



NEWS RELEASE

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## **Final line-up announced for the prestigious Tourism ExSEllence Awards**

*The final results of the Tourism ExSEllence Awards covering the whole of the South East were announced last night at a Gala event at the exclusive Wentworth Club in Surrey.*

*Winners, Runners Up and Highly Commended organisations from the shortlist of businesses in the South East across 15 categories can now be revealed.* The winners

include **Blenheim Palace, Woodstock** (Large Visitor Attraction category) and **Caswell House, Brize Norton** (Self Catering), both in **Oxfordshire**, **The Royal Windsor Information Centre, Berkshire** (Tourist Information Centre category), **The MacDonald Compleat Angler in Marlow, Buckinghamshire** (Large Hotel), **The Nurse's Cottage Restaurant with Rooms, Sway** (Access for All category) and the **Royal Marines Museum, Southsea** (Small Visitor Attraction), both in **Hampshire**, **the Gardener's Rest near Deal, Kent** (B&B/Guesthouse), **Sailnet Sailing Centre, Brighton** (Best Tourism Experience and Sports Tourism) and **Hastings Food and Wine Festival, Sussex**. (see **Note to Editors for full list of Winners, Runners Up and Highly Commended Awards**)

With a total of 15 Award categories, including 'Best Tourism Experience', 'Business Tourism' and 'Sustainable Tourism', the Tourism ExSEllence Awards are the premier awards for the tourism industry in the South East, managed by Tourism South East. This regional award scheme is the only one in the country to include an award for 'Sports Tourism', added in part to recognise the huge contribution sport will be making to the tourism industry in the South East in the run-up to the London 2012 Games. The 15 categories cover all kinds of tourism organisations, from small Bed & Breakfast businesses to large exclusive hotels and visitor experiences. Winners in this region will go on to compete in the national Enjoy England Awards for Excellence in 2009.

Judges are looking for excellence, quality and innovation covering all aspects of the business, from Customer Service, Sales & Marketing, to Training & Development for staff. Judge of the Outstanding Customer Service category, Stephanie Edwards (MD of Customer 1<sup>st</sup> International Ltd) declared **Brendan Budgen from the Best Western Reading Moathouse** as the Winner in the Outstanding Customer Care Category. She said ‘Every hotel in the world should have a Brendan Budgen, passionate about his hotel, its staff and every customer who walks through the door.’ And Judge Peter Birnie (former Chief Hotel Inspector for the AA) felt the **Macdonald Compleat Angler in Marlow** deserved its position as Winner of the Large Hotel Category and described it as; ‘A superb product.’ Tourism chief Ken Robinson CBE FTS was the judge of the Large Visitor Attraction Category and described Winner **Blenheim Palace** as ‘a ‘Big Beast’ of the Historic House sector’. **Festival Place Shopping Centre in Basingstoke** impressed the judges of the Sustainable Tourism category Rebecca Hawkins and James Little, who awarded it first place, not only on the basis of its ‘...clear commitment to sustainability’ but also for ‘the enthusiasm of the team’. Judge of the Best Tourism Experience category Roger Budden felt sailing centre **Sailnet, in Brighton**, to be the outright winner due to its ‘Excellent product range that has been invested in and developed over the last year to offer an increasingly wide range of experiences for the customer.’ Peter Birnie was also the judge of the B&B/Guesthouse Category and described Winner **The Gardener’s Rest near Deal in Kent** as ‘A wonderful B&B, with no faults in the bedrooms, a magnificent garden and a passion for continuous improvement through marketing, training and innovation.’

Robert Collier, chief executive of Tourism South East, comments on this year’s successes, “It’s a delight to see such a high standard of entry – it gets better every year. We look forward to seeing more success as the winners go forward to the national Enjoy England Awards for Excellence in 2009.

More information about this year’s Tourism ExSEllence Awards can be found at [www.getdiscovered2008.co.uk](http://www.getdiscovered2008.co.uk).

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### **Note to Editors**

**More quotes from judges and images of all Award recipients are available by emailing the above contacts. Full list of Awards made is below.**

#### **Winners:**

##### **Berkshire**

Royal Windsor Information Centre (TIC category)

Brendan Budgen, Best Western Reading Moat House, Reading (Outstanding Customer Service)

##### **Buckinghamshire**

Macdonald Compleat Angler, Marlow

**Oxfordshire**

Blenheim Palace: The Untold Story, Woodstock, Large Visitor Attraction

Caswell House – Coach House and Granary, Brize Norton, Self Catering

**Hampshire**

Hotel TerraVina, New Forest, Small Hotel

The Nurse's Cottage, Sway, Lymington, Access for All

Royal Marines Museum, Southsea, Small Visitor Attraction

Festival Place, Basingstoke, Sustainable Tourism

**Sussex**

Hastings Seafood & Wine Festival, Flavour of the South East

Sailnet UK, Brighton Marina, (Best Tourism Experience, Sports Tourism)

**Kent**

The Gardeners Rest, Deal, B&B/Guesthouse

Kent Conference Bureau, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone, Business Tourism

[www.visitkent.co.uk](http://www.visitkent.co.uk), Tourism Website

**Runners Up :**

**Berkshire**

Ascot Racecourse, Sports Tourism

**Buckinghamshire**

Five Arrows Hotel, Waddesdon, Small Hotel

**Oxfordshire**

Fallowfields Country House, Kingston Bagzuize with Southmoor, Flavour of the SE

Oxford Castle Unlocked, Small Visitor Attraction

Abbey Guest House, Abingdon, Access for All

Blenheim Palace, Best Tourism Experience

**Hampshire/Isle of Wight**

Cottage Lodge, Brockenhurst, B&B/Guesthouse

Careys Manor and Senspa, Brockenhurst, Sustainable Tourism

Norton Park Hotel, Winchester, Business Tourism

South Winchester Lodges, Self Catering

Portsmouth Visitor Information Service, Tourist Information Centre

Hampshire County Council, Tourism Website – Visit Hampshire [www.visit-hampshire.co.uk](http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk)

Isle of Wight Luxury Apartments, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, Self Catering

The Enchanted Cottage, St Catherine's Point, Isle of Wight, B&B/Guesthouse

The Leconfield, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, B&B/Guesthouse

**Sussex**

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, Access for All

Nancy Joy, Butlins, Bognor Regis, Outstanding Customer Service

Hovel and Hop House, Windmill Hill, East Sussex, Self Catering

[www.crowhurstpark.co.uk](http://www.crowhurstpark.co.uk), Battle, Tourism Website

Best Western Gatwick Moat House, Business Tourism

**Surrey**

Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking, Large Visitor Attraction

Hampton Court Palace, Large Visitor Attraction

Loseley Park, Guildford, Small Visitor Attraction

Asperion Hillside, Worplesdon, Sustainable Tourism

**Kent**

Canterbury Historic River Tours, Best Tourism Experience

Abode Hotel, Canterbury, Large Hotel

Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest, Goudhurst, Sports Tourism

**Highly Commended**

**Berkshire**

Swan at Streatley, Streatley-on-Thames, Small Hotel

Coppid Beech, Bracknell, Large Hotel  
Best Western Reading Moat House, Large Hotel

**Buckinghamshire**

Waddesdon Manor, Waddesdon, Best Tourism Experience

**Oxfordshire**

Banbury TIC, Tourist Information Centre  
Cogges Manor Farm, Witney, Sports Tourism

**Hampshire/Isle of Wight**

New Park Manor Hotel and Spa, Brockenhurst, Small Hotel  
Tour Hampshire, Outstanding Customer Service  
The Brookfield Hotel, Emsworth, Large Hotel  
The Enchanted Cottage, St Catherine's Point, Isle of Wight, B&B/Guesthouse

**Sussex**

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, Business Tourism  
Rye Lodge Hotel, Rye, Small Hotel  
M's Cycle Hire, Worthing, Sports Tourism  
Visit Eastbourne (Tourism website)

**Surrey**

The Manor House, Godalming, Sustainable Tourism  
Stuart Lawrence, Gatton Manor, Ockley, Outstanding Customer Service

**Kent**

Alkham Court Farmhouse, Dover, B&B, Guesthouse  
St Peters Village Tour, Broadstairs, Best Tourism Experience category  
Joss Bay Surf School, Broadstairs, Sports Tourism  
Royal Tunbridge Wells TIC, TIC category  
The Historic Dockyard Chatham, Large Visitor Attraction  
Rochester Castle, Large Visitor Attraction  
Rose and Crown, PerryWood nr Faversham, Kent, Sustainable Tourism

***Sponsors of the Tourism ExSellenace 2008 Awards include:***

**Customer Maze** – further information from [www.customermaze.com](http://www.customermaze.com)

**Enjoy England** [www.enjoyengland.com](http://www.enjoyengland.com)

**Pure Brand Media** [www.purebrandmedia.com](http://www.purebrandmedia.com)

**South East Food Group** [www.sefgp.co.uk](http://www.sefgp.co.uk)

**Sport England** [www.sportengland.com](http://www.sportengland.com)

**Take One** [www.takeonemedia.com](http://www.takeonemedia.com)

**The Visitor Network** [www.thevisitornetwork.com](http://www.thevisitornetwork.com)

**Tourism for All** [www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)