

# Cornwall Sustainability Awards



Venus Café was the overall winner in 2005's Sustainability Awards



The Venus Company was set up in 1995 by Michael Smith, his wife, Louisa and Lee Porter. Early on, they decided to create a quality concept, which encompassed their keen interest in environmental issues. The family run business aims to bring the professionalism of the High Street to a beach setting and to acknowledge the corporate responsibility towards achieving positive environmental impacts and community benefits.

Venus serves local and organic produce to over 500,000 customers a year in Devon and Cornwall, has a turnover topping the £1.35m mark and employs a core group of 15 full time employees, supplemented by a 40 strong pool of seasonal staff and part time summer catering staff with special needs.

## Venus operations at Tolcarne Beach, Newquay

The Venus mission is to be the greenest beach café and shop operator and the company philosophy is best summed up by its strap line of "Loving the Beach". Venus has three other sites in the South Hams of South Devon at the beaches of Blackpool Sands, East Portlemouth and Bigbury on Sea.

## Environmental, community and local economy measure

Environmental measures at Tolcarne Beach include: water flow reducing taps; daily electric monitoring; cardboard, glass & oil recycling; biodegradable and environmentally friendly produced packaging; inter company mail, time sheets, daily reports etc all run through dedicated servers saving paper; chlorine and toxic free chemicals and energy efficient equipment & menus.

One way Venus supports the local community is by using 15 Cornish quality suppliers in 2006.

Venus is keen to support the local economy through the recruitment and training of local management and seasonal staff. In 2005, Venus purchased quality local goods and services from Cornwall to an approximate value of £75,000.

**Cornwall Sustainability Awards 2006 are funded by a partnership of local organisations; envision, Cornwall County Council, Environment Agency, Carrick District Council, Kerrier District Council, North Cornwall District Council, Penwith District Council and Restormel Borough Council**

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## Environmental developments for 2006

New for 2006, is a range of "Land to Hand" biodegradable packaging made from 100% compostable chlorine free paper, such as baguette and panini bags, burger wraps, roll down bags and paper lids for the hot drinks. A new sandwich box has been introduced that has no plastic or see through film and even the plastic lids on cups are fully biodegradable. Venus is just one of a few businesses in the world trialling a new packaging product.

The Venus Beach Wildlife Fund set up in 2006, aims to help protect the special nature of the beach and marine wildlife habitats where Venus has a presence in Devon & Cornwall. Venus donates 5p on its customers' behalf for every cup of tea and chocolate flake bought in the next five years to raise up to £25,000 for the Venus Beach Wildlife Fund.

## Key Awards

In 2005, the Venus Company was honoured with the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, providing the best al fresco Mediterranean style dining experience in a UK beach setting whilst integrating environmental and social care into every business decision.

In November 2005, Venus achieved global recognition through being named as the 2005 First Choice Responsible Tourism Award for Best in a Marine Environment Category at the World Travel Market in London.

A further coup in December 2005, was the achievement of 2005 Overall Winner and Best Small Business in the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Sustainability Awards. Judges praised Venus' **"overall enthusiasm and determination to incorporate sustainability into every aspect of what they do"** and were **"impressed with the attention given by The Venus Company to detailed monitoring of energy and water use, the outstanding sustainable purchasing practices and their innovative work in waste minimisation and recycling."**

## Benefits of winning the Cornwall Sustainability Awards

**"Winning the Cornwall Sustainability Awards was a real coup for The Venus Company and our Cornish staff team in having our green tourism business efforts at Tolcarne Beach recognised and promoted in this way."** said Michael Smith, Venus managing director. **"Our efforts continue to ensure that what we are doing has as little impact as possible on the environment. We're not always looking at a return today. We are investing in an education process and long term environmental benefits."**

"We applied to enter the Awards last year to help benchmark ourselves and to see what areas of our operations we might be able to improve. It has been useful to network with like minded business people and learn from their efforts. Winning the Award motivates us to carry on and improve the depth and breadth of sustainability throughout the Venus Café and Shop."

## A year on

Venus has increased the amount of local content in its products and the Company has almost doubled the amount sold at Tolcarne this year on last. Venus now sources produce from 15 local suppliers with some products being sold at The Venus Shop at Tolcarne Beach.

The potential opportunities for using solar and wind power in the future are being investigated by Venus.

Michael Smith said **"It is really encouraging to see more tourism operators signing up for green tourism and to see the high level of interest shown by Cornwall businesses in general, in improving the county's sustainability for the future."**

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