

MEDIA RELEASE

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Moray winner of Williamson Foodservice Highlands & Islands Food & Drink Awards celebrate with top chef Nick Nairn

Nick Nairn, Scotland's top chef and a champion of local produce, congratulated the winners in the 2010 Williamson Foodservice Highlands & Islands Food & Drink Awards as the names were revealed at a glittering ceremony and dinner in Inverness.

Tio Ltd won the Healthier Food and Drink Award, sponsored by Robert Wiseman Dairies.

The Awards celebrate excellence and achievement within the food and drink industry and are sponsored by Williamson Foodservice, organised by the Highlands & Islands Food & Drink Forum, and supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Ten Awards recognise categories including best use of local food and drink, healthier food and drink, good environmental practice, innovation, businesses working in collaboration with each other, as well as new products and new businesses.

The Awards Dinner was hosted by BBC Scotland's popular presenter, Catriona Shearer. Over 250 guests enjoyed a delicious menu at the dinner featuring mouthwatering venison, crab, scallops, pork, fish and vegetables. The produce has been generously provided by suppliers across the Highlands and Islands.

Nick Nairn, who opened his first restaurant over 20 years ago and became the youngest chef in the country to be awarded a Michelin star, said: "I'm delighted to have the opportunity to address the Highlands and Islands Food and Drink Awards and acknowledge the huge contribution food and drink businesses make to the region. The Highlands and Islands has some of the best produce in Scotland, and therefore the world, and the 30,000 people involved in the growing, supplying and cooking this produce for local and international consumption are second to none. They deserve these Awards to celebrate their achievements and I'm very much looking forward to meeting just a few of them on the night."

Gary Williamson, managing director of Williamson Foodservice and title sponsor of the event, said: "Food and drink is extremely important for the Highlands and Islands economy and Williamson Foodservice is pleased to have the opportunity to support and celebrate quality in this vital industry. As chair of the judging panel for the Awards, it is very encouraging to see consistently high standards of entries from year to year. Congratulations to all companies who have made the shortlist tonight – this is a fantastic achievement and an acknowledgement of the excellent people and products involved in the industry across the area."

Chris Taylor of Highlands and Islands Enterprise said: "We are proud to support the Highlands and Islands Food and Drink awards since their inception in 2005. Many winners have gone on to develop their business in markets across the UK and abroad and the record number of entries in 2010 demonstrates the ambition of everyone involved in this great industry. These awards are an invaluable showcase of the very best the Highlands and Islands has to offer and congratulations to all the nominees".

Anne Moseley, co-chair of the Highlands & Islands food & Drink Forum, said: "As organisers of the Awards, the Highlands and Islands Food and Drink Forum are delighted to see a continued increase in the number of entries, reflecting both the value of Awards to our businesses and the dynamism and high standards of our industry. All individuals and businesses who made the shortlist this year have done really well in the face of stiff competition, and special congratulations are due to all of tonight's winners.

Anne continued: "The Forum's Awards are just one way the forum can serve the food and drink industry and its supply chain. Looking to the future, we need to ensure that the organisation works

closely with industry to extend opportunities for everyone, share knowledge and provide platforms to encourage collaboration”.

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