

thePublican FOOD & DRINK AWARDS 2008



RETAIL DRINKS CONCEPT OF THE YEAR

The Winner

SPONSORED BY



SMITH & JONES BY BARRACUDA GROUP

Marlow, Buckinghamshire

The 2008 Retail Drinks Concept of the Year is Barracuda Group's Smith & Jones concept, a mid-market pub retail brand that is unique to the sector.

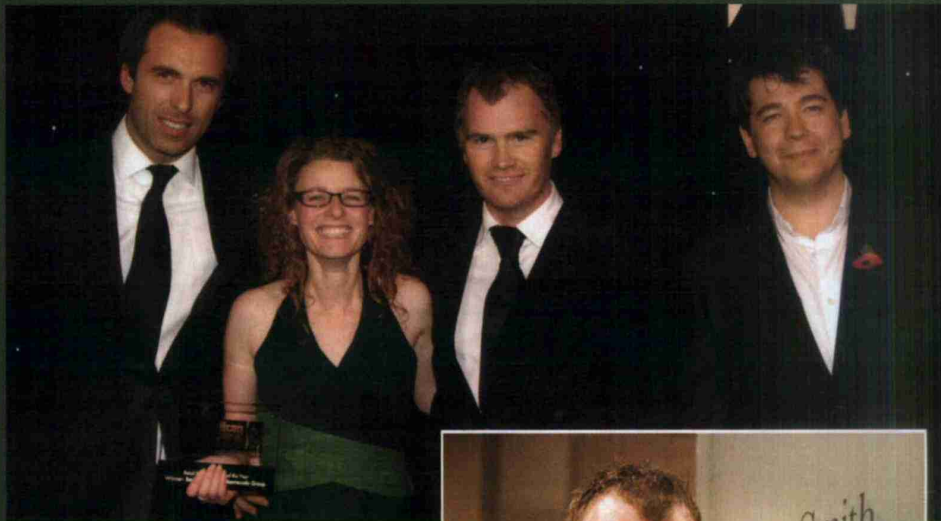
Because each site is not overtly branded, and retains its individual pub name and identity, it is able to build strong links with its community and tailor its offer accordingly – which gives it a major USP and competitive advantage in the current pub market.

Judges at this year's awards were impressed by the concept's highly effective use of its loyalty card scheme to build business. Over 45,000 regular customers have joined the scheme and the resulting database is used to tailor marketing and promotional material to each site.

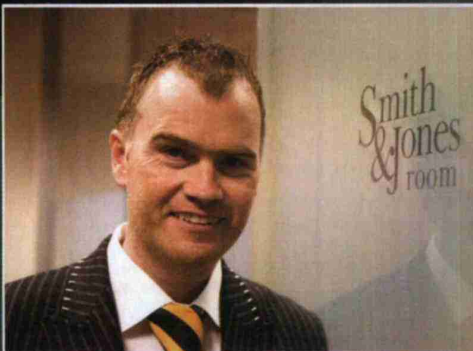
There is also an impressive relationship between Smith & Jones management and its suppliers, with partnerships with brand owners driving promotions but also improved service standards and staff training.

It is refreshing to see a concept in the market that is so proud of its wet-led offer, and this year has seen Smith & Jones capitalise on this with a new cocktail offer that provides staff with an easy and quick way to make top quality cocktails for customers, even at busy times. This, alongside a very carefully planned and tailored drinks offer in each site, ensures that at an incredibly tough time for the industry Smith & Jones has bucked the trend and grown its drinks sales year-on-year.

To support this innovation, a unique incentive scheme for staff and managers offers some once-in-a-lifetime holidays to the best performing members of the team and helps grow sales across the estate.



thePublican FOOD & DRINK AWARDS 2008



Because it is so flexible as a concept, Smith & Jones has also been able to adapt to many different areas and markets, and has in many cases broken new ground by introducing a quality local pub to areas of secondary towns and cities that have suffered from poor services previously.

This not only rejuvenates and injects money into down-market areas, but also helps avoid the sort of cutthroat competition that has hit some other retail brands hard.

It also means that the team are able to pick the right products and style for each area individually – rather than shoe-horning in a standard concept. This buys them local support among customers, many of whom do not see Smith & Jones as a brand at all, but would

know their local pub by its particular local name.

The staff have also been empowered at a local level to introduce their own events, and initiatives appropriate to their own clientele. This gives managers real ownership of their site, and many of these initiatives, where successful, are then rolled out to other sites in the estate.

A unique concept that successfully combines head office retail clout with an awareness of local markets – and a worthy winner of this year's award!