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Celebrating half a century in business

Leading specialist food wholesaler, Vin Sullivan Foods from Blaenavon, is celebrating 50 years in business.

The family-run business supplies first-class hotels, restaurants and caterers throughout the UK with high quality produce including Welsh farmhouse cheeses, Scottish smoked salmon, live Menai mussels, fresh Hampshire trout, Devon clotted cream and Spanish saffron - more than 6,000 items from small producers throughout the UK and Europe.

The company sends produce to destinations as far flung as the tip of Scotland, the Isles of Scilly and Galway, and even the Caribbean - priding itself on a rapid turnaround with a guaranteed next day delivery for all produce.

Top class customer service is a priority for Vin Sullivan, reflected in the fact that the company won the Daily Telegraph/BT Customer Service Award.

Vin Sullivan also prides itself on forming long-lasting relationships with clients - one such business relationship, with the prestigious Angel Hotel in Abergavenny, goes back 50 years.

“The produce ordered by the company five decades ago was far simpler than today’s, and included apples, potatoes, marrows, parsley and brown trout, reflecting the more seasonal and less exotic tastes of the time,” explains Vin Sullivan MD, John Sullivan, who recently unearthed invoices to the Angel Hotel dating back to 1960.

“One of the features of our business is our personal service, and our commitment to going the extra mile for our customers. This helps us create a loyal relationship with our customers, as they know they can rely on us.”

William Griffiths, General Manager of The Angel Hotel, says;

“Since purchasing The Angel eight years ago our aim has been to provide superb food and attentive service in an elegant setting. Vin Sullivan is the perfect partner, supplying us with high calibre produce, year-round.”

Vin Sullivan has never been afraid to experiment with new and exotic food, and has been a market leader in importing exciting produce from overseas.

In 1969, the company imported the first cooked meats from Poland; and in 1975 brought the first maize-fed chickens from France, while in 1989 the first ostrich arrived from South Africa and in 1990, crocodile from Australia.

“While some of these things have now become commonplace, in the mid 1970s maize-fed chicken was a radical new concept,” says John Sullivan. “Similarly, nobody is surprised to see ostrich on the menu, but in 1990, it turned heads. The latest exotic meat to have captured the public imagination was bison from Canada, which we started importing in 2002.”

“We aim to continue pioneering food sourcing, and aim to expand our portfolio of establishments significantly over the next 12 months,” he adds.

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Caption: John Sullivan, MD of Vin Sullivan Foods in Blaenavon, holding the 1960 invoice book, and William Griffiths, owner of The Angel Hotel in Abergavenny, holding a box of typical produce ordered 50 years ago.

Notes to editors:

Vin Sullivan started life on the High St in Abergavenny in 1960. The company’s reputation was built on outstanding customer service, flexibility and the desire to go the extra mile.

The company has always been a leader in sourcing exciting new produce, fulfilling the requirements of innovative modern chefs.

Vin Sullivan supplies hotels, restaurant and caterers with an overnight service, and pioneered the concept of the third party carrier nearly 20 years ago.

The company is now the leading national supplier of quality fine foods.

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The Angel Hotel

Once a coaching inn on the London to Fishguard route, The Angel Hotel is now a 3-star hotel with 35 rooms, in the centre of the bustling market town of Abergavenny on the edge of the Brecon Beacons.

The Angel Hotel has an AA rosette for its cuisine, a Wine Spectator 'Award of Excellence' and a Tea Guild 'Award of Excellence' for its traditional afternoon teas.

Under the ownership of Caradog Hotels Limited for eight years, with William Griffiths as the General Manager, The Angel Hotel is being restored to its former glory, through a massive refurbishment programme.

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