



**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. Award-winning organisations from the shortlisted businesses in Surrey across 15 categories can now be revealed.*

There was significant success across Surrey with Runners Up and Highly Commended Awards going to 6 organisations. Runners Up were **Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking** (Runner Up in the Large Visitor Attraction category), **Hampton Court Palace** (Runner Up, Large Visitor Attraction), **Loseley Park, Guildford** (Runner Up, Small Visitor Attraction), and **the Asperion Hillside Hotel, Worplesdon** (Runner Up, Sustainable Tourism). Highly Commended Awards went to Stuart Lawrence from **Gatton Manor in Ockley** (Outstanding Customer Service) and **The Manor House in Godalming** (Sustainable Tourism).

With a total of 15 Award categories, including 'Sports Tourism', 'Best Tourism Experience' and 'Business Tourism', the Tourism ExSEllence Awards are the premier awards for the tourism industry in the South East, managed by Tourism South East. They 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 Large Visitor Attraction Category tourism chief Ken Robinson CBE FTS

described **Denbies Wine Estate** as ‘A pacesetter attraction as far as wine-related facilities are concerned.’ He was impressed by the ‘excellent standards’ and the fact that Denbies ‘Takes advantage of the rising interest in wine.’

Judges of the Small Visitor Attraction Category Ian Scott and Fred Cabbage were impressed by stately home **Loseley Park** in Guildford, summarising it as ‘An excellently presented historic house and garden, offering a high quality guided tour and very good interpretation of its well maintained garden.’

Golf Shop Receptionist and Retail Assistant **Stuart Lawrence** from **Gatton Manor** in Ockley was awarded Highly Commended by the judge of the Outstanding Customer Care category, Stephanie Edwards (Managing Director of Customer 1<sup>st</sup> International Ltd). She described Stuart as having ‘a great personality which is infectious and adds to everyone’s enjoyment.’ Special mention was made of his very positive attitude and the way in which he strives to deliver a great service every day to everyone, remembering everyone’s names into the bargain! Stephanie mentioned a particular incident when he delivered free hot bacon baguettes to a group of new golfers who had expected refreshments at the halfway hut (open in high season but on this occasion, it was closed). A delighted group left determined to return.

Runner Up in the Large Visitor Attraction category **Hampton Court Palace** was described as ‘A Royal Palace of national importance – well managed ...with commendably high overall standards...and good commitment to customer service.’

And Surrey’s accommodation, too, impressed the judges. Two hotels won awards in the Sustainable Tourism category, judged by Rebecca Hawkins and James Little; **The Asperion Hillside** was made Runner Up for its innovative approach to marketing its sustainable credentials and its commitment to work within the local economy and **The Manor House** received a Highly Commended for its grass-roofed refurbishment, fairtrade and local products, energy efficient lighting and environmentally-friendly plans for extension.

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:**

**Quotes from judges and images of all Award recipients are available by emailing the above contacts.**

**Full final line-up for the Tourism ExSEllence Awards in Surrey are as follows (full list across the South East available on request):**

**Runners Up**

Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking, Large Visitor Attraction  
Hampton Court Palace, Large Visitor Attraction  
Loseley Park, Guildford, Small Visitor Attraction  
Asperion Hillside, Worplesdon, Sustainable Tourism

**Highly Commended**

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

*Sponsors of the Tourism ExSEllence 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)