

Press Release: East Devon comes out top in 2009 Tourism Excellence Awards

Winners have been announced for the 2009/2010 South West Tourism Excellence Awards, with East Devon based tourism businesses producing no fewer than five winners! The East Devon businesses recognised for their commitment to excellence are:

- Escot Park in Ottery St. Mary (*Small Visitor Attraction of the Year*)
- Mazzard Farm holiday cottages in Ottery St. Mary (*Sustainable Tourism*)
- The Salty Monk in Sidford (*B&B of the Year*)
- Darts Farm in Topsham (*Taste of the South West*)
- The Globe Hotel in Topsham (*Sustainable Tourism*)

What this highlights is that this small corner of Devon is now firmly on the tourism map for Great Britain, with businesses clearly responding to the increasing demand for high quality tourism experiences.

The South West of England has been a significant destination for tourists for many decades, with well established businesses in areas such as the English Riviera, South Hams, Dartmoor and Exmoor, North Devon and Cornwall firmly on people's minds as potential holiday destinations. East Devon has only fairly recently entered this arena, having long been seen as the mainly agricultural hinterland of seaside towns such as Sidmouth, Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton.

The emergence of East Devon as a holiday destination of choice could not be more clearly demonstrated than through the 2009 South West Tourism Awards, where East Devon based businesses made the short list in as many as six of the fifteen Award Categories, and winners in four of these. The Sustainable Tourism category in particular has caught on in this part of Devon, with two of the category's three winners coming from this small corner of the South West - the Globe Hotel in Topsham and Mazzard Farm holiday cottages in Ottery St. Mary. Mazzard Farm was also shortlisted for the Self Catering of the Year category.

Other East Devon businesses rewarded for their proven commitment to excellence are Escot Park in Ottery St. Mary, as winner in the Small Visitor Attraction category, Darts Farm in Topsham in the Taste of the South West category, and the Salty Monk in Sidford in the B&B of the Year category. The Salty Monk also made it to the shortlist in the Taste of the West category.

Delighted by the results, Derek Phillips, chairman of Exeter and Essential Devon tourist board comments: *"We are delighted but not at all surprised that the judges have recognised how many high quality tourism businesses there now are in this beautiful part of England. This is a testament to all the hard work these businesses have put in over the last few years. East Devon now has a tourism sector to be really proud of."*

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- **Mazzard Farm holiday cottages** is a small, 6-cottage self-catering complex, situated on East Hill, just outside Ottery St. Mary. East Hill overlooks the Jurassic Coast, and is recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Mazzard Farm is rated 4*/4* Gold by VisitBritain. Ruud Jansen Venneboer and Jacqueline Parker at Mazzard Farm can be contacted on 01404 815492 / 07768 – 864 376 or info@mazzardfarm.com, and more background information is available on www.MazzardFarm.com.
- Annette & Andy Witheridge purchased **The Salty Monk** in 1999 and after an extensive sympathetic refurbishment it has been transformed into a haven of luxury. Originally a Salt House used by the Benedictine Monks who traded Salt at Exeter Cathedral The Salty Monk is set in the unspoilt natural beauty of Devon. A perfect place to stay to explore or escape for a romantic break, wedding or honeymoon. Contact Annette Witheridge (saltymonk@btconnect.com 01395 513174) for more information www.saltymonk.co.uk
- **Escot Park** lies within 1100 acres of glorious East Devon just off the Exeter to Honiton A30 at Fairmile. Its historic gardens and unrivalled children's play facilities have attracted nearly 10,000 loyal local season ticket holders as well as many fans among the visitors to our region. For more details see www.escot-devon.co.uk or call 01404 822 188.
- **The Globe Hotel** has been a busy inn for many centuries and is still popular with tourists, business travellers and locals today. It has been privately owned and managed by the Price family since 1978 and continues to offer friendly service to all. The Globe has 19 en-suite bedrooms (all non smoking), The Elizabethan Restaurant, the Bar and The Malthouse for functions, conferences and exhibitions. Contact Liz Hodges (01392 – 873471, sales@globehotel.com) for more information www.globehotel.com
- Situated just outside the historic estuary town of Topsham near Exeter, nationally-recognised **Darts Farm** offers a truly special shopping experience. Darts Farm used to be - and still is - a working farm. Food which is locally grown, reared, baked, caught or produced is at the centre of Darts Farm's

success and the on-site master butcher, fishmonger, baker, deli, cider and wine cellar all reflect the superb produce available within the South West. The restaurant uses the food hall as its larder; chefs prepare daily specials with locally grown ingredients, ensuring customers receive the freshest seasonal flavours. Combine all this with the Aga shop, Fired Earth, Orange Tree and the unusual design led gifts for the home and garden, florist, children's clothes, toys, The Treatment Loft beauty salon, Cotswold Outdoor and the RSPB shop and you will understand why your first visit won't be your last. Contact Rachel Gould (01392 878228 rachel@dartsfarm.co.uk) for more information

Photos of all five businesses are available by contacting the respective businesses