

PRESS RELEASE:

5* BED & BREAKFAST IS NAMED AMONGST THE CREAM OF DEVON'S TOURISM INDUSTRY.

The highest rated Bed & Breakfast between Exeter and Honiton has won Gold at Devon's prestigious tourism awards.

Larkbeare Grange finished top in the 'Bed & Breakfast and Guest Accommodation of the Year' category at the 2011 Devon Tourism Awards, hosted by Judi Spiers at Sandy Park last night.

Organised by regional tourism body, VisitDevon, after rigorous judging from a record number of entries, 27 businesses were shortlisted across 10 categories to represent the cream of Devon's tourism, with the chance now of going through to the national finals in May.

Completely renovated and opened in 2002, Larkbeare Grange is a four bedroomed Georgian house run by Charlie and Julia Hutchings, set in rolling East Devon countryside on the outskirts of Exeter.

Now a 5* rated Bed & Breakfast with strong green credentials, Larkbeare Grange also has a Gold Award from Visit Britain, a rare Breakfast Award for its commitment to sourcing locally and for its wide ranging environmental initiatives, a Gold Award from the national Green Tourism Business Scheme.

The judging took into account the entry form and supporting information, along with a combination of web searches, emails, telephone calls and visits. Awards co-ordinator Robin Barker commented: "The panel was looking for all elements of the business to be excellent, with some of them outstanding. To be amongst the winners, given the level of competition, is therefore a very significant achievement indeed."

Over the summer Charlie and Julia invested £13,000 into adding two rows of Photo Voltaic solar panels so that all the electricity used by the business during the day is now generated by the sun with any excess electricity exported straight back into the National Grid.

There is already a whole host of existing energy saving and environmental initiatives in place that include extensive recycling, using low energy appliances and lighting and also eco friendly cleaning products. Food plays a big part in the experience so as well as buying locally, the couple grow their own seasonal fruit, make their own marmalades and jams and squeeze their own fruit juices for guests.

Charlie Hutchings commented: "Winning this award is very humbling as we strive to do everything as well as we can and to exceed people's expectations of what a B&B can be. To be recognised alongside the likes of Gidleigh Park, Bovey Castle and Riverford is a very great honour indeed. Many of those who do stay with us comment that having arrived as guests, they leave feeling much more like friends which is exactly why we keep doing it."

Successful businesses in the Devon Awards will be fast tracked into the South West Tourism Excellence Awards in February 2012, and possibly on to the National Visit England Awards in May.

ENDS: 24/11/11

For more information on Larkbeare Grange please visit: www.larkbeare.net

For all press enquiries please contact Ross Hayward on ross@wellseasonedpr.com