



24 November 2006

Visit London Award Winners Announced

The winners of the prestigious Visit London Awards 2006 were announced last night (23 November) at a glittering awards ceremony at the Roundhouse, Camden. The Awards, sponsored by Eurostar, celebrate and reward the capital's top tourism businesses.

GMTV presenter Kate Garraway handed out the awards in front of more than 800 guests from all sectors of the tourism and leisure industry. The celebrations went on into the night with a live performance by Jocelyn Brown followed by DJs from the Ministry of Sound.

Visit London's Chief Executive James Bidwell said: "The Visit London Awards are becoming more and more sought after and influential, thanks to the continued support of Eurostar, our media partners and sponsors. The event is a fitting celebration of the capital's top tourism businesses, whose dedication and work contributes to London's position as the number one city destination on the planet. Many congratulations to all of our winners."

Eurostar's Chief Executive Richard Brown said: "The winners of the Awards demonstrate the tremendous quality and variety of attractions that make London such an exciting destination for visitors from France, Belgium and far beyond. It is vital that the UK capital continues to set high standards that

will draw tourists from all over the world. We look forward to bringing people even more quickly to our new station in London, St Pancras International, when we move there in November 2007 and cut journey times by more than 20 minutes."

The entertainment was sponsored by The O₂, the new world-class entertainment venue set to open in July 2007 on the site of the former Millennium Dome. The reception had a Tutankhamun theme and was sponsored by Arts and Exhibitions International, organisers of the blockbuster Tutankhamun exhibition, which will return to the capital in November 2007.

Gold Award Winners

The Special Award for **Outstanding Achievement**, sponsored by Virgin Atlantic, went to celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, who has nine London restaurants. (Please see separate press release for more information on Gordon Ramsay's award.)

The **Large Hotel of the Year** award, sponsored by Davies Tanner, was won by the London Hilton on Park Lane, which was recognised for its continual investment in new products such as the POP Champagne bar and newly refurbished Galvin at Windows restaurant.

The **Small Hotel of the Year** award was picked up by The Zetter, which was praised for its style, comfort and 'quirky personality' as well as its strong environmental credentials.

The **Large Visitor Attraction of the Year**, sponsored by Marriot International, is the National Portrait Gallery, which houses the world's largest collection of personalities and faces and celebrates its 150th anniversary this year.

The **Small Visitor Attraction of the Year**, sponsored by London Duck Tours, is the Fan Museum, Greenwich, one of London's hidden gems, which was

commended for its creativity, dedicated staff and links with the local community.

The **B&B of the Year** category, sponsored by eviivo, was won for the second year running by B+B Belgravia, a contemporary B&B which, with its style, comfort and modern approach, is competing with 4 star hotels and helping to revitalise London's B&B offering.

Hostel of the Year, sponsored by Take One Media, is the Globetrotter Inn, a friendly establishment with an impressive range of facilities including a bar, internet café, DVD cinema, gym, self-catering kitchen, travel desk, laundry, three television rooms and language classes.

The **Business Event of the Year** award, sponsored by ISES UK, was introduced this year to acknowledge the importance of B2B events to London's tourism industry. It was won by Launchpad Events for an IPC product launch at Chartered Accountants' Hall.

The 2006 **Business Venue of the Year**, sponsored by Confex Group, is ExCeL London, London's largest venue which continues to go from strength to strength thanks to a thoughtful programme of investment.

The **Tour London** award was won by BBC Tours, which offer great value for money and a fascinating insight into life at Television Centre, with specially tailored tours for adults and children.

The **Cultural Event of the Year** award, sponsored by SML events, went to the Sultan's Elephant, produced by Artichoke, which provoked amazement as it paraded through the streets of central London in May.

The new **Future London Sustainable Tourism Award**, sponsored by Future London, was awarded to Apex City of London Hotel for a raft of sustainability measures, and for the hotel chain's effective communication of sustainability messages to customers and staff.

Tourist Information Centre of the Year, sponsored by Morris Visitor Publications, is the Britain and London Visitor Centre on Regent Street, where the highly-trained staff (who between them speak eight different languages) offer visitors detailed and personalised itineraries not just for London but for the whole of Britain.

The **Marketing / PR Campaign** award, sponsored by London Calling Arts, was picked up by Pearl Restaurant and Bar for its innovative and successful 'Shopping with the Chef' campaign.

The **Tourism Website** category, sponsored by Narrowstep, went to the Barbican for www.barbican.org.uk. The impressive functionality of the website clearly demonstrates great consumer understanding and it is a shining example to website creators worldwide.

The **Best Borough Initiative** award, sponsored by etc.venues, was collected by Cross River Partnership for its novel Photo Access Maps, which help users to navigate step free routes around some of London's most visited areas.

The **Outstanding Customer Service** award, sponsored by MSB, went to Sharon Francis, Gallery Assistant at the National Maritime Museum. Sharon was singled out for her exceptional understanding of the needs of young people - particularly disabled young people - as well as her tireless energy, enthusiasm and commitment, which has helped to improve access to the Museum amongst a wider audience.

People's Choice Awards

ITV London, the Evening Standard, LBC News 1152AM and Totally London were media partners for the Visit London Awards. Each ran their own 'people's choice' award, which allowed members of the public to vote for their London favourites.

- ITV London's '**London Tonight Best Day Out for Londoners**' award was won by the British Airways London Eye.
- The Evening Standard's **Entertainment Award**, sponsored by Superbreak, was picked up by two joint winners: Tate Modern and The Lion King.
- LBC News 1152AM listeners voted Wagamama as their favourite **Restaurant**. The award was sponsored by Yellow Pages 118 24 7.
- Visitors to visitlondon.com nominated Covent Garden as their top **Shopping** destination for the second year running. The award was sponsored by Global Refund.

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Notes for Editors:

- For images of the awards ceremony visit www.pmsphoto.co.uk, click on Visit London Awards and enter the password 'visit' (lower case).
- All categories, apart from the 'people's choice' awards, were judged by a panel of independent industry judges.
- Winners in certain categories will be put forward for the national EnjoyEngland Awards for Excellence 2007, which are run by VisitBritain and celebrate the best of English tourism. Now in their 18th year, the Awards are known throughout the industry. They promote healthy industry competition and high standards, helping to ensure England's place as a world class destination.
- Visit London is the official visitor organisation for London. Its role is to promote London as the world's most exciting city, targeting domestic and overseas leisure and business visitors as well as Londoners. Visit London works in partnership with the Mayor, the London Development Agency and the commercial industry. www.visitlondon.com
- Future London is a campaign of activity launched by London Unlimited designed to promote a greener, more sustainable lifestyle amongst Londoners. Future London will highlight London's key sustainability initiatives and promote the changes required to make London the most sustainable city in the world. www.futurelondon.co.uk
- Tutankhamun last came to London 35 years ago, when it became the most popular travelling exhibition in the history of the British Museum, drawing over 1.5 million visitors.

For more information please contact:

Hannah Collingbourne or Janet Hanson

Visit London press office

Tel: 020 7234 5843 / 5841

Email: hcollingbourne@visitlondon.com / jhanson@visitlondon.com

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