

Thames Valley University School of Hospitality and Tourism sets the Red Tractor benchmark for hospitality education nationwide!



Pictured: Thames Valley University (TVU) School of Hospitality students can't resist the pull of the life-size Red Tractor, supplied by Massey Ferguson, outside the TVU Pillars Restaurant in Ealing

One of the UK's most influential universities for hospitality education has become the first to receive Red Tractor certification – the leading independent mark of quality that guarantees the food purchased comes from British farms and food companies that meet high standards of food safety and hygiene, animal welfare, and environmental protection.

Thames Valley University's (TVU) London School of Hospitality and Tourism became the first centre of hospitality education to be awarded the Red Tractor License at a special celebratory lunch, recently held to mark the occasion at TVU's Pillars Restaurant in Ealing. The event was co-hosted by TVU's Head of the London School Professor David Foskett MBE – renowned and respected for his work in the hospitality industry, not least for his catering books which have been the definitive point of reference for so many chefs; and Assured Food Standards, the independent organisation set up to manage, develop and promote the Red Tractor as a mark of safe, quality, affordable whole chain British food that the public can trust.

At the lunch, Professor Foskett was officially presented with the Red Tractor plaque by Assured Food Standards' Trade Marketing Manager Penny Beauchamp. Commenting on the award,

Professor Foskett said: “TVU’s London School of Hospitality and Tourism is proud to be the first catering school to be granted Red Tractor membership. A huge amount of hard work has gone into ensuring that we fulfil all Red Tractor criteria – from safety and hygiene standards in the kitchen, to animal welfare when sourcing meat so that our students confidently create high quality meals in the best environment.”

Penny Beauchamp added: “We’re delighted to be able to award Red Tractor status to TVU’s School of Hospitality and Tourism. It’s a chance to widen our reach to the next generation of hospitality management students who will be working in all sectors of the profession – from hotels, restaurants and gastro-pubs, to foodservice management and welfare catering. This is one of the most influential hospitality schools in the country, launching the careers of some of the industry’s most important operators.”

Being the first UK hospitality and tourism school in the country to be granted a Red Tractor License, the TVU School has set the benchmark for other UK hospitality education centres of excellence to follow to ensure their students, who are tomorrow’s managers, understand the importance of every link of the food chain – from the farm to the plate.

At the TVU celebration lunch, 80 invited guests sat down to a three-course meal – fittingly prepared and served by the London School’s second and third year students, studying for the Diploma in Chef and Restaurant. Each course focused on Red Tractor food and drink that encompassed less used meats – such as mutton and turkey legs; seasonality; and total carcass utilisation. Dishes included parley barley casserole with mutton and herbs; asparagus with Welsh rarebit; roast belly of pork with apple sauce; slow roast chuck of beef with Yorkshire pudding; and desserts such as rhubarb compote with Red Tractor ice-cream. In this instance, the ice cream was provided by Angela and Sebastian Parker who own and manage Callestick Farm – producers for nearly 20 years of the finest Cornish dairy ice cream at Callestick, near Truro.

On the farm, the Parkers have continued to observe the traditional practices of good animal husbandry and land management, as demonstrated by previous generations of their family at Callestick. This has not only proved important for producing the best possible milk, but also sustaining healthy biodiversity and protecting the landscape of Cornwall. The source for the fresh cream milk, needed for the ice cream and then Cornish cream, is a small herd of Friesian cows. “We add loads of double or clotted cream for a seriously creamy rich Cornish ice cream experience; and all flavourings are natural, pure and additive free,” explained Angela, who is responsible for quality assurance and new product development.

An ardent supporter of promoting British food, Angela has been delighted to be awarded the Red Tractor licence. “I have been really keen to have this accreditation since its inception 10 years ago,” she said. “It’s a tremendous way of assuring customers of quality – right from grass roots through welfare, and to the finished item.”

Another important Red Tractor component of the TVU celebratory lunch was the beer, supplied by Carling, which on 9 June announced that it had received Red Tractor certification for its barley. Carling now carries the Red Tractor mark on all its multi-pack boxes and will be displaying the logo on its cans later this year.

Carling Sourcing Manager Jerry Dyson said: “We’re really pleased to be able to tell our customers that 100% of our barley has met the high quality standards set by Red Tractor throughout its production, from grain to glass. Last summer, Carling signed 70 UK growers up to a three-year deal to supply 20,000 tonnes of barley direct to the company as part of our 100% British Barley campaign. Now the Red Tractor logo features on our packaging, we can demonstrate to customers this ongoing commitment to Red Tractor farmers and their quality products.”

Supporting the Red Tractor logo at the TVU Lunch was a real life-size red tractor, supplied by Massey Ferguson, which was parked outside the venue for the event. Massey Ferguson’s Public Relations Manager Paul Lay said: “We have supported the Red Tractor scheme since its inception

10 years ago because it plays such a crucial role in creating closer links across the industry. Having TVU's School of Hospitality as a Red Tractor member will help take key food assurance messages to the catering sector through future generations of students. These young people are our future and they will now leave here with a greater knowledge about quality ingredients and how they are produced."

The vitally important issue of educating hospitality students and the industry generally about 'sustainable food' is a priority concern of the Considerate Hoteliers Association (CHA); and its Director John Firrell greatly welcomed the news that TVU's London School of Hospitality and Tourism has become the first catering school to be granted Red Tractor membership. "This is immensely beneficial for the School's students and for the future of the hospitality industry as a whole. I strongly urge other UK centres of hospitality excellence to follow TVU's fine example; and look forward very much to the day when these 'managers of tomorrow' enter and win the CHA's prestigious annual 'Sustainable Food Award' – won earlier this month by Lasswade Country House and Restaurant at Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys in Wales."

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