

Hotel of the Year – Group

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The shortlist

Blythswood Square
Glasgow

London Marriott
Hotel Park Lane

Pennyhill Park
Bagshot, Surrey

The judges

Stephen Carter
General manager,
Old Course Hotel,
Golf Resort & Spa,
St Andrews

Giovanna Grossi

Group area manager,
AA Hotel & Hospitality
Services

Michael Magrane

General manager, the
Midland Manchester

Harry Murray

Chairman, Lucknam
Park Hotel & Spa,
Colerne, Wiltshire

Jonathan Raggett

Managing director,
Red Carnation Hotel
Collection

Marvin Rust

Senior managing
director,
FTI Consulting

John Stauss

Regional
vice-president and
general manager,
Four Seasons Hotel
London at Park Lane



2016 winner

Pennyhill Park

The ongoing enhancements to improve a guest's stay at Pennyhill Park are extraordinary. In the past two years alone, the five-red-AA-star, 123-bedroom hotel has refurbished 18 of its suites, with bathrooms featuring horizontal shower beds and glass baths with 'chromotherapy experiences'; opened a screening room for up to 24 guests; refurbished the drawing room; developed the pool bar and barbecue area outside the spa; and created a kitchen garden.

At the same time, the property has also agreed a 20-year partnership with Rugby Football Union to provide world-class training facilities for the England team.

Pennyhill Park was originally acquired by Giuseppe Pecorelli in 1981 as a 17-bedroom hotel and has since gone on to become the flagship of what is now the impressive Exclusive Hotels and Venues group, comprising four hotels, two venues and one golf club. Today, Giuseppe's son, Danny Pecorelli, the 2014 Hotelier of the Year, heads the group as managing director, while Julian Tomlin is Pennyhill Park's general manager.

The provision of new and innovative facilities were not the only aspect of the hotel to impress the judges – they also applauded the focus on people, with all members of staff having a development plan from the moment they join the hotel.

Training is regarded as a crucial part of the business' success and, to this end, opportunities to improve industry skills, for example, in wine and spirits and food and safety, are readily available. Equally, staff are encouraged to work towards leadership and management training, with opportunities to work across departments and other properties within the group.

New initiatives include the Be My Guest programme, which enables new members

of staff to review a stay at the hotel, providing them with an opportunity to thoroughly understand the high level of service they are expected to deliver. And the Wow Awards employee recognition programme highlights the efforts by staff that go above and beyond their normal job description.

With a well-trained and motivated team in place, Pennyhill Park is able to ensure that the approach to customer care is always first class – before, during and after a guest's stay – throughout every area of the extensive property, comprising the Latymer restaurant headed up by newly appointed head chef Matt Worswick, the Brasserie, the Ascot bar, ballroom, 21 meeting rooms and the spa.

Delivering exemplary experiences for anyone staying at the hotel is the focus of the whole team, from the reservations staff to the guest reservations managers who are on call for guest needs, and housekeepers who put individual touches in the bedrooms prior to arrivals.

Happy staff and happy guests drive results, and last year a record £20m turnover and pre-tax profit of £3.3m was achieved at Pennyhill Park. This is a hotel which is not content to stand still and, as such, makes a worthy addition to the Catey Academy.

What the judges said

"This award-winning family-run hotel and spa continues to evolve as a leading resort with ongoing investment in the product and its people."
Harry Murray MBE

"Danny Pecorelli with his very able GM, Julian Tomlin, continue to deliver truly outstanding, consistent and genuine hospitality – a key reason for the hotel being one of the most successful luxury country-house hotels in the UK."
Jonathan Raggett

