



**Case Study**

**Isle of Eriska Hotel, Spa and Golf**

**Taste of Scotland Thistle Awards 2010**



*Isle  
of Eriska*  
*Hotel, Spa & Golf*

**Category Sponsored by:**



## **INTRODUCTION**

Isle of Eriska Hotel has been operating for nearly 40 years. It was the brainchild of Robin and Sheena Buchanan-Smith who bought the 350 Acre Island in 1973 and set about creating a unique individual property. The business now employs 50 staff and generates a significant turnover, targeted to reach £2.5million in 2012.

Eriska's ability to evolve and develop has insured its survival and it is now in the hands of the second generation of hoteliers and has expanded far beyond the simple small seasonal hotel of the early years to a thriving all year round destination property welcoming visitors from all around the globe.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Isle of Eriska Hotel's core purpose is to deliver the "Eriska Experience" to visitors through their unique blend of 5 star service, accommodation and facilities on a private, Scottish Island.

### Core Values:

To support their staff so that providing 5 star service happens naturally

Deliver constant and consistent hard work and attention to detail in order to deliver the "Eriska Experience"

Strive to improve their current offerings and develop operations of the business for the benefit of guests, staff and the local community.

Ensure commitment to improving and developing environmental sustainability

Ensure they contribute to the island thus leaving it in better condition than when the family arrived.

## **CHALLENGES**

The business has had to change and adapt to many changes over the years. It has been essential not only to attract new business and open up new markets but also to maintain the loyalty and value of existing markets.

In order to open up new markets, Eriska has moved from a seasonal property to a full time operation with the benefits of steady income, personnel and consistent standards and training. However the achievement of becoming a year round programme comes against a backdrop of a complex seasonal market with different needs and desires. Understanding and delivering those differing expectations whilst maintaining a satisfactory return on investment for the businesses required to afford the fixed costs is always a delicate path.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

From humble beginnings, Eriska has strived not only to support the local infrastructure but also to help it develop and evolve.

Eriska understood that recognition of their achievements, locally and nationally - by customers, stakeholders and local suppliers would support growth and should be central to their marketing strategy.

The most recent strategic review took into account the views of their traditional stakeholders and also included suppliers and local environment. Eriska introduced a system of food miles to establish and use the best local fresh produce suppliers. They explored joint marketing opportunities and in one occasion entered a joint venture with a supplier to not only assist in sourcing local produce but also to help remove instability and seasonality of production.

The ethos of engaging beyond the customer/business environment has provided Eriska with a vision that the views of others are vital in shaping and developing the business. That external view allows the company to grow based upon the needs of those who interact with the company, developing their staff through feedback. This also creates the opportunity to promote their skills and experiences in order to build a higher profile of the business in order to boost sales.

Eriska entered the Scottish Thistle Awards in order to gain national recognition for the team and to reward them for their persistence in following the ethos of the best locally sourced produce and to complete the virtuous supply circle and gain some recognition for those suppliers they work alongside. Entering the awards allowed the team to set down on paper the aspects and achievements of their initiative and allowed them to assess the road travelled to date, putting down a marker from where the business can continue to evolve and develop.

It also gave the team support and a baton with which to help move forward, increasing their strength of argument when it came to releasing further funding and support for new initiatives.

## **RECOGNITION**

Eriska had been operating for over 38 years when they won their Scottish Thistle Award. Whilst they had established a loyal and wide ranging clientel, they had not reached all potential markets and supporters. Success provided an opportunity to re-launch the product to a new market and more importantly to re-educate those who thought they knew product about the fantastic range of services.

Entering the Scottish Thistle Awards, especially in this category, allowed the team to be viewed from a different perspective and to set up a proposal which they believe represents their ethos and projects their image correctly. Winning the award has opened up opportunities to reach a wider marketplace which has boosted sales and supported the businesses goal of growth.

## **SUCCESS STORY**

Eriska has always aspired to deliver the greatest of standards of facility and service possible and indeed is currently rated with a 5 gold star rating. Winning a Scottish Thistle Awards for the Taste of Scotland conveys our success in our business and staff.

“Winning the Scottish Thistle Award was especially important to our team as it reflects the hard work and consistency they have achieved over the years and rewarded them for this.”

**Beppo Buchanan-Smith**

**Isle of Eriska Hotel, Spa and Island**

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