

great taste awards

This year's GTA winners now online



Trade buyers and keen foodies can now find all the 2010 gold star winners in this year's Great Taste Awards (GTAs) on the Guild of Fine Food website.

Judging was completed at the Guild's Somerset HQ last month and the one-, two- and three-star gold winners have already begun capitalising on the awards, adding the 2010 logo to their packaging and advertising and announcing their successes through the press, websites and social media like Twitter.

Out of a record entry of more than 6,000 products this year, around 1,150 received one-star golds, 480 were awarded two stars and just 100 collected the maximum three stars that mark out products with a 'wow factor'.

This year, in a further tightening of the judging process, every product awarded gold was sampled by at least 16 judges before its one-, two- or three-star grading was confirmed.

The Guild has also improved its feedback to producers, passing on any judges' comments that will help awards entrants understand what appealed – and what did not appeal – to the independent chefs, retailers and food writers who taste-test each product.

Anyone who submits a product for the GTAs can now read the judges' comments online in a password-protected section of the Guild website.

For the second year running, winners of the major regional and national GTA trophies will be announced at an awards event at Fortnum & Mason in London, timed to coincide with September's Speciality & Fine Food Fair. www.finefoodworld.co.uk

supermarkets

Waitrose plans to widen its reach

Waitrose intends to nearly double its portfolio of shops in the next five years. It aims to reach 250 stores by the end of this year and then open 40 stores a year until 2015. Partner sites within Boots health and beauty shops, Shell filling stations and Welcome Break motorway service stations could bring 1,000 more, putting Waitrose food in 1,450 branches.

suppliers

Kenyan tea and coffee group buys cash-strapped Mantinga

By **PATRICK MCGUIGAN**

Frozen bakery products supplier Mantinga plans to roll out a new café concession for farm shops after being bought out of administration by an East African tea and coffee grower.

Gloucestershire-based Mantinga, which supplies delis and farm shops with speciality bake-off bread and patisserie, went into administration at the beginning of July after running into cash-flow problems ahead of the proposed deal.

The company was then bought from the administrator by Sameer Investments, which owns Kenyan tea and coffee company Sasini, and now plans to launch branded bakery and coffee concessions in farm shops and garden centres.

"[The company] was never meant to be bought from administrators, but it was a force of hand," said Steven Mackintosh, Mantinga's managing director. "We planned to buy the shareholders out of the old company, but it didn't work out that way. We were tripped up by a shareholder pulling out, and there was not enough working capital. We now have a properly funded business that can go forward in a challenging time."

He said that some of the company's suppliers had lost out through the administration process, but most had decided to stick with the company.

"In terms of ongoing trade we're securing our suppliers," he said. "They may not get every penny in the

pound back but in a few invoices time they'll be back to where they were. Only three suppliers are not willing to work with us."

The company's new bakery and coffee concession concept has already been launched at two farm shops – Over Farm Market in Gloucestershire and Oakchurch Farm Shop in Herefordshire – under the Mantinga brand, although this is likely to be replaced with a consumer brand shortly, he said.

Mantinga also plans to wholesale retail and foodservice packs of Sasini tea and coffee.



The bake-off supplier is set to develop a new consumer brand for in-store concessions

staff training

Harrods creates sales degree for potential high achievers

Four of Harrods' food hall team have signed up to the retailer's newly launched sales degree, which has been developed in conjunction with academics at Anglia Ruskin University.



Fast-tracked: 10 Harrods staff are taking the first BA (Hons) Sales course

The Knightsbridge retailer says it is the first store in the UK to offer sales staff a BA (Hons) Sales, which will teach them the "art of selling".

The two-year work-based course, which is being taken by 10 employees in total, comprises practical and theoretical modules on human behaviour, psychology and business enterprise.

There are no specific sections on selling food and drink. Instead the course is expected to improve employees' general sales skills and effectiveness so they can be fast-tracked within the business.

"By creating a degree tailored to the needs of the luxury retail environment we're setting new standards in our sector," said Harrods learning and development manager Arkin Salih. "This will be the qualification for retail employees wishing to bolster their sales professionalism whilst investing for their long-term career planning."

The course is formed of three parts; the Certificate in Higher Education Sales, the Diploma in Higher Education Sales and the BA (Hons) Sales.