

The Forester

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2012

Judges announce this year's finalists

AS the countdown begins for the glittering *The Forester* Business Awards evening on Thursday April 26, our panel of judges have announced the finalists.

With a bumper entry of 123, compared with last year's 75, their work was cut out for them.

The quality of entries was very high and the competition keen.

The winners will be revealed at Forest Hills Golf Club, near Coleford, where a dinner and presentation is being held from 7pm.

The finalists are as follows:

Business of the Year finalists

Hale & Co (Drybrook) Ltd

This well-known family-run timber and builders' merchants based in Drybrook overcame a devastating fire to expand its range of facilities – including kitchen and bathroom showrooms.

Quickmach Engineering Pressings Ltd

This Cinderford-based firm is going places. It plans to expand into new premises, win new business, develop staff training while making customer service a priority.

Business Person of the Year finalists

Alex Weiss

Alex Weiss is a former car salesman who took the plunge to run his own fish and chip shop Al's Plaice in Coleford. He places great emphasis on staff training and supporting his community.

Miranda Jenkins

Miranda Jenkins who runs Skills To Go, a training and development business, has been instrumental in helping and inspiring people to start their own ventures and advance their professional lives.

Health and Beauty Business of the Year finalists

Rockets Health & Fitness Club

Andy Griffiths aims to help his clients lose weight and change their body shape but he also helps them recover from injury with his physio clinic at the Coleford-based gym.

Maria Young Beauty and Massage

Maria Young is only 20 and is passionate about her Coleford-based business. Her ambitions are to go onwards and upwards in everything she does.

Customer Service Award finalists

Keith's Kars

Keith Hoyle runs Keith's Kars from Huntley and prides himself on being the 'taxi of choice' for many people and businesses. 80 per cent of his business is returning customers.

Maria Young Beauty and Massage

Maria Young is only 20 and is passionate about her Coleford-based business. Her ambitions are to go onwards and upwards in everything she does.

Outstanding Apprentice of the Year finalists

Skyle Beddington (Westbury Dental Surgery)

Former Heywood School pupil Skyle Beddington has achieved the position of principal dental surgeon's nurse.

Sam Elliot (SPP Pumps)

Sam has contributed to his firm SPP Pumps' apprentice scheme over and above expectations.

Young Business Person of the Year finalists

Ian Drew

Ian Drew runs a small design and planning consultancy called i-design consultancy from Coleford. His business began when he was made redundant and he has grown it into a going concern.

Henry Gardner

Henry Gardner began his landscaping business Countryside Maintenance in Longhope as a 17-year-old and has continued to expand and improve the service he gives four years on.

Tourism Business of the Year finalists

Greenway Farm

Lorraine and David Morgan run the Forest's only five-star graded camping and caravan site at Greenway Farm in Drybrook. On site they even have a café and bistro.

Speech House Hotel

Peter and Gill Hands bought the Speech House Hotel in 2010 and since then have developed the quality of service, links with the community, as well as the general ambience for guests and visitors.

Family-run Business of the Year finalists

Littledean House Hotel

Family-run Littledean House Hotel prides itself on catering for everyone's individual needs and the owners are really putting it back on the map as an integral part of the community.

The George Inn, Aylburton

Ian and Carole Lilley involve the whole family in running their vibrant pub The George Inn at Aylburton and the adjoining 14-bed en suite Millingbrook Lodge.

Green Business of the Year finalists

Woodgate Sawmills

Founded in 1950, family-run Woodgate Sawmills has built up a considerable trade in supplying wood to the general public and they are planning to expand business by installing a new kiln.

Al's Plaice

Alex Weiss is a former car salesman who took the plunge to run his own fish and chip shop, Al's Plaice in Coleford. He places great emphasis on staff training and supporting his community.

Small Business of the Year finalists

Mel's Top Cutz

Meloney Hurrell's very modern barbershop appeals to all ages. It's her first solo venture and she pays special attention to making children feel comfortable.

Omnis Ltd

Tough decisions taken two years ago to move the direction of the business have paid off for this Omnis Ltd, based at

Vantage Point Business Village. They've had a runaway success with a new state-of-the-art phone system called Babbblevoice.

Retailer of the Year finalists

Al's Plaice

Alex Weiss is a former car salesman who took the plunge to run his own fish and chip shop, Al's Plaice in Coleford.

Apollo Carpets and Flooring Ltd

Robert Capindale who runs Apollo Carpets and Flooring Ltd in Lydney prides himself on his customer service. His growing business also supports local charities.

Pub of the Year finalists

Farmer's Boy, Longhope

Farmer's Boy landlord Phil Kiernan has put all his energies into making a name for his pub, whether it's on TV's Four in a Bed series or in opening his Deli & Gastro Pie Shop.

The New Inn, Shortstanding

Chris Barker reopened the New Inn last July and has turned the business round into a vibrant pub.

Restaurant of the Year finalists

The Bluebell Restaurant, Coleford

Sue and Geoff Sparkes are well-known for the quality of their food which is locally sourced where possible.

Orepool Inn, Sling

James and Becky Chilton have turned round the fortunes of the Orepool Inn through sheer hard work since they took it over in 2009.

Superb selection of prizes to be raffled in aid of SARA at awards night

Rockets Health and Fitness Centre



Six-months' membership for two people, worth £200, at Coleford's Rockets Health and Fitness Centre will help you and your partner get fit for the summer holidays! Membership at the club includes a personal training package, with food consultations and Diet Club, for the first six weeks. Members can receive discounts from both Reds physio and sports injury clinic, and from Heavenly Glow beauty therapy.

Severn Valley Cycles



Severn Valley Cycles, run by Marcus Carozzo, has donated a bike worth £220, that could be used for riding in the Forest – one of England's finest cycling destinations. The bike is a Falcon hybrid man's bike, with 21-speed top-of-the-range Shimano gears, and a rear wheel mudracker.

Speech House Hotel



If you are a fan of Strictly Come Dancing then this raffle prize of a chef's jacket signed by John Sergeant would be right up your street. It has been donated by Peter Hands, owner of the Speech House Hotel, where John stayed recently during filming and actually used the chef's jacket to cook Speech House pudding.

Taylor's Jewellers

This beautiful 9ct diamond cluster ring, worth £175, has been donated by Claire Taylor, of Taylor's Jewellers of Cinderford and Lydney. The 9ct gold ring, with its tiered-style circular cluster of small faceted diamonds is in a gold claw setting.



Severn Area Rescue Association

This prize is not for the fainthearted – it's a day out on the River Severn or Wye with the crew of Severn Area Rescue Association in one of their lifeboats. You will see at first hand what these intrepid volunteers do to save lives on our inland waterways.



Forest Hills Golf Club

Alison and Ed Breton have donated a year's membership of their Forest Hill's Golf Club, which is worth a total of £500. The 18-hole course is based near Coleford and boasts excellent club house facilities. It hosts County Matches and will be the venue for our glittering Forester Business Awards night.



National Birds of Prey Centre



Jemima Parry Jones has donated a 12-months free pass to her National Birds of Prey Centre near Newent. There is something to see at every time of year – today it's newly hatched owls, then there are the flying demonstrations with birds showing off their amazing and last but not least is celebrity owl Harley who is the poster boy for the centre's 45th anniversary raptor hospital appeal.

JSPens



You could be the proud owner of one of woodturner Jeff Stanford's beautiful pens crafted in walnut and with its 24ct gold plated nib and trimmings. Jeff, who runs his woodturning business from Lower Soudley, has donated the pen, worth £30, as one of the raffle prizes.

Syon Park Waldorf Astoria Hotel



This complimentary night for two at the luxuriously appointed Syon Park Waldorf Astoria Hotel in London is a prize worth in excess of £200 and has been sourced courtesy of SARA.