

Deeside Local Food Festival

News release

North-east businesses boosted by bumper food festival



The corridors and courtyards of Cults Academy were reverberating to rather different sights and sounds on Sunday 15th September, as thousands of people descended on the venue for the Deeside Local Food Festival's fifth outing.

Over 3,400 people of all ages immersed themselves in an enticing array of gastronomic delights, as well as foodie talks, chef demos, workshops and activities, all designed to celebrate the North-east's thriving food and drink scene.

Featuring a staggering 74 food and drink businesses, over 90% of whom hail from the local region, the festival was a resounding hit with visitors and businesses alike. Food and drink producers from across the North-east reported brisk business throughout the course of the day, and revelled in the opportunity to present their products to both locals and visitors. Indeed, such was their popularity that many of the outlets and stalls sold out.

VisitScotland Regional Director, Jo Robinson, welcomed the lasting legacy of the festival for local businesses, saying: “Deeside is home to many first-class food and drink producers and experiences; the Deeside Local Food Festival is a fantastic asset to the events programme in the North-east, and attracts visitors from far and wide, making a valuable contribution to the visitor experience and the regional economy.

“Visitors spend around a fifth of their holiday budget on eating and drinking when they are on holiday in Scotland, demonstrating the importance of the industry to Scottish tourism.

“I am delighted that the community and businesses in Deeside have been able to once again showcase the inspirational products as well as food and drink experiences in this region for visitors to enjoy.”

The local produce market was at the heart of the annual festival. From jams to jalapenos, cheese to chocolate and bread to bacon, the North-east’s most exciting producers were on hand to share their artisan wares – and their passion for fine food - with the appreciative crowds.

Gin-blending workshops were a new addition to this year’s programme. Run by master gin-blenders, the Deeside Distillery, these popular workshops gave gin-lovers the opportunity to craft their own signature bottle of gin.

Younger foodies were also well catered for. Lynne from ‘Kids in the Kitchen Aberdeen’ ran a number of children’s afternoon tea making workshops, which sold out in record time. The budding young chefs whipped up a selection of delights including cheese scones, custard creams and rocky road bars, as well as enjoying food themed games and activities.

Lots of visitors enjoyed learning more about the story behind the brand, with talks from Wes Lewis of the Seafood Bothy, Jamie Hutcheon of Cocoa Ooze, Anna Mitchell from Castleton Farm, and Jenny Fyall from Udny Pumpkins.

Returning to the festival was particularly special for Wes and his wife Maria, as it was a visit there last year that sparked the idea for their business – a converted horse-box serving up the fresh seafood Wes catches off the Stonehaven coastline.

The much-loved chef demonstrations returned this year, with some of the North-east’s most distinguished chefs serving up culinary masterpieces. Craig Wilson of Eat on the Green and Lauren Mitchell of Northsound, compered the Marquee stage which hosted Graham Mitchell of the Newmachar Hotel, Orry Shand of Entier Services, Nick Coetzer of Roots Catering and Ross Cochrane of the Rothesay Rooms.

John Franchetti and Cat Frankitti compered the Seafood Scotland stage, which celebrated Scotland’s rich seafood bounty. Top chefs Ross Cochrane, Orry Shand and Kevin Dalgleish of the Chester Hotel cooked up a mouth-watering menu of fish and shellfish dishes. Kids also took part in lots of fishy-themed fun activities at the stage, including challenges, competitions and storytelling.

Throughout the day The Street Food Café thronged with visitors serving up tasty treats to diners, while they enjoyed live entertainment from a number of music and dancing groups, including Cults Academy Ceilidh Group, Chalmers Mackay Music School and the Sinclair School of Highland Dancing.

Festival organiser, Rachel Gambro, said: “Each year the festival has gone from strength to strength, and this year was no exception. From produce stalls to chef demos, every aspect was buzzing, reflecting the strong local appetite for top quality food and drink. Feedback from stallholders and visitors alike has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, I’ve already had my first enquiry about next year, when booking doesn’t open until next year! It’s such a great opportunity for local producers to present their wares to a new and enthusiastic market, and really puts them on the map.

“The many visitors who streamed through our doors soaked up the wonderful atmosphere, created in no small part by a host of local charities and community groups providing lots of fun, family activities, and our superb team of hard-working volunteers.”

“We are extremely grateful to all those who made the Deeside Local Food Festival 2019 possible and in particular we would like to thank our sponsors – Seafood Scotland, the Connect Local Regional Food Fund, Aberdeen City Council, CALA Homes, Balvenie St Ice-cream, CBM Community Council and MBC News - for their support.”

The Deeside Local Food Festival was also supported by the Connect Local Regional Food Fund, which is financed by The Scottish Government, in partnership with industry, and has been created to promote local food and drink, in line with Ambition 2030.

For further information visit: www.deesidefoodfestival.co.uk.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

Photos by Zoe Rae Photography: Euan Campbell of Udney Provender; Kevin Dalgliesh of The Chester Hotel cooking up a storm on the Seafood Scotland stage.

Deeside Local Food Festival

The Deeside Local Food Festival was launched in 2015 with a grant from the Think Local Community Food Fund. Its aim was simple: to showcase the variety and vitality of the local food and drink industry. It was an instant huge success, attracting over 1,500 visitors, and featuring 23 local food producers. Since then, each year it has gone from strength to strength, in both size and popularity. Last year (2018) the event attracted over 3,300 visitors and 62 local food stalls and vendors, demonstrating a strong appetite for a community food event in the local area.

<https://www.deesidefoodfestival.co.uk/>

Connect Local Regional Food Fund

For further information visit:

<https://connectlocal.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ambition-2030.pdf>

For further information contact:

Bold St Media

Pauline Smith

Senior Account Executive

Tel 01651 267485

pauline@boldstmedia.com

