House Of Commons Launch For Asian Curry Awards

Tuesday 10 September, 2013

- Key issues raised at influential networking event

- “New business models, fusion cuisines, healthier menus, wider use of social media and technology with exciting marketing, communication and promotion”

The Rt Hon. Tom Brake MP, Deputy Leader of the House of Commons, hosted the launch of the third Asian Curry Awards at the House of Commons on Wednesday 4th September.

Held in the Terrace Pavilion overlooking the River Thames, the function attracted an impressive range of leading figures, including Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other diplomatic representatives, Lord Sheikh, the Rt Hon Keith Vaz, Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee and Rushanara Ali MP, Shadow Minister for International development.

Welcoming the role of the Awards in recognising the industry’s talents and endeavours, guest speakers praised the contribution made to the economy by Asian restaurants and acknowledged the challenges faced during a tough trading environment. Several called for a cut in VAT for the hospitality industry.

“The evening gave the ideal platform to raising key issues such skills shortages, training and employment, whilst others raise the importance of embracing training,” said Councillor Thomas Chan, Co-chairman of the Asian Catering Federation (ACF) and organisers of the Asian Curry Awards in conjunction with the Federation of Bangladeshi Caterers (FoBC).

"The networking event was a tremendous success. I would like to thank our host, the Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, and other distinguished guests for their attendance and contribution,” said Councillor Chan.

The evening was presented by Barrister Anwar Babul Miah and the list of speakers included Yawar Khan FoBC, Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, Cllr Thomas Chan ACF, Rushanara Ali MP - Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, HE Pasan Teparak - Ambassador of Thailand, Lord Sheikh - Chairman of the Conservative Muslim Forum, John Allan - Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses, Teddy Chen ACF, Annette Hallmark, Head of Professional Standards People 1st and Saad Gazi - Hon Chairman, FoBC.

During his speech ACF’s Thomas Chan spoke of the sector’s £4 billion contribution towards the economy and its need to forge partnerships with other organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses, the British Hospitality Association and People’s 1st, which were present at the launch. He praised the “younger, well educated and more imaginative entrepreneurs”with “new business models, fusion cuisines, healthier menus, the wider use of social media and technology, exciting marketing, communication and promotion activities.”

Lovers of Asian food can nominate their favourite restaurants for the third Asian Curry Awards (ACA). The awards are open to all Indian and Asian restaurants in Britain.

Following 11 regional heats across the country the winners will be announced at a high profile, glittering award dinner being held at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane in London on Sunday 17th November 2013. There will also be awards for the Asian and Oriental Chef of the Year and Young Chef of the Year.

“These awards recognise the huge successes made by business owners across the whole of the curry industry and ensure that key players are lauded for their achievements,” said Yawar Khan, Chairman of the ACA, who added, “Every restaurateur has a unique background and story – awards reflect a lifetime of work, honouring the dedication and commitment of people who have contributed so much to the continued vibrancy and growth in the sector.”

Nominations forms may be downloaded from the ACA website www.asiancurryawards.co.uk. Short-listed candidates will be announced online, with regional finalists being invited to attend a Cook off to be judged by a panel of industry experts and celebrity curry lovers.

Competing chefs will be invited to prepare a signature dish and judged on criteria of innovation, technical skill, nutritional value, food safety, creativity and, of course, taste. From these, a shortlist will be drawn with winners selected by FoBC and ACF consultants and industry experts.

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“The Young Restaurateur of the Year” Award for business owners under the age of 30 is designed to recognise concepts of entrepreneurship, innovation and motivation, vision and hard work.

The Awards are also designed to encourage young people to join the restaurant industry and to motivate those already in the profession to set their sights higher.

The full list of award categories is:
Regional/National Restaurateur of the Year
Regional/National Takeaway of the Year
Young Restaurateur of the Year (under 30)
Business Woman of the Year
Best South Asian Restaurant
Best Asian & Oriental Restaurant (UK)
Best Asian & Oriental Restaurant (International)
Best Asian Takeaway
Newcomer of the Year (restaurants established less than 3 years)
Asian & Oriental Chef of the Year
Asian & Oriental Young Chef of the Year (under 25)

Overall winners will be chosen amongst regional winners from London, South East, South West, East of England, East Midlands, West Midlands, North East, Yorkshire&Humber;, North West, Scotland, and Wales. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Current sponsors include Booker Wholesale, Kingfisher Beer and Square Mile Insurance.

Editors’ Notes: Awards Dinner: Individual tickets cost £150. Tables of 10 cost £1,195, £1.950 and £2,950 for Silver, Gold and Platinum VIP packages. All tickets include a 4-course meal and all drinks.

Attached Photo: (L to R) - Mrs Padmaja, Counsellor (Public Diplomacy), Indian High Commission, Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa, Attache, Embassy of Nepal, Mr Teddy Chen, Co-Chairman, Asian Catering Federation, Lord Sheikh, Chairman of the Conservative Muslim Forum, Cllr Thomas Chan, Co-Chairman, Asian Catering Federation, Mr Yawar Khan, Co-Chairman, Asian Catering Federation, The Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, Deputy Leader of the House of Commons, HE Teuku Mohammad Hamza Thayeb, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, HE Mr Pasan Teparak, Ambassador of Thailand, Mr Noriyuki Shikata, Political Minister, Embassy of Japan, Ms Sharifa Khan, Commercial Counsellor, Bangladesh High Commission and Mr Li Guangling, Counsellor (Maritime), Embassy of the People's Republic of China.

The event was also attended by the Rt Hon Keith Vaz MP, Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Ms Rushanara Ali, Shadow Minister for International Development, Baroness Uddin, Mr John Allan, National Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses, and Mr Martin Couchman, Deputy Chief Executive, British Hospitality Association.

Federation of Bangladeshi Caterers: The “voice of the curry industry” is a nationwide non-profit making and non-political organisation, led by the Westminster Press and Parliamentary office – which lobbies on MPs, Government and Whitehall, promoting and protecting the interests of the curry industry in Britain.

Asian Catering Federation: “Uniting the Asian Food Industry, a sister organisation with similar objectives representing restaurateurs outside the Bangladeshi community across the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia, with members drawn from the Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Burmese, Korean, Singaporean and India restaurant sectors.

Annual membership is only £95 and enables members access to host of business advice and discounted serves encompassing legal advice, tax and business consultancy, recruitment and training, insurance facilities, utility supplies, banking, seminars and workshops, private healthcare and marketing support.

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