# Food & Drink Devon Has Started 2015 With A Big Bang!

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- Food & Drink Devon's prestigious annual awards is now open for entries until Friday 17th April, visit www.lovetheflavour.co.uk for more information
- **NEW** annual 'Love the Flavour' Food & Drink Devon guide will be released this June
- Guide to be available for the first time in the Exeter Airport Aviation Lounge as well as in the First Class lounge at Paddington Station

With a wealth of artisan producers and specialist independent food and drink businesses, Food & Drink Devon is branching out beyond the county's borders with fresh gusto this year to spread the word about what Devon has to offer.

Now firmly positioned as major players on the Westcountry's gastromap, Devon's restaurants, cafés, farm shops and festivals are attracting visitors with a more discerning taste for provenance and traceability.

Michael Smith, chairman of Food & Drink Devon since 2008, is excited about the dynamic new scope of this organisation: "Amongst other ventures, we have recently partnered up with Visit Devon, the tourism website for the county that gets a phenomenal 250,000+ visits a year. There's a fresh hunger and a thirst for great quality Devon-made food and drink, and food tourism is a massive part of the economy."

Food & Drink Devon is the county's only dedicated membership organisation supporting quality, provenance, sustainability and trading across the food and drink sector. With over 250 Devon-based members, including cookery schools, hotels, speciality retailers and farmers markets, membership starts from just £155 for 12 months and includes more member benefits than ever. Newsletters are sent every month to over 2,700 consumers and over 250 member businesses, plus Food & Drink Devon is the centre of seriously proactive foodie chatter on social media with 8,000 Twitter followers.

Redesigned for 2015, 60,000 copies of the reinvigorated 'Love the Flavour' annual guidebooks will be distributed this summer through *Devon Life* magazine and by members across the county. These trusty guides are a 'go-to' reference book for industry experts, and this year they will be sent to key members of the food and drink consumer and trade press. In addition 5,000 copies will be distributed with*taste buds* magazine to foodie outlets across Devon.

Another recent development is a new partnership with *West Country FOODLOVER*. The magazine and website reach more than 110,000 food lovers a year and will further position Devon as the country's most exciting region for food and drink.

The Food & Drink Devon board, a high profile group of talent from across the sector including Michael Smith, co-owner of The Venus Company, Gabriel David, managing director of Luscombe Drinks and Barbara King, managing director of The Shops at Dartington, all contribute their time and expertise to the organisation on a voluntary basis.

New to the board is Hayley Reynolds, director and founder of RAW PR & Marketing, who shares her passion for Devon's food and drink. "We're currently experiencing a major transition in how we promote what is on our doorstep. Whilst Devon has always had a rich and diverse food and drink industry, we're only just beginning to really shout about it beyond the Devon borders. Together, as Food & Drink Devon, we want to tell the world about the wealth of flavours on offer in this thriving county and sell Devon produce as a brand, so I'm thrilled to join the board and be a part of this."

Food & Drink Devon will be spreading the word with their new eye-catching stand, with photography by talented photographer Craig Howarth at SeaAitch photography, at Exeter Festival of South West Food and Drink in April (24th – 26th April 2015), The Shops at Dartington Food Fair in May (24th and 25th May 2015) and at Plymouth's Flavour Fest in August (14th – 16th August 2015) to promote its members. The organisation also holds its prestigious annual Food & Drink Devon awards, with entries now open.

**2015 is going to be an influential year for Devon's food and drink sector. To join the journey, please visit www.lovetheflavour.co.uk and follow @lovetheflavour on Twitter.**

**ENDS**

**Notes to the editor:**

1. Food & Drink Devon was founded with the aim of representing like-minded businesses dedicated to producing food and drink of the very highest quality. The Food & Drink Devon association is committed to continuously achieving its mission – to make 'Love The Flavour' a nationally recognised brand for outstanding sustainable food and drink.
2. To search the directory and browse members, visitwww.lovetheflavour.co.uk/directory
3. Visit Devon now has a dedicated foodie web page driving people to Food & Drink members' businesses: www.visitdevon.co.uk/food-drink/

**For further information, photography or an interview with Michael Smith, chairman of Food & Drink Devon, please contact:**

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