



PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

5 July 2006

HESWALL TEA ROOMS NAMED ONE OF THE MIDLANDS' TOP BUSINESSES IN HSBC START-UP STARS AWARDS

A new Heswall tea room has fought off stiff competition to be crowned a Regional Winner in the 2006 HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards – the UK's premier showcase for the most promising start-up businesses and the inspirational entrepreneurs behind them.

Michelle and Andrew Foulia, who set up Roses Tea Rooms less than one year ago, were one of six Midlands Regional Winners to be presented with their commemorative certificate at a special event held today at the New Hall Hotel at Sutton Coldfield.

Their entry will now go forward to the National Judging Panel, who will select the Top 10 National Finalists – and Michelle and Andrew are hoping to go all the way and scoop the top prize of £25,000 plus the title HSBC 'Start-Up Star 2006'

It may not be The Ritz, but Michelle and Andreas Foulia have created a tea room in Heswall that has been recognised as one of the best places in Britain to enjoy a traditional afternoon tea.

Just eight months after opening, Roses Tea Rooms has achieved membership of the prestigious British Tea Guild, the only independent tea rooms in Cheshire and Merseyside to achieve such a distinction!

The venture was meticulously researched, with the couple consulting various specialist food organisations as well as small business advisory bodies. Added to Andreas's background in hotel management and catering and Michelle's love of cooking, great organisational and marketing skills, it was a recipe for success.

Anxious to achieve a modern take on a traditional concept, and moving well and truly away from the old fashioned patterned carpets, panelled walls, and decorative clutter Roses Tea Rooms is decorated in simple, clean and light colours keeping to a French chic style, making it relaxed and comfortable and designed to appeal to young and old alike.

Most importantly, emphasis is placed on the quality of every single item that is served from the freshest loose leaf teas, freshly ground coffees, organic juices, to the food made from excellent quality ingredients sourced locally where possible.

Their concept is new and refreshing, reviving old traditions but adding top class (table) service, relaxing, clean and welcoming atmosphere and excellent quality simple food moving away from the mass market of ready packaged mass produced snacks and self service cafes.

It has been a long journey for Andreas and Michelle, who moved to England from Cyprus five years ago. Since then they have faced and overcome enormous hurdles. But the concept of their new business kept them focussed and they are now achieving the success they dreamt of.

With plenty of ideas for expanding the business in the future, the Foulia's have revived a great British tradition and people from near and far are beating a path to their door to sample the delights of crustless sandwiches and perfectly baked scones, as well as an officially perfect cuppa.

This year's Start-Up Stars - now in its sixth year - launched in February, with a record £70,000 worth of cash and prizes to be won. The Awards are designed to seek out fledgling firms less than three years old which can prove they have the determination, dedication, creativity and business acumen to succeed.

Roses Tea rooms is one of six companies to be named Regional Winner in the Midlands Heat - one of five being held across the UK.

Simon Wainwright, Head of Business Banking for HSBC Bank, said: "Last year, HSBC helped the entrepreneurs behind nearly 80,000 new businesses get started - that's one every six minutes - so we understand what it takes to set up a new venture and go it alone.

"Starting your own company isn't easy, and we hope that the success of Roses Tea rooms in this year's HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards will help the firm go from strength to strength.

"We've been impressed by the vision and determination shown by Michelle and Andrew Foulia, and hope that other budding entrepreneurs in the area will be inspired to take control of their own lives by becoming their own boss."

The 10 National Finalists will win a prize package worth £4,000, including the QuickBooks Pro small business accounting software from Intuit and the Google Mini hardware-software solution from Google.

The 2006 HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards will culminate in a glittering black tie event at London's famous Savoy Hotel on Tuesday October 17th, where the Overall Winner and Runner-Up will be announced before an audience of 300 guests drawn from the worlds of business, politics and the media.

"What makes Start-Up Stars special is the people who enter", added Simon Wainwright. "They come in all shapes and sizes but have one thing in common - each shared a dream of running their own business. But, crucially, all of them have had the guts and determination to turn that dream into an idea, put the idea into practice and then work tirelessly to see it become a reality."

To find out more about how to get a business off the ground, would-be entrepreneurs can order a copy of HSBC's free *Starting a Business* pack by visiting www.ukbusiness.hsbc.com or calling 0800 328 6942.

Notes to editors:

1. HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards

The HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards, presented in association with the *Daily Express* and Sky News, invites entries from UK businesses that have been trading for less than three years and can demonstrate they have the management skills and ideas for success.

2. HSBC Start-Up Stars 2006 judging panel

This year's judging panel includes:

Simon Wainwright, Head of Business Banking, HSBC Bank; Simon Bartley, Deputy Chair, CBI SME Council; Maisha Frost, *Daily Express*; David Nelson, Business Producer, Sky News; Susan Lazareff, Managing Director, Intuit; Lorraine Twohill, Director, European Marketing Programmes, Google UK; Dr Glenda Stone, CEO, Aurora; Derek Browne, Chief Executive, Entrepreneurs in Action; Sally Preston, Founder & Managing Director, Babylicious and Start Up Star Winner in 2003; Tom Singh, Managing Director - Commercial, New Look.

3. The HSBC Group

HSBC Bank plc is a wholly owned subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc, and a member of the HSBC Group. Serving over 110 million customers worldwide, the HSBC Group have approximately 10,000 offices in 76 countries and territories in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa. With assets of US\$1,154 billion at 30 June 2004, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations. HSBC is marketed worldwide as 'the world's local bank'.

4. Intuit UK

Intuit UK is a leading provider of business and financial management solutions for small businesses and their advisors including accountants and book-keepers. Key products and services include the popular QuickBooks family of business accounting software and QuickBooks Payroll and Exceed support among other services. These are available directly or through major retailers and partners including High Street banks. Intuit works with the industry through its QuickBooks Professional Advisor Programme and Intuit Developer Network to serve the accounting needs of small enterprises nationwide. Intuit UK is headquartered in Maidenhead, Berkshire. Intuit UK a subsidiary of Intuit Inc., and is quoted on the Nasdaq stock market under the symbol INTU. For more information on Intuit and its partners visit www.intuit.co.uk and www.quickbooks.co.uk/advisors.

5. Google Inc.

Google's innovative search technologies connect millions of people around the world with information every day. Founded in 1998 by Stanford Ph.D students Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Google today is a top web property in all major global markets. Google's targeted advertising program provides businesses of all sizes with measurable results, while enhancing the overall web experience for users. Google is headquartered in Silicon Valley with offices throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia. For more information, visit www.google.com