

NEWS RELEASE

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2010 Beautiful South Awards for Excellence launched by Tourism South East

Tourism South East's acclaimed Beautiful South Awards are today open for entries from tourism businesses across the region. By celebrating the best in quality, innovation and service, the annual Awards give regional recognition to achievements over the last year.

Now in their 20th year, the Awards have been expanded to 20 categories allowing entries for Destination Marketing, Digital Marketing, Outstanding Contribution to Tourism and Overseas Marketing. This means that tourism businesses across the industry can showcase the aspects of teamwork and investment that could give them the accolade of 'best in class'. And with no less than seven 2009 regional winners going forward to the national Enjoy England Awards for Excellence 2010, there's an opportunity to cast a national spotlight onto south east businesses.

Mike Bedingfield, Chief Executive of Tourism South East explained, 'Raising standards across the region and assisting businesses to meet increasing consumer expectations are key tenets of Tourism South East. As a region we are perfectly placed to benefit from the continuing 'staycation' trend with more Brits than ever looking for easy-to-access short break and day visit options. Last year's Awards generated in excess of 5 million 'opportunities to see' across a broad range of industry and consumer media, so the excellent PR acts as an extremely valuable tool in the marketing tool box'.

'We were thrilled to have no less than two Gold and five Silver winners in the recent national awards and see that as a real testament to the regional commitment to delivering great customer service and a high quality experience,' Bedingfield added.

Rupert Spurgeon, South Lodge Hotel (2009 Gold Award Business Tourism and Large Hotel of the Year) commented that 'in the current economic climate we stayed committed to raising quality, and appreciate that our work in this area was recognised on a regional level. The marketing and promotion opportunities that came alongside the Awards programme were invaluable in helping us to raise awareness about our business'.

Jayne Pritchard, Visitor Services Manager at The Lightbox, Woking (Gold Award Small Visitor Attraction of the Year) said 'To win was such a wonderful accolade to all the hard work that is put in. We have a dedicated team of staff and volunteers that continually strive to make our visitor experience the best that it can be and the Award was a real testament to this.'

Short-listed businesses will be invited to bring team members to the celebrity-hosted Gala Dinner and Award ceremony which this year will take place at the magnificent Mercedes-Benz World in Weybridge, Surrey on 21 October 2010. Winners in the national categories will then represent the Beautiful South at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence in April 2011.

Further information and easy on-line entry is available at www.beautifulsouthawards.co.uk . The closing date for entries is 5pm, Friday 2 July 2010.

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For more information contact Dan Holmes on 023 8062 5449 or email: dholmes@tourismse.com

More information about Tourism South East can be found at www.tourismsoutheast.com

Note to Editors:

Tourism South East is the official tourist board 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.

Award Categories for 2010 are:

Access for All Tourism Award
Bed & Breakfast/Guest Accommodation of the Year
Best Tourism Experience of the Year
Business Tourism Award of the Year
Caravan Holiday Park of the Year
Destination Marketing Award – **NEW**
Digital Marketing Award - **NEW**
Flavour of the South East Award
Large Hotel/Townhouse of the Year
Large Visitor Attraction of the Year
Outstanding Contribution to Tourism - **NEW**
Outstanding Customer Service
Overseas Marketing Award - **NEW**
Self-Catering Holiday of the Year
Small Hotel/Townhouse of the Year
Small Visitor Attraction of the Year
Sports Tourism Award (regional category)
Sustainable Tourism Award
Tourist Information Service of the Year
Tourism Event of the Year

the Beautiful South