

WEST KENT BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS: Drinks all round at pub and

restaurant group Whiting and Hammond after it is named the outright winner

The best in the business

THE WINNERS

2011 West Kent Business Excellence Award Winners

■ Best Growing Business (companies trading less than ten years)
Whiting and Hammond Ltd
Sponsored by NatWest

■ Best Growing Business (companies trading more than ten years)
Ecolution
Sponsored by NatWest

■ Best New Business (small company)
Bertie's Wood Fuel Ltd
Sponsored by Genesa

■ Best New Business (medium company)
Super Mango Ltd
Sponsored by Genesa

■ Best New Business (large company)
Blue Chew Digital Ltd
Sponsored by Genesa

■ Best Retailer
Love is Boutique
Sponsored by Henry Paul Funerals

■ Community Award (charity/not-for-profit organisation)
The Bowles Rock Trust
Sponsored by Town & Country Housing Group

■ Community Award (business sector)
The Tunbridge Wells Mum
Sponsored by Town & Country Housing Group

■ Customer Care and Service (small/medium company)
Feathers
Sponsored by Halliwell/Elizabeth Finn Homes

■ Customer Care and Service (large company)
The Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre
Sponsored by Halliwell/Elizabeth Finn Homes

■ Employer of the Year
Lightmaker UK Ltd
Sponsored by Loch Associates and enblise

■ Entprising Business
ID&C Ltd
Sponsored by West Kent Chamber of Commerce

■ Excellence in Marketing
Lambs Larder Ltd
Sponsored by Deeks Evans

■ Innovation (small/medium company)
ID&C Ltd
Sponsored by West Kent Partnership

■ Innovation (large company)
Ecolution
Sponsored by West Kent Partnership

■ Outstanding Business Person
Henry Treadwell, Treadwell Electrical Ltd
Sponsored by Synergie

■ Young Entrepreneur of the Year
Peter Tweddell, Bertie's Wood Fuel Ltd
Sponsored by Kent Trainers

■ West Kent Business of the Year
Whiting and Hammond Ltd
Judged by Simon Hume-Kendall

By Keith Lewis
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THIS year's West Business Excellence Awards drew to a glittering climax at The Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells on Thursday.

Following five months of painstaking evaluation by the judges, 14 businesses eventually walked away with 17 different category awards before independent pub and restaurant group Whiting and Hammond was revealed as outright winner of West Kent Business of the Year 2011.

Former Savoy chef Brian Whiting, the driving force behind the family business, said: "What a month. I wasn't expecting the top prize, so I'm obviously very happy."

"Better still, it is a tremendous reward for our 300 staff who have worked so hard to make us a success."

"It follows on from our winning the Best Growing Business award earlier in the evening and being nominated for two other separate industry awards in November."

Fulfilment

"It represents the fulfilment of eight years' work."

Earlier in the evening guests had been welcomed to the event, which was held on Thursday of last week, by the competition's top judge and winner of the Business Person of the Year Award in 2008, Simon Hume-Kendall.

He said: "I salute all the finalists who have made it here tonight for having done so well during the most difficult period most of us can remember."

The awards were sponsored by the Courier Media Group whose managing director, Richard Karn, thanked the judges and individual award sponsors before describing the finalists as "the cream of the cream".

Three other businesses emerged as double winners, each taking a prize in two of the 11 designated categories.

Renewable energy specialists Ecolution won Best Growing Business for businesses trading for more than ten years, as well as an Innovation award.

Access control group ID&C picked up the Entprising Business award and also won the Innovation award for small to medium sized businesses for the second year running.

And Bertie's Wood Fuel took Best New Business for small firms and 27-year-old Peter Tweddell was voted Young Entrepreneur of the Year.



PREVIOUS WINNER: Simon Hume-Kendall

A very popular winner, Mr Tweddell said afterwards: "I started this business 13 months ago with a small loan from the bank based on a first-year income prediction of £25,000."

"In the event, we managed to generate revenue of £80,000."

"I have ploughed everything back into the business for future growth."

Exciting

"Perhaps the most exciting development is a contract to supply kiln-dried logs to B&Q which should boost our 2012-13 winter season."

Awards organiser Alan Pocock told guests: "Tonight proves that, despite the gloom and doom we read every day, business and enterprise are alive and well in West Kent."

"We have applauded the winners tonight and, while the runners-up may feel disappointed right now, everyone who has made it through as a finalist should feel very proud."

Mr Hume-Kendall added: "We have some real beacons of success here tonight."

"Imagine what they could achieve in normal conditions - the mind boggles."



TOASTING SUCCESS: 2011 Business Excellence Awards winners



MOTHER KNOWS BEST: The Tunbridge Wells Mum



FLYING HIGH: Feathers receive the Customer Care and Service award for small/medium-sized companies



DOUBLE WINNER: Ecolution receive the Best Growing Business award for companies that have been trading for more than ten years



CUTTING EDGE: ID&C receive the Entprising Business award



REWARD: The Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre were to pick up the Customer Care and Service award for large companies



TASTES SWEET: Brian Whiting (second from left) picks up the Business of the Year award, pictured here with Simon Hume-Kendall (far left), Darren Somerton and Chris Hammond



YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR: Peter Tweddell receives one of two awards



LOVIN' IT: Love Is Boutique receives the Best Retailer award



EXCELLENT WORK: Lambs Larder Ltd receives the Excellence in Marketing award



INNOVATIVE: Ecolution receives the Innovation award for large companies

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