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Press Release

Tourism ExSelleness Awards 2009— Guest Accommodation of the Year



When Mary and Hugh bought Strand House they set out to create something unique. A guesthouse with a sense of history, the unique feel of a coastal location, a warm homely feeling with great cooking using all the superb ingredients available locally.

Three years on and that dream has come true, with a **Silver** award in the **Guest Accommodation of the Year** category in the prestigious **Tourism ExSelleness Awards**.

Awarded for an outstanding level of comfort, customer service, attention to detail, staff training and commitment to environmental matters, this demonstrates the very high standard reached by Strand House in its goal to become a luxury guesthouse, more like a small country house hotel.

"The great thing about Strand House is the people who stay here, everyone has a story to tell. Some come to sit on the beach, others to stroll round the medieval towns or gardens and some just want to chill out in the house and garden. We have people come to stay following cancer treatment, a family came from all corners of the globe to celebrate a lady's 85th birthday and of course we have had five civil ceremonies which is lovely."

"A lifestyle business that allows us to go for a walk on the beach during our coffee break"

Mary and Hugh moved into Strand House exactly one year after they met! Hugh worked for a multi-national pharmaceutical company and Mary was MD of her own contract catering company. The plan.... buy a lifestyle hotel business close to the sea, keep their jobs and build up the business over five years. Within three months both were working full time as hoteliers! Three years further on and the guesthouse is busier than ever and is known for its excellent food, cooking and warm welcome in a quirky old house.

There are no regrets about the leap of faith however, "We love living by the sea and just being able to walk on the beach whenever we want. It's a great area to live in, Rye is a vibrant tourist destination with a real sense of history, lots to see and do for all ages and close to London. The locals are very friendly with a real sense of community. Oh yes *and* we are still taking to one another!"

Mary has been cooking professionally for 25 years. She buys organic lamb and beef from the farm next door, the bread comes from a local artisan bakery and the fish is bought daily, straight off the boats in Rye harbour. Much of the fruit and vegetables are bought from local farms and there are great local delicacies such as Scallops in the Spring. Mary cooks a British style menu that allows the incredible quality and freshness of the ingredients to shine through.

For feature articles, photos, images and news items please contact
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