



'Inspiring' island resort named Scotland's top hotel

A resort set up more than a quarter-of-a-century ago to provide indoor leisure facilities on an island has been named Scotland's top hotel.

Auchrannie on Arran took the main honour at the Scottish Hotel Awards, presented last night at a sell-out party in Glasgow attended by more than 500 hoteliers, staff and guests.

Judges praised its average year-round occupancy rate of around 90% on an island often described as 'Scotland in miniature.'

"Auchrannie is an inspiring Scottish tourism success story," said Damian Riley-Smith, Managing Director of Awards organiser Paragraph Publishing. "It is a creatively designed destination resort offering excellent accommodation, hospitality, leisure facilities and a luxury spa where guests of all ages can experience carefree relaxation and family fun for a true getaway island escape."

Owned by the Johnston family which acquired it in 1988, Auchrannie has grown from a 16 bedroom guest house to comprise two 4 star hotels with 64 rooms, thirty 5 star self-catering luxury lodges, three restaurants, a shop, two leisure clubs with pools, a spa, outdoor adventure centre and a children's 'Playbarn'.

Last year's Hotel of the Year, Cromlix, owned by tennis star Andy Murray and his family near his home town of Dunblane and where part of his wedding celebrations were held last weekend, was voted Luxury Hotel of the Year.

The Awards, Scotland's most comprehensive programme for the hotel and accommodation industry, were presented at Glasgow's Crowne Plaza Hotel hosted by comedian Fred MacAulay. Judging included three months of mystery visits in nine regions with regional winners eligible to win the national categories. The overall Hotel of the Year was chosen from national category winners.

Ardanaisig, on the banks of Loch Awe at Kilchrenan, was named Country House Hotel of the Year, with Lake of Menteith Hotel, located beside Scotland's only natural lake in the Trossachs National Park, taking the Small Country House Hotel Award.

Shieldhill, on the site of a castle at Biggar in the Upper Clyde valley dating back to 1199 and where guests have included Nelson Mandela, captured the Romantic Hotel Award, and Balbirnie at Markinch won Best Wedding Hotel.

Restaurant of the Year went to the 5 star 18 bedroom Inverlochy Castle Hotel near Fort William.

Duisdale House in Sleat on the Isle of Skye, won the award for Best Informal Dining and its owners, Anne Gracie and Ken Gunn, picked up one of four Gold Laurels presented to 'visionary entrepreneurs' for their Sonas Hospitality company.

Chef of Year was Tony Sarton of Twenty Princes Street at Edinburgh's Royal British Hotel, shortly to be re-branded as the boutique Hotel Indigo.

The Award for best bed and breakfast or guesthouse was presented to Sean and Karen O'Byrne for Ardtorna at Barcaldine, near Oban.

Jamie Stevens of Glasgow's Hilton Garden Inn was voted Scottish Hotel Manager of the Year. He was recently appointed to head up the new Urban Village Resort which opens in July on Glasgow's Pacific Drive.

The Marketing Manager of the Year Award went to Eve Inglis of the 5 star Mar Hall Golf and Spa resort at Bishopton, voted Best Luxury Hotel in Glasgow.

Ayrshire-based Robert and Vivien Kyle received the Award for Scottish Independent Hoteliers of the Year.

The fellowship award for contribution to Scotland's hospitality industry went to Peter Harrison of Pool House on the shores of Loch Ewe, a popular refuge for celebrities and business leaders.

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