



Press Release
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LAP OF LUXURY WILL BRING PROSPERITY TO LOCH NESS

The Highlands' priceless tourism asset, Loch Ness, now has its own exclusive lodge retreat in an investment set to bring significant dividends to the local economy.

Newly-opened Loch Ness Lodge, which has already been awarded five stars by VisitScotland, offers exclusive-use accommodation and service to its guests who will command a view of the loch from each of its seven bedrooms and have access to the Lodge's private Loch Ness shoreline. It has been designed to incorporate features of a classic Highland lodge and was built by local craftsmen with substantial investment by local family, the Sutherlands.

Loch Ness Lodge will employ seven members of staff, including a chef who trained under Marco Pierre White, contributing to the five-star service on offer to guests.

Heading the team is Scott Sutherland, whose family has operated successful five-star self-catering cottages in the grounds of the lodge, situated between Inverness and Drumnadrochit, for nearly a decade.

Scott said: "Loch Ness is arguably the only stretch of fresh water in Scotland which has world wide recognition. We wanted to create a first class tourism product which was an asset to the area and which matched the five star environment of Loch Ness with five star service and hospitality".

“We have been getting a lot of requests from our cottage guests to hold weddings here, so we felt the timing was right to provide the only five-star accommodation venue in the area to cater for this market. The lodge has been constructed by local craftsmen using traditional materials over a period of 18 months. The building has an exterior finish of Scotch harl and a natural slate roof as well as a turret, which is a striking key feature of many Scottish hunting lodges”.

Scott Armstrong, Area Director VisitScotland Highland said: “The Highlands has a great range of accommodation to offer visitors, but Loch Ness Lodge is really setting the standards for exclusive-use venues in the Highlands. Scott Sutherland has worked very closely with VisitScotland’s Quality Assurance team in order to ensure they do all they can to be officially recognised as providers of quality, and I’d like to congratulate them on their achievements.

“I hope their commitment to quality is an inspiration for other tourism businesses, as raising standards within the industry is an essential part of our joint ambition to grow Scottish tourism by 50% by 2015. Providing a first class product is a key element in ensuring the Highlands of Scotland continues to be perceived as a must visit, must return destination.”

Tony Mercer, Head of Quality and Standards for VisitScotland, said: “Quality Advisors assess everything from property exterior and cleanliness to management efficiency and guest information, and the standards we set are rightly very high, based firmly on customers’ expectations.

“Loch Ness Lodge scored very highly on all fronts, and deserves to be recognised as a great example of the highest standard of quality and service we are aiming to achieve throughout Scotland, so that our visitors experience the best our country can offer.”

The Lodge has been created for exclusive-use for up to fourteen guests in seven individually styled en-suite bedrooms. Technology has been combined with traditional luxury to create the perfect ambience throughout the public rooms, intimate dining areas, a spa and therapy suite and beautifully landscaped grounds.

A further 14 guests can be accommodated at the neighbouring Loch Ness Cottages, five luxury cottages also overlooking the loch.

Scott Sutherland continued: "We have tried to create the ultimate expression of a distinctive exclusive-use property catering for both the business and leisure markets. Our guests can enjoy the ultimate 'home from home' experience with outstanding facilities and attentive and discreet personal service for special occasions such as anniversaries, celebrations and private weddings, and the property is ideal for business and corporate groups looking to organise team gatherings, incentive breaks, small meetings and conferences and corporate events.

"Guests can enjoy the spectacular loch setting and the landscaped grounds, which include a lochan and several water features. There is also an underpass to the Lodge's private stretch of Loch Ness shoreline, with access for a seaplane, and we have our own private helipad."

Scott added: "Loch Ness Lodge is a prestigious, elegant venue and is likely to attract those who want to mark a special event or entertain clients in quality surroundings with first-class service and facilities."

Scott is positive about tourism prospects for the area. He said: "We have already joined forces with the local tourism group Destination Loch Ness, and back its bid for World Heritage status for Loch Ness.

“We have also been working closely with VisitScotland to tap into the forthcoming publicity surrounding The Waterhorse, a movie based on the Loch Ness monster which is released this month in the USA and is due out in Britain in February next year.

“We’ve already hosted journalists from Australia, the USA and France, and they have all been very impressed with what they have seen. Their articles will be an important way to get our message across to an influential international audience, to the benefit of Loch Ness Lodge and the wider tourism industry in the Highlands”.

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Further information on Loch Ness Lodge at www.loch-ness-lodge.co.uk and further media information and photographs from Caroline Keith at the **Keith** consultancy on 01463 811000.