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FISKARS VILLAGE WINS INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AWARD

Fiskars Village has been awarded the The Royal Destination Award for Sustainable Tourism, 2007. The aim of the award is to recognize destinations engaged in outstanding and innovative sustainable practices in tourism.

The competition jury stated: "Among a huge variety of sustainability initiatives Fiskars Village was awarded for excellent performance with regard to sustainable tourism development, with special attention to destination management as well as economic viability and local prosperity at destination level."

From more than 20 destinations in 13 European countries, a prominent jury of sustainable tourism experts nominated 15 applicants and selected 3 finalists for the award. The two other finalists were Pielach Valley from Austria and Cairngorms National Park from Scotland, United Kingdom. Fiskars Village was specially acknowledged for its unique concept for reviving a dying industrial locality, an issue common to many European countries.

The winner was announced in St. Andrews, Scotland, on 13 April, 2007, following presentations by all three finalists. Fiskars Village was presented by Mr. Ingmar Lindberg, Vice Executive President at Fiskars Corporation and a leading figure in the development of the village for more than two decades. Lindberg received a statue and a certificate in a gala evening following a conference on sustainable tourism arranged in St. Andrews on Friday, 13 April. In his speech of thanks, Lindberg stated that the objective in the development of Fiskars Village has been to maintain the village as a lively, functional community rather than to create a tourism destination. Today, thanks to the residents who live and work in the village, amenities have been preserved, and the village remains as an esteemed community of professional craftspeople, a tradition harking back to 1649 when the village was founded. Word of the new life of the village has spread, and in the process, Fiskars has become an interesting resort attracting many tourists. High-quality art, design and crafts exhibitions together with boutiques and workshops in the setting of a historic village and unique natural surroundings provide tourists with unforgettable experiences.

The award was handed out by Royal Awards for Sustainability together with DestiLink, a European-wide network of rural regions and research institutions, now for the first time. Both organizations are partly funded by the European Union's Interreg IIIC program. The Royal Awards are protected by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Felipe of Spain. The next awards will be presented in Ireland in 2009.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, with increasing global and local impacts. Sustainable tourism refers not only to paying attention to ecology issues such as environmental load and waste, but also to social responsibility. On a very tangible level, it deals with local progress, culture and natural environments benefiting from tourism-generated money and jobs.

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