



## **NEWS RELEASE**



**Wednesday 22 August 2007**

### **Two North East Tourism Businesses Toast Success in Tourism Awards Shortlist**

Two estates in the North East of Scotland are celebrating after making it onto the shortlist of this year's Scottish Thistle Awards. The Crown Estate and Finzean Estate are among 35 top tourism businesses which have made it through to the finals of VisitScotland's prestigious awards this year.

The coveted accolades celebrate quality and innovation. The 2007 winners will be announced at a glittering ceremony in Edinburgh on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. Now in their 16<sup>th</sup> year, the awards are open to all businesses operating in Scotland's tourism industry and businesses can enter as many of the 10 categories as appropriate.

The Crown Estate has been shortlisted in the Sustainable Tourism category, sponsored by Scottish Natural Heritage, and faces stiff competition from two Edinburgh & Lothians based candidates – Rabbie's Trail Burners and the Radisson SAS Hotel. Finzean Estate is up against The Captain's Galley Restaurant in Scrabster, and The Forth Floor of Harvey Nichols in Edinburgh, in the Taste of Scotland category sponsored by EatScotland.

Commenting on reaching the finals, Andrew Wells, Countryside Manager for the Crown Estate, said: "We are thrilled to hear that we've been shortlisted in the Sustainable Tourism category. We strive to offer our visitors the best possible experience when they come to the Glenlivet Estate, while also doing all we can to minimise the effects of their activities on our beautiful environment. This nomination is a testament to the hard work of all those involved in the development and upkeep of the Crown Estate at Glenlivet, who help both locals and visitors get the most out of this fantastic part of Scotland."

Catriona Farquharson of Finzean Estate added: "Reaching the finals of the Thistle Awards is great recognition of all the hard work and effort that has gone into developing the farmshop and tea room. Our focus in both is on offering visitors a range of the finest quality, local, Scottish produce to choose from, including produce from the estate itself, so we are delighted that our establishment has been acknowledged in this way."

Congratulating the finalists, Tourism Minister Jim Mather said: "These awards recognise people who are delivering the very best of Scottish hospitality.

"I congratulate all those shortlisted. They have achieved high standards and have not only boosted their own individual businesses, but also Scotland's economy as a whole.

"The Scottish Thistle Awards are yet another reminder of the skills, talent and drive shown by our tourism industry. The Scottish government is determined to work with the industry to build on our successes, boost tourism figures and increase sustainable economic growth."

VisitScotland Aberdeen & Grampian's Area Director, Ian Dunlop, said: "It's great news that Aberdeen and Grampian is represented by two excellent initiatives on this year's Thistle Awards shortlist. We know that it is the little things we do which will make the difference and keep visitors coming back to the north east of Scotland for more.

"The Scottish Thistle Awards recognise small and large businesses across Scotland which go that extra mile to drive up quality and make Scotland and Aberdeen and Grampian a must visit, must return destination. I wish both the North East Estates the very best of luck in the finals."

## **2007 Scottish Thistle Awards Categories / Sponsors / Finalists:**

### **Business Tourism**

Sponsored by VisitScotland Business Tourism Unit

2007 Finalists:       Horsecross (Perth Concert Hall and Perth Theatre.)  
                          The Westin Turnberry  
                          Unique Venues of Edinburgh

### **Customer Care: Accommodation**

Sponsored by VisitScotland Quality and Standards

2007 Finalists       Foxglove Cottages, Drymen  
                          Millness Croft Luxury Cottages, Inverness  
                          Morag's Lodge, Fort Augustus

### **Customer Care: Serviced Accommodation**

Sponsored by VisitScotland Quality and Standards

2007 Finalists       Clach Mhuilinn, Inverness  
                          Radisson SAS Hotel, Edinburgh  
                          The Western House Hotel, Ayr

### **Customer Care, Activities and Attractions**

Sponsored by VisitScotland Quality and Standards

2007 Finalists       Haggis Adventures  
                          Rabbie's Trail Burners  
                          The Famous Grouse Experience, Crieff

### **Events and Festivals (Regional)**

Sponsored by EventScotland

2007 Finalists       Cambo Snowdrops, Fife  
                          Kirkintilloch Canal Festival Group  
                          RBS Caledonian Challenge

### **Events and Festivals (International)**

Sponsored by EventScotland  
2007 Finalists Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow  
Loch Ness Marathon  
Dumfries and Galloway Council for the Tour of Britain

### **Innovation**

Sponsored by Scottish Enterprise  
2007 Finalists Loch Lomond Seaplanes  
Lothian Buses  
Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

### **Marketing Initiative**

Sponsored by VisitBritain  
2007 Finalists Dynamic Earth/ Mother Earth of All Adventures, Edinburgh  
Glasgow Mackintosh Festival  
Mary King's Close/ Ghost Fest, Edinburgh

### **People Development (Small)**

Sponsored by Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
2007 Finalists Anstruther Fish Bar and Restaurant  
The Famous Grouse Experience, Crieff  
The Shetland Fudge Company

### **People Development (Large)**

Sponsored by Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
2007 Finalists Historic Scotland – Visitor Services and Business  
Development  
Horsecross (Perth Concert Hall and Perth Theatre)  
The Town House Company, Edinburgh

### **PR Excellence**

Sponsored by BAA Scotland  
2007 Finalists Historic Scotland  
McKinlay Kidd Limited, Glasgow  
Podge Publicity, Edinburgh

### **Operator Programme of the Year**

Sponsored by Historic Scotland  
2007 Finalists HotelBeds  
JAC Scotland

### **Sustainable Environment**

Sponsored by Scottish Natural Heritage  
2007 Finalists Crown Estate, Glenlivet  
Rabbie's Trail Burners, Edinburgh  
Radisson SAS Hotel Edinburgh

### **Taste of Scotland**

Sponsored by EatScotland  
2007 Finalists Finzean Estate, Banchory  
The Captain's Galley Restaurant, Scrabster  
The Forth Floor at Harvey Nichols, Edinburgh

Further information is available via the website: [www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk](http://www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk)

## Note to editors

- VisitScotland is Scotland's national tourism organisation. Its core purpose is to maximise the economic benefit of tourism to Scotland.
- The organisation has five roles:
  1. To give strategic direction to the tourism industry.
  2. To attract visitors by marketing Scotland and the country's tourism assets to all parts of the world in the UK and internationally.
  3. To provide information – and inspiration – to visitors and potential visitors to enable them to get the best out of a visit to Scotland.
  4. To provide quality assurance to visitors and quality advice to industry partners to ensure the industry delivers to meet – or exceed – visitors' expectations.
  5. To promote partnerships with the wider industry to ensure we all reap the economic benefits of collective effort.
- VisitScotland is working with the tourism industry and other partners to achieve a 50 per cent growth in tourism revenues for Scotland by 2015.
- The organisation employs over 1,000 people and has offices and tourist information centres across Scotland.
- Tourism employs 200,000 people in Scotland in 20,000 diverse businesses. The industry generates over £4 billion revenue. Tourism supports around 9 per cent of employment in Scotland (13 per cent in the Highlands).
- For VisitScotland's press releases go to [http://www.visitscotland.org/media\\_centre.htm](http://www.visitscotland.org/media_centre.htm)
- For Scottish tourism statistics go to [http://www.visitscotland.org/research\\_and\\_statistics.htm](http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics.htm)
- For frequently asked questions go to [http://www.visitscotland.org/about\\_us/faqs.htm](http://www.visitscotland.org/about_us/faqs.htm)
- For holiday information on Scotland go [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)

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For information on VisitScotland, Scotland's national tourism organisation, visit

<http://www.visitscotland.org>

For all holiday information and bookings go to <http://www.visitscotland.com/> or telephone  
0845 22 55 121

For business tourism information go to [www.conventionscotland.com](http://www.conventionscotland.com)