

PRESS RELEASE - SEPTEMBER 2003

**STOBO CASTLE HEALTH SPA UNVEILS THE AMBITIOUS £5m
EXPANSION AT THE MOST GLAMOROUS PARTY OF THE YEAR.**

On budget and on time, it has taken less than a year to complete the £5 million extension to Scotland's most successful and indeed exclusive spa resort at Stobo Castle in the Scottish Borders. As Managing Director Stephen Winyard prepares to open the doors on the incredible development on Wednesday 10th September, his customer base is getting as excited as the owner and indeed they have every reason. With phase 1 being unveiled this week at a VIP party at the castle, guests will be spoiled for choice in the 2000 sq. ft extension, which includes the showpiece 25-mtr ozone pool (the only one of its kind in Scotland).

Sir David Steel will officiate proceedings at the Castle, which will be followed by dinner prepared by one of Scotland's renowned chef's - Brian Maule. With luxury a key theme at the castle, top British designer Amanda Wakeley, who will be attending in person, will unveil her new collection at an exclusive fashion show. Dancing and fireworks will continue well into the early hours where personalities such as Sarah Heaney, Stephen Jardin, Ally McCoist, Michelle Mone and high profile figures from media, industry and government will attend.

The spa has been a 'labour of love' for Stephen who had dedicated the new development to his mother, the late Mrs Winyard. With the addition of 40 luxury treatment rooms, new air conditioned aerobics/dance studio, Ice Fountain, Aromatic Steam Room, new Hydrospa and new Laconium, new snail showers, a new Serailbad mud chamber and a state of the art gym, the spa is assured to extend it's already envied reputation as one of the leading spa's in Europe.

"Since we opened our doors in 1978 after an extensive refurbishment programme to the castle we were the first and only destination spa in Scotland. I believe that our success is due to our commitment to being ahead of the game when it comes to facilities and services. We recruit the top in their field and offer unrivalled facilities to the consumers of the spa market and it is only continued investment in to these areas that will keep us there" says Stephen Winyard.

Indeed Winyard is passionate about service stating that with the new spa facility launching will provide a 1:1 ratio between spa staff and guests. Complement this with the strategy of refurbishing all of his 30 bedrooms in the last 18 months, makes for an unrivalled luxury destination. Recruiting one of Scotland's foremost interior design companies for his refurbishment - Drysdales, Edinburgh has ensured that residents can truly expect the best.

With such expansion comes new jobs of which Winyard has estimated an immediate 40 new staff at the spa increasing their employee numbers to around 160.

“Of course such an expansion has an added value effect to our residential customers but day visitors represent significant business to us and we are very optimistic about the projected increase in this area alone” states Winyard.

The business achieved double-digit growth (10% year on year) in 2002 with 4000 day visitors paying an average of £135 per head per visit, which more than justifies Winyards intentions to maximise this sector of income for the spa.

“People who are spending this sort of money on day visits expect the best and Stobo has always delivered. This extension will cement our policy. There is an incredible market out there for the ‘day visitor’ from the general consumer to the corporate sector who are seeking escapism and relaxation. With the stress that corporate Scotland undertakes they can rest in the knowledge that the most appropriate rejuvenation vehicle is on their doorstep”, states Winyard.

With a budgeted turnover on track for £4 million in 2003 and an expected turnover of at least £5 million in 2004 the company is set to reach the mark. “Stobo has achieved something spa destinations always yearn for - a haven. Our customer’s view Stobo as their haven, a home from home with a relaxed atmosphere yet indulging in the absolute best in what the spa industry has to offer. If we can continue to deliver this proposition, the business can continue to go from strength to strength into the 21st Century» says a confident Winyard.

With waiting lists for the ‘favourite rooms’ always in demand and the presence recently of Dame Shirley Bassey and her entourage at the Castle one can but imagine the effect of the new spa development: For Shirley is most definitely the best advert the brand could have for investing in oneself! One wonders therefore who are the mystery guests who will be making a grand entrance to the party by helicopter?

ENDS SEPTEMBER 2003

EDITORS NOTES

AWARDS

- 2001 & 2002 Health Spa of the Year - Professional Beauty Awards
- 2002 - Health Spa of the Year - British Beauty Awards
- 2003 - Darphin Spa of the Year

HISTORY

- Completed in 1811 for Sir James Montgomery, the Lord Chief Baron, Stobo Castle was the home to the family for nearly 100 years. The last resident of the castle was the Countess of Dysart who lived there until the mid 1960's.
- Acquired by the Winyard family in 1975, 2 years were spent transforming the castle into a luxury health spa keeping the elegant style and enhancing the baronial architecture that the castle boasts.
- Since 1975, over 40,000 guests from all over the world have indulged in the Stobo experience.
- A choice of over 70 health and beauty treatments guarantees that every desire is fulfilled.
- 2000 saw the launch of Park Lodge within the castle grounds. A self-contained unit, which was converted to provide luxury accommodation for up to 12 guests, has allowed the castle to tap into 'corporate retreats' or 'hen den' sectors. It's quite simply, the only location in Scotland for the ultimate 'hen weekend'. (The new spa will also unveil a new covered walkway which will link Park Lodge to main building).

JUICE & COFFEE BARS

- The spa development will also see the launch of a new piazza style coffee and juice bar concept which will take the place of the existing boutique which will be moving to it's new location in the new development site.

CONNOISSEURS SCOTLAND

- Stobo Castle became a member of Connoisseurs Scotland in 2002 joining Scotland's most exclusive and finest properties.

PHASE 2 - COMPLETION DATE EXPECTED AUTUMN 2003

- Phase 2 will see the launch of a further 8 en-suite bedrooms which are due to be in service by November 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT JENNI WATTS AT STOBO CASTLE ON T:01721 725305 OR jenni@stobocastle.co.uk

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