



Leamington Spa Food & Drink Festival deemed an outstanding success

The Leamington Spa Food & Drink Festival, which took place on Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 August, has been deemed an outstanding success. Around 10,000 people attended the Festival over the two days and over 50 local businesses exhibited their produce from stalls in the Pump Room Gardens. Even the rain on the Sunday didn't deter people from celebrating the event which has now safely put Leamington on the map as a top food and drink destination. The Festival was organised by BID (Business Improvement District) Leamington and was the first event the team had organised since trading began on 1 July 2008. Plans are already underway to stage another Leamington Spa Food & Drink Festival in 2009.

A 'Taste Trail' was incorporated for the first time into the Festival which was highly successful. The initiative encouraged people to visit up to 13 restaurants in the town to sample their food for free. Restaurants that participated included The Newbold Bar and Brasserie, Nicolinis, Strada, Fat Birds Cafe, Grill Kitchen at The Fox, Mor, Mumbai Bluu, Voodoo Bar, Copper Pot, La Tasca, Thai Elephant, The Leamington Bar and Grill and The Whale. Thousands of people took part in the Taste Trail which was so popular that many were queuing outside, patiently waiting for up to an hour to sample the complimentary food. All 13 establishments reported record visitor numbers, with many trebling their usual number of covers.

Mark Benton, Owner of The Newbold Bar and Brasserie stated "We were delighted at the number of people that visited The Newbold over the 2 days. The majority of people were new customers and it was a great way to show them the quality of food that we offer". Franco Nicolini, owner of Nicolinis, stated "The Taste Trail worked incredibly well for us, 98% of people that visited were new customers. We will definitely be participating in next year's Festival".

June Ellis and her husband, who lives in Coventry, read about the Festival in the Coventry Telegraph and heard it on BBC Coventry & Warwickshire. June stated "We were very impressed with the organisation of the event. Prior to the Festival we had only ever eaten at Mumbai Bluu, but during the Taste Trail we visited 8 different restaurants which were all fantastic. We wish Coventry had a Food & Drink Festival such as this and we look forward to next year's event".

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A number of local restaurants took part in the live cookery demonstrations which also proved incredibly popular. Chefs from Sabai Sabai showed visitors how to cook green curry and pad Thai noodles. Laura Hamilton, owner of Queans used produce from the Farmers Market to cook home-made dishes, cooks from Aubrey Allen demonstrated how to cook the perfect sausage, Starbucks showed visitors how to blend coffee and brew the perfect cup whilst cocktail mixology was provided by Dockers Diner.

Throughout the two days live music was performed by local bands from the Pump Room Gardens. Kelly Elliott, Lament and Ellen Miller entertained the crowds whilst BBC Coventry & Warwickshire broadcast the Festival live over the weekend.

Helen Smith, Executive Director of BID Leamington, stated “We’re delighted that the Festival has been such a fantastic success. All the exhibitors reported significant sales, many doubling what they would normally take over a weekend. The Taste Trail was incredibly popular, you could feel the buzz as you walked around the town and there was a fantastic atmosphere in the Pump Room Gardens. We’re already extremely excited about next year’s Leamington Spa Food & Drink Festival”.

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