



NEWS RELEASE

Friday, 27 February 2009

Kent Business

Taste of Kent Award Winners Savour Business Success

Outstanding and innovative Kent food and drink products, producers and retailers were recognised at the prestigious Taste of Kent Awards, staged at Leeds Castle, near Maidstone, on Thursday, February 26.

The Taste of Kent Awards are the brainchild of the county's food and drink champions, Produced in Kent. Last night marked the fifth anniversary of the annual awards – the county's established benchmark of quality and innovation in regional food production and retailing.

The finalists, together with Produced in Kent's key supporters, Kent County Council and Hadlow College, gathered with the award sponsors to hear the winners announced.

With recent media coverage and increasing awareness of the positive health and environmental benefits of shopping and eating locally, this year's Taste of Kent Awards attracted record levels of voting from members of the public with a 42 per cent increase in votes over last year.

A panel of expert judges then faced the challenge of whittling down the three most popular entries in each of the 12 public voting categories to one overall winner.

More...

For the first time, in a 13th special category, the Taste of Kent Awards also acknowledged the county's most innovative food or drink product.

This award, sponsored by SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), went to Butterfly Meadow, of Whitstable, who have developed a Kentish fruit leather made by drying 100 per cent fruit puree using warm air.

Produced in Kent Manager Julie Monkman said: "The Taste of Kent Awards are increasingly seen as the benchmark of regional quality and business innovation by the buying public.

"There has been a huge rise in topical television programmes about sourcing and eating locally produced food and drink. Consumers are more aware than ever of the health, environmental and economic benefits to be enjoyed by buying locally grown and produced food and drink from regional retailers and producers.

"We have seen some outstanding products and companies in Kent recognised in the Taste of Kent Awards. Clearly, our county has a great deal to celebrate.

"In a tough economic climate, all these companies are playing a pivotal role in creating jobs and stimulating Kent's rural economy."

The 2008 Taste of Kent Awards winners are:

- Best Butcher/Meat Producer: A J Barkaway, Faversham.
- Best Beer: Ramsgate Brewery, Ramsgate – Gadds No. 3.
- Best Wine: Chapel Down Winery, Tenterden – Chapel Down English Rose.
- Best Seafood Retailer: Whitstable Fish Market.
- Best Local Food Retailer: The Little Stour Farm Shop, Wingham.
- Best Farmers' Market: Cliftonville, Margate.

More..

-3-

- Best Non-Alcoholic Drink Producer: Pine Trees Farm, Doddington.
- Best Food Producer: Blue Bell Hill Apiaries, Lidsing, near Gillingham.
- Best Food & Drink Product: The Chapel Press, Burmarsh – Rapeseed Oil.
- Best Restaurant: The Mulberry Tree, Boughton Monchelsea.
- Best Pub: The Plough at Stalisfield, Stalisfield Green, near Faversham.
- Best Cider or Perry: Hard Core, Core Fruit Products, Mystole, near Canterbury.
- Best Innovative Product: Fruit Leather, Butterfly Meadow, Whitstable.

The 2008 Taste of Kent Awards sponsors were: Barclays Bank; BBC Radio Kent; Belmont International; Bennett Opie; Biddenden Vineyards; Chapel Down Winery; Foodari Direct; Hadlow College; Kent County Council; Kent Frozen Foods; Kent Life; Maxim PR & Marketing; SEEDA; and W K Finn-Kelcey.

For further information about the Taste of Kent Awards and all the Produced in Kent initiatives supporting the county's food and drink businesses and the rural economy, visit www.producedinkent.co.uk, email: info@producedinkent.co.uk or call 01732 852521.

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For further media information and interview opportunities, please contact:

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