

In good company

Ayrshire & Arran tourism businesses shortlisted for Scottish Thistle Awards

A FAMILY fun park and luxury adventure tour company are among the bumper crop of businesses representing Ayrshire and Arran, as the shortlist for this year's Scottish Thistle Awards regional finals are unveiled.

Heads of Ayr Farm Park and **Primal Adventures** have made it through to the West regional final of the Scottish Thistle Awards. A total of nine businesses and individuals will represent the region at the West Regional Final at Oran Mor in Glasgow on Thursday 28 November 2019.

Heads of Ayr Farm Park has been shortlisted in the Best Visitor Attraction category, sponsored by ScotRail, and Primal Adventures, based at Largs, has been shortlisted in the Best Outdoor/ Adventure Experience category.

Other regional finalists from Ayrshire & Arran include Trump Turnberry in the Best Hotel Experience category, sponsored by Fishers, as well as in the Best Self Catering Accommodation Experience, sponsored by Bruce Stevenson Insurance Brokers. Auchrannie Resort on the Isle of Arran has also been shortlisted in the Best Hotel Experience category, as well as Linda Johnston in the Regional Ambassador category, sponsored by Johnstons of Elgin.

Three members of staff from the Trump Turnberry have also been shortlisted for awards. **Robert Burns Birthplace Museum** in Alloway has been shortlisted for the Best Heritage Tourism Experience, sponsored by Historic Environment Scotland.

The Scottish Thistle Awards, now in their 27th year, help shine the spotlight on individuals and businesses going above and beyond to create a destination and visitor experience worth talking about amongst our valuable tourism industry. They champion the very best of the Scottish tourism industry, celebrating innovation, success and excellence in the sector.

2019 saw almost 600 entries submitted, including more than 1,000 nominations from members of the public keen to give hotels, restaurants, B&Bs, visitor attractions and individuals the opportunity to earn the recognition they deserve from their own industry peers.

Rebecca Brooks, Chair of the Scottish Thistle Awards industry panel, said: *“Once again, the Scottish Thistle Awards, have attracted entries from right across the country, with the regional winners earning their place at the prestigious National Final in March, where they will join the country’s tourism elite to be honoured with the highest accolade in the Scottish hospitality and tourism sector.*

“Tourism is more than a holiday experience – it is the heartbeat of the Scottish economy and touches every community, generating income, jobs and social change. The Scottish Thistle Awards is a chance to celebrate those people and businesses responsible for offering the warmest of welcomes that our country is famous for.

“On behalf of the panel, I would like to congratulate all regional finalists and wish each and every one of them the very best of luck at the regional finals.”

The Scottish Thistle Awards are led by Scotland’s national tourism organisation, VisitScotland, and supported by a panel of industry representatives including the Aberdeen

City and Shire Tourism Awards, Highlands & Islands Tourism Awards, the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA), the Hospitality Industry Trust Scotland, Scotland Food and Drink, Scottish Tourism Alliance, the Scottish Licensed Trade Association, **sportscotland** and Wild Scotland.

VisitScotland Regional Director Gordon Smith said: *“I am delighted to see such a strong representation from Ayrshire and Arran at the West Scottish Thistle Awards Regional Final. These entries show the strength and depth of the tourism industry in the region, from high quality accommodation and historic visitor attractions to individuals going the extra mile to put the region on the map. Those individuals and businesses should feel very proud to have been shortlisted in the regional final and I wish them the very best of luck.”*

Regional finals will take place in different locations around Scotland covering areas such as Central Fife and Tayside, Lothian & Borders, West, the Highlands and Islands, organised by the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards, and Aberdeen City and Shire, which is organised by Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Awards.

- The Highlands and Islands Regional Final, organised by the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards, will take place at the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness, on Friday 1 November.
- The Central, Fife & Tayside Regional Final will take place at Prestonfield House Hotel in Edinburgh on Thursday 14 November.
- The Lothian & Borders Regional Final will take place at Prestonfield House Hotel in Edinburgh on Thursday 14 November.
- The Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Final, organised by Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Awards, will take place at the Chester Hotel, Aberdeen, on Friday 22 November.
- The West Regional Final will take place at Oran Mor, Glasgow, on Thursday 28 November.

The full 15 regional categories are:

- ScotRail - Best Visitor Attraction
- Fishers – Best Hotel Experience
- Bruce Stevenson Insurance Brokers – Best Self-Catering Accommodation Experience
- Abbey UK- Most Hospitable B&B/Guest House
- Best Informal Eating Experience
- Best Restaurant Experience
- Best Bar / Pub
- Johnstons of Elgin - Regional Ambassador
- Best Outdoor/Adventure Experience
- Working Together For Tourism
- Tourism & Hospitality Hero
- HIT Scotland - Regional Rising Star
- Best Cultural Event or Festival
- Historic Environment Scotland - Best Heritage Tourism Experience
- Geotourist - Innovation in Tourism Award

For a full list of shortlisted finalists, please visit: www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk