

From Fawly To Faultless – How The British Hotel Became The Envy Of Europe TripAdvisor trend data reveals eight year increase in UK service standards; average review rating on UK properties rises above average in rest of world

London, 25 May 2012 - Far from the shabby rooms and grumpy owners famously depicted by Fawly Towers, the UK's hotels and B&Bs are now rated among the very best in Europe, data released today by TripAdvisor® has revealed.

Review ratings collected by TripAdvisor from travellers around the globe show a year-on-year rise in UK accommodation standards since 2004, when UK hotels and B&Bs lagged behind the average rating on properties in the rest of the world. Now, the average rating on UK hotels and B&Bs stands just above the global average, and higher than some other major markets such as the US, France, Spain and Germany.^[1]

The record review ratings for UK properties come at the same time as a huge number of visitors are expected to arrive on these shores to enjoy major events such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Christine Petersen, President, TripAdvisor for Business, said:

"In the last ten years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of travellers posting reviews about where they have stayed. But today's findings show the wealth of information now available hasn't just benefitted other travellers, it has benefitted the industry as well. Hotel and B&B owners have, it appears, clearly been listening to the free feedback they have received, and used it to improve the service they provide."

Soaring average scores for customer service and cleanliness have been the key drivers behind the UK hospitality industry's revival^[2], while smaller B&Bs are now outperforming their larger hotel rivals on average, proving that great service is not simply the reserve of the luxury hotel chains^[3].

Jo Causon, Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Customer Service, welcomed the findings:

"We know from Institute data that as customers we have become more demanding and a key differentiator for any organisation has to be on the service they deliver. What the TripAdvisor data shows is that where there is a genuine focus on delivering excellence in service this will be rewarded positively by the comments and recommendations customers post."

Pierre Williams, spokesman for the Federation of Small Businesses, said:

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy, so it is great to see British B&B's holding their own against the large hotel chains. It just goes to show how much people appreciate the personal touch, and how you don't need vast resources and a huge marketing budget to provide great service."

The data also revealed the difference in consumer review ratings across the English counties, with properties in the South West and the North of England scoring particularly highly. The five English counties with the highest average TripAdvisor rating for hotels and B&Bs are:

- Cumbria (4.30)
- Cornwall (4.28)
- Northumberland (4.26)
- Devon (4.24)
- Somerset (4.22)

Tim Farron MP, whose Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency is situated in the top-scoring county of Cumbria, commented:

"I'm encouraging all our fantastic tourism businesses - however large or small – to get involved with the conversation on the web by registering with sites like TripAdvisor. Having a small marketing budget is no longer a barrier because a great trip speaks for itself."

Dan Jarvis MP, Shadow Tourism Minister, said:

“2012 will be a year when the eyes of the world are fixed on Britain. We are rightly proud of our tourism industry and this year, right across the country, tourism will provide a hugely valuable boost to our local, regional and national economies. I know that businesses will be doing all that they can to maximise the potential of the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee celebrations so that tourists can enjoy the very best of British hospitality

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