir Charles Norwood Trust award of \$600 for being the top apprentice from any trade.

The top sign-writing award was won through sitting a trade certificate at the end of Mr Wallace's five-year apprenticeship, and the overall award was presented last week after a panel interview which included considering his personal goals and activities outside work, like coaching the under-21 Alhambra rugby team.

Mr Wallace said sign-writing work had changed, as half of the work was now being done on computers, but that was not his preference.

Computers saved time on monotonous, smaller, straight-forward sign-writing work but he enjoyed brush work the most — "...

getting out on a big wall".

"You can be really creative and get into the creative side of it or sit behind a computer all day and type out boring old signs."

Two of his more prominent hand-painted signs around Dunedin include the large colourful wall of

Carter Auto Electrical with cascading nuts, bolts and spark plugs, and a 30 metre-long Castrol sign on the roof of a tractor servicing business near the airport.

An interest in art prompted Mr Wallace to start door-knocking while a seventh-former at South

Otago High School, Balclutha, and getting an apprenticeship in a small business had been the key to his success, Mr Wallace said.

"Rather than getting stuck on one job all the time you're doing the whole lot."

He planned to head overseas in a few months for

about two years and was hoping to do some sign-writing and bar work while there.

On his return Mr Wallace would like to set up his own business, possibly in Balclutha, depending on where there were openings.

