

FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR TOURISM SOUTH EAST'S BEAUTIFUL SOUTH AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE 2011

Having agonised over application forms, tourism businesses across the South East have spent the last few months trying to spot mystery visitors, waiting with baited breath for news that they have been shortlisted in the Beautiful South Awards for Excellence 2011.

But the wait is over, the scores are in and the shortlist for the 2011 Awards has been announced. More than 100 entries across 16 categories have been put through a rigorous judging process which saw their entry forms scrutinised and websites examined by a team of experienced industry professionals.

Factors taken into account included most importantly the quality of service on offer to visitors and value for money. Other aspects scrutinised include commitment to staff training and development, the environment and accessibility. Judges also examined websites to consider how well they attracted visitors firstly to the area, and secondly to the individual business.

The list of finalists sees a number of past winners who have continued to show consistency in the quality of their offer, as well as many 'first-timers' in the awards. Plans are now in full swing for the Awards Dinner on Thursday 1st December at Denbies Wine Estate near Dorking, where the winners will be announced and crowned category champions.

Gold, Silver and Highly Commended awards will be presented to winners across 16 categories, along with several 'special' awards. Until then finalists will have to wait in suspense to find out what award they have won.

"We're thrilled with the high calibre of entrants this year and their amazing achievements over the last year", comments Sue Saville, Managing Director of Tourism South East. "The customer service benchmark demonstrated by all entrants is exceptional and the shortlist selection has proved challenging. The dedication of our regional businesses to raising standards is particularly encouraging in the current economic climate and we are delighted to recognise their efforts. I congratulate all who have been shortlisted and look forward to seeing them at Denbies Wine Estate on 1 December"

Tickets are now on sale for the Awards on 1 December and more information about the Beautiful South Awards for Excellence 2011 can be found at www.beautifulsouthawards.co.uk

For more information about the awards and awards night please contact:

awards@beautifulsouthawards.co.uk

For press queries please contact:

Dan Holmes, dholmes@tourismse.com, 023 8062 5449

Notes to Editors

The Beautiful South Awards are run by Tourism South East, who is the leading membership-based tourism organisation for South East England, covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East and West Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

The South East is the largest region for tourism in Britain outside of London, worth in excess of £12 billion p.a. to the regional economy (7% of regional GVA) supporting over 300,000 jobs.

THE 2011 FINALISTS

In alphabetical order

Access for All Tourism

Abbey Guest House www.abbeyguest.com

The Calf Shed - Bardown Farm Holiday Cottages www.bardownfarm.co.uk

Bed & Breakfast/Guest Accommodation of the Year

Sponsored by Eviivo www.eviivo.com

Abbey Guest House www.abbeyguest.com

Enchanted Manor www.enchantedmanor.co.uk

Molland House www.mollandhouse.co.uk

St Mary's Hall www.stmaryshall.com

Strand House www.thestrandhouse.co.uk

Best Tourism Experience

Ascot Racecourse Ltd www.ascot.co.uk

Go Ape! (Black Park) www.goape.co.uk/sites/black-park-country-park

New Forest Activities Booking Centre www.newforestactivities.co.uk

The Livingstone Lodge Port Lympne Wild Animal Park

www.aspinallfoundation.org/livingstonelodge

Business Tourism

Aviator www.aviatorfarnborough.co.uk
Farnham Castle www.farnhamcastle.com
Kent Conference Bureau www.kentconferencebureau.co.uk
Leith's at Beaulieu www.leithsatbeaulieu.co.uk
The Solent Hotel and Spa www.shirehotels.com

Caravan Holiday Park/Holiday Village of the Year

Bunn Leisure www.bunnleisure.co.uk
Sandy Balls Holiday Centre www.sandyballs.co.uk

Flavour of the South East

Aviator www.aviatorfarnborough.co.uk
No. 2 Pound Street www.2poundstreet.com
Shepherd Neame Visitor Centre www.shepherdneame.co.uk
The Mill at Gordleton www.themillatgordleton.co.uk
The Wiremill (Yummy Pubs Ltd) www.thewiremill.co.uk

Large Hotel/Townhouse of the Year

Sponsored by ebxp www.ebxp.com
Aviator www.aviatorfarnborough.co.uk
Lingfield Park Marriott Hotel & Country Club www.marriottlingfieldpark.co.uk
Macdonald Windsor Hotel www.macdonald-hotels/windsor
Old Swan and Minster Mill www.oldswanandminstermill.com
Pendley Manor www.pendley-manor.co.uk
Tylney Hall www.tylneyhall.com

Large Visitor Attraction of the Year

Sponsored by Take One Media www.takeonemedia.co.uk
Blenheim Palace www.blenheimpalace.com
Denbies Wine Estate www.denbies.co.uk
The Historic Dockyard Chatham www.thedockyard.co.uk

Outstanding Customer Service

Sponsored by Vivo HR www.challengemanager.co.uk
Beaulieu Front of House Team www.beaulieu.co.uk
Lola Andrews - Mapledurham House www.mapledurham.co.uk
Lucie Ward - Stanwell House Hotel www.stanwellhouse.com
Melanie Loizou and FM Team, Royal Holloway, University of London
www.conferences.rhul.ac.uk
Thanet Visitor Information Centre Team www.visitthanet.co.uk
The No. 2 Pound Street Team www.2poundstreet.com

Self Catering and Serviced Apartments

Sponsored by Pavey Group www.paveygroup.co.uk and *Supercontrol*
www.supercontrol.co.uk
Hill Farm www.hillfarmbrading.co.uk
South Winchester Lodges www.southwinchesterlodges.co.uk
The Hayloft - represented by Mulberry Cottages
<http://www.mulberrycottages.com/cottage/holiday-cottages-in-kent/22669-the-hayloft-at-chislet/>
West Marden Farm Accommodation www.theoldstables.net

Small Hotel/Townhouse of the Year

Sponsored by Villeroy & Boch www.tabletalkatvilleroyandboch.com

Fallowfields Country House Hotel Restaurant and Farm www.fallowfields.com

Pelham House www.pelhamhouse.com

Stanwell House Hotel www.stanwellhouse.com

The Lamb Inn www.cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/lamb

Wroxton House Hotel www.bw-wroxtonhousehotel.co.uk

Small Visitor Attraction of the Year

Brading Roman Villa www.bradingromanvilla.org.uk

Owl and Monkey Haven www.owlmonkeyhaven.co.uk

Stanstead Park Foundation www.stanstedpark.co.uk

Sports Tourism

Bike Blenheim Palace www.bikeblenheimpalace.com

Joss Bay Surf School www.jossbay.co.uk

Kent Cycle hire www.wcch.co.uk

Lingfield Park www.lingfieldpark.co.uk

Sustainable Tourism

Sponsored by Green Business www.green-business.co.uk

Blenheim Palace www.blenheimpalace.com

Englewood B&B www.SmoothHound.co.uk/hotels/englewood.html

Jurys Inn Brighton www.jurysinns.com/brighton

The Chestnuts www.thechestnuts.net

The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre www.roalddahlmuseum.org

Tourism Event of the Year

Ascot Racecourse Ltd www.ascot.co.uk

Beaulieu International Autojumble www.beaulieuevents.co.uk

MG Live www.mglive.com

New Forest & Hampshire County Show www.newforestshow.co.uk

The Hampshire Food Festival www.hampshirefare.co.uk

Tourism Information Service of the Year

Guildford Tourist Information Centre www.visitguildford.com

Oxford Tourist Information Centre www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com

Portsmouth Visitor Information Service www.visitportsmouth.co.uk

Thanet Visitor Information Service www.visitthanet.co.uk

Towncentric, Gravesend Visitor Centre www.gogravesham.co.uk